According to Jennielynn Holmes, Senior Director of health and housing for Catholic Charities, before the fires there was a 1% vacancy rate for housing in Sonoma County. After the fires it’s 5%. That means 5% of the people are now looking for someplace else to go. “As a community we need to do better than having people sleep in tents end up chronically homeless.”

The second wave of victims will be experiencing more trauma as people begin to be pushed out of housing. According to Zillow, people displaced by the wildfires are likely to find it challenging to find another home for sale nearby. In many areas, inventory was already down by more than 10 percent—in some areas more than 20 percent—year-over-year in August. And that’s before fires burned down thousands of homes in the area, reducing would-be inventory in an already slim market. Families looking to rent a home may not fare much better, especially if they are trading in the relative

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Walk for Life West Coast
January 27th 2018

Fr. Frank Pavone Talks with YOU, Walk for Life West Coast!

There are few people, clerical or lay, who have shown more unswerving dedication to the defense of the unborn than Fr. Frank Pavone. Fr. Pavone was ordained in 1988 by Cardinal John O’Connor, and in 1993 the Cardinal named him National Director of Priests for Life. As a wonderful side note, Priests for Life was established right here in San Francisco in 1991!

Once again this year, Fr. Frank will be joining us at the Walk for Life West Coast. He graciously took a little time out from his very busy schedule to speak with us.

(see Walk for Life, page 4)

Reverend Philip Ryan
1932-2017

Father Philip Ryan, a retired priest of the Diocese of Santa Rosa in California, died on Thursday evening, December 14, 2017 at Sutter Lakeside Hospital in Lakeport following a heart attack on the previous day. He died peacefully in the presence of some friends who had given him hospitality in his retirement.

Father Ryan was born in Upperchurch, Co. Tipperary, Ireland on February 4, 1932. He attended Milestone National School and Rockwell College Secondary School, Cashel, Co. Tipperary in June 1951. He entered St. Patrick’s

(see Reverend Philip Ryan, page 6)
Another Liturgical begins, another Calendar Year begins. No matter how often we go through the graced Seasons of the Liturgical year we are repeatedly blessed by our full, active and conscious participation in them. In fact, every year, even though the liturgical prayers and readings follow a repetitive cycle, we find something new and challenging each year. We continue to make discovery of things we should have noted long ago. Perhaps, with our propensity to forget, we hear for instance the first reading for the Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time and think, I never heard that before. In truth, we have heard it before, or better, it has been read to us before. The Second Vatican Council called for all of us, laity and clergy alike, to a full, active and conscious participation in the sacred liturgy. There has been and continues to be a strong emphasis on ‘active’ participation but this is only one part of what the Council called for. It is also necessary to understand properly the meaning of “active” participation. If this level of participation is limited to those who sing in the choir, proclaim the scriptures or assist in the distribution of Holy Communion then the possibility of such “active” participation is extremely limited. Since all are called to active participation and since not everyone can participate in the “activity” surrounding the liturgy, the meaning of “active” needs to be seen in a broader context. It is here, more than fifty years after the Council, that we might find that we have not participated in the life of the Church in as full or conscious a manner as we might imagine.

There have been repeated attempts over the decades to make sure that the meaning of the Latin texts of the Council are properly understood. We have taken it for granted for decades that the Council called for ‘active’ participation. As I used the terms above, I would be relatively safe in saying that only a very few would take exception to my use of the phrase “active participation” as a description of a part of the call of the Council. At least in the United States, with our great propensity for activity, there was general acceptance of this term without questioning its origin. The term in Latin in the Council texts is “actuosa”. Peter Kwasniewski points out that an authoritative lexicon says that actusus “properly is one who is totally engaged in the act or motion of the body—such as an actor and a dancer, who for this reason are called actuosi.” He then writes: “The word actuosa itself is very interesting: it means fully or totally engaged in activity, like a dancer or an actor who is putting everything into the dancing or the acting; it might be considered “super-active.” But what is the notion of activity here? It is actualizing one’s full potential, entering into possession of a good rather than having an unrealized capacity for it. In contemporary English, “active” often means simply the contrary of passive or receptive, yet in a deeper perspective, we see that these are by no means contrary. I can be actively receptive to the Word of God; I can be fully actualizing my ability to be acted upon at Mass by the chants, prayers, and ceremonies, without my doing much of anything that would be styled “active” in contemporary English.”

In a sense the word “active” implies “doing” something whereas “actuosa” points more towards “being” something, namely more fully present, more attentive, more thoughtful, more receptive. This kind of participation is open to everyone without exception and is not limited to a few souls chosen for “active” participation. In fact, those chosen for the more active roles will have a more difficult time fulfilling the call of the Council since they will necessarily be distracted by the duties which they are called upon to perform so that others may enter more fully and peacefully into the “participatio actuosa” called for by the Council. If our focus, for many years, has been on trying to find ways for more engagement in the activity of the liturgy, we might try, this New Year, to be more engaged (participatio actuosa) in the Liturgy itself.

To Be Totally Engaged in the Liturgy
VENTURA Calif. - Thomas Aquinas College narrowly escaped the worst of the Southern California fire that took its name, but still suffered extensive damage on a campus where trees are still smoldering and the ash is nearly knee-deep in some places, forcing an early end to the fall semester.

College President Michael McLean, who stayed on campus as the fire enveloped the surrounding land, called it a “once-in-a-lifetime experience” that he would “not want to repeat.”

The Thomas Fire—which, as of this writing, was still raging and had become the largest in California history—began sometime in the early evening of Dec. 4, about half a mile south of Thomas Aquinas College’s campus in Santa Paula, about 66 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

Senior Nicholas Gartonavesky was studying for a nighttime seminar in the college commons when he noticed a bunch of students running out of the building. He ran out with them and saw a glow around the hills and was struck by how much closer it was than another minor fire that had broken out in the summer.

Around 6:30pm, college officials rang the chapel bell—an emergency alert that has only been used a handful of times in the college’s history. About 365 undergraduates flocked to the commons, where college officials made the decision to evacuate. Students were given three minutes to grab whatever they could from their dorms. Gartonavesky had just enough time to collect his laptop, some “important documents” and a “grab bag” he had prepared after the summer.

Meanwhile, the evacuated students had been assigned to stay in the homes of faculty members, at least one board member and other friends of the college. Gartonavesky and nine other students stayed at the home of Milton “Bud” Daily, a member of the college’s board of governors.

They spent the rest of the week there. They read books checked out from the local library. They watched movies. They followed the news on television and online about the fire. And they prayed. Each night, the Dailys led the students in a Rosary.

By dawn, the worst of the fire had passed. Tulberg, his workers and some neighbors had been given three minutes to grab whatever they could from their dorms. Gartonavesky had just enough time to collect his laptop, some “important documents” and a “grab bag” he had prepared after the summer.

All of the underbrush was gone, and a layer of ash ankle to knee-deep carpeted the area.

‘A View Out of Dante’

McLean and his wife were led out of the faculty building and on to an athletic field, where he had moved his car. Tulberg, his workers and some neighbors had also pulled their cards onto the field.

Soon after, the firestorm descended on the campus. Streams of fire cascaded down surrounding hills, like lava from a volcano. One-hundred-foot jets blew out of the storm, fueled by the Santa Ana winds. When the flames attacked a tree, they started in the roots, working their way up through the center before shooting out of a branch that had been broken or pruned off. “It would look like a blowtorch coming out,” Tulberg said.

As hot air flowed into bamboo on campus, it exploded, sounding like small-arms fire. The heat was so intense on the lower part of the campus—where the president’s house, a grotto and the outdoor Stations of the Cross are located—that Tulberg and his crew could only walk to the top of a hill overlooking it and glance down for a few seconds at a time.

“It was raining fire. It was a view out of Dante,” Tulberg said, referring to the medieval poet’s description of hell.

As firefighters battled the main blaze, Tulberg and his crew—armed only with shovels—attacked hot spots that popped up on the campus itself. On the athletic field, the cars were moved to dodge potential flames.

By dawn, the worst of the fire had passed. Tulberg was sure that Thomas Aquinas had lost at least one building. It turned out almost all of them—even the president’s house—had been spared. Instead, just one structure had been destroyed: a storage unit—and the door to one of the dorms had been charred when sparks hit an outside chair that had been leaning against it.

Extensive Damage

Still, the damage is extensive. The hills encircling the campus are all burned. On campus, the brunt of the fire was borne on the lower area. Before the fire, it had been a lush area, with redwoods and sycamore trees with drawbridges crossing over streams. That morning it was nearly unrecognizable to Tulberg: All of the underbrush was gone, and a layer of ash ankle to knee-deep carpeted the area.

“Now it’s like walking on the moon,” Tulberg said.

Meanwhile, the evacuated students had been assigned to stay in the homes of faculty members, at least one board member and other friends of the college. Gartonavesky and nine other students stayed at the home of Milton “Bud” Daily, a member of the college’s board of governors.

They spent the rest of the week there. They read books checked out from the local library. They watched movies. They followed the news on television and online about the fire. And they prayed. Each night, the Dailys led the students in a Rosary.

“It was like family,” Gartonavesky said.

Ultimately, the college decided not to resume classes and sent the students home early, about a week before when they would have taken their final exams. Students will return Jan. 7 and start their finals the next day, with the option of coming back early Jan. 4 to study, according to McLean.

On Dec. 9, five days after the fire broke out, students were let back on campus to pack up their dorms and head home. The college had set up fans to blow out the smoke. Even then there was still so much smoke that it was safe for students to be in their dorms for only 30 to 45 minutes, Gartonavesky said.

“It was very, very smoky on campus still,” Gartonavesky said.

(see Thomas Fire, page 6)
Fr. Frank, When did you first attend the Walk?

I first attended the Walk in 2007, its third year, and it has been a priority item on my calendar ever since. Of course you also attend the March for Life in Washington pretty much every year. What similarities/differences do you see between the March in DC and the Walk in San Francisco?

The similarities between the March for Life and the Walk for Life are based, first of all, in the fact that these are events that respond to the tragedy unleashed in our nation by the legalization of abortion on January 22, 1973. They are events “for life,” but are not diluted by the idea that prolife events should focus on a wide range of issues. At both events, walks and marches are inspired and shaped by particular, specific problems, and both of these events focus on the particular problem that the lives of children in the womb are no longer protected by law.

The similarities are also rooted in the people who attend. The crowds are marked by an impressive variety of ages, ethnic backgrounds, and religious and political affiliations. Yet all are united in their commitment to defend the unborn. Likewise, the crowds on both coasts are marked by that remarkable combination of voxes and voices. We are rightly distressed and grieve the ongoing loss of life by abortion; but we are filled with the joy our faith brings us that death has been conquered in Jesus Christ.

For so many of the participants, the Walk for Life and the March for Life are not just a response to Roe vs. Wade; they are a response to Jesus Christ. Both the March and the Walk allow pro-life groups to have exhibit booths in order to serve the participants by having a wide range of educational materials available. At both events, there are also many auxiliary events, masses, conferences and prayer services organized by other pro-life groups. Priests for Life is privileged, at both events, to organize the Gathering of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign (a joint project of Priests for Life and Anglicans for Life), at which those who have had abortions share their testimonies of pain and healing.

There are, at the same time, specific distinctions between the two events. The March for Life, because it is in DC, is more policy-focused, with a larger number of elected officials speaking at the rally, and many marchers visiting the offices of their Congressional representatives.

The Walk for Life, on the other hand, has a stronger emphasis on the fact that abortion hurts women, and that there needs to be a cultural change. Both themes are present at both events, but it is a difference in emphasis.

The Walk for Life is marked by a greater number of counter-protestors than is the March for Life, because of the mistaken notion in the minds of abortion advocates that they own the city of San Francisco, but they don’t.

What do you think about the new generation of pro-lifers, i.e. Lila Rose, David Daleiden, Students for Life?

We are blessed with various new pro-life organizations and leaders who are able to apply new technologies and tactics to the same vision and mission that the movement has developed over the years. I have had the privilege of mentoring and advising many of these younger leaders and assisting them and their activities to get started and/or integrated into the movement. One of the key things the movement needs to do is to attract new activists and leaders and is to provide them with an understanding of the history of the movement. We need to know the accomplishments and mistakes of the past in order to build the future.

Father Frank, what thoughts would you like to leave us with?

Whether Walking for Life in San Francisco, Marching for Life in DC, or taking part in smaller, similar events in towns, cities and villages everywhere in between, pro-life people understand that these activities have an effect both externally and internally. Externally, these events show the world that advocates of the unborn are not going away and will not be silent until abortion ends. We have seen, for instance, legislators who have changed their minds about abortion because of seeing the Silent No More women march with their signs, “I regret my abortion.”

These events also have an impact “internally,” that is, on the pro-life participants themselves. We’re encouraged to know we are not alone; we have the opportunity to network to build relationships with other activists; and by expressing our convictions in a public way, those convictions are strengthened in our own minds and hearts, and we are ready to do even more pro-life activity throughout the year.

Great News! Joe Scheidler to Speak at Walk for Life West Coast!

What an honor! Mr. Joe Scheidler, one of the grandfathers of the American pro-life movement, the founder of the Pro-Life Action League, twice sued by “NOW” (both convictions overturned by the Supreme Court with NOW forced to pay Mr. Scheidler’s costs) the recipient of every pro-life award in the book, father, grandfather, and faithful Catholic, will be one of our keynote speakers at the 14th Annual Walk for Life West Coast on January 27.

We are inexpressibly honored to be able to welcome Mr. Scheidler, who has been fighting for the rights of the unborn since before the infamous Roe v. Wade decision.

Come to the Civic Center at 12:30 on January 27, 2018 to hear from this great American, who follows in the footsteps of the abolitionists and heroes of the civil rights movement!

Other Walk For Life West Coast 2018 Speakers

Every year, we invite speakers to inform and inspire us as we stand up for the lives of unborn children and their families. Below is a short bio for the speakers we have lined up this year:

Terry Beatley: In 2009, author, wife, and mother Terry Beatley met with, and accepted the pro-life mantle of former abortionist Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder of NARAL. Listening to Dr. Nathanson’s remorse for exploiting women and stripping the unborn child of all rights and protections inspired Terry to promise Dr. Nathanson that she would make Americans aware of the “8-point strategy of deceit” used by the abortion industry “and to deliver his personal parting message about ‘loving[ing] one another’ until that strategy becomes common knowledge or until Roe v Wade is overthrown.”

As part of fulfilling this promise, she founded Hosea Initiative, a non-profit organization which teaches the impact of worldview through the pro-life conversion story of Dr. Nathanson. Fulfilling the promise made to the “Keeper of the Abortion Industry Keys” and using the power of story-telling, Hosea Initiative teaches a broader understanding of the abortion industry’s exploitation of women and children.

Dr. Bruchalski received his M.D. from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in Mobile, AL, in 1987. He completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Eastern Virginia Medical Center and the Jones Institute for Reproductive Medicine in Norfolk, Virginia in 1991. He received board certification in 1993.

Motivated by a desire to become the best possible physician, Dr. Bruchalski chose to divest himself of his abortion practice during his residency. Gradually, he realized that abortion actually harmed women. After a spiritual awakening, he returned to the Catholic faith of his youth and felt God’s call to start a medical practice that truly helped women. In 1994, Dr. Bruchalski founded Tepeyac in Fairfax, VA, offering, in addition to excellent medicine, a faith-based welcome to women regardless of belief, background, or financial situation. He strove to provide the best OB/GYN medicine and to care for those in need in accordance with the teachings of the Church on the sanctity of life. In 2000, he founded Divine Mercy Care, a non-profit organization, to assist Tepeyac and other similar life-affirming medical practices. Divine Mercy Care’s additional missions involve educating medical students in, and broadening community awareness of, pro-life medicine.

Pastor Cledarn Howard Childress, Jr., a lifelong resident of Montclair, New Jersey, joined the New Calvary Baptist Church in September of 1974. In 1978, he was appointed Director of Youth Department to organize and educate youth. He also served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Superintendent of the Sunday School Department and Vice-President of the Outreach Ministries. Pastor Childress successfully completed Northern Baptist School of Religion in 1986 where he majored in Christian Education. He was ordained in 1988 by the North Jersey Shiloh Association and later installed as Senior Pastor of New Calvary in April of 1989.

Pastor Childress Jr. has repeatedly been featured in World Magazine and has contributed commentary and editorials for Christianity Today, The Christian Post, Black Christian News, The Washington Times and New Jersey Star Ledger and is a regular columnist (see Walk for Life, page 8)
The Quirky Father Solanus: Squeaky Violinist, Tamer of Bees

December 20th Detroit (Catholic News Agency) - You’ve heard of Christ’s multiplication of the loaves. But have you heard of Fr. Solanus Casey’s multiplication of the ice cream cones?

To be sure, what Fr. Solanus is most remembered for is gentle holiness, humility and obedience to the will of God in all things. It’s why the beloved Capuchin friar was beatified Nov. 18 in Detroit.

However, there’s something endearingly unconventional about the story of Father Solanus Casey - from the miracles reportedly worked through his intercession down to his breakfast habits—that makes his story especially unique.

The Ice Cream Miracle
Fr. Solanus was a friar and simplex priest, meaning that, due to lesser academic abilities, he was not allowed to preach or to hear confessions.

But this freed him up for other charisms in which he particularly thrived—including serving as the porter (doorkeeper) at St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit, from 1924-1945.

As porter, Fr. Solanus became the main link from the brothers to the outside world, and he soon became renowned for the gentle and willing counsel that he offered, and for the miracles attributed to his intercession.

Fr. Tom Nguyen, OFM Cap., a Capuchin friar who lives in Detroit, recalls a story commonly told at the Solanus Casey Center in Detroit:

On one warm summer day in 1941, a fellow friar in the novitiate came to see Fr. Solanus, in need of a miracle of healing. Something was wrong with his tooth, and if things went poorly at the dentist, the friar could miss too much formation and be sent back to the beginning of novitiate, as was the practice at the time.

The young friar sought Fr. Solanus’ blessing before heading out to the dentist, who told him to trust God that everything would work out.

While the friar was at the dentist, a lady who came to visit the monastery brought Fr. Solanus two ice cream cones. Too busy to eat them at the moment, he put them into his desk drawer.

After more than half an hour, the younger friar returned from the dentist, his tooth found miraculously healthy. He went to thank Father Solanus, who pulled out three (not two!) perfectly frozen ice cream cones from his desk drawer on the hot summer day, which he offered to the friar to celebrate his good outcome.

The Breakfast Penance
Saints are often people known for offering up some kind of physical penances to the Lord - whether that’s wearing a scrappy hair shirt, taking on some kind of fasting, or sleeping on a hard floor. Even in this way, Fr. Solanus’ penance was uniquely quirky.

The friar was known for eating all of his breakfast at once—cereal, juice, coffee, and milk all mixed together in the same bowl.

In a story for the Michigan Catholic earlier this year, Fr. Werner Wolf, OFM Cap., recalled how he had been inspired to join the Capuchins specifically by Fr. Solanus Casey, who was still alive at the time. Eager to learn from the holy friar, Fr. Wolf decided he would watch Fr. Solanus very closely.

“So the first day I was there, I watched him like a hawk,” Fr. Wolf said.

“In the morning, the novices brought food to the older friars. First breakfast, I watched that man’s every move, pouring his cereal, the sugar, the cold milk, then warm milk, then prune juice in the whole works. I looked at him, telling God, ‘Father, if that’s holiness, I don’t want none.’”

Tamer of Bees
Like St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscans, Fr. Solanus also had a special relationship with animals—bees in particular.

On several occasions, witnesses recalled Fr. Solanus taming the bees that were kept by the Capuchin friars. On one particular occasion, the witness was Father Benedict Groeschel, cofounder of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

Fr. Groeschel was visiting St. Felix Friary in Huntington, Indiana, where Fr. Solanus Casey was stationed at the time.

Then a young Capuchin, Fr. Groeschel had also heard of the holy Fr. Solanus, and watched him closely.

One day, Fr. Groeschel and another friar were visiting the beehives kept by the friars, when the bees started swarming angrily.

Fr. Groeschel was instructed to get Fr. Solanus, who started talking to the bees and calming them when he arrived.

“He started to talk to the bees. All right now. Calm down. All right,” Father Groeschel recalled in a story to Our Sunday Visitor. “And they started to calm down and go back into the hive.... I was absolutely in total shock.”

Fr. Solanus recognized the problem—there were two queen bees in the hive—and without the standard protective gloves or netting, stuck his bare hand in the hive and pulled out the second queen without getting stung.

A Violinist of ‘More Love Than Skill’
Also on display at the Solanus Casey Center is the friar’s beloved violin, which by all accounts he played “with more love than skill.”

He loved to play the violin and sing, a skill he picked up while still living at home. But he had a high squeaky voice that some friars found grating.

According to one account from the Catholic Education Resource Center, one of the Capuchin friars had fallen ill, and Fr. Solanus went to fetch his violin in order to cheer him up. While he was gone, the sick friar asked one of his visitors to turn on the radio to deter Fr. Solanus from playing his violin.

In another story about his violin playing, a friar heard a squeaky noise coming from the chapel. When he went to see where the noise was coming from, he found Fr. Solanus alone in front of the chapel’s Nativity scene, playing and singing Christmas carols in his squeaky voice for the baby Jesus.

On the whole, Fr. Solanus’ quirks only served to make him more beloved among the people of Detroit and those who have a devotion to him.

“He was sincere, everyone knew he was holy, even though listening to him play the violin was a challenge,” Fr. Wolf told Michigan Catholic in February.

Over 20,000 people came to pay their respects after the friar died, and an estimated 70,000 people attended his beatification Mass.
The Culture of Life and Its Obstacles

By Chris Lyford

One of the greatest obstacles in creating a Culture of Life today is the culture of death itself which pervades our society and is promoted and celebrated by those in control of the media sources through the vehicles of movies, music, fashion, and even news. The modern means of communication are not the obstacles; the content delivered by them and the authors of that content are. More substantially the obstacles come in the form of errant philosophies, pseudo truths, pluralism, and postmodern relativism that imbue these media creations to which our society is exposed on a daily basis.

These seeds of pseudo truth can infect the hearts and minds of our families with the darkness of self-deception. In addition, the leaders of our world have systematically passed laws that break down Judeo-Christian principles, facilitated unjust wars abroad, and most devastatingly facilitated the death of millions in the slaughter of the unborn though acts of deception. In addition, the leaders of our world have and minds of our families with the darkness of self-pluralism, and postmodern relativism that imbue the form of errant philosophies, pseudo truths, and superficially the obstacles come with the simple gifts of humility, charity, honesty, and faith. It's not in the power of our logical argument, but in our living the joy of knowing we are God's beloved that we can make a sign of hope to others. We all need mercy. And thank God for His mercy! It's His mercy that reaches into the cave of darkness into which we can wander. He shows us the truth of what our lives are like when we choose our will over His, and still respect our free will to remain in the cave of self-deception, or reach out to grasps His outstretched hand. With reckless abandon He strongly seeks any contrite heart in order to flood it with pure light; the light of truth.

It's in our own parish community where the signs of hope abound. Every day I see more and more Catholics who have embraced the call to humbly evangelize themselves, their families, and their congregations, and who are presenting to their 'worlds' the challenging merciful Jesus while they exhibit the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The social teachings of the Church, the initiatives by our shepherds to make known at the 'table of the world' the timeless truths of our faith, and the heroic virtue of all Catholics who have embraced the New Evangelization are all the response of the light of Christ to this culture of death. The 14th annual Walk for Life West Coast to take place on January 27th represents a work dedicated to the public interaction between our basic belief in the dignity of human life itself, and our socio-political culture. It's the image (and reality) of the Catholic Church walking the streets of San Francisco. This symbolic 'front line' of the culture war is primarily an event to show our support for the dignity of human life through faithful citizenship and political action, yet it serves as a rallying point for much more.

It's the rallying point for all who have chosen to defend the Faith, hearten the faithful, and defend the faithful. ❖

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Letters Policy

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

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

By Julienne Sparacio

Again, it's time for me to write something, preferably in keeping with this issue theme—Hope. Protecting children is not exactly a feel good, hope filled topic! I have been reflecting on the title of my office—Child and Youth Protection and how to provide that in this world. We have background checks in place—if you have been arrested/convicted of certain offenses—you will be prohibited from working with our children. We have trainings in place—so our adults can recognize inappropriate behaviors in adults, and signs of abuse in children, and report it. We have a program for our children to empower them, to understand what is not okay, to say no, and to tell someone so that the adults in charge can stop things, hopefully before it gets to the point of damage or trauma. But is that enough?

I wrote last month a little bit about online bullying. I have seen three articles in the last week—about bullying behavior at three different locations, three different cities—all in Northern California. I am wondering, how can we say that we are providing a safe environment for children, when they may be victims, bystanders or perpetrators of bullying behavior? Our country is pretty divided these days, and I see in the news, in our communities, online, in the grocery store line, instances of adults bullying, talking nasty or being just plain rude to each other. No wonder our kids act out! It's all very discouraging. So I have an idea.

I turn 60 in January—yikes! This year, with the loss of my husband, and my life changing so dramatically, I wasn't looking forward to another 'milestone'. As you can imagine, I was not in the mood to find anything good in my days. So I decided that I would spend the year looking for 60 'joy moments'. To be totally honest—some of them have been a total stretch—I definitely wasn't feeling the joy, but forced myself to see the good, the positive in that moment. Some of them were easy—hello—finding out I am going to be a grandma for the first time! I thought I would be done with this little project as soon as I hit 60, but someone gave me a journal with "Joy Moments' engraved on it. What a great reminder that this could be a lifetime project. Okay maybe I won't keep count on Facebook anymore, but I could keep track for me. I flipped through my moments from this year—I am up to 51, and I smiled and laughed and teared up a little.

So here is my thought—what if more of us did that? What if we taught our kids to actively look for joy moments? What if we did it alone and together as a family and shared those with each other? What we would be teaching our kids, in a fun and different way is how to live like the glass is half full. Happy, contented kids tend to see life as positive and full of possibilities. And those kids are less likely to bully others and more likely to stand up when they see something wrong. Life happens, and sometimes it really stinks. But if we can focus on the good, the joy, and the blessings in our life—we are much more likely to approach each other with kindness and compassion. So search for those joy moments—I bet you won't have to look very hard.

By Dr. Paul Young

Sincerity is a very deceptive thing. We all think that if we are sincere, then all is OK. Some of the greatest tragedies of history, however, happened because of sincerity; people who were sincere, but sincerely wrong. It happens when a nurse puts the wrong medicine into the IV, sincerely believing that the medicine will bring life. However, in a few minutes the patient is dead. It happened when Adam and Eve looked at the inviting fruit on the tree from which God told them not to eat. "Why shouldn't we at least try it," they asked? "This glorious creature made by God says it will make us wise. And God surely isn't against wisdom, is he?"

We know the rest of the story, don’t we? In their sincerity, humanity was cast into sin and death. Such is the price of so much of what we call sincerity.

Just over 500 years ago a devoted Augustinian monk, Martin Luther faced a litany of problems he observed in the Church. The Monarch’s do this as well as the Jehovah Witnesses, people so sincere that they come to your door to talk about their views of Jesus—views that are absolutely opposed to what the Catholic Church teaches.

It was St. Paul who said that if “anyone preaches another gospel than the ONE RECEIVED (this includes the truth about Jesus) let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:9). He even states that if an angel comes and tells us something different than what is consistent with what the Church teaches, he should go to hell!

Pretty strong, isn’t it? To distort the truth is a spiritual crime. It is serious!

Martin Luther did not agree with the old creeds concerning the Hypostatic Union of Christ - his humanity and divinity and how they were combined into one person forever. No. Luther had a better way to approach this age-old doctrine. In short, according to Theobald Beer, the greatest living authority on Luther, Martin Luther was gnostic, a totally heretical position of Jesus the founder of our Church. You mess with HIM, and you mess with everything else. Luther’s views of the Trinity and of the divinity of Christ are definitely not those of the Church expressed in the Councils.

What happened to this committed Augustinian monk that led him so far afield?

The problems of the Church in his day was only an excuse to change the whole of Christianity. I call it the LUTHER SYNDROME. You see dogmas and actions you don’t like. Then you begin to think. Doubts enter. That leads you to believe that your new thoughts are more in line with the truth than what the Church has taught all along. Finally, you begin to believe that YOUR WAY is the better way.

It happens to so many. Why are there over 40,000 different Christian denominations today? Each one is doing what Luther did - come up with a better way to approach Christian truth, and most of all - make sure that NO ONE ELSE is telling you what to believe like the Pope, or the Bishops. Submission to them is not the democratic way. We want the Burger King church—"have it your way."

In so doing the very CORE OF OUR FAITH is undermined by this type of sincerity, this democratic approach to our faith, where a few drops of poison is put into the pure water of our Catholic teaching. As people drink, they no longer know what JESUS really thinks because they are not in full alignment with THE CHURCH.

The book of Judges ends with this statement: "And everyone did what was right in their own eyes." It was a mess. The wheels had come off. This is what
(Sincerity, cont. from page 7)

happens when people, like Luther, decide to be their own captain, to chart their own waters. And today, EVERY MAJOR GROUP THAT LEFT THE ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOTOLIC CHURCH has discarded the moral code laid down by Jesus. Gay is in. Family is out. Abortion is in, kids are out, our conscience is in, study of the TRUTH is out, sincerity is in, and our society dies.

Elton John, the English gay musician said recently: “Jesus would support gay marriage today,” I’m sorry. He must be talking about another Jesus, definitely not the one who founded the Church. So many Catholics today talk about Jesus, but WHAT JESUS are they talking about? They have changed who he is JUST LIKE MARTIN LUTHER DID. They say things about him that are not consistent with what the Church teaches. In so doing, they change Christianity itself, a Christianity made in their own image.

Many say: “We have changed our beliefs out of love.” But the kind of love that CHANGES THE TRUTH AND MAKES IT A LIE, is not love at all. It is only the whisperings of the devil, deceiving the soul, speaking words of God’s thought to be wisdom, but in actuality are only actions that bring death.

Seventeen years ago, I was reading a Lutheran pastor’s honest admission as to why he was not Catholic. “I want to believe what I WANT to believe and not be responsible to a Pope or Bishops telling me what to believe.” At the end of the article he admitted that he and most Protestants were in rebellion, revolutionaries against the Church that Jesus founded.

I was a Protestant leader at the time. As I read this honest evaluation I had to confess my sin of rebellion to God. In less than 2 years I became a Catholic and have fully sought to follow the Church, and in so doing, follow Jesus. I had to abandon all the false doctrines and practices I held as a Protestant... that I might win Christ.

Martin Luther did not do this. He rebelled. And now today, his soul is in jeopardy. Was he sincere? Yes! But he was sincerely wrong. And now millions of people are following in his wake, doing their own thing instead of bowing their knee to Rome - a bow so doing, they change Christianity itself, a Christianity not consistent with what the Church teaches. In so doing, follow Jesus. I had to abandon all the false doctrines and practices I held as a Protestant... that I might win Christ.

(More Statistics from Sonoma County Catholic Charities:

- In 2016, 1,934 of our clients were children.
- Homeless children get sick four times as often as other children.
- Catholic Charities operates three emergency overnight shelters and a day center in Santa Rosa, which collectively serve 3,000 homeless children and adults each year.
- 11 million U.S. families pay at least half of their income toward housing, putting them at risk of becoming homeless.
- The length of time people spent in our shelters has decreased from 196 days to 57 days.
- In 28 children in California do not know where they will get their next meal.
- From 2000 to 2015, median income of renters has declined 6 percent, while rents have increased 16 percent.
- We provide 389 emergency shelter beds each night in Sonoma County.
- The annual cost of renting a two-bedroom, two-bath place in Sonoma County is $25,000.
- For every child who house, 4 more are on our shelter waiting list.
- In 50 children in the US are homeless (~1.5 million children total).
- In California, fewer than 25% of homeless children graduate from high school.
- At eight food sites, we distribute 40,000 bags of food each year.
- The National Center on Family Homelessness ranks California 48th out of 50 for extent of child homelessness (on a scale where 50 is the worst in the country).
- For a Sonoma County family receiving CalFresh (formerly food stamps), the average monthly benefit is $162 per person, or $1.80 per meal.
- The average age of residents in our family shelter is 12 years old.
- The average monthly amount California residents receive through WIC, a food subsidy program for pregnant mothers and their young children, is now down to $36.81/month.
- About a third of Sonoma County’s school-age children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.
- We helped 135 homeless adults gain full-time employment in 2016.
- 92% of homeless mothers have been severely physically or sexually assaulted at some point in their lives, many when they were children.
- In the most recent homeless count, 57.5% of homeless people surveyed in Santa Rosa were staying on the street, in emergency shelters, or in places not meant for human habitation.
- 31% of people who are homeless in Santa Rosa report that a combination of illness or disability and illness-related stresses on income contributed to their homelessness.
- The average age of residents in our family shelter is 12 years old.
- 35% of people who are homeless in Santa Rosa have some form of physical or medical disability.
- Nearly 500 people in Santa Rosa are chronically homeless, which means they are homeless, disabled, and have either been continuously homeless for one year, or they have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- In California, a minimum-wage full-time worker earns 33% of what they would need to afford a 2-bedroom, fair-market-rate apartment.

(Walk for Life, cont. from page 4)

on Alan Keys Renew America.

Pastor Childress is joyously married to Regina Childress and has four children: Clenard, Thomas, Tonya and Tia.

Join Alan Keys in SF on Jan. 26 at 40 Days for Life Gala!

That’s right, on January 26, the eve of the Walk for Life West Coast, you can join pro-life hero Alan Keys and other luminaries at the first ever 40 Days for Life Walk for Life Gala! The gala will be right here in San Francisco at the JW Marriott Union Square at 515 Mason Street. 40 Days for Life has, in a few short years, become one of the greatest lifesaving efforts in America! Tickets start at $40 for individuals, and are scaled up from there.

This event will include an optional VIP reception, dinner, words of encouragement for the Walk for Life … and our featured speaker, Alan Keys! California is the largest state for 40 Days for Life, and we have seen God use this effort to save lives and close abortion facilities along the west coast. We have been working with our friends at the Walk for Life to prepare for this first-time event and expect it to fill up quickly, so RSVP soon.

Here are the details: 40 Days for Life Walk for Life Gala with Alan Keys, Friday, January 26 from 7pm-9pm (VIP Reception at 6pm). JW Marriott Union Square, 515 Mason St., San Francisco

Go here for tickets: https://40daysforlife.com/gala

Dr. Paul Young is a parishioner at St. Eugene’s Cathedral in Santa Rosa and has authored a number of books including IMPACT MAN Daily Walk, Dr. Paul’s TOTAL Relief, Depression Book 1 (a series of books) If There Is A God, Whose God Is God? How To Be An IMPACT Man, Know What You Believe, A Dynamic Catechism For Today, and You Can Change Your World.

(Stability, cont. from page 1)
Thanksgiving Dinner Served in St. Helena

Reprinted with permission from the St. Helena Star: Tim Carl

Last Thanksgiving dozens of volunteers and more than 200 guests gathered for Thanksgiving dinner at the Catholic School's gymnasium in St. Helena. Surrounded by festive decorations, lively music from a boom box and the comforting aromas of roasted turkey, savory ham and all the trimmings, community members from all walks of life joined together to eat, drink and relax in a spirit of gratitude and communion.

“We are expecting over 200 to join us for dinner here this afternoon, and we have also delivered meals to over 60 people who were unable to be with us here today,” said Kaitlyn Russell, who has been chairwoman of the event for the last two years.

Russell explained that the annual event is a non-denominational effort conducted through the St. Helena Catholic and Grace Episcopal churches that allows both families and individuals to join in solidarity around the table or in service to the community.

“We’ve been helping out here for the last five years,” said Joe Sweeney, a part-time resident whose mother lives in St. Helena. “You have an absolute obligation if you’re fortunate enough to give back. My mother’s not here today, but she would be if she could; however, she is absolutely beaming that her granddaughters are here.”

“It feels good to reach out to the community and know you’ve made a positive impact on someone’s day or their life,” said Sweeney’s daughter, Alexandra.

“It is nice to see different cultures come together around the table and share what we can with each other,” said Chef Francisco Santa Cruz Delgado, who has been cooking at the event for the last 14 years. “What else would a good community do?”

Serving those in need

“We serve seniors, widowers, veterans, low-income people, those temporarily or permanently displaced by the fires, and even students that are away from their homes,” Russell said. “We deliver to those that are ill or unable to travel, and even those families helping out someone who needs to stay at home so they can also have a nice dinner, too. It’s a wide-ranging and diverse group of both guests and volunteers.”

“I like to share my time, especially on this day when it doesn’t matter what color you are or where you are from,” said Gustavo Covarrubias, who’s been helping at the event for the last four years. “It just feels good to do what is right and remember what it means to be a part of a town, giving thanks to God for everything we have.”

Due to the fires, the need is greater this year than ever before.

“The numbers are significantly higher this year because of the fires,” Russell said. “We served about 150 here last year, and we have doubled our deliveries. There seems to be a lot of need out there.”

“I see many familiar faces, but I also see a lot of new faces this year, too,” said Charlie Carpy, who has volunteered at the event for the last 15 years. “It’s always nice to be here and serve.”

What does it mean to live and work in a supportive community?

“We live in a special place, full of amazing people and beautiful surroundings,” Carpy said. “I honestly think this event is a needed and appreciated service that makes everyone involved feel better knowing that we live in a place where we’re looking out for each other.”

He paused and gazed around the room where families laughed and children had gathered at the dessert table for warm apple pie a la mode.

“After this I get to go home to my own wonderful family,” Carpy said. “There are others that are not so lucky. Yet I think everyone here feels truly blessed, knowing that we’re together with what I hope we all consider is our broader extended family.”

Father Andrew Apostoli, Beloved Priest & Retreat Master, Dies at 75

Fr. Andrew Apostoli, a member of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, admired preacher and retreat master, died on December 13, 2017. He was 75.

Fr. Andrew was a founder of the Community of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (CFR), a reform community started in 1987 by eight Capuchin Friars based in New York City. He spent his fifty years as a priest preaching, writing and traveling the world giving parish missions and retreats, spreading the Gospel with an emphasis on encouraging love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. In addition, Fr. Andrew was the founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, a group of consecrated Sisters who serve the poor and needy throughout the world. He hosted “Sunday Night Prime” on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), and was the Vice Postulator of the cause for canonization of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen.

His written work includes titles such as “Fatima for Today,” “When God Asks for an Undivided Heart,” and “Following Mary to Jesus.”

Fr. Andrew was born on July 3, 1942, in Woodbury, NJ, to Dominic and Malvina Apostoli. After a devout upbringing, Fr. Andrew entered the Capuchin Friars in 1959 at the age of seventeen. He professed perpetu-
‘Thank you for Your Service’

By Sister Constance Veit, l.s.p.

Together with another Little Sister I was invited to represent our Congregation at a somewhat exclusive reception during the Christmas season. We were happy to bring two of our Residents along with us. One of them, a 97-year old veteran of World War II, proudly wore his best tweed sport coat and his VFW Garrison cap decorated with a host of ribbons. The other, an immigrant and artist, is the widow of a U.S. Navy veteran.

During the reception we sampled the luscious buffet, admired the beautiful Christmas decorations and met a few notable personalities. But what really struck me was all the attention and affection the partygoers gave our two Residents, especially our retired airman. Women and men, both old and young, paused to let him pass through the crowd in his wheelchair, offered to wait on him and thanked him for his service. More than a few people knelt beside him to ask about his military experience and his life story, listening attentively as he sketched out the details of his long life. Our Resident felt so special! He returned home beaming and is still talking about this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The reverence and esteem of the V.I.P.s we met that day for our elderly Residents was moving. “Thank you for your service,” they kept repeating. Without diminishing in any way, the unique contribution of our veterans, it struck me that this is something we should be saying to all of our elders. “Thank you for your service… as sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles… Thank you for your service as educators, nurses, factory workers, engineers, farmers and businessmen…”

More profoundly, we should thank our elders for their wisdom, their faithfulness and their selfless generosity toward us. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for all that they share with us and pass on to us – their faith, their life experience, their family history and the history of our communities and nations. We need to remember our elders, take a lively interest in them and offer them our support so that they will be able to go on contributing to the formation of new generations.

Pope Francis has often said that a people that does not take care of grandparents has no future. Let’s keep this in mind as we begin a new year, and especially as we gather from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco this month to march for life. These annual prolife events commemorate the passing of Roe vs. Wade in 1973, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in our country, so it goes without saying that they focus on the unborn. But the elderly need our protection, too.

The fact that physician assisted suicide is now legal in Washington, D.C. and California should drive this point home as we pound the pavement for life at these events. I would like to propose that after we have marched for life this January, we return home and reach out to the elders in our family, our neighborhood or our local nursing home to say thank you – Thank you for giving me life! Thank you for your service to family, community and this great nation! Thank you for passing on your wisdom, your experience and your faith to my generation!

Pope Francis has said that he longs for “a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!” In 2018, let’s help make his dream a reality!

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.

January 4: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

What really struck me was all the attention and affection the partygoers gave our two Residents, especially our retired airman

—Thank you for giving me life! Thank you for your service to family, community and this great nation! Thank you for passing on your wisdom, your experience and your faith to my generation!

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.
Ancient artifacts. Centuries-old legends. Prayers dating back to the time of Christ. An enemy seeking to destroy it all. And a team of dedicated scholars trying to save the memories before it’s too late.

It may sound like the start of the next Indiana Jones movie, but for the team behind the Christian Communities of the East Cultural Heritage Project, the reality of Christian communities disappearing from the Middle East is a pressing threat.

Following persecution at the hands of ISIS, more than a decade of war, and generations of economic struggle, these researchers are looking to record the memories and traditions of the Christian communities of Iraq before they are lost forever.

But instead of swinging through empty tombs or digging through rubble, these scholars are asking the community members themselves to engage in the rich Middle Eastern tradition of storytelling, sharing their memories and descriptions in their own native Arabic and Neo-Aramaic languages—some of them singing and speaking the same language Christ himself did.

Dr. Shawqi Talia, a lecturer on Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures at The Catholic University of America explained that his colleagues’ quest to preserve the history and culture of Iraqi Catholics is essential for passing on their meaning, not only to the next generation, but for the world.

Talia, himself an Iraqi Chaldean Catholic, told CNA that he wants young people “to know how life was and what life was all about for the Christians—not just up north but in Iraq as a whole—in the ’50s and the ’40s and the ’30s, and to know that our history goes back for 2,000 years.”

With so many Christians from the Nineveh plain fleeing their homeland due to threats of violence, Talia hopes Middle Eastern Christians in diaspora will see the stories, songs, histories and memories contained in the project not only as a record, but as a tool. He wants Middle Eastern youth to “work in order to keep this kind of heritage alive, not just for the Christians from that part of the world who are now living in diaspora, but because it’s the history of humanity—for all of us.”

This history is not just for the Christian communities of the Middle East, but for all Christians and the whole world to learn from and preserve—even as the ancestral lands continue to be embroiled in conflict. “You can read something in a history text, but now you see it, and you hear it in person,” Talia said of the recorded interviews.

Preserving the past
The idea behind Christian Communities of the East Cultural Heritage Project—a joint partnership between the Institute of Christian Oriental Research and the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America—was born over the course of years of conversations between Dr. Talia and Dr. Robin Darling Young, an associate professor of spirituality in the university.

“The reason that we started this project was that we wanted to put together materials that would make available to other people and to communities themselves records of various kinds of the life of Christian communities in the Middle East,” Darling Young told CNA.

Attacks by ISIS against Christian and other minority religious communities in northern Iraq heightened the sense of urgency in preserving this culture’s heritage and history.

Since 2003, violence in Iraq and Syria has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions more, including whole communities of Middle Eastern Christians. In the past 14 years, an estimated 1 million Christians have left their communities in Iraq, leaving less than 500,000 Christians in the lands inhabited by the faithful for 2,000 years.

To begin preserving their history before it completely vanishes, the group used Talia’s connections to the Chaldean Catholic community in the United States, particularly those in the Washington, D.C. area and in Southeast Michigan, where some 150,000 Chaldean Catholics have established new homes over the past century. Plans also exist to interview Iraqi Christian communities in Europe and elsewhere, as well as release a documentary funded by the Michigan Humanities Council.

After developing a detailed questionnaire, the team began to record interviews with members of the Chaldean communities in both English and Neo-Aramaic, a form of the language spoken by Christ. The researchers also collected photographs and documents to digitize and present online along with the recordings as part of a comprehensive online archive.

Ryan Craig, a doctoral student in the department of Semitics, explained that after consulting with oral history experts at the Library of Congress and elsewhere, the team sought to “draw out descriptions of communal life in their original languages” in the interview process.

“My challenge was to try to craft questions that would get people to answer in their native tongue.”

One of the first questions, she said, was to ask community members to explain the meaning behind their family name and its importance in their home village. This same technique was also used in getting participants to sing special communal songs created for special occasions like marriages or births, as well as to describe childhood games, or record how family recipes were made and their importance.

Given the circumstances that have brought some Chaldean Christians to the United States, however, some interviews have captured a much different side of the Middle Eastern Christian experience: persecution and flight. Craig told CNA that some of the first interviews of the project were conducted with recent refugees, many of whom were still processing the traumatic circumstances leading up to their exodus.

“A lot of the questions we were asking just weren’t relevant for them,” she said of the questions about traditions and history on the groups’ questionnaire. “At that point we just decided to let them tell whatever story they wanted to tell, and didn’t really prompt as much as we do with people who have been here for decades and feel more settled.”

In collecting both these stories as well as those from Chaldean Christians who moved to the United States decades ago for economic reasons, the group has been able to document a cross-section of Iraqi Christian life. Among those who came over in the 1950s-70s, the researchers have recorded histories by people from smaller Christian villages who spoke Neo-Aramaic and were very much connected to the Chaldean identity and more ancient traditions and ways of life.

Meanwhile, the majority of Chaldean refugees coming over to the United States as a result of violence and persecution are more likely to speak Arabic than Neo-Aramaic, and are also more likely to come from larger, more cosmopolitan cities. Still, among those persecuted, “there’s a profound sense of them being Christian, because they’re being persecuted for that reason.”

‘More than just memories’
Though Talia is not involved directly in the interview process, he stressed to CNA the importance of (see Christian Cultures, page 16)
Want to Get Close to Your (Heavenly) Mother? Check Out This Book.

January 1st Charlotte, N.C., (Catholic News Agency) - For Catholics, it’s fairly par-for-the-course to be questioned by non-Catholics about the Blessed Virgin Mary at some point. And that’s probably because the Catholic Church has a lot to say about her. Church teaching holds that Mary was conceived without sin, that she maintains perpetual virginity, that she conceived by the Holy Spirit, and that she was assumed into heaven, among many other things.

A recent book, the Manual for Marian Devotion, provides the context and answers for all kinds of questions about Marian doctrine, as well as prayers and stories for growth in personal devotion.

The Manual was produced last year by TAN Books in conjunction with the Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist, and so has a touch of Dominican flavor throughout.

“They wanted it to reflect the charism and the spirituality of our community to a certain extent, so it was really great to work with them,” said Sr. Albert Marie, who along with another Dominican Sister helped write the book.

The manual is divided into two sections. The first part provides explanations of Marian teachings and doctrines, while the second includes various Marian prayers and stories of Marian miracles for personal devotion.

“It’s not an aggressive apologetics, it’s just: this is what the church teaches, this is why it’s beautiful, this is how it can touch your life,” Sr. Albert Marie told CNA.

It also differs from a Marian consecration book, such as the one by St. Louis de Montfort, in that it provides context and information about Mary rather than focusing on one particular path of devotion, Sr. Albert Marie said.

“This might be coming out of my own personal prayer life and spirituality, but before I do something - whether it’s a particular prayer or devotion - I want to know the why and the big picture before I’m taken by the more particular details,” she said.

“I think there’s a lot of people in the Catholic Church who are growing up realizing that the Catholic Church is beautiful, or who are interested in Mary, but need a little more of that intellectual formation to see where exactly does she fit, or how clearly do we think about her,” which is where the manual can be particularly helpful, Sr. Albert Marie added.

One of the biggest roadblocks to Marian devotion for some people is that they seem to get caught up in the otherness and special graces granted to Mary, which can make her seem distant or inaccessible, Sr. Albert Marie said.

But the faithful shouldn’t be intimidated by Mary, she added. She received special graces necessary for her particular role, but her privileges do not mean that she “shines down on us” as something separate and different forever, but rather as someone who paved the way to Christ and to Heaven.

Mary also provides women with a unique example of Christian holiness, she said.

“The way that a mother models to her children what it means to be an adult woman, there’s a way that Mary’s privilege and holiness...gives us an image of Christian holiness to move towards,” she said.

The manual was originally released last year, during the 100th anniversary year of the Marian apparitions at Fatima, Portugal, in which Mary appeared to three children for six months in 1917. She brought messages about the importance of prayer and making reparation for sin, as well as messages about the World Wars and the future of the Church. During the sixth and final apparition, on October 13, the sun appeared to miraculously dance in the sky.

Sr. Albert Marie described the anniversary as a special time in which the whole Church turns with special and renewed devotion to Mary.

But her favorite Marian miracle described in the manual is much less dramatic than Fatima or some of the other more well-known Marian miracles.

It’s called “She Helps the Friars Preach,” and recalls a simple story of a Dominican Friar who decided at the last minute to ditch his prepared sermon in favor of one that was divinely inspired.

A Cistercian monk who witnessed the small miracle said he could see Mary next to the friar, holding up a book. The Cistercian said the preachers seemed “to speak better and with greater profit to souls, and farm more fervently than he had done for a long time.”

It’s a simple story, but close to Sr. Albert Marie’s heart in her roles both as a Dominican and as a teacher, she said.

(see Heavenly Mother, page 16)
◆ THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY
Paul Quay, S.J.; Ed. by Joseph Koterski, S.J.

An updated, expanded edition of the best-selling work on the Christian meaning of human sexuality by an acclaimed teacher. Sexual morality can only be fully understood if we understand what our sexuality truly means. Drawing upon divine revelation in Scripture, tradition, the Fathers of the Church, and more, Fr. Quay gives insight into the marriage covenant, shows us what sexuality means in Christian terms, and describes the complementarity of male and female that is psychological, spiritual and bodily. The new material in this expanded edition considers the theology of natural family planning (NFP).

CMHS2-P . . . Sewn Softcover, $17.95

"A superb book that is intelligent, realistic and grounded in a profound faith in the truths about human persons and human sexuality set forth in divine revelation."
— William E. May, Ph.D., Professor of Moral Theology, Catholic University of America

◆ MADE FOR LOVE
Same-Sex Attraction and the Catholic Church
Fr. Michael Schmitz

Father Schmitz presents the Catholic teaching on same-sex attraction and same-sex "sexual" relations. He discusses various worldviews of the human person, the philosophy of nature and purpose, objective and subjective truth, and fallen human nature from Original Sin. He then presents in great detail the nature and ends of human sexuality and the nature of true love, while, in a compassionate and non-judgmental way, explaining the flawed nature of same-sex "sexual" relations.

MFL-P . . . Sewn Softcover, $16.95

"Fr. Schmitz helps us approach this topic with compassion and clarity, showing how the Church's teaching on this topic is all about love. If we want to love the people in our lives, we must share this truth with them."
— Edward Sri, Ph.D., Author, Whom Am I to Judge?

◆ HEART OF THE REDEEMER
Timothy O'Donnell, S.T.D
Forewords by Cardinal Gerhard Muller and Fr. John Hardon, S.J.

This revised, updated edition of the classic work on the Sacred Heart of Jesus examines the doctrinal roots of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in Scripture and in the Apostolic and Patristic ages; charts its development through the Middle Ages; explains the enormous contribution of St. Margaret Mary; and unfolds the magisterial teaching on the subject. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a response to the tremendous love of Christ symbolized by his human heart pierced on Calvary. It lies at the core of Catholic spiritual life and is the key to effective renewal of individuals, the Church and the world.

HR2-P . . . Sewn Softcover, $19.95

"This book is the last and best word on its subject. Devotion to Jesus’ Sacred Heart is a wellspring of both charity and profound theology."
— Scott Hahn, Ph.D., Author, Rome Sweet Home
There’s a certain point at which a hobby can become too much.

The World Health Organization is considering adding “gaming disorder” to the list of mental health conditions in its next update of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), according to a beta draft of the document.

The 11th version of the ICD is not yet set, but the addition would be a recognition that a pastime can become problematic if it leads to a form of addictive behavior.

Specifically, the draft’s language states that gaming behavior could be a disorder if it meets three characteristics: if a person loses control over their gaming habits, if they start to prioritize gaming over many other interests or activities, and if they continue playing despite clear negative consequences.

This would add gaming to a list of other behaviors that can become problematic if people lose control over them, including gambling and disorders related to the use of substances like alcohol, marijuana, caffeine, or nicotine.

Gaming covers any activity from playing Two Dots on your iPhone to sitting down in front of a custom-built gaming PC for hours. Putting uncontrollable engagement in that category of activities on the list would give doctors and mental health professionals a way to officially diagnose someone with the condition.

But to be clear, this doesn’t mean that all gaming is addictive or could lead to a disorder. It’s only if the behavior is severe enough “to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning,” according to the draft. In other words, it has to be intense enough to harm personal relationships or interfere with school or work.

The psychology of games

The psychological community has been debating whether gaming is addictive enough to be described as a disorder for some time. So far, the American Psychiatric Association has declined to classify gaming addiction as a disorder but has said it merits further research.

Part of the problem is how to distinguish between simply spending a lot of time playing games and actual addictive behavior.

Scientists need to “establish a clear-cut distinction between someone who may use games excessively but non-problematically and someone who is experiencing significant impairment in their daily lives as a consequence of their excessive gaming,” a group of researchers from Nottingham Trent University in the UK wrote in a paper published last summer in the Journal of Addictive Behavior.

Researchers are still trying to understand the activity’s risks and effects, since it has only recently become such a common pastime.

There are plenty of stories about individuals whose gaming behavior has become problematic—people have gotten so caught up in online games that they’ve ruined relationships and lost jobs. Compulsive gaming and problematic substance use can also go hand in hand.

But problematic gaming may also serve as a dysfunctional coping mechanism for some, according to the Nottingham Trent researchers. Someone who is struggling with depression or anxiety may turn to gaming or abuse substances like alcohol as a way to relieve those symptoms.

Benefits and harms

Figuring out the degree to which playing games is harmful (or helpful) is all about context, according to Bruce Lee, an associate professor of international health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Lee wrote in a column for Forbes that gaming habits can also be psychologically beneficial.

On the positive side, research has shown that game playing can relieve stress, improve problem-solving abilities, and enhance traits like eye-hand coordination. Technologies that we think of as for gaming, like virtual reality, can also be used in psychological therapy.

Yet people can struggle to find a healthy balance with gaming.

Researchers are still trying to understand the activity’s risks and effects, since it has only recently become such a common pastime—63% of US households contain at least one “frequent gamer,” a trait that didn’t exist a couple of generations ago.
News
Briefs

From left to right: Victenciosa Marilyn Mosher, Ron Menegon, Barbara Shurtz, and Valerie Presten bag vegetables in preparation for the arrival of the families.

Local

The Joy of Generosity
St. Helena, CA Each year the St. Vincent de Paul Ministry of St. Helena Catholic Church and UpValley Family Centers organize the Holiday Assistance Program for needy up-valley families. Local churches, businesses and individuals donate gifts for children, food cards, and money to support this annual event. This year they served more than 150 families (representing more than 500 people) by providing a generous food basket of a turkey, vegetables, fruit, and bread, along with age-appropriate gifts for the children. This collaboration of dozens of volunteers and the generosity of the community helped to make the Christmas season a bit brighter for those families, and brought great joy to all involved.

National

USCCB President On the Passing of Cardinal Law
Washington D.C. December 28 (CNA/EWTN News) - A partnership among the Diocese of Brownsville, businesses, and other community partners aims to create a self-sustaining space where area residents can learn, play, find services, and meet others from different backgrounds.

“My intention is that this be a place where you can encounter and enjoy knowing other people,” Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville said at a Nov. 29 dedication ceremony at the project site. “My hope, especially for the families that are here, is that this land will continue to be a land that bears fruit - fruit of hope, of joy, of laughter and learning, especially for our young people.”

The project, called Plaza Amistad, will include a health care clinic and education center, retail stores, a farming field school, a farmer’s market, a community garden, and a café.

There will also be venues for soccer, volleyball and other sports, as well as a perimeter trail, the Rio Grande Guardian reports. It takes its name from the Spanish word for friendship.

The project’s first phase, developed over a six-month period, will use 14 acres outside Donna, Texas, which is located 50 miles northwest of Brownsville, and just eight miles from the US-Mexico border.

The land was donated by the Bonham family, non-Catholics who are prominent citrus growers in the Rio Grande Valley.

It is modeled on public-private partnerships to gather support and expertise from various community partners.

“For me it is a perfect partnership and I am grateful that God opened the doors,” Bishop Flores said. “We have to take a few risks because we haven’t done this before. This is all kind of new – the church, businesses, local community organizations, the more the merrier, working together as a community of communities.”

“We want a community that helps the community,” the bishop continued. “To me that is part of the Catholic vision of life. We were not put on this earth to only help Catholics, we were put on this earth to help everyone because we are Catholics, and that means, for example through Catholic Charities, we don’t ask people what religion they are, we don’t ask them if they have papers; we ask them, ‘are you hungry, are you thirsty, do you need a place to stay?’”

For Patti Sunday, a consultant who has worked on the project, Plaza Amistad is “one of the first steps at solving our own problems,” she told CNA Nov. 30.

“Santos said that while the diocese has provided an initial outlay of funding, “the idea is to partner with different entities that can bring to the table their particular expertise.”

“Our interest is to partner with different institutions who can each be responsible for the operations of their specific part of the project,” he said.

Fifteen college sophomores are helping design commercial and medical architectural portions of the plaza, according to Jim Glusing, a civil and architectural engineering professor and director of the Institute for Architectural Engineering Heritage at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Parts of their proposals could be considered for inclusion in the final design.

Kydnel Bennett, a member of the traditionally Methodist Bonham family, said he thought the project was “a win-win for all involved.”

“It is a project we are all excited about,” Bennett said.

Near Texas-Mexico Border, Catholics Plan A Community Of Encounter
By Kevin Jones

Brownsville, Texas, Dec 28 (CNA/EWTN News) - A partnership among the Diocese of Brownsville, businesses, and other community partners aims to create a self-sustaining space where area residents can learn, play, find services, and meet others from different backgrounds.

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“The project aims to host enough profitable services that it can fund vital services like health care at an "extremely affordable rate" for people who otherwise couldn’t afford them.

The effort aimed to combine both making a profit and good stewardship, taking a new path in a field that often involves the same people competing for limited grants and government funding.

The Brownsville region has developed a border culture of its own where U.S. and Mexico territory meet. Beneficiaries of the project might or might not be undocumented.

The Plaza Amistad model focuses on the “working poor,” people who take in about $40,000 per year per family of four. It is believed they have enough income to support such a community, while also benefiting from affordable community services.

The plaza is located next to entry-level housing, while the project’s farmer’s market will also bring people together across class lines. Population growth projections suggest the area near Plaza Amistad will grow.

“It’s a different vision, and I think it is something God will bless,” said the bishop. “With the hard work of a lot of people, I think it could be a model for the whole country.”

Miguel Santos, director of strategic planning for the Brownsville diocese, said Plaza Amistad is based on “the premise of human dignity, of both solidarity and subsidiarity, of not just giving them a handout but a hand up.”

There could be a Catholic church and parish in the future, second phase of the project.

“We will have a chapel,” Bishop Flores said. “It will be a place to let the Church do what I think the Church does best, which is gather people in the knowledge of the love of God, and in the love of neighbor.”

For the bishop, it is natural that the Church gathers her people and then “opens up the doors, as the Holy Father Pope Francis says, so that we can welcome.”

“For the beauty of what it is to be human is that we were meant to live in community and not isolated,” Flores added.

The diocese is the leading agent in the public-private partnership.

S. Agnes Virgo et Martyr O.P.N.

January 21: St. Agnes
January 2: St. Basil

❖

ten copy) of Archbishop Fulton Sheen’s homily at Fr. the joy found in the Gospel. “

Just as his mother painted the experience of growing up in her hometown for Talia and his siblings, so too do these oral histories transmit the feeling of being in the communities of northern Iraq. “When you see these memories put on audio or on video, you can feel as if you were, or are present.”

While Talia was raised in Baghdad, his mother came from a Christian village of around 5,000 people in the northern Nineveh plain, without electricity, but maintaining many ancient traditions in their daily lives, including the Neo-Aramaic language.

“It’s more than simply nostalgia,” he explained of the stories. “It’s more than just memories. It’s a way of life which has disappeared or is disappearing.”

For Talia, the importance oral history plays in Middle Eastern culture has all the more weight due to the uncertainty faced by many communities. Even those that have been freed from the hands of ISIS are often in ruins, and much of the Middle Eastern Christian community is now in diaspora. Talia wants to help ensure “that the community isn’t gone simply because it isn’t in the villages or the towns.”

The next generation

The preservation of their home cultures and traditions is also a major concern for young Middle Eastern Christians who want to know more about their roots. Yousif Kalian is a second-generation Iraqi immigrant and a member of the Syriac Catholic Church. As an undergraduate student at The Catholic University of America, he was a young adult researcher on the Christian Communities of the East Cultural Heritage Project, and he has continued to work with the endeavor after graduation. He initially learned about the project while taking a class with Dr. Talia.

“I’ve always had an interest in the region from a professional point of view, on top of being Iraqi-American,” Kalian told CNA. He said that within both Catholic and secular culture in the United States, there is a lack of understanding about Middle Eastern Christians, as well as a culture gap between Middle Eastern parents or grandparents and their children or grandchildren. This, he said, has left a lot of questions about identity and culture among many of his Middle Eastern Christian peers.

Kalian sees this project’s blending of oral history and multimedia access as a way for young people to help change that knowledge gap.

“If you know anything about the Middle East, the oral tradition is the most prominent tradition there,” he said, pointing to the recitation traditions in Islam, Judaism and several Christian churches. Singing and storytelling are closely tied up with the identity of the people, he explained.

“I think not just preserving dates and numbers and facts, but really preserving the stories is the most important thing to preserve from Middle Eastern Christian culture,” Kalian stressed.

“We all grew up with stories. The monastery that my grandfather was named after was destroyed by ISIS in 2015,” he said. “And my grandmother’s name was Behnam.”

Saint Behnam and Saint Sara monastery was established in the 4th Century in the Nineveh plain, about 20 miles from the city of Mosul. In late 2014, ISIS fighters took control of the monastery, expelling the monks under threat of death. On March 19, 2015, the terrorist group released images of the destruction of the tomb of Saint Behnam and the surrounding buildings.

Yet, Kalian keeps the memory of the monastery with him, as a part of who he is. “The story goes that my great grandma couldn’t have a son,” he told CNA. “Kept having daughters, and in Middle Eastern culture having a son is a point of pride: he carries the name and the wealth and protection. So she went to St. Behnam monastery and was praying, ‘Please give me a boy, St. Behnam. I’ll name him after you if you give me a boy’.”

“Sure enough, she gave birth to a boy, and he survived,” Kalian said, “He survived, and she named him Behnam.”

“You can find a book on Christianity in Iraq, or you can find a book on this monastery. But stories like this: they’ll die with our parents or grandparents.”

“That’s why I think this project is so important: to get the recipes of the food that they cook and the history behind the food they cook, and the names of our parents and grandparents and where they come from, and these saints and stories and traditions… once we move here, to an extent it stays and is alive, but in another sense it gets lost,” he lamented. “That’s why I think that this project really is important.”

And he is not the only one who is excited about the chance to pass on these stories: his siblings and other friends from his Syriac Catholic community have been interested in having a template to interview their parents and grandparents, and a way to digitize their memories. Kalian himself hopes to interview his family members and priests to collect their oral histories.

“I think every young person, if offered the opportunity, would love to speak with their grandparents or parents, if you gave them a structure to find out more about their own history,” he said.

“If you make it an active thing and have an active culture—will engage them more and therefore persevere our communities, our history, our culture and our language.”

Once completed, the Christian Communities of the East Cultural Heritage Project will be accessible at www.ccmideast.org and in the archives of the Institute of Christian Oriental Research at The Catholic University of America. Documentary video will also be distributed in Michigan at a later date.

(Christian Cultures, cont. from page 11)

(Heavenly Mother, cont. from page 12)

“That’s one story that will never be brought for anyone’s canonization, nothing will be done with it, it’s just the testimony of one person,” she said. “But it’s an example of that very simple presence and help of Mary in daily life.”

Sr. Albert Marie also said that she hopes the different stories of Marian miracles and the different quotes about Mary from various saints will help readers foster their own unique relationship with their Mother.

“For everyone who reads the manual or prays to our lady, there’s going to be a particular feel to that relationship, and it’s going to be unique because it is a personal relationship between them and with her,” she said.

The manual is available through TAN books on their website at: https://www.tanbooks.com/index.php/manual-for-marian-devotion.html. It is the second in a series of devotional books being produced by the publisher.
Learning to Love Jesus through Mary at St. Eugene’s School

Along with the other schools in the diocese, the children of St. Eugene Cathedral School are focusing this year on learning to love Mary more in efforts to draw closer to her Divine Son, Jesus. We began the school year learning about her apparition in Fatima, Portugal in 1917. The children not only learned about the events surrounding the apparition, the prayers that were taught, but most importantly they discovered that her message is meant not only for people of that time, but us as well. We learned what Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means, the importance of the rosary and the deeper meanings of sacrifice.

Throughout the year children are encouraged to make acts of sacrifice that are offered to Our Lady to help win souls for Jesus. These sacrifices are written down and placed in our Mary Box. During morning assembly the student council draws from the box and shares one sacrifice that was done for the edification of all and to give us ideas for the future.

After the fires happened the children gathered for the Living Rosary. With the 5th and 6th graders each holding an individual rosary bead and one with a crucifix, they created a living rosary that rapped around the Church. The rest of the children sat or knelt inside the rosary. Singing the “Aves” in between each decade, we prayed together asking our Lady for peace and strength. It was like a giant hug from heaven, the children surrounded by the rosary!

For families interested in bringing devotion to the Blessed Mother into their homes. We have three traveling Pilgrim Virgin Statues that families can check out for a week. One of the statues has a removable crown, so Mary can be crowned right in their own homes as Queen of the Family, or Queen of All Hearts.

Beginning on November 5th, the students prepared themselves to make an Act of Entrustment to the Blessed Mother on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. They learned that by entrusting themselves to Mary she will draw them closer to Jesus and grant them graces to make their crosses easier to carry. The Act of Entrustment was made during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with each child receiving a blessed Miraculous Medal as a sign of his or her entrustment. They are encouraged the wear this medal always as a sign that they belong to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

As St. Louis Marie de Montfort says, belonging to Mary is the surest way to get to Heaven! ♦

Santa Rosa Underpass Homeless Camp Grows in Wake of Fires

Wildfires that destroyed thousands of homes across Santa Rosa also drove Thesha Iraheta from a creekside encampment near Marlow Road to what has become an enduring symbol of the city’s homelessness problem—the Sixth Street freeway underpass.

The grubby bivouac of tents and bedrolls under Highway 101 that confounded neighbors and city officials before the Oct. 8 blaze has nearly doubled in size, with new arrivals spilling into the street and the adjacent Fifth Street underpass.

Like residents from Fountaingrove to Coffey Park who had to flee the flames, many homeless people said they were forced out in the middle of the night with no place to go. Some joined evacuees in area shelters while others plopped down on the sidewalk where they remain three weeks later.

“Everybody was affected by the fires whether they are homeless or not,” said Iraheta, 28, who spent the first 10 days after the Tubbs fire in a Red Cross shelter at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. “They amplified the chaos.”

The growth of Santa Rosa’s most visible encampment is a setback for city officials who had hoped to begin moving inhabitants to temporary shelters and take steps to begin shutting it down. It was to be the second step of a pilot program begun earlier this year at a site near Farmers Lane to get some of the city’s 1,900 homeless people off the streets.

But it was put on hold in the wake of the Oct. 8 fires—the most destructive in state history and most costly ever in the U.S.—that destroyed nearly 2,900 homes in Santa Rosa and killed 23 people in Sonoma County alone.

Now, with officials embarking on a multiyear recovery, the focus is on rebuilding neighborhoods and finding short-term housing for displaced homeowners and renters.

Increased demand is driving up rents, creating a sense of despair among homeless people who fear they won’t ever get housing, said Jennielynn Holmes, director of shelter and housing for Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa.

She and other advocates are bracing for a “second wave” of homelessness as the poor are priced out of affordable housing. It could come faster than it did in 2008 when the region was hit with widespread foreclosures, she said.

“It’s really hard because we were making so much progress,” Holmes said.

Santa Rosa City Manager Sean McGlynn said Wednesday that 68 people remain at the evacuation center set up at Finley Community Center.

A “significant number” of those people are “pre-disaster homeless,” and the city was working with Catholic Charities to get them housing, McGlynn said.

Meanwhile, homeless people who once lived in the burn zones are turning up in parks and building alcoves.

The Sixth Street encampment has swollen to as many as 75 people. Some came in from a burned-out haunt on Bicentennial Way near Fountaingrove, and another along the Santa Rosa Creek near Coffey Park.

They squeezed onto the already-crowded sidewalks, bringing pets and bicycles. During the fires, disaster relief workers made the underpass a regular stop, dropping off donated food and clothes.

Now, Red Cross blankets are draped across some tents. New trash cans line the street.

“It’s one of the safest places,” said Iraheta, holding a box of donated pastries.

(see Homeless Camp, page 23)
Otros tiempos litúrgicos que comienzan, otro Año Civil que comienza. No importa cuántas veces pasemos por los agraciados Tiempos en el Año Litúrgico, repetidamente somos bendecidos por la participación plena, activa y consciente en la sagrada liturgia. Ha habido, y continúa habiendo un fuerte énfasis en la participación plena, activa y consciente en las ceremonias de la Iglesia. Lo hemos escuchado esas y otras veces. En verdad, los términos anteriores, sería relativamente seguro al decir que sólo unos pocos tomarían excepción al uso de la frase “participación activa” como una descripción de una parte del llamado del Concilio. Al menos en los Estados Unidos, con nuestra gran Inclinación a la actividad, hubo aceptación general de este término sin cuestionar su origen. El término en Latín de los textos del Concilio es “actuosa”. Peter Kwasniewski señala que un léxico autoritativo dice que actuosa es “correctamente actuar, intentar”. Este Nuevo Año, ser más comprometidos: significa completa o totalmente dedicados a una actividad, como un bailarín o un actor que está poniendo todo en el baile o la actuación; se podría considerar “muy activo”. Pero, ¿cuál es la noción de actividad aquí? ¿Es desarrollar plenamente su potencial, entrando en posesión de un bien en lugar de tener una capacidad no realizada. “Activo” a menudo significa simplemente lo contrario de pasivo o receptivo; pero en una perspectiva más profunda, vemos que de ninguna manera son contrarias. Puedo ser activo receptivo a la Palabra de Dios; yo puedo totalmente actualizar mi capacidad de actuar en la Misión por los Santos, oraciones y ceremonias, sin hacer nada que incluya ser “activo” a como lo entendemos en castellano.

En un sentido de la palabra “activo” implica “hacer”, mientras que “actuosa” nos indica el “ser” algo, más presente, más atento, más reflexivo, más receptivo. Este tipo de participación está abierta a todos sin excepción y no se limita a unas pocas personas con participación “activa”. De hecho, los elegidos para los papeles más activos se les hará un poco más difícil cumplir con el llamado del Concilio, ya que serán distraídos por las funciones que están llamados a realizar para que otros puedan entrar más plenamente en la “participatio actuosa” llamado por el Concilio...

Si nuestro enfoque, durante muchos años, ha estado tratando de encontrar maneras para una mayor participación en la actividad de la Liturgia, podríamos intentar, este Nuevo Año, ser más comprometidos (actuosa participatio) en la Liturgia misma.
Noticias en Español

Noticias

Sábados: 17 de Febrero, 17 de Marzo, 21 de Abril 
Curso de Planificación Natural de la Familia
Pastores, favor de invitar personalmente a parejas de su parroquia y anunciar en misa. Hemos invitado a unos instructores de Oakland a venir para darnos la oportunidad de tener clases en español. Es un gran momento para un mayor espíritu en el sacramento matrimonial.

Mejorar tu matrimonio! Curso de Planificación Natural de la Familia. Para Parejas Casadas o Comprometidas
Becker Center, Catedral de St. Eugene, 2323 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa
Sábados: 17 de Febrero, 17 de Marzo, 21 de Abril, 11am-2pm. Hay cuidado para niños y bocadillo Para registrar, llama a María Sanchez, 542-6984 x9

Profanar Sagrario y roban hostias consagradas de una parroquia de España
MADRID (ACI/Actual) - La parroquia dedicada a San Francisco de Sales en la zona Este de Parla, pertenece a la Diócesis de Getafe (España) ha sido objeto de profanación en las últimas horas, con la profanación del Sagrario y el robo de hostias consagradas en la noche del martes al miércoles.

La noticia ha corrido como la pólvora a través de dos mensajes difundidos en el tranvía de la Diócesis de Getafe en las redes sociales y por servicios de mensajería instantánea. El primero, para anunciar que "en medio de la alegría de la Navidad se abre paso un terremoto" por la parroquia de San Francisco de Sales (Parla). El segundo, exigiendo "la parroquia de San Francisco de Sales (Parla) ha sido objeto de profanación en las últimas horas, con la profanación del Sagrario y el robo de hostias consagradas en la noche del martes al miércoles" por la parroquia de San Francisco de Sales (Parla).

Esposos dirigirán primer hospital católico a construir tras derrota del ISIS en Irak
ROMA (ACI) - A pedido del Arzobispo Caldeo de Erbil (Irak), Mons. Bashar Warda, un matrimonio iraquí asumió la administración del primer hospital católico que será levantado tras la derrota del Estado Islámico (ISIS) y que servirá para atender a las víctimas de este grupo terrorista.

Según informó el periódico Chaldean View, Saveen Oghana y Ban Isaqi, que son médicos en la región respectivamente, fueron escogidos por Mons. Warda luego de que la Universidad Católica de Australia (ACU por sus siglas en inglés), ofreció varias becas para apoyar a la diócesis católica de Erbil en su proyecto de construir un hospital y una universidad.

Los jóvenes de 28 años acabaron de finalizar el primer año de estudios de su maestría en Administración de Salud, en el campus de la ACU en la ciudad australiana de Brisbane. En aproximadamente seis meses deberán culminar una investigación para luego regresar a Irak.

"Sabemos que será el primer hospital católico en todo Irak, no el primero, pero sí el único", indicó Saveen a Chaldean View.

"Porque, saben, en Irak, especialmente en Bagdad, solíamos tener, como cristianos, muchos hospitales, pero actualmente ya no debido a las guerras y conflictos, a la inmigración de nuestro pueblo, y a los secuestros, asesinatos y luchas continuas", agregó.

El nuevo hospital se está construyendo en el barrio cristiano de Ankawa, en Erbil, ubicada en el norte de Irak. Saveen reveló que el nombre del centro de salud será "Shlama', que significa 'Shalom', que quiere decir 'paz'.

"La visión del Arzobispo Warda es que la presencia de cristianos en Irak sea efectiva. Esto no solo significa estar allí en una misión, sino estar presente con los valores cristianos", destacó.

"Y como Iglesia, nuestra Iglesia en Ankawa, está trabajando en dos sectores principales, que son los de educación y salud", agregó.

Saveen dijo que aceptar la oferta de Mons. Warda para aparecerse en el extranjero no fue fácil porque "dejanmos todo atrás en nuestro país, para capacitarse en el extranjero no fue fácil porque no tenemos, como cristianos, muchos hospitales, así que fue un desafío".

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A Lucid, Insightful Tour Through the Principles of Ecumenism

By Dr. Jared Ortiz (IgnatiusInsight.com)

Peter Kreeft’s Catholics and Protestants: What Can We Learn from Each Other? emphasizes that Christ’s "Church will become wholly whole when it becomes wholly holy."

When Protestants and Catholics discuss ecumenism, it is not uncommon for Protestants to say, somewhat defensively, that there are plenty of "conversions" from Catholicism to Protestantism to offset those from Protestantism to Catholicism. It is also not uncommon for Catholics to reply, somewhat smugly, "Yes, there is plenty of traffic both ways, but Protestants send us their best while we send them our worst," meaning that the Protestants who become Catholic tend to be faithful and intelligent, while the Catholics who become Protestant tend to have never been very faithful or know much about the Catholic faith. This smug reply, which is largely true and for many Catholics a kind of trump card, is, in fact, rather damaging for the Catholic side. It means that the Catholic Church has failed and failed miserably; it means that the contemporary Catholic Church has not built up believers, not taught them the faith, and with all the fullness of truth at its fingertips has not made the Catholic Church a home where its own sons and daughters want to live.

Peter Kreeft’s new book, Catholics and Protestants: What Can We Learn from Each Other?, proceeds from a keen awareness of this situation. Kreeft is one of those faithful and intelligent Protestants who became Catholic, but he is not smug about his Catholicism. Rather, he knows that Catholics have failed to communicate the most fundamental reason for the existence of the Catholic Church: to introduce people to Christ and unite them to Him. Indeed, Kreeft says that the call of the last four popes for a "new evangelization" is "the greatest confession of failure in Church history." The new mission field for spreading the Gospel is not those far reaches of the earth that have never heard the Gospel, but the Catholic Church itself (or at least large parts of it) that have been sacramentalized but not evangelized. From his own experience teaching at an elite Catholic university, Kreeft knows firsthand how little Catholics understand that their church is not a living institution with teaching authority and as a real literal personal presence in the Eucharist.

Catholics discover the fire, and Protestants discover the essence of Evangelical Protestantism; a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Protestants discover the essence of Catholicism; Christ’s own visible, tangible Body, both as a living institution with teaching authority and as a real literal personal presence in the Eucharist.

It is not that these things are completely absent in the other tradition, but in the lived experience of Catholics and Protestants today, this is more often true than not. The fire belongs in the fireplace, but too often and for too long, Catholics have not tended the fire and Protestants have downplayed the need for a fireplace. This is why many cradle Catholics have found their own home seemingly cold and impersonal, and have sought warmth in the fire of Evangelical communities. But this is also why many Protestants turn to the Catholic Church because they realize that the fire they have belongs in a home. Kreeft draws a surprising and insightful conclusion from this experience: for reunion, both Catholics and Protestants will have to change, but "both parties will change by addition, not by subtraction. No one gives anything up. Or rather, both recover what they used to have together..."

Kreeft does this kind of intellectual jujitsu numerous times. He does not lazily believe that deep down we are all really the same or are really saying the same thing. On some issues—transubstantiation, the Pope, Marian dogmas—one side is right and one side is wrong. But, Kreeft time and again uncovers a deeper unity in our motives. Both Catholics and Protestants seek to do Christ’s will.

We have many theological and institutional obstacles to overcome, but our motives, which are the very first thing, have been massively converted: we love each other, and we love each other’s faith in Christ, and we want to learn from each other, because we both have a holy greed for all we can learn of Christ….and we are both distressed at the wounds and lacerations in His Body (51).

How essential is this perspective of hope! On official levels, ecumenical dialogue has stalled. There is, for the time being, a sense that we have discussed everything there is to discuss and pretty much know where the agreements and disagreements are. Dialogue continues, and must continue, but it is not clear where it is going. But, Kreeft says, viewed from Christ’s perspective this matter of motives is the most fundamental. That the motives of Catholics and Evangelical Protestants have become the same and that this motive operates in the context of ecumenical friendship should give us a palpable hope that reunion is possible, even if we cannot see how and even if it does not happen in our lifetime (which seems unlikely). And, moreover, we know by faith that it is not only possible but a future reality because Christ himself wills it and prayed for it (see John 17).

Reunion for Kreeft seems to mean that Protestants will “come home” to the Catholic Church. This is (see Principles of Ecumenism, page 21)
Justin-Siena Prepares a “Lift-Up” Lunch

We have been praying for our brothers and sisters at Cardinal Newman High School in Santa Rosa ever since the wildfires broke out. Nearly one in six CNHS students lost their home, and their campus was severely damaged. Since the fires, CNHS classes are being held at four different satellites sites, by grade level with plans to return to campus in the spring.

Justin-Siena Director of Lasallian Student Life, Mr. Stan Cordero, who is also a proud graduate of CNHS has been in regular communication with his alma mater in helping to determine needs and ways in which Justin-Siena can be of assistance. One way we showed support was through a “Lift-Up Lunch” which included personal notes...

We intentionally picked the Feast of Saint Nicholas as the day to offer our support as he was regarded for his generosity and over the centuries many stories and legends have been told of his life and deeds. It is his life and example that inspires the tradition of giving gifts at Christmastime today.

As this activity falls in the season of Advent, it offers a curricular component through our Advisory Program. The “Lift-Up Lunch” Service Project was an empathy-building activity that encouraged students to connect the Advent theme of hope to actions of service while helping another Catholic community near and dear to us in the Santa Rosa Diocese.

According to event organizer, Mr. Stan Cordero who is the Justin-Siena Director of Lasallian Student Life and a proud graduate of Cardinal Newman, “We all hope for a really nice gift at Christmas and try to bring joy to others with the gifts we offer them. But the giving spirit of St. Nicholas was focused on those who needed help. It is in this spirit that we will perform the simple service of making a lunch for someone else. This, coupled with the personal notes of encouragement written by students and staff for each member of the CNHS community, are intended to bring hope to our brothers and sisters who suffer without their campus and many of whom, are without their homes. It is our way to express the kind of giving that St. Nicholas has inspired and to offer a sense of hope to those who need it.”

Our amazing student body packed 680 lunches in about 22 minutes! Once all the packages were prepared they were loaded into the cars of parent volunteer drivers and taken to the four CNHS locations.

We hope that our CNHS brothers and sisters felt our sense of hope for them now and in the weeks and months to come. ♦

(Principles of Ecumenism, cont. from page 20) perhaps the unacknowledged controversial point of his book and one Kreeft perhaps could have explored more. He even has a chapter entitled, “What Will Make Good Protestants Come Home?” Kreeft is certainly right on one level to use this language; this is often the experience of Protestants who become Catholic. They see the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church, encounter its saints, and are drawn into full communion. “Coming home” is still a common way for Protestant “converts” to talk about their experience (see EWTN’s Journey Home television show with Marcus Grodi sponsored by the Coming Home Network or Scott and Kimberly Hahn’s immensely popular book Rome Sweet Home). This language, though, is in stark contrast to official statements which reject what is called an “ecumenism of return” (see Pope Benedict XVI’s talk at the 2005 World Youth Day Ecumenical Meeting). Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, a former cardinal, and founder and director of Saint Benedict Forum, is the author of You Made Us for Yourself: Creation in Catholic Theology of Human Deification (Ignatius Press, 2016).

About Dr. Jared Ortiz: Dr. Jared Ortiz is Assistant Professor of Religion at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and founder and director of Saint Benedict Forum for Catholic Thought, Culture, and Evangelization. He is the author of You Made Us for Yourself: Creation in St. Augustine’s Confessions (Fortress Press, 2016) and contributor to Called To Be the Children of God: The Catholic Theology of Human Deification (Ignatius Press, 2016). How to Be Holy: First Steps in Becoming a Saint, and get to work.... Kreeft’s Catholics and Protestants: What Can We Learn from Each Other? is a lucid and insightful tour through the principles of ecumenism. He models it on Pascal’s Pensées, with chapters of varying lengths and styles (including parables, stories, short treatises) devoted to making a particular point. It makes for good spiritual reading (it was mine for the past month) and would also make for a provocative book study or ecumenical dialogue. Kreeft powerfully shows how reunion will come about not through compromise, but through doubling down on the truth. Without minimizing our disagreements, Kreeft penetrates beneath the surface to our deeper agreements. It is by seeing our disagreements through the lens of our deeper agreements that we will make progress toward Christian unity. ♦
January 3rd & 20th

Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering

Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month. Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend.

Join us on January 3rd from 6-8 pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.

Join us on January 20th from 2-4 pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park.

Our 2018 weekends are scheduled: June 7-10 Men’s Cursillo Weekend, August 2-5 Women’s Cursillo Weekend. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Priscilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957. Our website is: http://www.catholiccursillemovementofsanta ros.com

January 5th

Clericus Classic Basketball Game 7:00 PM Friday

Come cheer on the priests and seminarians of the Archdiocese of San Francisco as they face off in this second annual event! Half-time entertainment for all ages. Bring family and friends to Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep’s gym (Sister Teresa Piro, DC Student Life Center) on Friday, January 5 at 7 pm. Parking available in the Cathedral parking lot; across the street from the school.

Tickets: https://archdiocese.org/events/basketball

January 13th “Women of the Year” Celebration Saint Apollinaris Church Napa 11:00am Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert F. Vasa, followed by the presentation of certificates and luncheon. Anyone who has sent in their reservation please contact Connie Lynch Sorenson at 707-823-7378. srdccwgloria@hotmail.com

January 20th

Reflect, Renew, Refocus

St. Vincent’s Marinwood 9am-4pm $10 – Lunch included. Who: Ministers, teachers, coaches, and parents who work or volunteer with young people. Why: We who exercise passion and dedication to share the Good News with young people need to renew our spirit. We often neglect self-care. Speaker: John Beaulieu: John has been involved in ministry for over thirty years, serving in many areas of the field including as a NET missionary, a parish youth minister for 13 years, and the Director of Youth Outreach in the Christian Outreach Office (COO) at Franciscan University for 10 years. Currently John serves the COO as the Director of Partnerships and Engagement and has taught youth ministry courses as an adjunct professor for Franciscan University. John is a lay evangelist and ministry coach who regularly provides retreats, missions, trainings and workshops at parishes and dioceses across North America. Register: http://santasr oscatholic.org/YouthMinistryEvents email: youth@srdiocese.org

January 20th

Crab Dinner

The Knights of Columbus Arcata Council 69247 is planning to hold its annual Robert S. Murphy Memorial Crab Dinner on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 6:00pm at Leaven Hall. Choice of Dungeness crab or barbequed tri-tip sirloin will be on the menu. This year’s fundraiser event is contingent on the availability of crab.

Please mark this special date on your calendar. Tickets will be $30 per plate and will be sold on a pre-sale basis. The Knights will be selling pre-event tickets to this dinner after Masses following the New Year once the commercial crab season has opened. Please join us for this fun-filled event and come visit with your “old and new” fellow parishioners and friends.

January 20th

Discernment Day

Single, Catholic women ages 18-38 are invited to spend a day with the Dominican Nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park, Saturday, January 20th. Visit their website at www.nunsmenlo.org or email vocations@nunsmenlo.org.

A vocation – marriage, priesthood, religious life, etc. – is a call to love and every baptized person has one! But perhaps you’re feeling a tug to give your heart to Jesus exclusively, setting aside His love for you. This women’s day at Menlo Park will give you a glimpse of the same hidden life of love that has been lived at the heart of the Church and the Dominican Order since Saint Dominic founded the first community of Dominican nuns in 1206. The event is free.

January 25th

Walk For Life West Coast

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

January 27th

Natural Family Planning Class

All married and engaged couples are invited on Jan. 27, 2018, to the natural family planning class taking place in Santa Rosa. These English speaking classes are from 7-9 p.m. For more information, you may call (707) 542-3635 or visit The Couple to Couple League website at www.ccl.org.

March 11th

Diocese Youth Day


Ongoing in North Diocese

Christ the King Church Parish, McKinleyville

Weekdays: Monday Mass 9:00am Tuesday Communion Service 9:00am. Friday Adoration 3:00pm followed by Mass 4:00pm

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, Hoopa: Sunday Mass 11:30am

HSU Newman Center, 700 Union St. Arcata: Sunday Mass 5:30pm followed by supper & learning about Catholicism.

St. Mary’s Arcata

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

Prolife Rosary

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

Ongoing in South Diocese

Through Feb 15th

Knights of Columbus Bible Study: St. Eugene

The Bible Timeline is a Catholic Bible study that takes you on a journey through the entire Bible so that you can discover the amazing story woven throughout all of Scripture. The study will include a series of 24 videos presented by Jeff Cavins. The study begins on Monday, Oct. 2nd in the Parish Life Center, Hope room. The class is from 6:30 to 8:30 pm every Monday evening through February 15th. The work-books are $35 each. For more information, please contact Greg De Gennaro at 707-494-5969 or by e-mail gregoryd@sonic.net

First Saturdays: Oakville House of Prayer (Carmelite Monastery)

Morning of Recollection every first Saturday of the month 6 Spiritual Talk 9-10am; Confessions 10-11am; Mass 11:00 am. Confessions (English/Spanish) Mondays and Fridays; 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm. Church Hours: Chapel opens at 7:00 a.m. Closes at 9:00 p.m. only on Mondays and Fridays. All other days Church closes at 6:00 p.m. 20 Mount Carmel Drive, Oakville, CA 707-944-2454 oakvil lecarmelites.org.Weekday Mass 8:00 am. Monday – Saturday. The first Sunday of the month will be at 6:00am, and the Sunday Mass 9:00 am. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5:00 pm - 5:45 pm. Mass 5:45 pm. Benediction. All are invited please silence cell phones in the Chapel.

To have your calendar event listed please email us!

Srdiocese1@gmail.com

CALENDAR
The "me too" movement is good, but we need better. Victims have been given a prominent voice and any-time someone is stripped of the dignity God instilled in them, we all suffer silently. So let us not be ignorant, I’m calling out our culture here: preserving human dignity and the sanctity of life is antithetical to the culture of death we live in.

The current public outcry against disgusting individuals is indicative of our bigger problem: we live in an over-sexualized society whose first amendment has become: “if it feels good do it.” TV programming, video games, and horrendous language in music have permeated and fueled this epidemic. Our society’s moral degradation has plummeted off a cliff.

Sexual impropriety starts with protecting the sanctity of all life and protecting all human dignity. The objectification of women in all areas of our society must be coupled with protecting human life from conception until natural death—if we truly believe in the sanctity of all life and dignity of all persons.

Are we Christian apologists or merely apologizing for being conservative?

Our faith clearly defines our marching orders: The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his sanctity of all life and dignity of all persons.

In the sanctity of all life and dignity of all persons, we all suffer silently. So let us not be ignorant, I’m calling out our culture here: preserving human dignity and the sanctity of life is antithetical to the culture of death we live in.

Sexual impropriety starts with protecting the sanctity of all life and protecting all human dignity. The objectification of women in all areas of our society must be coupled with protecting human life from conception until natural death—if we truly believe in the sanctity of all life and dignity of all persons.

Sure, we’re calling to task politicians and Hollywood elites but we need a major swing of basic decency here. Human dignity for all persons must battle the over-sexualized “if it feels good, do it” society. More sophisticated, progressive, and strategic plans to defend human dignity and just moral behavior will need to exceed “concerned conservative mothers clubs,” Therefore a few resources of hope:

1. Life Teens’ “Victory” App and curriculum enables conversations and personal accountability.

2. Fight the New Drug is a secular non-profit organization that also provides education and an App. See more stats at www.fightthenewdrug.org.

3. Our Faith clearly defines our marching orders: The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his sanctity of all life and dignity of all persons.

If we truly want to stop the perpetrators of disgusting sexual misconduct then we need to start supporting Pro-Life rallies and chastity education. We need to call out sin in all aspects of video games, social media, and Hollywood filth. We need to fight.

Lastly, this is a powerful force of sin, only prayer prayer and more prayer will defeat it. Please invoke our God ordained warrior St. Michael to help us in the fight.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

Solemnly we place before thee, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who presume to injure thy holy soul. Amen.

Adult ministry office will host a Youth Day similar to the rallies that occur all around the country. Joe Melendrez delivers a hyped message and powerful witness of the faith. He is joined by other inspirational speakers as the day concludes with Mass celebrated by Bishop Vasa. We promise an exceptional day as teens pour back onto Cardinal Newman campus for an epic celebration of the Body of Christ. Youth ministers, coaches, teachers, and parents should book seats for their teens immediately.

March 11th
11am - 4pm
$10 per teen

Adult Ministry office will host a Youth Day similar to the rallies that occur all around the country. Joe Melendrez delivers a hyped message and powerful witness of the faith. He is joined by other inspirational speakers as the day concludes with Mass celebrated by Bishop Vasa. We promise an exceptional day as teens pour back onto Cardinal Newman campus for an epic celebration of the Body of Christ. Youth ministers, coaches, teachers, and parents should book seats for their teens immediately.

Related Stories
Santa Rosa plots breakup of underpass camp
Shelters still provide a home for those who fled fires

“It couldn’t get any worse,” said Boyce Street resident Allen Thomas. “You can’t use that street anymore.”

Kelli Kuykendall, the city’s housing and community services manager, confirmed that plans to disband the encampment are suspended with no new timeline.

However, she said the city’s homelessness team had its first meeting since the fires and discussed issues such as finding temporary shelter and changing the city ordinance to increase the penalty for illegal camping.

City crews did a partial cleanup Wednesday.

“We really want to see this move forward,” Kuykendall said. “But unfortunately we can’t right now.”

Residents of the West End neighborhood who have criticized the city’s response to the homeless encampment in the past have been reluctant to complain given the scope of the fire disaster.

But they hope officials eventually live up to the promises made before the fires to do something about the encampment. And they’re worried both about sanitation, with reports of people defecating in yards, and access to the sidewalk leading to the Santa Rosa Plaza and the downtown area.

(Homless Camp cont. from page 17)
There was no such special designation for the centennial of the apparitions at Fatima. Yet in parish after parish, in schools and chaplaincies and shrines, the centennial was marked by devotions.

Preparation for the centennial of the Fatima apparitions began in 2010, with the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the Portuguese shrine, where he acknowledged that “in seven years you will return here to celebrate the centenary of the first visit of the Lady ‘come from heaven.’”

The expected highlight of the Fatima centennial was the apostolic visit of Pope Francis to Fatima for the feast May 13, when he canonized the child visionaries Jacinta and Francisco Marto—the youngest non-martyr saints in Church history. Yet the centennial became a much more widespread observance, an undeclared “Year of Fatima,” a movement of the faithful and local pastors.

Under St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the idea of special dedicated years was often employed. John Paul had his Years of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit leading up to the Great Jubilee of 2000, and then the Years of the Rosary and the Eucharist. Benedict added the Year of Priests, the Year of St. Paul and the Year of Faith. Pope Francis added a Year of Consecrated Life and then the recent Jubilee of Mercy.

There was no such special designation for the centennial of the apparitions at Fatima. Yet in parish after parish, in schools and chaplaincies and shrines, the centennial was marked by devotions—the Rosary, First Saturdays and processions—along with lectures about the history and significance of Fatima in the life of the Church. Above all, a wave of consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary—requested by the Blessed Mother at Fatima—swept over the entire world.

There was no consecration in Rome by the Holy Father, as Pope Francis already made a consecration of the entire world to Mary in the first year of his pontificate (Oct. 13, 2013), for which he had the statue of Our Lady brought from Fatima.

Consecrations elsewhere were ubiquitous. Accounts of personal consecrations to the Immaculate Heart abounded. Parishes and dioceses by the thousands made the consecration collectively, as reported in the Register. Several countries were consecrated by their bishops, including Canada, where the bishops collectively consecrated the entire country to the Immaculate Heart, and each bishop did so in his own diocese, moving among them asking each pastor to consecrate his own parish.

What accounts for this undeclared Year of Fatima?

Four reasons suggest themselves.

The first is that Fatima has become a daily part of the lives of Catholics. The Fatima angel’s prayer of adoration is often prayed at times of Eucharistic exposition and adoration. More important, the Fatima prayer during the Rosary—O my Jesus…—is now universal, becoming part of the most common of all Catholic devotions. Fatima has shaped Marian devotion throughout the Church. Already by the 1940s, just 25 years after the apparitions, we find Venerable Pius XII making the consecration and parishes being established under the title of Our Lady of Fatima.

Given that Fatima is part of the ordinary daily life of the Church, it would be expected that the faithful would desire to celebrate what was familiar and dear to them.

Second, during a century when history seemed particularly burdensome, the Fatima apparitions were a sign of the divine presence in history. It was as though God sent the Blessed Mother to a century where it became possible to wonder if God had been driven out entirely from the world.

“The vision of Fatima concerns above all the war waged by atheistic systems against the Church and Christians, and it describes the immense suffering endured by the witnesses of the faith in the last century of the second millennium,” said Cardinal Angelo Sodano in 2000, during John Paul’s visit to Fatima, when the “third secret” was revealed. “It is an inestimable Way of the Cross led by the Popes of the 20th century.”

After the secret had been revealed at Fatima, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was charged with preparing a theological commentary.

He concluded that commentary by observing that Fatima was about the working of divine Providence in history:

“…I would like, finally, to mention another key expression of the ‘secret,’ which has become justly famous: ‘My Immaculate Heart will triumph.’ What does this mean? The Heart open to God, purified by contemplation of God, is stronger than guns and weapons of every kind. The fiat of Mary, the word of her heart, has changed the history of the world, because it brought the Savior into the world—because, thanks to her Yes, God could become man in our world and remains so for all time. The Evil One has power in this world, as we see and experience continually; he has power because our freedom continually lets itself be led away from God. But since God himself took a human heart and has thus steered human freedom towards what is good, the freedom to choose evil no longer has the last word. From that time forth, the word that prevails is this:

“In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world’ (John 16:33). The message of Fatima invites us to trust in this promise.”

When the horizon of history appears dark, the maternal presence of Mary is more intensely desired.

A third reason is the figure of St. John Paul II himself, linked to Fatima by the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981. John Paul read the third secret of Fatima while recuperating from the shooting and saw immediately that it took place on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima to make clear that his life had been saved by Mary so that he might complete his mission.

That mission included leading the Church into the third millennium, which is why the only foreign trip John Paul made during the Great Jubilee—aside from the epic pilgrimage to the biblical lands—was to Fatima.

As the awareness grows that St. John Paul was indeed the great pope sent by God for our time, it follows that the central aspects of his teaching and piety would be emphasized. Therefore it makes perfect sense that after the Jubilee of Mercy, in which John Paul’s teaching on the centrality of Divine Mercy would be reproposed, the faithful would desire a Year of Fatima.

Finally, Fatima is a powerful reminder that miracles do happen, including the “Miracle of the Sun,” Oct. 13, 1917, the most witnessed miracle in history. At a time when secular fundamentalists and scientific materialists seek to deny the entire spiritual dimension of reality, miracles—witnessed, authentic and verified—stand as a refutation, more vivid than philosophical proofs.

The Year of Fatima was an unplanned grace. It confirmed the centrality of Fatima for the contemporary life of the Church, our distinctive lens through which the mysteries of salvation are to be understood in our time.