Lent. Keep it Simple

From Our Sunday Visitor

Lent lies at the very heart of our Catholic faith. Each year, on Ash Wednesday, we begin our Lenten retreat. We are blessed with ashes, reminding us that we are dust, and to dust we will return. For the next 40 days we are led into the desert of our own hearts to look within, face our sins, and ask for God’s mercy. While Lent was originally intended as a time of preparation for those being baptized at Easter, it gradually became a time when all of us get ready to renew our own baptismal promises. It is the season in which we prepare both individually and as a Church for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior. It is the season when we reflect on the dying and rising of Christ that has made our salvation possible. It is the season when we enter into Christ’s dying and rising as we seek to purify, cleanse, and nourish our bodies, minds, and souls.

(see Lent, p. 4)

Our Lady Of Perpetual Help Women’s Club Has Speaker From “Get On The Bus”

by NCC Staff

Joan Warner, a parishioner at St. Helena Catholic Church and long-time volunteer for “Get on the Bus” program, was guest speaker at the February meeting of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Women’s Club in Calistoga. Joan has been a Bus Team Leader for the Santa Rosa area (Bus “U”) for many years.

More than 200,000 children in California have a parent in prison. These children are more likely to experience

(see Women’s Club, p. 4)

Dreamers in Limbo Under New Administration

by Ray Holley, Sonoma West Times

If you were in need, would you refuse help? Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa offers a variety of services to its clients, ranging from the most basic needs, such as food and shelter, to services that make life better and safer, such as a daily check on homebound seniors.

Catholic Charities has spent considerable resources helping immigrants apply for various types of residency documents, from green cards to full citizenship. That effort continues, but there’s a new urgency.

Yet Catholic Charities’ clients are calling and coming into the agency’s Santa Rosa headquarters, asking to be removed from the lists of those who get help with job seeking, immigration counseling and even food.

“Our clients feel like they’re being pulled back into the shadows,” said Karen Shimizu, director of operations for the agency. “They’re asking to be removed from our rosters.”

The reason? The Trump Administration has vowed to crack down on undocumented immigrants, and Catholic Charities serves that population.

“We see a fear, not only with immigrants but with permanent residents,” said Dina Lopez, Immigration Senior Program Manager for Catholic Charities, herself an immigrant.

(see Dreamers in Limbo, p. 4)
A Very Powerful Season of Grace

The Season of Lent began on March 1, Ash Wednesday. Since this is a very powerful season of grace it is also a very powerful season for conversion, renewal and fulfillment of resolutions. Life is filled with an abundance of ‘wishes’. We wish that we were more prayerful. We wish that we had a better schedule of prayer in the home. We wish that we could overcome some of our habitual flaws. We wish that we had better control over our impulses regarding food and drink. Lots of wishes but what is often lacking is the graced ‘will’ to engage in the battle necessary to begin to overcome these spiritual deficits.

Lent is the season when we are invited by the Church and by grace to renew and redouble our efforts to make our spiritual wishes into realities. Actually this language is deceptive because it implies that Lent is a season during which our efforts will achieve greater success. The truth is that our efforts will be no more successful in Lent than they will be at other times of the year unless we come to the very humbling conviction that we are powerless, that God is all powerful and that we need to rely much more on Him and His assistance than on our own meager powers. Cardinal John Henry Newman when writing about the difference between Catholic education and secular education reminds us of the same message. He writes: “Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of human knowledge and human reason to contend with such keen and delicate instruments as human instruments which may be effective in secular matters are nearly useless when contending with sin. The ‘battle’ in which we are engaged on a daily basis is the same battle which Jesus Himself came to fight on our behalf. Jesus conquered sin and death and He needs us to share in His victory.

During Lent we are invited in a more forceful way to engage in the battle using the weapons of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer and charitable giving have been adopted and are most likely well used throughout the year. However, fasting and mortification, the penitential practices more strongly recommended for us during the season of Lent, need to be added to our spiritual routine. It is not only a question of ‘giving up’ something, it is a question of training and conditioning ourselves in small and relatively easy spiritual matters in response to God’s grace so that we can learn how to rely on God and His grace in greater matters as well. The more we learn to rely on God, His grace and His strength in spiritual matters the greater will be our success in fulfilling our Lenten ‘wish’ list. We expend our energy trying to modify the granite of our bad habits and we continue to use the delicate instruments of human reason and knowledge. These are certainly valuable but in a spiritual battle they are ineffective. The bad habits continue to flourish and we grow increasingly frustrated with the lack of positive results. We expend our energy trying to overcome our spiritual weaknesses, to hold back our passions and this, according to Saint John is like trying to hold a large ship in place with a thread of silk. The delicate human instruments which may be effective in secular matters are nearly useless when contending with sin. The ‘battle’ in which we are engaged on a daily basis is the same battle which Jesus Himself came to fight on our behalf. Jesus conquered sin and death and He needs us to share in His victory.

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From the Bishop

Bishop Robert F. Vasa is the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa.

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The newspaper of the Diocese of Santa Rosa
Most Rev. Robert F. Vasa
Publisher
Christopher Lyford
Editor
March 2017
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ANNIVERSARIES

Bishop Daniel Walsh
March 30, 1963

Rev. Pat Stephenson
March 3, 1968

Rev. Fr. Gary Lombardi
March 9, 1969

Rev. Louis Coddaire
March 5, 1978

Prayer for Priests

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

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ’s victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God “with all their hearts” (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

1. The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, a man disgraced and pitiful. Then we will be able to experience and share the parable’s wisdom. The poor man is a living gift, a sign of God’s love and care, who calls “father” (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God’s people. This detail makes his life appear all the more appealing.

When we face the poor, we will not be able to close our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

2. Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called “a rich man”. His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: “He feasted sumptuously every day” (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The parable then shows that the rich man’s greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. ibid., 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man’s greed springs from the man’s pride in being a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door. Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: “No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money” (Mt 6:24).

3. The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”. As it is turned into ash, the rich man acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door. Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: “No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money” (Mt 6:24).

We too see what happens in the afterlife. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls “father” (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God’s people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory; for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffering with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: “During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony” (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life’s evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: “They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them” (v. 29). Countering the rich man’s objections, he adds: “If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead” (v. 31).

The rich man’s real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God’s word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God’s word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favor the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2016
 Feast of Saint Luc the Evangelist
Lenten discipline has historically centered on the “Big Three” of Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer. Fasting is not just a spiritual diet. By denying our bodies, our physical hunger reminds us of the hunger of our souls for God, our longing for our sakroustenike—our relationship with God and with others.

Almsgiving teaches us to separate ourselves from our material possessions. By freely giving of our money and possessions, we learn to trust the Lord more deeply for our own daily needs. Finally, an emphasis on Prayer during Lent is a way to stir up our love and ardor by having a deepening conversation with the Almighty. Remember that the light of God’s love shines more brightly in the darkness of the recognition of our own sinfulness.

To Keep It Simple This Lent, Try The 1-1-1 Plan: One Sin, One Add-In, One Give-Up. Concentrate or focus on one sin or fault that is getting in the way of your relationship with God and with others. Add one positive activity that will deepen your prayer and spiritual life (especially if you think you are too busy to put anything more into an impossibly busy schedule!). Deny yourself something you really like or are attached to.

One Sin. Most of us, if we are honest, know at least one area of sin to focus on during Lent. If you aren’t sure, or are having trouble narrowing it down, use the traditional Seven Deadly Sins as a guide. (Contrary to what one may gather from all the emphasis on sex these days, there are six deadly sins besides lust!) In fact, some of the other deadly sins are even more dangerous than sex. Some of them are:

- Gluttony (desire to overindulge)
- Sloth (laziness)
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One Add-In. The next step in 1-1-1 Lent is to add one spiritual practice that you haven’t been doing to your routine. Because we are all so busy, it’s a good idea to not just pick an add-in, but to schedule a regular time when you put it on your calendar so you don’t “forget.” Ideas for add-ins are pretty much endless, but some include:

- Go to Mass, in the middle of the week.
- Do personal Stations of the Cross on Fridays or once a week.
- Read a Gospel.
- Volunteer at a social ministry.
- Get up early to pray.

One Give-Up. Giving up something for Lent has been part of the Church almost since the beginning. While giving up sweets and alcohol are time-honored, consider giving up one thing that you really like or enjoy. Just make sure it is something that lets you feel the deprivation and is at least a little bit challenging. Make it difficult but doable.

Give up impulse purchases. Give up an unhealthy habit, like smoking. Limit the time you watch TV or surf the web. Give up fast food and donate the money you save.

Lenten disciplines are stable. I can’t buy a car or get credit. I’ve worked so hard to succeed in this country, to get my Associate degree.”

Shimizu is adopting a wait-and-see attitude about the Trump Administration, while counseling immigrant families to “have a plan.” She suggests that families have a conversation about, “what to do if the primary wage earner is no longer there.” She also points out that communities can rally around their immigrant neighbors. “We can be that neighbor that says: I will watch your property, I will be there to watch your child.”

Teresa and Faviola hope it will never come to that. “I’m not a criminal,” Teresa says. “I am a dreamer who has goals, and I’ve worked for what I have.”

There are an estimated 742,000 “Dreamers” in this country—about half live in California and about 3,000 are in Sonoma County.

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(Lent, cont. from page 1)

Keep It Simple

The best Lent is one in which we enter the season wholeheartedly. All too often people either take on too much or don’t take on enough. The solution is to simplify our disciplines, focus our intentions, and concentrate more clearly on our spiritual goals.

The Big Three. Matthew 6:3-4, 6, 17-18. We aren’t just spiritual beings. We are also physical entities, and the way to the soul is through the body. That’s why Lenten discipline has historically centered on the “Big Three” of Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer. Fasting is not just a spiritual diet. By denying our bodies, our physical hunger reminds us of the hunger of our souls for God, our longing for our sakroustenike—our relationship with God and with others.

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(Women’s Club, cont. from page 1)
US Bishops Denounce Rise in Anti-Semitic Attacks

Washington D.C., Feb 27 (CNA/EWTN News) - The U.S. bishops are responding with solidarity and concern for the Jewish community, following a surge in anti-Semitic actions in recent weeks.

"On behalf of the Bishops and people of the Catholic Church, as the Chairman of the Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, I want to express our deep sympathy, solidarity, and support to our Jewish brothers and sisters," said Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski of Springfield in a press release.

"I wish to offer our deepest concern, as well as our unequivocal rejection of these hateful actions," Bishop Rozanski continued.

On Feb. 20, more than 150 headstones were damaged in University City, Missouri at the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery. Just a week later, over 100 headstones were found similarly knocked over at the Mount Carmel Jewish Cemetery in Philadelphia.

Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia was "deeply saddened" by the vandalism at Mount Carmel Jewish Cemetery, and called for "prayerful solidarity with the families of those whose final resting places have been disturbed."

"As a community, we must speak out to condemn inflammatory messages and actions that serve only to divide, stigmatize and incite prejudice," the archbishop continued. "We must continually and loudly reject attempts to alienate and persecute the members of any religious tradition. Rather, as members of diverse faith and ethnic communities throughout the region, we must stand up for one another and improve the quality of life for everyone by building bridges of trust and understanding."

No suspects have been named in either case, but the damage has reached hundreds of thousands of dollars.

More than 50 bomb threats targeting the Jewish community have also been reported across the country since the beginning of the year, including scares at Jewish community centers in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Milwaukee.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, violent anti-Semitic actions soared in 2015, and continued into 2016 with increased online anti-Semitic harassment.

Leaders and officials have denounced the surge in anti-Semitic actions, including words from President Donald Trump last week, who said the recent attacks on the Jewish community were "horrible and are a painful and a very sad reminder of the work that still must be done to root out hate and prejudice and evil."

Mayor Jim Kenney of Philadelphia also spoke out, saying that "hate is not permissible in Philadelphia," and that the perpetrators "will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," according to the New York Times.

Echoing these sentiments, Bishop Rozanski promised that "the Catholic Church stands in love with the Jewish community in the current face of anti-Semitism."

As a community, we must speak out to condemn inflammatory messages and actions that serve only to divide, stigmatize, and incite prejudice.

Quoting Pope Francis, he pointed to the dangers of the anti-Semitic attacks, linking them to acts of dehumanization, which is most notably seen in hatred towards neighbors.

However, the Springfield bishop also voiced hope that these attacks could be an opportunity for neighborly love to shine brightly.

"But here we also find an opportunity: that the light of the love of neighbor may illuminate the Earth with its stunning brightness like a lightning bolt in the dark; that it may wake us up and let true humanity burst through with authentic resistance, resilience and persistence."

"I encourage everyone to remember their neighbor, to find the opportunities to be lights of resistance, resilience, and persistence during these contentious times, especially with all our brothers and sisters of faith."

Hey, Men…

by Michael P. Diepenbrock, J.D. Impact Man Ministries

Did you guys hear about the new course offered at Brown University? It’s called, “Unlearning Toxic Masculinity.” I know that social engineers have been messing with “gender identity”. But now academia is teaching that masculinity is “toxic.” The course description announces: “Men will often resort to violence to resolve conflict because anger is the only emotion that they have been socialized to express. Unfortunately, the way that young men are conditioned to view sex and their need to be dominant and have power over others also contribute to instances of sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence on college campuses.”

And then there are the current issues of “transgenderism” and gay marriage. And Bruce Jenner, a male Olympian athlete, has redesigned himself as a lady named Caitlyn Jenner! So, they say that masculinity is a product of toxic social conditioning. What do you guys think of all that?

It seems society today is telling men to “stand down” and either stop acting like men or start acting like women. But Fox News reports that recent polls show that the ladies are not happy with de-masculinized men. The ladies say they want guys to be men, as designed by nature.

No doubt men have abused their masculinity and some of that abuse may have inspired this idea of toxic masculinity. In all justice we have to admit that our original ancestor, Adam, misread the instruction manual and abused his male character. That poor guy unwittingly set us on the course of history that is now responsible for the disorders mentioned above.

(see Hey Men, p. 9)
It’s too Late to Run

by Chris Lyford

When I was around 5 or 6 years old I used to have a recurring dream about a tidal wave sequence. In the dream I was just a kid watching the water recede out into the ocean as it does prior to an imminent tidal wave when dozens of people ran onto the beach and started picking up treasures for their own exploratory enjoyment. I yelled frantically to the hapless beach combers trying to alert them to their peril. Parents with their children, and others were greedily scrambling though the treasures though they knew they were gambling with their lives. I knew instinctively that the big wave was coming, and when it came, there would be no escaping it. I was beside myself at how stupid these people were but doing everything in my power to get them to decide to run. Some ran early and barely saved themselves, and others were swallowed up by the crushing tsunami.

Then, just over 20 years later in August of 1987 I was sitting in a diner in Crescent City finishing up a perfect breakfast when my eye caught a series of pictures on the wall detailing the devastation from the “Good Friday” tsunami of March 28th, 1964. I was seeing the scenes from my childhood dream. I looked at the name of the diner on the menu and it was called “The Wave” because the restaurant had been picked up and moved by the big wave.

Yeah that was weird.

Well I am not the kind of person to let that go without asking God for input. I certainly ran through my own ‘spiritualization’ process: I asked myself what the spiritual meaning of the dream could be? Chastisement? Baptism? Causality? It’s pretty easy for a Catholic to read the signs of the times. Jesus put a premium on being able to correctly read the signs of the times. He scolded the Pharisees and Sadducees because they knew how to predict the weather but they couldn’t even read the signs of the times. It’s like saying ‘hey man, you know how to fill out an NCAA basketball tournament with success because that’s your god; the thing you place ‘first’ in your life, but you can’t even admit that there are very real (and easy to spot) supernatural signs happening every day now in every country in the world—if you choose to see them (by the way, I like basketball, but not that much).

But what do you do when it’s too late to run?

If the image of a tidal wave can be read into what Jesus was saying, the signs of our times might be seen like something really scary; like standing in the shadow of a cresting tidal wave. Talk about a perfect time for a perfect act of contrition!

These days I really have come to think differently about the image of a tsunami applied to my spiritual life. I actually see it with more hope. If it’s a ‘bad thing’ well, it’s too late to run, so why don’t I do my best to bring hope, comfort, and peace to as many people as I possibly can. If it ends up symbolizing a ‘good thing’, maybe I should get ready for a season of miracles, a time when God will blow me away with His presence, love, power, and mercy. These days I think I’m more apt to run out onto the beach to get close to the folks who live in the shadow of the wave, amidst the anger, confusion, loneliness, and other paralyzing maladies. I think we who have faith are all called to do just that, in the high school halls, in the shopping malls, in traffic, or in our favorite pew. We are called to be vessels of love, grace, and mercy to each other, to get close enough to say “I think everything’s gonna be alright.” Perhaps we can live the next five minutes with that hope filled attitude, and if that’s successful, then the next five, and so on. It’s a long journey to Holy Thursday, but if we live with the one hope to which we are called, we will be walking with Jesus, and He will be with us.

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

Letters Policy

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NOTE: Views of correspondents do not necessarily reflect those of this publication.
In the most northwest corner of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, sits Saint Joseph’s Parish. It is not a large parish, but it is a parish with a gift. It was not enough that God cradled this parish between the beauty of Pacific Ocean to the west and the large majestic Redwoods to the east. God blessed this parish with a treasure, a Marian Garden.

In 1956, sixty years ago, Franciscan sisters were sent to Saint Joseph’s Parish to teach at the parish’s school. A convent was built with an attached garden. In the garden, Ed Langlous, with the help of the children of Saint Joseph’s school, built a grotto for the sisters. The sisters taught for many years, but like many catholic schools eventually succumbed to the bad economy. The sisters left and the school in time closed. Years passed and the school building was rented out to a charter school. The garden was forgotten about and was left behind it’s brick wall to deterioration.

As the years passed, the parish had no idea how close it was coming to losing the garden. Through the years, it has been suggested that the garden be removed and the land used for other purposes such as a parking lot, or to put storage buildings in the enclosure, and the charter school even asked if they could turn it into a playground for young children. But God was not going to let the little Marian Garden waste way or disappear.

A few years ago, I was brought in to look at the back gates in the garden, by request of the charter school. The gates were broken down and in badly need of replacement. But the gates were not the only thing that caught my eye. The garden was in dire need of care. The walls that surrounded the garden had been written on by children and needed to be painted, plants were over grown, and the grotto was falling apart, pieces of cement and stone were around the statue and worst of all, the Blessed Mother stood in animal feces around her feet. It was just about that time that the principal of the school asked me if the school could remove the statue or plant a large hedge in front of her. Her request was unacceptable. I knew that the garden not only had to be given back to the parish, but it suddenly occurred to me on how blessed this parish was to have a Marian Garden. The garden was a real treasure. I knew we could no longer neglect it, we needed to use it. I realized this was going to be a lot of work, but I also believed that God would be there to open every door.

With permission and support from our priest, Father Greg Villasavcusa. It began. It was no time before a committee of six was formed. With the committee formed and with the support of our parish priest, we began, but what was beginning was much more that I had expected. It was a greater understanding of what the garden represented. The Marian garden is a part of Saint Joseph’s history, faith and, identity.

The committee readied its plans in restoring the garden. In the first phase, we repaired the grotto and then enclosed the grotto with an unbreakable glass, we replaced the back gates and put in a front entrance with matching black iron gates, to make it more accessible to the parishioners, and cement walk way was poured with a six-inch border to separate the sidewalk from the flower beds. The sidewalk makes the garden more accessible to the elderly and handicapped parishioners. Of course, roses were planted in the traditional colors of the mysteries of the rosary; white roses for her joys, red roses, used to meditate on her sorrows, and the yellow roses are for her glories. A memory wall was added to the garden for our deceased loved ones.

It was during the construction of this first phase that the historical connection to the parish and community was discovered. It was always known that there had been several churches build on parish property, but most of the parishioners were not aware of how many churches had been built and what had happened to them. It was common knowledge that one had been torn down and two had burnt down in fires that started in the church. But where these churches sat on the church property was somewhat lost.

It was during the construction of the sidewalk and curb around the flower beds and shrine that one of the workmen called me to come down to the garden for questions. The questions were regarding the set-up on the foundation for the sidewalk. However, before I left, he asked me if there had been a fire where the garden now sits. He showed me a foundation footing that ran inside the wall and the wall itself was sitting on another foundation. He gave me a small piece of glass that had been melted by a hot fire. As I looked at where the new foundation was being set, I noticed other small pieces of melted glass. It was then that he said, “There was something here before this garden that was destroyed by a fire. I found ash and slivers of charred wood.” It then it dawned on me that this was where one of the old churches sat before it burnt down.

In late 1868 the Catholics in Crescent City purchased a church building on Third and E Street from the Methodist. In November of 1873, Fr. Michael Walrath replaced that church with a new larger church. This was the first Catholic church built in Crescent City by the parishioners. Sometime prior to 1915 this church burnt down. Other Catholic churches were built as time passed, but not on the same spot where the first church once stood. That church’s foundation remained there until 1956 when the Marian Garden was built. Using the old foundation of the first church, the walls of the garden were placed. A spot of worship once destroyed by fire rose again from the ashes as another place of worship in the form of this Marian Garden.

As word spread through the parish of the reconstruction project of the Marian Garden, many parishioners came forward in many ways. The adults that went to school, when they were children, under the watchful eyes of the sisters, came forward. I received help from a prior student who contacted the convent in Iowa to see if any of the prior sisters could contribute information on the garden. The prior student mailed me the results, pictures and a log that contains the date of the ground breaking of the garden, April 26, 1956. A network had begun.

One day a book, sent by mail to the church, which was issued in 1961, when our present church was built, filled with loss of information regarding the churches, school, rectory, and the garden.

I found a picture of the grotto in the garden. In the picture were several people standing beside the grotto where the Blessed Mother is placed. Under the pictures the words state that this is a picture of the dedication of the Shrine of Our Lady with the date of July 15, 1956. It is further written in the book that the shrine was dedicated on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel’s vigil by Father Francis Goodall.

As time passed, I was told many stories of how much the garden had meant to these past students of Saint Joseph’s School. Memories of working on the shrine with Mr. Langlous and stories of school years pranks, to May celebrations and prayers with the sisters in the garden.

However, the most amazing is the way the garden is touching lives. Parishioners came forward offering to help without being asked, and if asked they replied gladly, yes. Other, who do not attend church regular.

(see Mary’s Garden, p. 10)
Is the Benedict Option the Only Option?

by Mary Rezac

Denver, Colo., Feb 26 (CNA) - When Josh and Laura Martin, both converts to the faith, moved their growing family of six from the city of Dallas, Texas to the hills of Oklahoma, they didn't necessarily know that they were participating in the “Benedict Option.”

“We initially just wanted to get out of the city and raise our family in a more protected, slower-paced environment,” Josh told CNA.

“With all the families out here searching for the same thing, we gravitated towards it and made the leap.”

They moved to be close to the Benedictine Abbey at Clear Creek, Oklahoma, where dozens of other families from around the country have congregated over the course of the past 15 years or so.

Dubious of the direction in which the morals of modern society seem to be heading, they came in search of a slower pace and a more liturgical life with a community of other like-minded Catholics.

Many villagers attend daily morning Mass with the monks before 7 a.m., and the traditional Latin Mass on Sundays. The monastery serves as the center of the community, the monks as a real-life example of religious life to the younger generations.

Journalist Rod Dreher is credited with dubbing this phenomenon “The Benedict Option,” a term inspired by the last paragraph of philosopher Alasdair Maclntyre’s book, After Virtue, in which he wrote about waiting “for another - doubtless very different - St. Benedict.” This new Benedict would help construct “local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages.”

Just as Benedict was looking to escape the crumbling and increasingly anti-Christian culture of Rome, families like the Martins are looking to the hills of Oklahoma to escape today’s secular society, where Christian values are seen as increasingly foreign or even hostile to the status quo. They are disturbed by trends such as the legalization of gay marriage, of the increasing popularity of gender ideology, or the shrinking of religious freedom.

In his new book, “The Benedict Option,” Dreher calls the new societal trends and values “The Flood,” and argues that Christians can no longer fight the new societal trends and values “The Flood,” and argues that Christians can no longer fight the prevailing secular culture.

“This romantic vision was shattered there pretty quick when we moved,” Mike said.

Most families in the area do not subsist off the land alone, but there are few options for work in town. The Institute for Excellence in Writing, directed by Clear Creek villager Andrew Pudewa, employs some people in the area. Others, like Mike, do much of their work remotely. Still others make the hour commute to and from Tulsa for work.

Despite the sacrifices, the geographic retreat is an important aspect of the Benedict Option for many of its adherents.

“Being in a rural area, where you're not maybe as distracted by the noise and going on of the city, there's a little bit more quiet, and that silence gives you the opportunity to appreciate (the liturgical season) more,” Laura Martin told CNA.

“There's fewer distractions, and that is helpful I think in focusing on trying to regain some of the culture that we've lost or the connections that we've missed in our busy lives, so that element has been really helpful for us to grow in our faith.”

But one of the main critiques of the Benedict Option has stemmed from this idea of separation—both culturally and geographically. How can the faithful evangelize, as they are called to do, if they embed in communities of likeminded people in remote countryside hills?

“It's not an insular community,” Josh insists, “but it is a sort of retreat because the cultural forces are so overwhelming that it's difficult for me to imagine... trying to raise my family in that environment, so somewhere in that mix is the Benedict Option.”

The Martins are aware of the dangers of becoming too insular. They send two of their kids to public school, and they let their kids play soccer on a local league, which has made them a lot of local, non-Catholic friends. But not everyone in the village agrees on this, or other subjects. The use of T.V. and internet varies widely among families, as do opinions about whether women should wear anything other than skirts (and of what length those skirts should be), or how much contact is maintained with the outside world.

The Martins were careful to specify they spoke only for themselves.

“Out here it's very dangerous to speak for the community, because...there's not one unified approach, there are many dissimilarities,” Josh said.

But what there is, is a strong sense of community and a desire to live out the Catholic faith. Whether it's for funerals, weddings, baby showers, dances, parties—almost everyone is involved, he said.

“Weddings are just a complete madhouse,” Josh said, laughing. Baby showers can sometimes include 60-70 women. When a new family arrives, everyone pitches in to help them move furniture and get settled.

“There's a huge sense of cohesion,” he said. “Your life is so intertwined with the community. There's a strong identity of being definitely Catholic that would be very difficult to leave.”

What about parish life?

For many Catholics, uprooting their lives and moving to Oklahoma (or near other monasteries) simply isn't an option. The most basic building block of Catholic community and society available to them is their local parish.

Dreher writes of the importance of living in proximity to one's parish, so that it can all the more easily become the center of one's life. But Christians must still be discerning about whether their local parish is teaching the true faith, or whether it has been easily become the center of one's life. But Christians must still be discerning about whether their local parish is teaching the true faith, or whether it has been too compromised by the secular culture.

“The changes that have overtaken the West in our modern times have revolutionized everything, even the church, which no longer forms souls but caters to

(see Benedict Option, p. 20)
Ask DMU: 
Is Being Seasonally Depressed an Actual Disorder?

by William T. McKenna, M.S.

I have a joke that February is the month that God forgot about. Depending on where you live, it’s usually cold and dark, which adds up to nothing more than feeling down and out. As a therapist, I see how many of my patients begin to take a downturn during the winter in general, and sometimes February in particular. During this time, therapists often add a certain specifier to a patient’s diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder. That specifier is, “with seasonal pattern,” a diagnosis that used to be known as Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a mood disorder that occurs during the winter months and abates by the spring (Timby & Smith, 2005). Funnily enough, SAD used to be an adaptive action for humans since food was scarce, and low-energy human burn less calories (Bellovsky, 2010). However, in our current society, we never take a break from our need to function at peak condition. Some symptoms for those who suffer from SAD are just like ones found in Major Depressive Disorder: depressed mood, loss of interest in things which you used to find pleasurable, either significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia, fatigue, feeling worthless, difficulty in thinking and concentrating, and recurrent suicidal thoughts. Additionally, those who live in places above 40 degrees latitude (e.g. New England) are more susceptible to suffer from the winter blues given their lack of sunlight. It is very important to note that just like anyone who suffers from depression, those who suffer from SAD are not weak. Depression is partly a biochemical disorder, and thus a person cannot just snap out of it. But that does not mean that you are at SAD’s mercy.

There are a variety of behavioral interventions that a person suffering from SAD can use to help themselves. For example, Timby and Smith (2005) recommend the following to combat this depressive disorder:

- Take walks outside, preferably around noon. Try to go outside for an hour.
- Avoid using sunglasses or contact lenses that are coated to shield UV radiation because this interferes with light transmission to the pineal gland.
- Add more lamps and brighter lights at home and work.
- Trim shrubs and trees from around windows to let in more light.
- Use translucent curtains or shades rather than heavy drapes.
- Sleep and eat in east facing rooms (if possible).

Another very important thing to remember when dealing SAD is for you to be patient with yourself and your recovery. Remember that SAD will abate and that you are not to blame for developing this disorder. You should take active steps to help work on your SAD, but remember that being hard on yourself is never the answer to solving the depression riddle. The winter month of February is one of the prime moments from SAD (now known as Major Depressive Disorder, with seasonal pattern) to develop. Rest assured that this mood disorder is, in fact, real and affects many people each year. However, with the right support and proper behavioral techniques, you or your loved ones can beat SAD and enjoy the peaceful serenity of the winter months.

William T. McKenna, M.S. is a Pre-Doctoral Resident in Clinical Psychology at Catholic Charities with the Diocese of Arlington. He recently completed his coursework for his doctorate at the Institute for the Psychological Sciences, now Divine Mercy University. Divine Mercy University offers graduate programs in psychology and counseling, both online and onsite in the greater Washington, DC area. Visit divinemercy.edu for more information.

An Ash Wednesday Statement on Immigration from the California Catholic Conference of Bishops

Sacramento, CA - Today marks the beginning of the Lenten Season, a time when Christian people devote ourselves more intentionally to the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in an earnest effort to reform our lives in the image of Jesus Christ. We use this occasion to call upon Catholics and all people of good will in California and throughout the United States to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable and excluded in our society. Urgent attention needs to be given to our neighbors who are migrants and refugees, especially those immigrants who are undocumented. They are being unjustly targeted and vilified.

We are deeply concerned about the possibility of widespread deportations that will break up families and break down our communities. Fear is now growing in our neighborhoods and schools. The work of businesses and farms is being disrupted. We seem to be turning away from our nation’s long history of renewed and innovation inspired by successive generations of immigrants and refugees. We are a nation of immigrants. We have a long history of welcoming those fleeing violence in other countries. We should not turn our back on this proud legacy, especially in this current moment in our history.

As pastors, we witness firsthand every day the fear in our communities. We call upon the new Administration and Congress in Washington to do everything in their power to ease the climate of fear that is now gripping our communities. It is long past time for our leaders to stop allowing this issue to be used for political advantage and set themselves to the task of fixing our broken immigration system. The principles and priorities for immigration reform are well-known and they are reasonable. We urgently need reforms in our visa and guest worker programs. We need reforms that keep families together and recognize that those who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process. We need to provide those who are here and who are detained already have the legal right of due process.

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Some concrete measures are already under consideration. In Congress, the Federal BRIDGE Act, S.128/H.R. 496, for instance, will protect DACA students (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). In Sacramento, the California Values Act, SB 54, would protect the safety and well-being of all Californians by ensuring that state and local resources are not used to assist in deportations that would separate families. It would also do so by having the effect of reducing crime, since undocumented persons would not fear approaching a law enforcement office to report a crime. We support these proposals as well as other reasonable steps to address immigration in a compas-

(see Immigration Statement, p. 12)
Archbishop Calls for Unity, Focus on Christ During Immigration Panel

MODESTO, CA - Fear, uncertainty and terror are part of the immigrant experience in Los Angeles, Archbishop José H. Gomez said Feb. 17 during a panel on immigration at a Vatican-sponsored conference.

The fear has continued to spread since the election of President Donald Trump, he said, reporting that many children at archdiocesan Catholic schools are afraid they’ll go home one afternoon and find their parents have been deported.

“I do not like the sense of indifference and cruelty that seems to be coming out of this new administration in Washington,” the archbishop said. “They are playing with people’s emotions and toying with people’s lives and futures, and that’s not right.”

The archbishop shared how he’d received a call from a pastor last week, reporting that Immigration and Customs Enforcement had been picking up undocumented immigrants at a local supermarket. The pastor canceled some church festivities so that his parishioners would not pick up groceries. While the report turned out to be false, the archbishop said, it illustrates the prevalence of anxiety in the community.

“We need to stick together, to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ,” the archbishop said. “We need to keep calm and make our judgments based on facts, not politics.”

The U.S. bishops have voiced opposition to extending the wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, the executive order on refugees, and the archbishop himself has often called for deportations to cease until immigration reform is implemented.

“The raids did not start with this president. The previous president deported more than anyone in American history, close to 3 million people,” the archbishop said. “And most of them were not violent criminals. And many of them were parents forced to leave their homes and their children. So we need to keep that perspective. What we really need is immigration reform.”

He called an “enforcement-only” approach to reform a “humanitarian nightmare.”

“We cannot let our judgment to get clouded by our frustrations and fears,” the archbishop said. “We cannot allow our Christian voice to be reduced to just one more partisan voice on this issue.”

The advocacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez are worthy of study by those attending the World Meeting of Popular Movements, the archbishop said. Both of these Civil Rights leaders were people of faith.

“We cannot get stuck in rhetorical actions that are angry reactions,” he said. “We have to be convinced that our cause is just and that God will help us in converting the hearts of our opponents—even the president of the United States.”

The archbishop also highlighted two concrete measures that could help immigrants in the near future—the Bridge Act and SB 54. The Bridge Act would grant those currently benefitting from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to remain in the United States. These immigrants—or “Dreamers” —were illegally brought to the United States when they were children. President Trump has expressed the possibility of compromising his otherwise strict immigration policy in such cases, recently saying he would treat these immigrants “with a lot of heart.”

California State Senator Kevin de Leon introduced the second measure, SB 54, to prevent local law enforcement from functioning as federal government agents. De Leon stressed that the bill would prevent local law enforcement from deporting undocumented immigrants.

“We need these bills to get passed. We need your help. We all need to work together,” the archbishop said. “We need to start there, piece by piece, until we fix every aspect of our immigration system. Our cause is the noble cause is of human dignity, that men and women are children of God, that life is sacred, no matter the color of your skin or your country of origin. A person is still a person, even if the person is without papers.”

The Feb. 16-19 conference is part of the Meeting of Popular Movements, which Pope Francis began in 2014 to bring Church and grassroots leaders together.

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(Mary's Garden, cont. from page 7) larly, have joined in and are supporting the garden. One gentleman, purchased a plaque, a bench in the garden for his mother and sister, and a donation in one visit. Another parishioner told me he was going to give a donation and surprised me by giving a generous donation in gold coin. Even people who are not of this parish have made donations after visiting the garden. And yet, the garden is not even halfway finished. It is a work in progress. Just like us.

The Garden is already giving back to the Parish. People who are burdened come into the garden and something happens. There is an understanding between the sorrows and troubles they feel and the consolation Mary offers. For who is better to understand sorrow than the Blessed Mother, who sat at the foot of the cross and watched her own son suffer and die for our sins. What better place to go when in search of God’s understanding and love, but to Our Heavenly Mother, who tenderly takes your hand to lead you to her son.

This world can be a dark place for all of us sometimes. It is nice to know that there is a place of beauty to come to and pray for the Blessed Mother’s intercession on our behalf. Saint Joseph’s Marian Garden is and will always be one of those places. Through our devotion to Mary, she will guide all who seek the love of Christ to our Heavenly Father. The treasure that God blessed Saint Joseph’s Parish with is a little garden, a Marian Garden.
Bishop Conley: Mass Deportations Will Not Fix our Immigration System

Lincoln, Neb., Feb 27 (CNA/EWTN News) - Controversial immigration policies issued by United States President Donald Trump’s have thus far prompted numerous critiques from concerned U.S. Catholic bishops.

The most recent order, issued Feb. 20, directed officials to more aggressively find, arrest, and deport illegal immigrants, regardless of whether they have committed serious crimes.

In his most recent column, “Standing in Solidarity,” Bishop James Conley of Lincoln joined other bishops in their criticism of the order, saying it would do “very little to resolve the immigration problems in our country.”

“No will it meaningfully impact the security of our nation, or the safety of our citizens,” he said.

He noted that the previous administration also oversaw numerous deportations, which had little effect on the security of the nation.

“Mass deportation is a panacea: the appearance of an answer without really resolving anything,” he said.

In his column, Bishop Conley explained that the Catholic Church’s teaching on immigration is based on three principles: “(T)hat families have the right to migrate for economic opportunities, for freedom, or for safety; that nations have the right to security, to fixed borders and ordered policies for immigrants; that as an obligation of justice and mercy, nations who can receive immigrants without detriment to the welfare of their citizens should do so.”

Bishop Conley argued that the United States government “does not adequately address its citizens’ right to safety,” nor does it “adequately respect the natural right of families to migration.”

“In short, our immigration system is broken, and that broken system is the cause of serious injustice,” he wrote.

“Whatever the reason for it, our broken immigration system is an injustice to immigrants and to all Americans. That injustice has tragic consequences in the lives of real families, who reflect the image of the Trinity.”

The state of Nebraska and its capital city of Lincoln, where Bishop Conley is based, are known for being particularly welcoming to refugees. Last year, Nebraska led the nation in resettling the most refugees per capita, according to federal government data. The state is a strong draw for refugees because of its stable economy and accessibility to jobs.

In 2016, Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska resettled 231 people (72 families), and placed 47 people in employment within three months of their arrival to the U.S. These refugees were primarily from the countries of Burma, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Four of these countries—Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Sudan—are Muslim-majority countries listed on the previous visa ban issued by President Trump.

Bishop Conley urged Catholics to remember that nearly 40 percent of Hispanics in the United States are Catholic, and that the Catholic Church in America is an immigrant Church. There was once a time in the history of the nation where Catholic immigrants from Germany, Ireland, Bohemia, Italy, and many other nations were similarly attacked, he said.

He urged the faithful to stand in solidarity with their fellow members of the Body of Christ when they are unfairly stereotyped as “thuggish criminals or economic liabilities,” and encouraged them to “expect better” policies from their government than mass deportations and extreme policies that hurt the vulnerable.

“I stand in solidarity with immigrant families living in fear of what might be coming for them. I stand in solidarity with American citizens, looking for real security, instead of political showmanship and rhetoric. I stand in solidarity with those politicians and law enforcement agents working to find fair and humane solutions to complex problems. I stand in solidarity with those living in poverty or danger, seeking some promise of safety, and opportunity for their children,” he wrote.

“As Catholics, we must continue to call for real, comprehensive, safe, and just immigration reform. But we cannot accept the panaceas of mass detention and deportation. Americans, immigrants, and the Church should expect something better than that.”

President Trump is expected to issue a new executive order on immigration this week, after his first executive order on immigration was temporarily blocked by a federal judge Feb. 4. ❖
Guest Commentary: Other Persons Are a Gift

by Sister Constance Veit, I.S.P.

A few days ago I met a very little girl who made a big impression on me. Grace and her older brother Benedict suffer from a rare genetic disorder that has resulted in serious hearing impairment and limited physical growth. The two come to our home for the elderly each week with their mother to pray the rosary with our Residents. Watching Grace and Benedict interact with the elderly, I was struck by their maturity and graciousness. I almost felt that I was in the presence of angels—such was the radiance of these two beautiful little ones in the midst of our frail seniors.

In all likelihood, Grace and Benedict will never make an impact on the world scene, and yet I believe that they, and so many other little, hidden souls, make a huge difference in our world spiritually. This is what our Holy Father is suggesting by his Lenten message this year. The theme he has proposed for our 2017 journey through Lent is The Word Is a Gift. Other Persons Are a Gift.

Using the parable of Lazarus and the rich man from St. Luke’s Gospel, Pope Francis turns our attention to those whom we might usually ignore. He compares the anonymity of the rich man, who is never named in Scripture, with Lazarus, who appears with a specific name and a unique story. Lazarus “becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast.”

The Holy Father continues, “Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value.” Lent, he says, is a favorable season for recognizing the face of Christ in God’s little ones. “Each of us meets people like this every day,” says the pope. “Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable.”

This is what our foundress Saint Jeanne Jugan did so beautifully. Mindful of Christ’s promise that whatever we do to the least of his brothers and sisters we do to him, she opened her heart and her home definitively to the needy elderly of her day. She often counseled the young Little Sisters, “Never forget that the poor are Our Lord … When you will be near the poor give yourself wholeheartedly, for it is Jesus himself whom you care for in them.”

Jeanne Jugan looked upon each elderly person with the loving gaze of Christ and so she saw each one as a treasure worthy of reverence and loving care. She knew that despite outward appearances, each person to whom she offered hospitality was someone for whom Christ died and rose again; each one was someone worthy of the gift of her own life.

Pope Francis’ prayer this Lent is that the Holy Spirit will lead us “on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God’s word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need.” Let us pray for one another, he concluded, “so that by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and the poor. Then we will be able to share to the full the joy of Easter.”

I thank God for my recent encounter with Grace and Benedict, for they opened my eyes anew to the beauty in each human person. My wish for you this Lent is that God lead might you to a similar life-changing encounter.

Gift. Other Persons Are a Gift.

During this Lenten season we will hear the familiar refrain from Psalm 95, “If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” The Lord God always hears the cry of the poor. God is all merciful and we are judged by how we see, hear, and act in accordance with that mercy. May our fasting, penance, charity and solidarity help us to live as one people under God’s merciful gaze.

March 25: Annunciation of the Lord

Child & Youth Protection

If you or someone you know has been harmed by sexual misconduct by clergy, a Church employee, or volunteer, please contact:

Julie Sparacio, Director
Child and Youth Protection
707-566-3309
jsparacio@srdocose.org
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NUMBERING MY DAYS
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Chene Heady
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LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTERS WITH CHRIST
The Powerful 30 Day Prayer to St. Joseph

Just in Time for St. Joseph’s March 19th Feast

by Diane Montagna, Aleteia

For centuries Christians have turned to St. Joseph as a powerful patron and faithful guardian, father and friend. Invoked as the Glory of home life, Patron of the Dying and Terror of Demons, Christians call upon St. Joseph for healing and conversion, help with their children, a new job or home, and for all their needs of body and soul.

Honored as the Patron of the Universal Church, St. Joseph’s paternal protection of the Lord Jesus continues even from heaven, as he watches over Christ’s Mystical Body on earth. The foster-father of the Son of God is also a father to those who have become God’s sons and daughters through the sacrament of baptism.

Saints and popes down the centuries have experienced and extolled St. Joseph’s great power to intercede. “Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious saint,” wrote St. Teresa of Avila in her autobiography, “for I know by long experience what blessings he can obtain for us from God.”

“Men of every rank and country should fly to the trust and guard of the blessed Joseph,” especially fathers of families, Pope Leo XIII wrote in his encyclical on devotion to St. Joseph, Quamquam pluries.

Pope Benedict XVI especially encouraged married couples and parents to turn to St. Joseph, saying: “God alone could grant Joseph the strength to trust the Angel. God alone will give you, dear married couples, the strength to raise your family as he wants. Ask it of him! God loves to be asked for what he wishes to give. Ask him for the grace of a true and ever more faithful love patterned after his own. As the Psalm magnificently puts it: his ‘love is established for ever, his loyalty will stand as long as the heavens’ (Ps 88:3).”

And Pope St. John Paul II, with Pope Benedict and their predecessors, held up St. Joseph as a model of the interior life, pointing to the silence of St. Joseph—shrouded in silence as they are—an aura of deep contemplation. Joseph was in daily contact with the mystery ‘hidden from ages past,’ and which ‘dwelt’ under his roof.

The liturgical feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Confessor of the Faith, is celebrated each year on March 19th. In preparation for this feast, we offer our readers a powerful 30 Day Prayer to St. Joseph.

Why 30 days, you might wonder? According to tradition, St. Joseph died just before Jesus entered into his public ministry. The prayer therefore honors St. Joseph for each of the 30 years he spent with Jesus and Mary on earth.

This prayer can be said during any 30-day period, but with St. Joseph’s feast (March 19th) fast approaching, now is a particularly opportune time to plan on beginning on March 19th, to turn to him asking his help and guidance for all your needs, the needs of your family, loved ones, friends, and all those in need of prayer.

And if you begin one or two days late, no need to worry. St. Joseph lives outside of time, and has been known to answer on the March 25th Feast of the Annunciation.

THIRTY DAY PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH IN HONOR OF THE 30 YEARS HE SPENT WITH JESUS AND MARY

Ever blessed and glorious Joseph, kind and loving father, and helpful friend of all in sorrow! You are the good father and protector of orphans, the defender of the defenseless, the patron of those in need and sorrow.

Look kindly on my request. My sins have drawn down on me the just displeasure of my God, and so I am surrounded with unhappiness. To you, loving guardian of the Family of Nazareth, do I go for help and protection. Listen, then, I beg you, with fatherly concern, to my earnest prayers, and obtain for me the favors I ask.

I ask it by the infinite mercy of the eternal Son of God, which moved Him to take our nature and to be born into this world of sorrow.

I ask it by the marvelous submission He showed in accepting the Divine order to depart from the company of the Child Jesus.

I ask it by the loyalty which He showed in leaving His holy Mother future victims of our sins and of their great love for us.

I ask it by the joy which filled your soul, when the adorable Child was lost to you and His mother for three days.

I ask it by your joy at finding Him in the temple, and by the comfort you found at Nazareth, while living in the company of the Child Jesus.

I ask it by the wonderful submission He showed in His obedience to you.

I ask it by the perfect love and conformity you showed in accepting the Divine order to depart from this life, and from the company of Jesus and Mary.

I ask it by the joy which filled your soul, when the Redeemer of the world, triumphant over death and hell, entered into the possession of His kingdom and led you into it with special honors.

I ask it through Mary’s glorious Assumption, and through that endless happiness you have with her in (see 30 Day Prayer, p. 15)
Bonin, to provide them with knowledge and a living experience of what is essential in the Cursillo Movement. The goal of Cursillo is to communicate God’s love through friendship in the moveable square meter where God has placed us at this exact moment. The CDC uses a schedule and format like the Cursillo Weekend, beginning on Thursday evening and ending on Sunday afternoon. Each day creates a different environment in and through the participation of cursillistas in friendship. The course provides a relaxing atmosphere and daily Eucharist. For more information on the Cursillo Movement in the Diocese of Santa Rosa, contact Debbie Simonson, the Communications Director at 904-463-1070 or debbiejan13@aol.com. Our website is www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com

5th Prayer Shawl Blessing by Fr. Mario Laguros
The Assumption Church Prayer Shawl Ministry, formed in February 2014, under the guidance of Beryl Newman, with the support and encouragement of Fr. Mario Laguros, is an expression of commitment to be people of God’s healing light and comfort through the creation of shawls that are lovingly made and prayed over. Those who receive the shawls continue to be held in prayer. The shawl is meant to symbolize the love and embrace of God. When the shawls are completed, they are displayed in church and blessed, and are then ready to be distributed to those who need comfort, support and prayers. To date, the group has made over 150 shawls which are blessed during mass with parishioners present. Pictured here with Fr. Mario, are Beryl Newman, left, and Barbara Davis, members of the Prayer Shawl Group.

Local Cursillistas attended the Cursillo de Cursillos
Deacon Joe Olsen, Nora Olsen, Olga Dorado, Molly Touchette, and Evelyn Estrella attended the Cursillo de Cursillos (CDC) in Oakland the weekend of February 4. The CDC is a course on the Foundational Charism of Cursillo for those cursillistas who are searching for something beyond the Cursillo Weekend course. The CDC was developed by its Founder, Eduardo Bonin, to provide them with knowledge and a

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March 18: St. Cyril of Jerusalem

(30 Day Prayer, cont. from page14)
the presence of God. O good father! I beg you, all your sufferings, sorrows, and joys, to hear me and obtain for me what I ask.

(Here name your petitions or think of them.)

Obtain for all those who have asked my prayers everything that is useful to them in the plan of God. Finally, my dear patron and father, be with me and all who are dear to me in our last moments, that we may eternally sing the praises of JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH. ‘A blameless life, St. Joseph, may we lead, by your kind patronage from danger freed.’

Hanna Boys Center Welcomes Four New Board Members for 2017
February 8, 2017 - SONOMA, CA - At its January 2017 Board meeting, Hanna Boys Center elected four new Regents to its Board of Directors: Jack Boland, founder and president of Baker Street Advertising, who will be serving on the development committee; Peter Connolly, a retired Wells Fargo executive who will be serving on the finance and investment committees; Frank Conway, corporate attorney with the Meyer Corporation, who will serve on the governance committee; and Mary Corroon, owner and president of Corroon Consulting, who will be serving on the development committee. Hanna Boys Center is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors composed of Trustees, which have fiduciary responsibilities; Regents, which act as advisors and serve on working committees; and Regents Emeritus, which serve as ambassadors for the organization. The Board is chaired by Bill Schrader, who is also chairman of Exchange Bank of Santa Rosa. "Hanna’s Board members come from across Northern California and bring a wide variety of expertise and experience from both the for-profit and non-profit worlds. But we all share one common goal: creating positive, permanent change for at-risk youth in the Bay Area and, through the work of the Hanna Institute, throughout California. I’m so grateful for the willingness of our latest Board members to help in this critical work of overcoming the effects of trauma and adversity so prevalent among young people today," noted Bill Schrader.

Since 1945, Hanna Boys Center has changed the lives of thousands of at-risk, motivated youth through faith, education and caring, helping them grow into productive members of society. Hanna exists to help at-risk teens overcome the effects of childhood adversity—to become responsible, productive adults and realize their highest potential. We do this by providing a nurturing and therapeutic residential environment, a tailored educational model, and trained, caring adults who help kids create positive, permanent change in their lives. http://www.hannacenter.org.

NORTH COAST CATHOLIC / MARCH 2017 / www.srdiocese.org
My Day in a Nicaraguan Garbage Dump

An Eyewitness Report by Rachael Joyner

The following is a field report from Rachael Joyner, a writer for Cross Catholic Outreach. During a trip to Nicaragua she experienced the harsh realities facing hundreds of families struggling to survive the horrifying conditions of a city garbage dump.

I didn’t know which was worse: the smell of burning tires and decomposing trash or seeing a 3-year-old, with no shoes and a dirty face, digging through that trash. My stomach sank as I held back tears. I had only been in Chinandega’s garbage dump for a few hours and I was desperate to leave.

I had seen developing-world poverty before in Haiti and east Africa, but it paled in comparison to what I saw in this 20-acre garbage dump in northern Nicaragua. Maybe it was the hopeless look in their eyes, or the immediacy of their poverty that sent me reeling. It’s hard to get much lower than living in a city garbage dump. Most of them had no shoes. Their days are spent scavenging through that trash. My stomach sank as I held back tears. I had only been in Chinandega’s garbage dump for a few hours and I was desperate to leave.

Today, they live in dilapidated shacks made from scraps of cardboard, wood, and tin collected from the dump, which offer little protection during the rainy season. Their days are spent scavenging the dump for plastic bottles, aluminum cans, bits of steel and glass, and pieces of paper to sell to recycling companies so they can feed their families. Some of the children attend school, but most work alongside their parents in the dump.

The area next to the dump where these families live is called El Limonal, but people in Chinandega have another name for it: the Triangle of Death. It gained this nickname because the triangular piece of land where they live is surrounded by the dump, an overflowing cemetery, and a contaminated river where the city’s sewage is dumped. The nickname is not an exaggeration.

The first thing that hit me as I walked through the dump was the overwhelming smell and the smoke, a kind of thick haze that engulfs everything. It stung my eyes and, with each breath, burnt my throat.

It reminded me of Dante’s description of the Inferno in his book, “The Divine Comedy.” There were people everywhere digging through mounds of garbage and little children rifling through bag after bag of trash. I watched one little boy, who couldn’t have been older than 4, pull a rotting banana peel from a bag and chew on it. He had probably not eaten yet that day because his family was too poor to buy food, and now he was turning to garbage to ward off his hunger.

It was hardest seeing the children in the dump. Most of them had no shoes. Their clothes were tattered, and a thick layer of dirt covered their bodies. When I first got to the dump, a crowd of people were gathered around a young boy, who was maybe 8 or 10. He had a hole in his foot the size of an orange. Though he was shaking from the pain, he didn’t make a sound. Like many in the dump, he didn’t have shoes and made the mistake of stepping in a pile of trash that was still burning underneath. The heat burnt the skin right off of his foot, leaving the large, oozing sore we were all staring at. Finally, his father carried him home to “put some cream” on his foot. (They were too poor to go to the clinic.) I spent the rest of the trip wondering if that boy would lose his foot or spend the next six months dealing with an infection that could have been prevented with something as simple as a pair of shoes.

Health hazards such as these abound in the dump, and children are especially susceptible. As the families pick through the garbage, they inhale toxic fumes from routine waste burning, which cause respiratory problems such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and pneumonia. Parasites from the garbage cause intestinal problems and bleeding. Bugs burrow into their skin, causing rashes and sores. Though most of these are treatable ailments, the majority of families are too poor to go to a clinic or buy medicine, so they suffer for years and some die.

That’s when I realized the desperation of these families’ situations. As one woman put it, “I work in the dump because I have no other options. I live in a house made of cardboard because it is all I have.” These people have nothing. I hardly lasted four hours in the dump, and these families have been living here for years.

The desperation of the families and the graphic images of the dump are what led John Bland, founder and executive director of Amigos for Christ, to quit his job in the U.S. and devote his life to helping them.

“I had never seen such hopelessness until I came here,” said Bland, a devout Catholic whose Nicaragua-based organization has been ministering to the poor for more than a decade. “These people desperately needed help. And I thought, ‘Why not me?’”

Since its founding, Amigos has helped hundreds of poor Nicaraguans in a variety of ways. In addition to sturdy new houses, Amigos has provided clean water, health care, education for their children, vocational training and micro-credit loans to begin small businesses — all the things these families need to rebuild their own lives. Bland also mobilized the local Catholic church, which now works closely with Amigos to tend to the spiritual needs of the people.

As Bland led me through the dump that day, he explained that none of this life-changing work would be possible without the financial support of organizations such as Cross Catholic Outreach and its generous Catholic donors in the U.S.

“We could not do this work without Cross Catholic Outreach. We need help with the resources to accomplish the work, and that’s one of Cross Catholic Outreach’s strengths. Working together is tremendous... because something very positive that glorifies our awesome God comes out of it.”

As we discussed Amigos’ ongoing poverty relief efforts, Bland was overjoyed that Cross Catholic Outreach’s donors were willing to support him in his life-changing work. I felt a lift from the conversation too. It made that terrible day bearable.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to Cross Catholic Outreach and its work with Catholic ministries overseas, use either the enclosed postage-paid brochure or send donations to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01319, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168.
Called by God to Rescue the Poor

American Catholics are embracing God’s economy as they help the poor in Latin America

Sandra Maria goes to work each day even though she knows it is slowly killing her.

Maria, a mother of five and a grandmother, spends each day scavenging in a city garbage dump in northern Nicaragua for recyclables, which she later sells for money to buy food. The work is hard — toxic fumes rising up from the mounds of putrid garbage sting her eyes and burn her throat as hordes of mosquitoes buzz around her body but not having food for her family is harder.

“The smoke is killing us and we bathe in dirty water,” says Maria, who lives in the shanty town inside the garbage dump with her family. “We would do anything to get away from the dump, but right now it is the only way for us to make money to survive.”

Maria’s family is one of hundreds who scrape out a living each day in Chinandega’s 20-acre garbage dump. In many Latin American countries, the poor flock to city garbage dumps because it is often the only steady work they can find and they can at least earn enough to guarantee their children a meal. Still, the pay is meager — the equivalent of between $2 and $10 U.S. dollars a week.

The dire situation in Chinandega is just one example of the intense poverty plaguing Latin America. A 2011 World Bank study found over 13 percent of Latin America’s population living on less than $1.25 a day, while 26 percent lacked access to basic sanitation. The fact that families are turning to garbage dumps for survival, shows the severity of the need.

“Garbage dumps and dirty streets are terrible playgrounds for children to be growing up in,” says Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, whose ministry supports several aid programs across Latin America for families struggling to survive intense poverty. “If we don’t do something to break the vicious cycle of poverty these children are trapped in, they are doomed to become adults still living in the same deadly environment.”

Despite the dismal statistics and fear over the future of an uncertain economy, dozens of local outreach ministries run by strong Catholic missionaries are tapping into God’s economy to help the poor in Latin America. And, already, they’ve seen great returns as lives are being restored.

One such life is that of Maria Elena. The mother of four used to work in the horrific 42-acre garbage dump in Managua, Nicaragua. She barely made enough money to feed her children, let alone send them to school. They often came to work with her in the dump, which she hated because it made them sick.

Maria Elena is now part of a jewelry-making program run by a local Catholic ministry where she earns enough money making necklaces and bracelets from recycled material to help support her family — even send her children to school.

“This program has been a great help,” she says. “I don’t know what we would have done without it.”

The simple program that changed Maria Elena’s life is one of several projects in Latin America supported by Cross Catholic Outreach. Thanks to contributions provided by its U.S. donors, Cross Catholic Outreach is able to partner with Catholic ministries in the field who are running great programs but don’t have the funds to sustain them. Support from American Catholics keeps these important projects up and running.

“We’re amazed by the unwavering compassion and generosity of these donors. Even at a time when people are hurting here in the U.S. because of the economy, they are still giving to help the poor around the world,” says Cavnar.

“They show great faith, and we are seeing the positive returns of that faith in the lives of the poor.”

Those positive returns are especially visible in the fight against world hunger. For example, monthly financial support from Cross Catholic Outreach allows Las Mercedes Nutrition Center in Honduras to feed more than a hundred poor, malnourished children who find themselves abandoned in garbage dumps and in the streets. Cross Catholic Outreach also feeds thousands of poor children through the support of school feeding programs and food shipments to countries such as Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

“It is amazing what God can do when you trust him,” said John Bland, executive director of Amigos for Christ, a Nicaraguan ministry serving the rural poor and people living in Chinandega’s city garbage dump.

With help from Cross Catholic Outreach, his ministry built homes for families living in the dump — families who have spent much of their lives wondering if they’d be able to collect enough plastic bottles to buy food.

“The poor have unbelievable faith, as do these Catholic ministries serving in the field, helping them each day,” Cavnar says. “We count it a privilege to help them and, in doing so, live out our faith.”

To make a tax-deductible contribution to Cross Catholic Outreach and its work with Catholic ministries overseas, either use the enclosed postage-paid brochure or send donations to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01319, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168.

How to Help:

Your help is needed for Cross Catholic Outreach to bring Christ’s mercy to the poorest of the poor. To make a donation, use the enclosed postage-paid brochure or mail a gift to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01319, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168.
Una Temporada Muy Grande De Alcanzar Gracias

El tiempo de Cuaresma comenzó el 1 de Marzo, con el Miércoles de Ceniza. Ya que esta es una temporada muy grande de alcanzar gracias, también es una temporada muy grande de lograr alcanzar conversión, renovación y cumplimiento de resoluciones. La vida está llena de una abundancia de ‘deseos’. Deseamos dedicarnos más a la oración. Deseamos tener un mejor horario para orar en el hogar. Deseamos poder superar algunos de nuestros defectos. Deseamos tener un mejor control sobre nuestras impulsos respecto a comida y bebida. Un montón de deseos pero lo que a menudo falta es la gracia ‘de la voluntad’ para participar en lo que la Iglesia nos invita a renovarnos y redoblar nuestros esfuerzos para hacer realidad nuestros deseos espirituales. Realmente este tiempo de Cuaresma nos invita a renovarnos y superar estas faltas espirituales.

La Cuaresma es el tiempo en que la Iglesia nos invita a renovarnos y redoblar nuestros esfuerzos para hacer realidad nuestros deseos espirituales. Realmente este tiempo es un poco engañoso porque implica que la Cuaresma es una temporada durante la cual nuestros deseos espirituales. Realmente este tiempo de Cuaresma no implica que la gracia ‘de la voluntad’ para participar en lo que la Iglesia nos invita a renovarnos y redoblar nuestros esfuerzos para hacer realidad nuestros deseos espirituales. Realmente este tiempo de Cuaresma no implica que la gracia ‘de la voluntad’ para participar en la batalla necesaria para comenzar a superar estas faltas espirituales.

La Cuaresma es un tiempo especial en el que los católicos son llamados a hacer un acondicionamiento en nosotros mismos en asuntos espirituales. La Cuaresma tiene una duración de 40 días y un importante tiempo litúrgico en el que la Iglesia llama a los fieles a la penitencia y conversión para prepararse bien a vivir los misterios de la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección de Cristo en la Semana Santa.

La Cuaresma es un importante tiempo litúrgico en el que la Iglesia llama a los fieles a la penitencia y conversión para prepararse bien a vivir los misterios de la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección de Cristo en la Semana Santa.

La Cuaresma es un tiempo especial en el que los católicos son invitados a convertirse. Aquí te presentamos 5 puntos importantes a tener en cuenta:

1. Oración, mortificación y caridad: Las tres grandes prácticas cuaresmales
La oración es la condición indispensable para el encuentro con Dios. En la oración, el cristiano ingresa en el diálogo íntimo con el Señor, deja que la gracia entre en su corazón y, como la Virgen María, se abre a la acción del Espíritu Santo dando una respuesta libre y generosa (ver Lc 1,38).
La mortificación se realiza cotidianamente y sin necesidad de hacer grandes sacrificios. Con ella se ofrece a Cristo aquellos momentos que generan molestias y se acepta con humildad y alegría las adversidades.
De la misma manera, saber renunciar a ciertas cosas legítimas ayuda a vivir el desapego y el desprendimiento. Dentro de esta práctica cuaresmal están el ayuno y la abstinencia que será explicadas más adelante.
La caridad es necesaria como refiere San León Magno: “si deseamos llegar a la Pascua santificadas y libres de pecado, debemos poner un interés especialísimo en la adquisición de esta virtud, que contiene en si a las demás y cubre multitud de pecados”.
Sobre esta práctica San Juan Pablo II explica que está enraizada “en lo más hondo del corazón humano: toda persona siente el deseo de ponerse en contacto con los otros, y se realiza plenamente cuando se da libremente a los demás”.

2. El ayuno y la abstinencia
El ayuno consiste en ingerir una sola comida “fuerte” al día, mientras que la abstinencia consiste...
BUENOS AIRES (ACI) - El Arzobispo de La Plata en Argentina, Mons. Héctor Aguer, reflexionó sobre la importancia de vivir “la espiritualidad del abandono” en un mundo lleno de inquietudes, donde “vivimos con los pelos de punta” y es difícil encontrar la calma incluso en los momentos de oración. La gente moderna “nos creemos muy protagonistas de todo y a Dios lo invocamos cada tanto para que nos ayude en nuestras empresas. Pero no sé si la cosa va por ahí”, advirtió el Prelado en su programa semanal “Claves para un Mundo Mejor” emitido por Canal 9. “Cómo se puede hacer para tranquilizarse un poco especialmente en aquellos momentos en los cuales nos dedicamos a la oración o estamos a solas?” cuestionó el Arzobispo, quien propuso acudir al Salmo 130 (131) para encontrar una respuesta. “Señor, mi corazón no es ambicioso, ni mis ojos altaneros; no pretendiendo grandes que superan mi capacidad; sino que acaló y moderó mis deseos, como un niño en brazos de su madre. Espero Israel en el Señor ahora y por siempre”, canta el salmista. Mons. Aguer explicó que en la cultura bíblica “el niño mamaba hasta los tres o cuatro años de su mamá y la idea que el salmista quiere expresar es que cuando el niño es pequeño “acérquese a Dios”, puede descansar en su regazo sin inquietud alguna, “el amor de Dios tiene un carácter maternal y por eso uno le habla de un Dios que es padre y madre”. El amor maternal por nosotros”.

“El Cantico de los Salmos revela muchas veces que el corazón de Dios se acerca a sus hijos, se voltea hacia ellos con un amor maternal por nosotros”. La actitud del niño en los brazos de su madre, de la que habla el salmista, es el “espíritu que hay que tratar de ir consiguiendo. Espero que esto nos sirva para algo en nuestra vida”, concluyó Mons. Aguer.

Papa Francisco: La verdadera felicidad viene de Dios y no del dinero

VATICANO (ACI) - O se sirve a Dios o a las riquezas, porque “no se puede servir a dos señores”. Esta fue la reflexión del Papa Francisco en la homilía de la casa de Santa Marta a primera hora de la mañana al recordar que uno de los mayores dones de Dios es el de la felicidad. El Papa comentó el pasaje del joven rico “que quería seguir al Señor, pero al final era tan rico que eligió las riquezas”. “Qué difícil es que un rico entre en el Reino de los cielos”, afirmó. Al comentar el Evangelio, habló de la actitud de Pedro ante Jesús cuando le dice: “Ya lo ves, nosotros lo hemos dejado todo y te hemos seguido”. Y la respuesta de Jesús “fue clara”: “nadie que haya dejado todo quedará sin recibir el cierto por uno”. “El Señor no sabe dar menos de todo. Cuando Él dona algo se dona a sí mismo, que es todo” porque “la plenitud de Dios es una plenitud realizada en la cruz”. “Este es el don de Dios: la plenitud crucificada. Y este es el estilo del cristiano: buscar la plenitud, recibir la plenitud lo seguir por este camino. No es fácil. ¿Y cuál es el signo de que voy adelante en este dar todo y recibir todo? Glorifica al Señor con ojo generoso y contento. En cada ofrenda muestra tu rostro alegre”. Sin embargo, “el joven rico tiene el rostro oscurecido y anda triste”. “No ha sido capaz de recibir, de acoger esta plenitud” pero “los santos, Pedro mismo, la han acogido y en medio de las pruebas, de las dificultades tenían el rostro alegre, el ojo contento y la alegría del corazón”.

Francisco finalizó recordando a San Alberto Hurtado: “trabajaba siempre, dificultad tras dificultad. Trabajaba por los pobres. Fue de verdad un hombre que hizo camino en ese país. La caridad para con la asistencia a los hombres. Pero fue perseguido, con muchos sufrimientos. Pero cuando estaba ahi, clavado en la cruz, la frase era: ‘Contenido, Señor, Contenido’.” “Que él nos enseñe a ir en este camino, nos de la plenitud y nos de la felicidad. El Señor, contento”.

“Hace muchos años escribí que la vida del cielo “no solo de pan vive el hombre, sino de toda palabra que sale de la boca de Dios” (Mt 4,4). El ayuno no prohibe comer un poco de alimento por la mañana y por la noche. Es obligatorio desde los 18 hasta los 59 años. En el caso de la abstención, si bien se refiere a no comer carnes, no impide el consumo de huevos, lácteos y cualquier condimento con grasa animal.

3. La Cuaresma comienza con el Miércoles de Ceniza y termina el Jueves Santo

Con el Miércoles de Ceniza comienzan los 40 días de preparación para la Pascua. Es día el sacerdote bendice e impone las cenizas hechas de las palmas bendecidas en el Domingo de Ramos del año anterior. Estas son impuestas haciendo la señal de la cruz en la frente y pronunciando las palabras bíblicas: «acuérdate que eres polvo y en polvo te convertirás», o «Conviértete y cree en el Evangelio». La ceniza representa un signo de humildad y le recuerda al cristiano su origen y su fin.

La Cuaresma termina en el Jueves Santo. Ese día la Iglesia conmemora la Última Cena en la que el Señor comió con sus apóstoles antes de ser crucificado el Viernes Santo.

4. La duración de la Cuaresma está basada en el símbolo del número 40 en la Biblia

Los 40 días de la Cuaresma representan los días que Jesús pasó en el desierto antes de comenzar su vida pública, los 40 días del diluvio, los 40 de la marcha del pueblo judío por el desierto, los 40 días de Moisés y Élias en la montaña, y los 400 años que duró la estancia de los judíos en Egipto.

En la Biblia el número cuatro simboliza el universo material, seguido de ceros significa el tiempo de la duración de la Cuaresma está basada en el símbolo del número 40 en la Biblia. "No solo de pan vive el hombre, sino de toda palabra que sale de la boca de Dios” (Mt 4,4). El ayuno no prohibe comer un poco de alimento por la mañana y por la noche. Es obligatorio desde los 18 hasta los 59 años. En el caso de la abstención, si bien se refiere a no comer carnes, no impide el consumo de huevos, lácteos y cualquier condimento con grasa animal.

5. El color litúrgico de la Cuaresma es el morado

El color litúrgico de la Cuaresma es el morado porque “no se puede servir a dos señores”. Esta fue la reflexión del Papa Francisco en la homilía de la casa de Santa Marta a primera hora de la mañana al recordar que uno de los mayores dones de Dios es el de la felicidad. El Papa comentó el pasaje del joven rico “que quería seguir al Señor, pero al final era tan rico que eligió las riquezas”. “Qué difícil es que un rico entre en el Reino de los cielos”, afirmó. Al comentar el Evangelio, habló de la actitud de Pedro ante Jesús cuando le dice: “Ya lo ves, nosotros lo hemos dejado todo y te hemos seguido”. Y la respuesta de Jesús “fue clara”: “nadie que haya dejado todo quedará sin recibir el cierto por uno”. “El Señor no sabe dar menos de todo. Cuando Él
Declaración del miércoles de ceniza sobre la inmigración de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de California

Sacramento, CA - Hoy inicia la temporada de la Cuaresma, momento en que el pueblo cristiano nos dedicamos, de forma más intencional, a las obras de misericordia, espirituales y corporales, en un esfuerzo sincero de conformar nuestras vidas a la imagen de Jesucristo. Aprovechamos esta ocasión para hacer un llamado a los católicos y a toda persona de buena voluntad en California y por todos los Estados Unidos, a que seamos solidarios con las personas vulnerables y excluidas de nuestra sociedad. Urge que presteamos atención a las necesidades de nuestros prójimos que son migrantes y refugiados, especialmente a los inmigrantes indocumentados. Injustamente se les están atacando y recluyéndolos en estos hermanos nuestros.

Estamos profundamente preocupados por la posibilidad que extensas deportaciones romperán a las familias y fragmentarán nuestras comunidades. Un tembloroso terror ahora está sofocando nuestras vecindades y escuelas. Se está impidiendo la industria de las empresas y las granjas californianas. Parece ser que estamos relegando al margen la larga trayectoria americana de la renovación e innovación que han inspirado generaciones sucesivas de inmigrantes y refugiados. Somos una nación de inmigrantes. Tenemos un largo historial de acoger a las personas que huyen de la violencia en otros países. No debemos darle la espalda a este legado orgulloso, especialmente en este momento actual del país.

Como párrocos, somos testigos del temor que diario aflige a nuestras comunidades. Hacemos un llamado a la nueva Administración y al Congreso en Washington para que alivien el clima de temor que ahora se apodera de nuestras comunidades. Ya es hora de que nuestros líderes dejen de polarizar sobre el tema de la migración para sacar provecho político y que se dediquen a la tarea de componer nuestro fracturado sistema de inmigración. Los principios y prioridades para la reforma de inmigración son razonables y bien conocidos. Nos hace falta la reforma de programa de visas familiares y de trabajadores extranjeros. Merecemos una reforma que mantenga la unidad de las familias y que reconozca el debido proceso de ley para cada persona. Deben proveer a los que ya están aquí sin documentos, y que ya contribuyen bastante a nuestra economía y sociedad, un camino eficaz hacia la regularización de su estado migratorio con la posibilidad de que se conviertan luego en ciudadanos.

Ya se están considerando algunas medidas concretas. En el Congreso, la ley Federal “BRIDGE”, S.128/H.R. 496, por ejemplo, protegerá a los estudiantes beneficiarios del programa DACA (Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia). En Sacramento, la Ley de Valores de California (California Values Act), SB 54, protegería la seguridad y el bienestar de todos los californianos al garantizar que los recursos estatales y locales no se utilicen para ayudar a llevar a cabo las deportaciones que separarían a las familias. Esta última también ayudaría a que disminuyan los actos delictivos ya que las personas indocumentadas no tendrían miedo de acercarse a un agente del orden público para denunciar un delito. Apoyamos estas propuestas, al igual que otras medidas razonables para abordar el tema de la inmigración de forma compasiva y considerada. Exhortamos a nuestros líderes políticos a que encuentren soluciones bipartidistas.

Los obispos católicos de California y los Estados Unidos apoyan la obligación del gobierno federal de proteger nuestras fronteras y respetar nuestras leyes de inmigración. También mantenemos que estos principios jurídicos deberían de estar siempre al servicio de la dignidad humana y del bien común de la sociedad. El sistema actual de leyes migratorias tiene carencias muy graves. Debido a éstas, el impulso actual de aumentar su aplicación e implementar las deportaciones masivas—sin primero reformar los fundamentos del sistema—solamente llevará a mayores violaciones de los derechos humanos y asaltos contra la dignidad humana.

Así como la Iglesia trabaja para proteger la vida de los niños no nacidos y para apoyar a los desempleados, a las personas sin hogar y a los que sufren por el hambre, no comprometemos de la misma manera a seguir apoyando los programas para migrantes y refugiados. Nuestras parroquias y servicios sociales, como Caridades Católicas, deberán seguir siendo solidarios con nuestros hermanos y hermanas que sufren.

Pedimos a todas las personas de fe que colaboren con sus vecinos para acoger y acompañar a aquellas personas que sientan el temor y la inseguridad. Debemos entender mejor y ponernos solidarios con el otro. El reconocer que todos compartimos la misma condición humana, los mismos profundos anhelos y esperanzas, nos ayudará a mejorar la respuesta a la angustia y la incertidumbre que existe entre nosotros mismos y en el país.

En esta época de Cuaresma, escucharemos el conocido estribillo del Salmo 95, “Si escuchan hoy su voz, no endurezcan su corazón”; El Señor Dios siempre escucha el clamor de los pobres. Dios es todo misericordioso y seremos juzgados por la manera en que vemos, escuchamos y actuamos conforme a esa misericordia. Que nuestro ayuno, penitencia, caridad y solidaridad nos ayuden a vivir como un solo pueblo bajo esta mirada misericordiosa de Dios.

(see Benedict Option, p. 24)
Three Tools of Lent

Sr. Caritas Marie, Director of the Santa Rosa Office of Marriage and Family Life

The goal of the liturgical season of Lent is to assist us to find Jesus more deeply. Our family lives are so busy, so full of pressing concerns and distractions, that it is very easy to relegate God to the periphery. Our wise Mother Church recognizes this human tendency and presents her family with this season and three tools to enable us to attain its goal: prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

As a child, I heard my parents discussing aspects of all three of these tools as Lent approached, but Lent to me meant extra family prayers, giving up candy until Easter and putting my spare change in the Rice Bowl on the kitchen table. These were serious deprivations for my child self, and so it took many years for me to realize that there might be more to these practices than just making me poorer and craving sugar.

Later in life, I heard a wise mother explaining Lenten practices to her daughters in a way that allowed me to reassess my approach to Lent. Keeping in mind the goal of Lent, she reminded other daughters that Lent is a season of special graces, a time to assess our life and our relationships and to use the Church’s tools to make corrections where necessary. Each of the tools can aid us in restoring the relationships essential to life—our relationship with God, others, and ourselves.

Prayer enables us to restore our relationship with God. All relationships require time, but trusting in His fidelity, we may be tempted to skimp on time with God, feeling satisfied with giving Him our Sunday Mass attendance while failing in the common courtesy of thanking Him for each day and each meal. My family frequently added praying through one of the Gospels before dinner or being faithful to our daily Rosary for our Lenten practice. Both of these were challenging for our lively family, but reflecting on these experiences, I can see that they both helped shape my understanding of the priority of our relationship with God.

Almsgiving includes all those acts which help us to restore our relationship with others. Giving financial support is good and necessary, but there are other forms of almsgiving that immediately affect our family life: the almsgiving of letting others have the last word, giving a cheery smile instead of a sarcastic response, or allowing another person the time and affirmation they need to flourish. Acts of this nature are like spiritual pushups—added as sacrifices for Lent, they can enable us to grow in virtue so that we can live more virtuously the rest of our lives.

Fasting is a voluntary restriction on something that is good—ordinarily food—for something better—a stronger relationship with God. It is one of the most powerful spiritual weapons we have, enabling us to strengthen our will, harness our desires, and raise our minds from the things of this life to heavenly realities. By God’s grace the little bodily mortifications that we choose for Lent can bring us back to right relationship with God and ourselves.

These three tools, prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, provide us with the means to grow closer to Christ and deepen our faith this Lent. May Our Lady obtain for us the grace to persevere in our Lenten resolutions and so to come to Easter with joyful and expectant hearts, rejoicing in Christ’s resurrection.

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National Council of Catholic Women celebrates 97 Years

Arlington, VA March 4, 2017 The National Council of Catholic Women, established by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, will celebrate its 97th year of serving the Church and communities since its founding March 4, 1920.

Historic milestones in the NCCW history include: a White House reception for delegates from the first NCCW Convention in 1921, address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the 1954 Convention in Boston, Mother Teresa’s first trip to the United States to speak at the 1960 NCCW Convention in Las Vegas and NCCW’s presence at the historic signing of the Equal Pay Act for Equal Work Bill in 1963 with President John F. Kennedy.

Today, NCCW continues its long-standing tradition as Catholic leaders at the intersection of Church and society by providing resources that answer the most pressing issues facing society today—human trafficking, domestic violence, pornography, evangelization, and temporary care giving through the Respite program. In response to the increase in numbers of women seeking to enter religious orders, a Vocation Purse Club was established to provide financial aid to women seeking this vocation. “During our 97 years of existence, NCCW has promoted solutions to current societal concerns by developing programs or volunteering to serve those with needs,” said Sheila Hopkins, NCCW President.

The U.S. Catholic bishops created the National Council of Catholic Women to give women a unified voice, a program of service and a vehicle for collaboration. NCCW’s mission is to act through its members to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. For more information on resources or membership, go to the website at www.nccw.org.

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Archbishop Gomez Calls on Faithful to ‘Show Forth Image of God’ in Pastoral Letter

by JD Long-Garcia / Angelus News

Los Angeles, Calif., Mar 1 (CNA) - The answer to society’s dysfunctions can be found in one person: Jesus Christ.

That message is at the core of Archbishop José H. Gomez’ new pastoral letter—“For Greater Things You Were Born”—released March 1, Ash Wednesday. The letter is a 16,000-word meditation on human nature, which the archbishop maintains can only be understood in relation to God.

“Jesus Christ alone knows who we are and he is the one teacher of life,” he writes. “He alone shows us the way to live in order to lead a truly human life.”

The elections revealed rifts in American society. The archbishop notes in particular “the persistence of racist thinking,” class divisions, “cruel indifference to the sufferings of immigrants” and efforts to “normalize” abortion and euthanasia. The “divisions and dysfunctions” in American society expose unanswered questions about the meaning of life, the archbishop writes. By forgetting God, society has lost a common foundation on which to build.

“So many of our neighbors seem to be not really living but only existing,” the archbishop writes. But, recalling that human beings are created in the image of God, he writes “God made us for greater things!”

The title of the pastoral letter is from Venerable Mother Maria Luisa Josefa, who founded the Carmelites in Mexico.

(see Archbishop Gomez, p. 23)
March 10th
Healing Mass Followed by Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament and Benediction
Presented by Christ the King, People of Praise Charismatic Prayer Group. FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2017 St. Elizabeth Seton Church 4595 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park. 7:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross, 8:00 p.m. Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Lawrence Mutiso, Associate Pastor of St. James Catholic Church, Petaluma, will officiate at the healing Mass and lead the congregation in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following Mass. Father was born in Machakos, Kenya and ordained in 1992. Before accepting the assignment at St. James, Fr. Mutiso was pastor of St. Joseph-Kithangaini, in the Diocese of Machakos. He was instrumental in starting a Catholic charismatic prayer group and reports that there currently are 40 charismatic prayer groups in his home diocese. Christ the King, People of Praise Charismatic Prayer Group meets every Friday, except major holidays and Feast Days at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Rohnert Park. Rosary, 7 p.m.; Prayer Meeting, 7:30 – 9 p.m. Personal prayer ministry and fellowship. All are welcome. For more information contact Dan or Giena Schutz at 707-367-0926, or email ckpp.prayergroup@gmail.com

March 11th - 14th
St. Mary’s Arcata Parish Lenten Retreat
with Fr. Ed Shea, OFM
Fr. Ed Shea, O.F.M., from Chicago is returning to share his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us his inspirational, hopeful & joyful message with us

March 12th
Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering
Want a Catholic friend? Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month. Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend. Join us on April 5 from 6-8 pm at St. Eugene's Faith Room in Santa Rosa. For further information call Debbie Simonson at 707-763-7165 or 904-463-1070.

April 7 - 9
Rachel's Vineyard Retreat
Do not continue to live in shame, fear or numbness: Rachel's Vineyard heals hearts broken by abortion. rachelsvineyard@gmail.com (707) 967-1101 rachelsvineyard.org

April 15th
Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering
Want a Catholic friend? Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month. Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend. Join us on April 5 from 6-8 pm at St. Eugene's Faith Room in Santa Rosa. For further information call Debbie Simonson at 707-763-7165 or 904-463-1070.

April 30th
Natural Family Planning Class
You are invited to put some "spring" in your marriage by going to the next Natural Family Planning class on April 30, 2017 from 7-9pm. Visit www.ccci.org to register for the English class in Santa Rosa. Questions? please call 707-542-3635.

July 12 - 15
2017 Sacred Liturgy Conference to highlight the Liturgy as the “Voice of the Bridegroom”
Registration is now open for the 5th annual Sacred Liturgy Conference scheduled for July 12-15, 2017 in Medford, OR. Join Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, Archbishop Alexander K. Sample and Robert F. Vasa in Southern Oregon for a three-day immersion in the Church’s sacred liturgy and its living musical heritage. The theme of this 5th annual conference is “The Voice of the Bridegroom” and will focus on sacred liturgy, Church history and the role of Gregorian chant. The conference will include eight important and informative lectures, five chant workshops, four sung liturgies, and plenty of time for fellowship. His Eminence Cardinal Burke will give a lecture and celebrate an Extraordinary Form Solemn Pontifical High Mass assisted by priests of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter. Archbishop Sample will give a lecture and celebrate a Pontifical Mass in the Ordinary Form. Additional faculty will include Bishop Vasa, Rev. Gerard Saguto, FSSP, Rev. Vincent Kelber, O.P., Rev. Timothy Fultow, Dr. Lynne Bissonnette-Pitre and Dr. Francesco Romero. The conference is organized by the Director of Schola Cantus Angelorum, Dr. Lynne Bissonnette-Pitre MD, PhD, LGCHS and hosted by Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Medford, Oregon. This Sacred Liturgy Conference promises to be intellectually, liturgically and spiritually enriching. To find out more specifics about the schedule, accommodations, and how to register for the conference go to www.sacredliturgyconference.org. You may also call 206-552-3400 or email souavacova@gmail.com - Don’t delay, as space is limited and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Thursday at St. Eugene's
Fr. Jeffrey Keyes is Teaching a Faith Formation Class
Adult Catholics who would like to broaden and deepen their knowledge of the Catholic faith. This week’s class will be on “St. Peter”. Please join us every Thursday at 7:30 pm, in the Charity Room in the Parish Life Center (PLC).

Thursday at St. Eugene's
Fr. Jeffrey Keyes is Teaching a Faith Formation Class
Gregorian chant is music that is meant to be the vehicle of the psalms and the word of God and is directed primarily toward worship. We meet every Thursday at 5:30 pm in the Parish Life Center (PLC). New members always welcome!

Every Saturday
Morning of Prayer at St. Helena Catholic Church, St. Helena. 9 - 10am, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and individual confessions; daily Mass at 10am followed by the Rosary. All are invited to begin their weekend with some quiet time before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Come for all or part of the morning.

Oakville House of Prayer (Carmelite Monastery)
Morning Of Recollection every first Saturday of the month; Spiritual Talk 9-10am; Confessions 10-11am; Mass 11am.

To have your calendar event listed please email us! Srdioce1@gmail.com
Archdiocese Names Rev. George F. Schultze, S.J. President-Rector of St. Patrick’s Seminary & University

San Francisco, February 16, 2017 – The Archdiocese of San Francisco announces that Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, Chancellor of the Board of Trustees of St. Patrick’s Seminary & University, has appointed Rev. George F. Schultze, S.J. as President-Rector and Vice Chancellor effective July 1, 2017.

The Search Committee, under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Daly, Bishop of Spokane and former President-Rector of St. Patrick’s Seminary & University, reviewed many priests with teaching and administrative experience in seminaries from across the United States. After a thorough search, the Committee recommended Father Schultze to the Archbishop, who in turn consulted the Board of Trustees. Having received their enthusiastic recommendation at the meeting of the full Board of Trustees, he appointed Father Schultze, S.J., as President-Rector.

Fr. Schultze has been at St. Patrick’s since 2005, serving on the Seminary faculty, holding various administrative positions and serving as spiritual director. Prior to this he was on the faculty and staff of the University of San Francisco College of Professional Studies for six years. His undergraduate work at Cornell University was in Industrial and Labor Relations and he has advanced degrees in business, philosophy, theology and social ethics.

Fr. Schultze is a Mountain View native and entered the California Province of the Society of Jesus in 1984.

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone has appointed Rev. George F. Schultze, S.J. President-Rector and Vice Chancellor of St. Patrick’s Seminary & University effective July 1, 2017.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

SAVE THE DATES 2017

March 10th - 12th
Pan de Vida Retreat
At St. Apolinaris

July 5th - 8th
Camp 12
At camp Cazadero

July 20th - 23rd
YOAM - Youth on a Mission: Discipleship Training
At Cal State Maritime Academy

June 25th - 30th
Eureka Mission Trip 1

July 9th - 14th
Eureka Mission Trip 2

July 16th - 21st
Eureka Mission Trip 3

July 28th - 30th
Steubenville Conference Nor Cal
At Cal State East Bay, Hayward

Please join me in welcoming Jennifer Gunderson and Vanessa Castillo-Reyes to the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Jennifer Gunderson, is from St. Eugene’s Cathedral and a proud mother of 9. She has volunteered in many areas of youth ministry and faith formation for decades, as well as an experienced office manager. Her role as Coordinator will focus on our events, retreats, and trips.

Email: youth@srdiocese.org | Office hours: half days on Tues, Wed, Friday.

Vanessa Castillo-Reyes, is from Resurrection Parish and is a student at Sonoma State. She has grown up and now assists in the Hispanic youth ministry program. Her role as office assistant will focus on the V. Encuentro.

Email: sryouthmedia@gmail.com | Office hours: Wed 8:30-12:30

For more information about upcoming youth ministry events, or to help out, contact: DSRyouth@srdiocese.org or call (707) 566-3371.
The Church left the people?” Peterson told CNA.

motion in him - have the people left the church? Or has the motions of the faith, but they didn’t seem to know young students he was teaching. They went through mean anything to the real, lived experiences of the Giussani began to realize that the faith didn’t actually Philosophy when it comes to living the Christian Opus Dei, Focolare, or the Neocatechumenal Way. 20th and 21st Centuries, has been Catholic Church, particularly in the post-Vatican Simon wrote. It is the supreme action that unites all who experience it to Christ and to the prayer and tradition of the universal Catholic community,” Simon wrote. Catholicism in the city: Ecclesial Movements Another popular form of community within the Catholic Church, particularly in the post-Vatican II years of the 20th and 21st Centuries, has been Ecclesial Movements. These include groups such as Opus Dei, Focolare, or the Neocatechumenal Way. In e-mail comments to CNA, Dreher said that he did not know whether Ecclesial Movements to say whether or not they could constitute a “Benedict Option.” But they seem to have markedly different philosophies when it comes to living the Christian life in the world. Ecclesial Movements seek to re-engage the laity in their faith and to evangelize the world. They include a variety of charisms, educational methods and apostolic forms and goals, and while they have local bases, they are not geographically bound to one location. Many have a presence in countries throughout the world.

Holly Peterson is the director of communications for Communion and Liberation, one such ecclesial movement that was founded by Italian priest Fr. Luigi Giussani.

As a young priest in 1950s Italy, where basically everyone went to Mass and Catholic school, Fr. Giussani began to realize that the faith didn’t actually mean anything to the real, lived experiences of the young students he was teaching. They went through the motions of the faith, but they didn’t seem to know what it meant to really live a Christian life.

“He later defined it by saying that he had this question in him - have the people left the church? Or has the church left the people?” Peterson told CNA.

Fr. Giussani started taking his students on retreats and excursions in the mountains so that he could teach them how to live an authentically integrated life of faith - much in the style of Pope John Paul II, a close friend of Giussani and the movement. “He understood that...he needed to introduce them to life, because through their experience of life they would begin to understand who God was, who Christ was,” Peterson said.

As his students grew up and continued following his teachings, a movement was born. Membership in Communion and Liberation is freely given—there’s no registration or membership requirements, and there are many different levels of association, but a standard commitment is attendance at the weekly meetings, called School of Community. School of Community is more than just a meeting, Peterson said. It’s a chance for catechesis, for members to be spiritually fed, but also for them to develop Christian friendships that grow outside of the official meetings. Members form strong friendships and communities that carry on outside of the weekly meetings. They go out to dinner, help each other with babysitting, have parties, and just live life together. “The movement also has consecrated lay men and women - called Memores Domini - who live in community but work in the secular world. There are doctors, rocket scientists, secretaries, teachers and many other kinds of professions found amongst the members. But regardless of the level of association, CL members have a markedly different way of viewing the world than the Ben-Oppers. “We’re not afraid of doom and gloom around the corner, not to say that that’s wrong, but that’s not our style,” Peterson said. “Instead we desire to dive into the deep end of the pool. We want to be present where people are suffering, we want to do what Pope Francis has called us to do, which is to go to the periphery.” “And the periphery isn’t necessarily skid row of L.A., though that is the periphery as well,” she added. “My periphery could be my workplace, where everyone might live a pessimism that’s so thick and so sad, where they have absolutely zero hope in front of the reality that we live.”

The Community of the Beatitudes, founded in France, is another active ecclesial movement. Like the name implies, they strive to live the teachings of the Beatitudes within their community. Their charism is Eucharistic and Marian, and in the Carmelite tradition.

The community has consecrated brothers and sisters, as well as several hundred lay members and friends at various levels of association, that are active throughout the world. In the beginning, lay members lived in community with the consecrated members in huge monasteries in Europe that allowed each vocation to have it’s own separate wing. But more recently, the Vatican told the community that the lay members must not live directly with consecrated members.

“Rome said lay must be real lay, you don’t stay set apart,” Sr. Mary of the Visitation, a member of the community in Denver, told CNA. “So obviously they are lay people, they receive the spirit and the charism of the community, they are full members of the community, they’re fully part of the liturgy, but they live in the world.”

The Community of the Beatitudes, much like Communion and Liberation, quickly spread all over the world. Their apostolates serve the immediate needs of their surrounding communities in various ways—schools, hospitals, catechesis—rather than focusing on one particular type of ministry. Members and friends of the movement regularly come together for meals, liturgy, faith formation and service.

Sr. Mary of the Visitation said that while her community anchors her, she desires to invite more people to live a life following the Beatitudes. Although rooted in prayer, “we live in the world,” she said. “So if I’m going for a walk in the neighborhood, I will meet people, obviously when they see my habit they will think about God, but then we can have a conversation and go deeper.”

Sr. Mary said that on the one hand, she understands the Benedict Option desire to preserve the good, and to separate oneself from evil. Preserving oneself from too much T.V., or other inappropriate media, is a good thing, she said. But she also worries that the Benedict Option may look at those in the world as “other,” rather than as brothers and sisters.

“What I dislike in this idea, is that it would mean that the world is bad, and the Benedictine Option is good. But we’re not in a movie with the bad and the good. We are in this reality of life, where the world is within me, and this is the most difficult part to convert myself,” she said.

“And I really think that my brothers and sisters from the world, I cannot judge them, I cannot be separate from them, because I don’t want to go to heaven without them.”

There have been concerns among some that ecclesial movements are taking the place of the parish in members’ lives. But lived properly, Peterson said, that’s not the case—movements should serve to strengthen parish communities.

“We try to be very engaged in the parish for that reason,” she said, “doing charitable work, teaching in parish schools, a lot of musicians in the movement are active in their parishes.”

Ultimately, she said, “I think these movements are the way that God is rejuvenating the Church... movements are called to give people life so that they can live in this crazy world here.”