Legend tells us that as St. Peter was fleeing Rome, where he was threatened with arrest, he met the risen Jesus on a road outside the city. Peter asked Jesus, “Domine, Quo vadis? (Lord, where are you going?)” He replied, “I am going to Rome to be crucified again.” Upon hearing this, Peter regained the courage to continue his ministry and returned to the city, where he was soon arrested and subsequently, crucified upside-down.

And so, the Diocese of Santa Rosa asks YOU … Quo Vadis? Where are you going, young man? Is Jesus calling you to the Priesthood? If you feel that this might be the case, the Diocese of Santa Rosa invites you to a “Quo Vadis Retreat” in the beautiful hills of Guerneville at Sweetwater Camp, where you can further discern the plan that God has for you.

Fr. Frank Epperson, Director of Seminarians for the Santa Rosa Diocese, said, “This retreat will offer the opportunity for young men to connect with priests and seminarians through prayer, conversation and various outdoor activities and games. Disconnect from the internet and connect with fellow Catholic men who are travelling the same road as you!”

By Teresa Tomeo (Catholic World Report)

Three things I am doing this week to help me better prepare for Easter Sunday.

There is a story about my patron and favorite saint, the great female doctor of the Church, St. Teresa of Avila, which centered on her encouraging her fellow Carmelites after they received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The story goes that as the sisters would come out of the confessional she would tell them, one after the other, “Begin again.” Those words are comforting not only after Confession but also during Lent. In itself, the liturgical season (see Holy Week 2018, page 4) is a time of Reconciliation and beginning again.

By Mary Callahan February 16 (The Press Democrat)

Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa is drawing up plans to transform nearly an entire city block with a new homeless service center, family shelter and nearly 140 low-cost apartments in partnership with nonprofit Burbank Housing.

The ambitious project, just now being unveiled to the public, would replace existing facilities and several homes on a downtown city block bounded by Sixth and Seventh, A and Morgan streets, northwest of the Santa Rosa Plaza mall.

The proposal, contemplated for several years though only now beginning to take shape on paper, has “had very positive feedback,” Catholic Charities Executive Director Len Marabella said.

“You know, it’s exciting and exhilarating as you really see it going together,” he said.

Named Caritas Village, from the Latin word for “charity” or “love for all people,” the site includes Catholic Charities’ current Family Support Center on A Street and (see Homeless Services, page 8)
Recognize His Love in The Mystery of The Cross

Rememember that the Liturgical Year can be for us a type of ‘pilgrimage’ through the life of our Lord. Every year we have the opportunity to encounter the Lord again if we commit to the whole pilgrimage. During the Season of Lent the challenge presented to us is that of John the Baptist who came proclaiming, “Repent and believe the Good News”. The work of repentance is never ending because no matter how often we resolve to do only good and to avoid anything and everything evil, the human reality is that we continue to be affected by our fallen human nature. In this fallen state we are repeatedly and continually drawn away from the mystery of God and enticed to focus on the more immediate and often disordered longings of our fallen nature.

God has created us for intimacy with Him and we have an ardent longing for that intimacy. Christian marriage, a reflection of Christ’s love for the Church, is a legitimate human expression of this longing for intimacy. Many other forms of intimacy, lacking commitment, lacking fidelity, lacking authentic love, lacking an openness to the fruitfulness intended by our Creator are disordered expressions of this longing for divine intimacy. In this way a legitimate longing for intimacy is corrupted by the focus on the more immediate and disordered longings of our fallen human nature.

In the course of the original Apostolic pilgrimage, the Apostles were not immune to this influence of a fallen nature. Peter, bold to proclaim in one moment that Jesus was the Son of God is found just seconds later reprimanding the Lord for declaring that the Son of God will be brought to the cross. Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, this same bold Apostle denies our Lord three times. This is the same Lord with whom he shared that most intimate Last Supper just hours earlier. How weak and fickle is the human heart!

We are well aware of how another Apostle, Judas, because of his excess of concern for material possessions actually betrayed our Lord, ‘selling’ Him to the Scribes and Pharisees for thirty pieces of silver. The Lord certainly wants us to have security but He wants first for us to seek everything in His hands. Judas, like our first parents Adam and Eve, found it easier to trust in what was immediately present and available, cold hard cash or some delightful fruit, than to trust to the Word of God and embrace the mystery of the authenticity of Christ’s love.

As we walk this present path of repentance we are invited to recognize in ourselves the boldness of Peter as well as his weakness. We are invited to see how Judas expresses concern for the poor but, in his heart, harbors the insecurity of greed. We are invited to see how every Apostle at the Last Supper declared total fidelity to Christ and to see how, just hours later, they all scattered. We are invited to see ourselves. What we see should not surprise us because we and the Apostles share the same fallen human nature.

Ultimately, our need for ongoing repentance is a symptom of a lack of faith. Adam and Eve lacked faith that God would deliver on His promise. The people of the Old Testament, time and time again, lacked faith that God would feed them, that He would deliver them from enemies, that He would overcome all obstacles for them, that He would be their God. The Apostles faced the same human propensities. So do we. We lack faith in the mystery that God is a loving God. We see harm and disaster, either perpetrated by others who reject God and His ways or by some natural calamity, and we lose faith. Like Peter we fail to hold on to the truth of God’s love. We easily forget that the cross is the clearest, most evident proof of the depth of God’s love for us and we forget that He also rose from the dead! This lack of faith in His love for us and in His Resurrection, both of which are great mysteries, leads us to abandon the world of faith and mystery and to seek temporary happiness by gratifying our more immediate and disordered cravings.

During our Liturgical Pilgrimage we are invited to deepen our personal relationship with Jesus, to experience His great love, to see His tender mercy toward the fallen, to recognize His love in the mystery of the cross. We are invited again to repent and to have a deepened faith in the Gospel.
This Couple Gave Up Everything to Help Sudanese Refugees in Uganda

By Elise Harris

Arua, Uganda, February 24, 2018 (CNA/EWTN News) - Selling everything and moving to Uganda to work with refugees is not likely on many people’s to-do list. In fact, it’s probably the last thing most would consider, especially young couples hoping to start a family.

But it’s exactly what Rachel and Rich Mastrogiacomo did last year.

Their story began when a series of devastating events and realizations would lead the couple to the edge of a war zone in the heart of east Africa, bring them face to face with abject poverty and eventually lead them to the recent adoption of their new daughter.

Though seeds were planted in both of their lives much earlier, the story began when the two got married in 2014. Like any other couple, they were excited about their new life together and eager to start a family.

However, their initial enthusiasm was quickly replaced by pangs of sadness and disappointment as the couple slowly began to realize, after months of trying to become pregnant, that they were facing infertility.

This pain was sharpened in 2017, when three foster children living with the couple were unexpectedly returned to their birth mother.

It was after this that Rachel and Rich began to feel an inkling that they were being called to something specific – something they would discover through a process of prayer and radical openness to God’s will and the signs that he provided along the way.

“It’s a blessing to have received this unbelievable gift when we least expected it; God’s fingerprints are all over it.”

Shortly after their foster children were reunited with their biological mother, Rachel and Rich attended a healing Mass. At the end, as Rachel was praying, a woman tapped her on shoulder, and told her, “I heard Jesus say, ‘She will be a mother to many.’ You’re healed.”

Around the same time, Rich—who says he never has dreams—said he had a very vivid dream of his wife standing on brownish-reddish dirt with trees all around. In the dream, Rich said Rachel was holding a baby and was surrounded by children, and as he looked at her, she smiled at him with a peaceful expression.

After the dream, Rich began to research South Sudan, and came across multiple articles detailing the horrors of the country’s ongoing conflict and the millions who, having fled war and famine in their homeland, are now living as refugees in neighboring countries. Uganda in particular has been one of the main refugee destinations.

Rich began emailing bishops in the area, and immediately got a response from Bishop Sabino Ocan Odoki of Arua, in northern Uganda, saying Rich’s email was an “answer to prayer,” as he had more than a million Sudanese refugees in his diocese and had been praying for lay missionaries to come from America.

The contact with Bishop Odoki—one whose diocese sits closely along borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan—was seen as providential by Rachel and Rich, because even since she was 10-years-old, Rachel had a special love for Sudan —she told CNA that her father put an image of starved Sudanese children her age on the refrigerator in hopes of fostering a sense of gratitude in her.

The image stuck with Rachel and was in many ways the spark of her desire to be a missionary, and when they got married, both Rachel and Rich felt a strong call to live a missionary life.

When Bishop Odoki said he wanted them to come and serve for a month-long “trial run,” the choice was obvious. The couple sold everything and went to Arua in the spring of 2017 with the Family Missions Company.

“There are no words to describe the intense human suffering that we saw among the refugees,” Rachel told CNA Feb. 22.

“It was unlike anything we’ve ever seen, unlike slum poverty. Never have we seen such a vast amount of people living in such poor conditions,” she continued.

South Sudan has been split by a brutal civil war for the past three-and-a-half years. The conflict has so far prompted some 4 million citizens to flee the country in search of peace, food and work. In August 2017, shortly before Rachel and Rich traveled to Uganda, the African nation had taken in their one-millionth refugee, and the number has continued to climb.

Roughly 85 percent of the refugee settlements Rachel and Rich serve are made up of women and children, they said, and while many humanitarian organizations on the ground try to help meet basic needs, “the overall need is absolutely overwhelming.”

They specifically visited the Palorinya refugee settlement in Uganda’s Moyo region, which is the second biggest camp in northern Uganda and as of November 2017 housed some 185,000 refugees, according to Reuters.

While in Arua, Rachel and Rich were able to tour the diocese and participate in the centenary celebration of Moyo Catholic parish, which is the first parish of the diocese of Arua. They also spent time visiting orphans, schoolchildren and youth in prison, and distributed both gifts and donations.

“[We] just loved on the kids,” Rachel said, and recalled what she said is one of her favorite memories of the trip. As they were visiting a school, Rachel and Rich entered one classroom and the children immediately began singing: “The Lord is calling you. You are welcome to lead us all into His kingdom.”

The song “touched our hearts deeply,” she said, explaining that throughout the entire month “we experienced the joy of the Gospel in a fresh and new way. The faith of the people is vibrant; God is their treasure.”

While the basic needs of those living in the camps are many, Rachel said that spiritually speaking, “the greatest need we found was the need to be heard.”

Pope Francis speaks about a ministry of listening, and this concept came alive for us while we were in the refugee camps,” she said, explaining that when they eventually return to Uganda, they plan to help with spiritual formation, since general catechesis and sacramental preparation are often lacking.

“The people are hungry for more than just food; they truly are hungry for God,” she said.

As the month drew to a close, Rachel said she, her husband and Bishop Odoki all experienced an “overwhelming confirmation” that God was inviting the couple to serve there as full-time lay missionaries and live as spiritual parents to the many children and orphans in need.

So while they already see Uganda as their new home, Rachel and Rich headed back to the United States to get things in order. But the story doesn’t end there.

Just three days after returning to the U.S., Rich (see Refugees in Uganda, page 4)
(Holy Week 2018, cont. from page 1)

of Lent is often associated with new beginnings. We go into that dirty, cluttered spiritual closet of the soul, seeking to purify it of all the junk that’s piling up—the sin and stuff that’s putting more space between us and Jesus. As we move through these 40 days, we are hopefully beginning again and also moving closer to Christ.

But have we ever thought about beginning again during Holy Week? I hadn’t until this past weekend. The thought came to mind, along with the story of St. Teresa of Avila, as I listened to the homily of our associate pastor during Palm Sunday Mass. The homily hit home because, frankly, I’ve had quite the “ho hum” Lent. The idea of some simple steps to “begin again,” so to speak, gave me the needed encouragement.

The main point of his homily was to make this Holy Week really count. Fr. Brian had three suggestions—or, as he likes to call them, homework assignments—to help make that happen:

• Attend as many of the Holy Week liturgies as possible.
• Watch the blockbuster film The Passion of the Christ.
• And read the account of Christ’s Passion, specifically the version in St. John’s Gospel, chapters 18 and 19, that is read during the Good Friday liturgy.

Maybe my Lent wasn’t completely lost after all. “I can do this,” I thought to myself as my husband and I headed home. I’ll admit the first assignment was to me the most doable for several reasons. I have always loved Holy Week. Even when I was in my fallen-away Catholic stage I somehow made it to at least one of the Holy Week liturgies, in addition to Easter Sunday Mass. The retelling of the Cross on Good Friday still grabs my heart, not to mention the significance of Holy Thursday Mass and The Easter Vigil. They take us back to the early days of the Church and give us a glimpse of the Church’s rich history and her proclamation of salvation.

I’ll admit that now being a deacon’s wife, in addition to loving the powerful liturgies, it’s also beautiful to watch my husband serving on the altar during the holyest of weeks. It is a reminder for both of us of how good God is, how far we’ve come in our relationship with Him, and affirmation I needed.

Finally, reading the Passion account in St. John’s Gospel will help me fulfill one of my Lenten goals of spending more time in Scripture as well as being great preparation for Good Friday. It wasn’t too late after all. Go figure! This is not exactly brain surgery given I’ve been in the habit of following the daily Mass Readings with my Magnificat for years. I have enough books on Scripture and Catholic spirituality in my home to fill several libraries and, for crying out loud, I’m a Catholic talk show host who encourages daily Scripture reading!

But we all fall short, as St. Paul reminds us, and the last few weeks, for whatever reason, I feel like the old lady in that well known Life Alert infomercial shouting (at least on the inside), “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up!”

But we can and will, with God’s help, get up no matter how many times we’ve fallen. Somehow, I feel that Fr. Brian’s homily was just for me. Three practical homework assignments reassuring me, that Jesus, our crucified Lord and Savior, always allows us, as St. Teresa of Avila told her sisters, to begin again. Happy Holy Week and Happy Easter!

Teresa Tomeo is an author, syndicated Catholic talk show host and motivational speaker. Her daily morning radio program, Catholic Connection, is produced by Ave Maria Radio and is heard on over 200 Catholic stations nationwide as well as on SiriusXM Satellite Radio. She has authored six books, including Extreme Makeover: Women Transformed by Christ, Not Conformed to the Culture (Ignatius Press, 2011).

(Discernment Retreat, cont. from page 1)

Lemus, Vocations Director added, “This is a great opportunity for those discerning a vocation to meet with Bishop Vasa and our seminarians in a relaxed, bucolic setting. Sometimes it is easier to talk while on a hike or sitting around a campfire.” The retreat will be offered to two groups: High school students, ages 13-17 will go on retreat from June 8 – 10. Men and women ages 18-35 will have an earlier retreat date, from May 25-27.

(Tribe, First will be offered to two groups: High school students, ages 13-17 will go on retreat from June 8 – 10. Men and women ages 18-35 will have an earlier retreat date, from May 25-27. Find out if God is calling you!

To register or for more information, please call 827-6684, ext. 16, or contact Fr. Epperson/Fr. Lemus at: frepperson@steugenes.com or: padre.raul@yahoo.com.  

(Refugees in Uganda, cont. from page 3)
Why Did We Forget How to Date? New Documentary Aims to Find Out

By Mary Rezac

Boston, Mass., February 18 (CNA) - It was about 10 or so years ago when Kerry Cronin, a professor at Boston College, noticed something was up with the way her young students were dating—or, rather, not dating.

It was the end of the year and she was talking to a group of bright, charismatic students who were full of plans for their future. Cronin asked her students if graduation meant some difficult conversations with their boyfriends or girlfriends—and she got blank stares.

“(They) were just really stellar people, beautiful inside and out, and had all kinds of charisma and everything and almost none of them had dated at all in high school or college,” Cronin told CNA. “And I thought wait, what? What’s going on?”

Further conversations with students proved to her that this group of seniors was not an anomaly, but the norm.

“I started talking to them about hookup culture and how that had impacted dating, and what I realized was that the dating social script was sort of gone,” she said.

And so, like any good professor, Cronin turned the problem into an (extra credit) assignment that she gave to her senior capstone class the following year.

While her students all thought it was a good idea, none of them had asked someone on a date by the end of the semester.

“And I realized they had no idea what I was talking about,” Cronin said.

So she tweaked the assignment to include a set of rules that students had to follow—ask a legitimate romantic interest out on a date. In person. Keep the date 60-90 minutes. Go out to ice cream or coffee—something without drugs or alcohol. You ask, you pay—but a first date should only cost about $10 anyway. The only physical contact should be an A-frame hug.

The idea caught on, and pretty soon these “Cronin dates” were the talk of Boston College. Today Cronin travels the country, speaking to college students about how to date, and continues to give the dating assignment in her classes.

Her renown as the ‘Date Doctor’ reached the ears of Megan Harrington and her colleagues, who were looking to create a documentary about dating in young students were dating—or, rather, not dating.

The students, she added, welcome the dating guidance.

“I am amazed at how much this generation of young adults wants coaching in all areas of their life,” she said. “They are hungry for coaching, and they responded so well to these rules I was amazed. In some ways I have no idea why they would do this, but then they do and they’re happy and they want people to help them navigate situations where they need to be brave.”

Two of the three production companies involved in “The Dating Project” are Christian companies—Paulist Productions and Family Theater Productions. Most of the single people featured in the film end up saying in every storyline. Cecilia wishes her Tinder date would tell her what he wants, Rasheeda can’t remember the last time she was on a real date, or what that even means. Chris is so overwhelmed by online dating he’s not sure where to begin.

The moniker “hooking up” is a term young people have embraced, Cronin noted in the film, because it could mean anything from making out to having sex, and everyone gains some social status from being able to say they “hooked up.”

Cronin tries to help her students see that it’s braver—and ultimately better—to get to know a person before becoming physically intimate with them, something the hook-up culture gets backwards.

“They don’t build great habits for marriage and family. It’s easy to let someone see your body. It’s hard to let someone see you,” she said.

Harrington said she was “shocked” at the amount of pressure on college kids to be very physical in relationships, “and I think that carries over when you get out of college, this pressure to fit in.” “I knew it was there and it’s not a new thing, and technology has just made it easier,” she added.

Cronin said that while the hook-up culture is prevalent, she’s found that most students are unhappy with that status quo and are looking for a way out.

“They want the way out but nobody’s offering it to them,” she said.

That’s why the rules for her dating assignment are so important, she noted. It’s not that she wants to return to the 1950s or some other bygone era, she added, but there are good things to be gleaned from these “dating scripts” of yesteryear.

“The rules are to help you so that you know what you’re doing,” Cronin said. “You’re not asking someone on an uber romantic date, this isn’t a candlelit dinner with violins and flowers, this is just a cup of coffee, just to see.”

She put together the “rules” from what she remembered of her own days of dating, as well as advice from friends and feedback from students who have done the assignment, Cronin said.

The students, she added, welcome the dating guidance.

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The uncertainty and ambiguity is a constant thread in every storyline. Cecilia wishes her Tinder date would tell her what he wants, Rasheeda can’t remember the last time she was on a real date, or what that even means. Chris is so overwhelmed by online dating he’s not sure where to begin.

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Two of the three production companies involved in “The Dating Project” are Christian companies—Paulist Productions and Family Theater Productions. Most of the single people featured in the film end up talking about their faith and values at some point, some more explicitly than others.

Rasheeda is the most outspoken about her Christian faith in the film. At one point, she expresses dismay that she can’t seem to find a man who shares her values and wants something out of dating besides a sexual encounter.

(see How to Date, page 7)
Choosing Love, or Losing it

By Chris Lyford

The entire world: each country, every state, city, family and church, is in the process of choosing between life and death; safety, or destruction. Of course this is the story told from the beginning of the book of Genesis: just after everything was affirmed in its goodness in Chapter 2, it all goes south in Chapter 3. The question still remains, what will we choose? We, Christians call the answer the “Good News”; the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that while we were still sinners, He died for us to save us from the ultimate destination of sin: death. So for us, the idea for now is like St. Paul said; “to live is Christ, and to die is gain”. But what does that mean in 2018?

Much is a-twitter from social media to the far reaches of cultural expression about the lack of civility in our public discussion about everything from gun control to immigration. And while the topics may be more or less of import as it relates to the core elements of our Catholic Faith, the way in which we engage in civil discourse is what distinguishes us as Catholic Christians.

As professed Christians we are called to be able to listen with empathy, disagree without being disagreeable, show respect to all, and truly attempt to see the things from the other persons point of view. All of these things we can do without ever compromising our belief. And to do this it takes real and deliberate effort. Most of us can tell when someone is blowing us off, or patronizing us, or even bullying us by raising their voice and monopolizing the conversation. If someone is not able to listen, then we can in good conscience, disengage and move on.

Chances are though there will always be an opportunity to show some understanding by repeating back to our conversation partner something they said while showing empathy by speaking about how it would feel to ‘walk a mile’ in their shoes. True Charity means to do something we can do on our own.

To quote the late and beloved Fr. John Hardon S.J.:

Christian charity is the practice of all the virtues animated by love. It is more than natural love, because it is a supernatural virtue, which enables a person to love beyond the powers of human nature. It purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the super human perfection of the very love of God; of the God, remember, who allows his sun to shine on the good and the bad, and His rain to fall on the virtuous and the wicked. Charity does, and this is of its essence, the humanly impossible. And how the world needs this. Christian charity is a moral miracle. There by definition: a moral miracle is where the real does what is beyond its natural powers of volition.

During this coming Holy Week we have an opportunity to reflect on God’s love in a very profound way. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ affirms that the greatest of all commandments is to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength and then to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Lk. 10: 25-28). Jesus also reminded the Apostles as well as us in the context of the Last Supper discourse: “And this is the greatest of all commandments to love one another as I have loved you... There is no greater commandment... By this will they know that you are my disciples if you love one another”. His example proved it by dying on the cross for love of all of humanity. “No greater love has one than to lay down his life for his loved ones.”

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

Letters to the Editor

By Sabrina Bjornstrom

Can you use this attached item in North Coast Catholic... an experience I had a few weeks ago about which I felt compelled to write. Thank you!

In her late 20’s, maybe early 30’s, the fashionably dressed young woman next to me was browsing at Macy’s with a boyfriend. It was obvious from their conversation that they didn’t know each other well. She lifted and considered a number of expensive sweaters. After a few moments, she declared to her boyfriend, “OK, I’m through shopping here. All done. Abort!” Then suddenly she added, “Just like my first three children.”

Shocked, I looked up and saw a determined, maybe forced smile, on this glamorous young woman. My glance strayed to her boyfriend, who grinned slightly as he hesitatingly followed her to another area of the store.

My 16-year old daughter Amy joined me a moment later. I related to her what had just happened. The first thing Amy said was: “Notice that she used the word ‘children’. She knows...”

Over the next few days I thought a lot about that woman. At first, I felt a kind of horror that someone could be so... I don’t know... cold? But then I started to pray for her, and I started to grieve for her. I thought about what she has gone through... what she is living with. Three times this woman felt she had no choice but to go to a clinic and climb up onto that cold, hard table to undo something she had brought about. Three times she had to leave that clinic and deal with the physical pain of an abortion. Three times she must have felt suddenly empty and alone. Was there anyone with her to bring comfort and support? Three times she suffered her children so that she could do as she wished. And this is apparently not something she has forgotten. Yes, maybe she tries to make light of it, but those words... “Just like my first three children...” How sad. Does she think of them now when she lies in bed at night? It sounds like maybe she has a child now? Perhaps that child brings memories of those others... I wish I could put my arms around her and tell her that, yes, she did something horrible... actions which will be with her for the rest of her life. Yes, she needs to face her guilt and sin. But that our God is there to heal and forgive her when she is ready to repent. And that there are Rachel’s Vineyard and Pregnancy Counseling Centers that are there for women like her when she is ready to deal with her past actions. I pray that God draws her to Himself and heals her broken heart.

Letters Policy

Email: srdioce1@gmail.com
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Name, hometown, and daytime phone number for verification required. Short letters only, no more than 150 words. Letters may be edited for clarity or space.

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

March 19: St. Joseph

March 6: St. Colette
The Circle of Grace

By Julie Sparacio

I am currently in Texas, on baby watch with my oldest daughter, anxiously anticipating the birth of my first grandchild. As I sit here and wait, and wait, I have been thinking about the world this baby is being born into. It's troublesome, actually downright scary to think about the influences that will impact this child. One of the things I learned early as a school counselor—kids can come from wonderful families, from dedicated parents, and still be lead astray by the influences around them. So pray, pray pray, for our world and our children.

Besides prayer—what else can I do? As a grandmother, I plan to be involved, I plan to be part of that influence. I promised my daughter that I will not be an overbearing, busy body, overly opinionated grandma, but it doesn't mean I can't be an influence! I am committed to learning everything I can about the world this baby will live in and being part of the protection. Even after I leave this job (oh retirement is calling my name!), I will keep learning. I will also learn about what he is learning! What is he learning in school, and more importantly, what is he learning in Church? We will talk about God, and loving Jesus, and following the path He has set before him.

Sometime this school year, all of the children enrolled in our schools, religious education programs, and youth programs, will be receiving instruction in our Circle of Grace program. The Circle of Grace program is founded on the premise that everywhere we go—God is with us. A modification of the ‘personal space’ concept, the COG idea is that we are surrounded by a ‘Circle of Grace’ and within that circle, right next to us, stands God. As each child progresses through the grade level lessons, the idea is expanded, to encompass what they take in and what they let out. What are they reading, watching on tv or in the movies, what are they listening to and what are they saying? What are they doing, seeing, saying on social media? Are they responding with kindness, with courage, with grace? It also serves a prevention program, teaching how to respond and tell when they feel unsafe.

As parents, grandparents, family and friends, I encourage you to talk to the children in your lives about this program. Find out what they have learned, what parts they understand and what parts they question. Use this as an opportunity to expand your influence, to assist that child in navigating the rough waters of their generation, so they land safely into adulthood.

And by the time you read this, my first grandchild will be here and I will be busy expanding my influence! Oh happy day!
the homeless drop-in center behind it, at 600 Morgan Street. Agency officials say the existing facilities—the century-old Santa Rosa General Hospital and an aging two-bedroom house—are inadequate to meet the need for temporary shelter and expanded programming shown to reduce homelessness.

But key to the project’s vision and urgency in a post-fire world is the inclusion of high-density, affordable housing for families and individuals priced out by the local market, representatives of the two nonprofits said. The October fires destroyed more than 5,100 homes in Sonoma County, including about 5 percent of Santa Rosa’s housing stock.

“We were thinking about a maybe a less aggressive housing project—and certainly a more relaxed timeline,” said Mark Krug, business development manager for Santa Rosa-based Burbank Housing, the county’s largest affordable housing developer. “But now that the fires hit, we feel like we have more of a moral obligation to the community to move as quickly and aggressively as we can.”

The proposal joins a growing list of projects involving Burbank Housing, which emerged last weekend as a lead developer in a bid to transform the fire-ravaged Journey’s End mobile home park into a new complex of affordable and market-rate apartments.

At Caritas Village, as currently envisioned, Burbank Housing would build and manage two multi-level apartment buildings on the north end of the site, with a combined 137 studio, one, and two-bedroom apartment units. Only one of the agency’s 63 housing projects has more units, Krug said. About half of the tenants at Caritas Homes would be people who are currently homeless or at risk of it, Krug said. The remainder would provide housing for those whose income levels are at or below 60 percent of the area’s median, he said.

A new emergency family shelter with up to 56 rooms and enlarged housing-focused day center for those experiencing homelessness would be built near the southeast end of the parcel, with an entrance off Sixth Street, away from residential areas. While Catholic Charities owns the existing Morgan Street drop-in center, two neighboring homes used for client volunteers and a vacant apartment building—all expected to be razed—two privately owned and occupied homes at the corner of Morgan and Sixth streets would remain untouched.

The agencies hope to begin phased construction by 2020 and expects it to be entirely complete within about 20 months after groundbreaking, said Jennielynn Holmes, director of shelter and housing for Catholic Charities.

But numerous hurdles remain before that can happen, including refinement of the conceptual plans, changes to the land-use designations for the site and neighborhood outreach necessary to win community support so large-scale income levels are at or below 60 percent of the area’s median, he said.

Key issues include the site’s inclusion within the boundaries of the St. Rose Historic District, which adds a level of scrutiny to plans to demolish structures. One resident and representative for the district, Denise Hill, attended a meeting last week at which the project was introduced to neighbors and said later that plans to tear down buildings are “a deal breaker” as far as she’s concerned.

Hill, who works for Sonoma Media Investments, owner of The Press Democrat, said she supports the overall mission and believes Catholic Charities has been responsive to neighborhood concerns in the past. But the agency has been repeatedly reminded that the land is in the historic district and should not be making plans to build on existing structures.

The whole point of the preservation district is that you are protecting the homes in the outer parts of the district from being eaten up by big development,” she said. Another area activist, West End Neighborhood resident Allen Thomas, said he has hesitations about the size and scope of the project, including parking needs and the plan to demolish structures in the historic district.

But he also highlighted adverse impacts neighbors on both sides of Highway 101 have experienced as a result of homeless loafing and encampments in the area, particularly given the exploding population of campers under area highway overpasses last winter. He said neighbors would need assurances the redevelopment would not negatively affect the area.

“If they had a clean and safe facility, I would be 100 percent behind the construction of a center there, as long as it didn’t have negative impacts on the neighborhood,” Thomas said.

Holmes said clients of Catholic Charities are obliged to adhere to a “good neighbor policy” that prohibits them from camping, toloeting, engaging in criminal conduct or other unseemly behaviors in the area. She also noted that the proposed housing would have round-the-clock on-site management and security patrols. Design elements in the project are meant to increase privacy and security, including windows facing the streets.

“We want to design around making things feel more safe and integrated into the neighborhood,” Holmes said.

Catholic Charities moved into the hospital site in 1989 and bought most of the block it is on from St. Joseph Health in 2015, Holmes said.

The hospital structure houses the largest emergency facility shelter between the Golden Gate and the Oregon border. It accommodates 138 individuals, or 35 to 40 families, but there is always a waiting list of up to 70 families, Holmes said.

The nearby 1,200-square-foot home that houses the drop-in center serves about 2,400 people a year, providing shower and laundry facilities, mail delivery, a telephone and referrals to social services.

“It’s a basic lifeline for a lot of individuals who are homeless in Santa Rosa, and kind of the doorway to how we serve some of those people,” Holmes said.

Hopes for the new center include 6,000 square feet of space and even, perhaps, a clinic at some point.

The preliminary drawings include interior walkways and courtyards between buildings to improve privacy for both clients and neighbors, with exterior design intended to fit in with the historic neighborhood, she said. Parking for the housing would be located under the apartments.

The nonprofits have yet to file formal applications with the Santa Rosa Planning Department, but representatives have been discussing next steps with city staff. A community meeting is expected to be scheduled in the next few weeks to outline the process and gather community input, according to Kristina Toomians, a senior planner for the city.

There will be numerous opportunities for the public to and city officials to weigh, in as the project will require a variety of approvals from various city panels, including cultural heritage and design review boards, planning commissioners and the City Council, said Planning Director David Guhin.

He noted the project’s mission fits with stated City Council goals prioritizing the addition of housing and reduced homelessness in the city. “We’re all supportive of what they’re proposing in terms of utilizing that property for affordable housing and the expansion of their services, which is really critically needed,” he said.

Conceptual drawings also suggest “an aesthetic upgrade” is in store for the site, said Councilman Tom Schwedhelm, who is active on homelessness issues.

“I think it’s a step in the right direction, and it’s a need that this community is desperate for,” he said. “It’s not clear what the project might cost, given the design is still only conceptual and that the costs of construction in the post-fire era are still in flux. Catholic Charities will be launching a capital campaign to raise funding for the project.

Several local philanthropists already have pledged support, including bank executive Vic Trione and his wife, Karen; retired financier Jon Stark, a veteran of the Burbank Housing Board member, and his wife, Terry, a longtime supporter of Catholic Charities.

“I think it’s just a very important project, and the need is so magnified by the fires,” Jon Stark said. Said Trione, “I really think it’s the right project at the right place at the right time and, you know, the right people.”

Catholic Charities is hosting community tours of its facility to help inform the public about its programs and vision for the site. The tours take place at noon March 8 and 22, April 5 and 19, and May 3 and 17, beginning in the lobby of the Family Support Center at 465 A Street. See www.buildcaritasvillage.org for more information on the project.

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The agencies hope to begin phased construction by 2020 and expects it to be entirely complete within about 20 months after groundbreaking.

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Chaput's words were addressed to students at Villanova University in Philadelphia on Feb. 22, with a speech titled “Things to Come: Faith, State and Society in a New World.” The archbishop delved into some of society’s challenges, what has led to them, and a renewal of faith as a way to heal some of the nation’s wounds.

“The United States is the most powerful market economy in the world...and most of us would probably agree that since World War II, American democratic capitalism has reshaped much of the world; in effect, created a new world of political and economic relationships,” Chaput said.

Global market economies, Chaput continued, have benefited millions around the world by improving their opportunities, standards of living, and lifespans. They have also reshaped other dynamics, such as family, political, and educational relationships, and shifted philosophies and behaviors around the globe.

However, while noting its many benefits, Chaput also highlighted capitalism’s damaging side effects.

“A consumer market economy tends to commodify everything and recast all relationships as transactions,” Chaput said.

“In practice, it depersonalizes a culture by commercializing many of our routine human interactions. It also very easily breeds a practical atheism by revolving everything and recasting all relationships as transactions,” he continued.

While many of the country’s changes and steps in progression over the years have aided Americans, especially through medical advancements, Chaput said that the pros and cons do not balance out.

“...the benefits and deficits of change have been very unequally shared. The result has been a deep dislocation in the American sense of stability, security, common purpose, and self,” he said.

Chaput particularly pointed to the lower classes, who are promised with the lures of “sexual freedom,” and yet burdened by its consequences because of a lack of wealth. He noted destroyed marriages, fatherless children, angry males, and increased poverty and crime as a result.

Chaput also underscored the nation’s other “deep and chronic problems” of drugs, unemployment, inadequate schools, and inner-city hunger.

The Philadelphia archbishop also spotlighted the rise in secularism over recent years, saying that Americans who identify as atheist, agnostic, or of no religious affiliation rose from 16 percent to 23 percent from 2007 to 2014. This shift, Chaput said, “has political and legal implications,” particularly seen in the attacks against religious freedom and human rights.

“Religious freedom—as the nation has traditionally understood it—can’t be a major concern for people who don’t respect the importance of religious faith,” Chaput said.

“Human rights, without a grounding in God or some higher moral order, are really just a matter of public consensus,” he continued.

While many leaders and politicians have promised change with various notions such as income equality and increased opportunities, or various other plans of action, Chaput believes the only antidote to the nation’s plague is a renewal of faith in God.

“The point is, God’s authority ensures human freedom,” Chaput said.

“When God leaves the stage, the state inevitably expands to fill his place. Without the biblical God, we end up in some disguised form of idolatry. And it usually involves politics,” he continued.

Despite the culture’s downsfalls, Chaput said people still have the desire for beauty, relationship, and new life—all of which can be found in the treasure of the Catholic Church and its proclamation of the truth.

“People still have a need for beauty, which means that beauty has the power to evade the machinery of logic and reach right into the human soul,” he said.

According to Chaput, the nation is desperately in need of the uncompromising truth, saying that before the problem can be fixed, individuals need to wake up to the reality of its challenge.

He also encouraged Catholics to protect their identities in Christ and act as faithful witnesses to the truth, saying “this isn’t a time for Catholics to be weak or apologetic.” At the same time, Chaput also noted this proclamation of truth should be spoke with love, patience and mercy.

Ultimately, Chaput said, the nation’s future will depend on the power of “personal witness,” through every individual’s pursuit of sanctity.

“Leon Bloy, the great French Catholic convert, liked to say that, in the end, the only thing that matters is to be a saint,” Chaput said.

“So the task tonight, when each of us leaves here, is to begin that path. And may God guide us all in pursuing it.”

(Chaput Laments, cont. from page 7)

his life; something that directs all of his reasoning and desires.”

Chaput began his remarks by urging Christians not to forget their history, which he said is essential for shaping present identity.

“When we Christians lose a strong grasp of our own history—our own unique story and identity—others will gladly offer us a revised version of all three—a version that suits their own goals and bigotries, and not necessarily the truth,” he said. “And then some very ugly things can happen. A community dies when its memory fails.”

Chaput pointed to the formation of the Poor Brothers of the Order of the Temple of Solomon—the Knights Templar, a religious order that was founded in Jerusalem in A.D. 1118-19 following the First Crusade.

A small group of men who were part of Europe’s knightly order had gathered in Jerusalem in hopes of living out a life of prayer, poverty, and obedience, and were eventually tasked by the Patriarch of Jerusalem with patrolling the roads and holy sites and their impressive organization and skills became the envy of many European leaders.

“Knighthood in medieval Europe began as a profession of nobly armed male thugs—men obsessed with vanity, violence, and rape. It took the Church and royalty centuries to tame and channel it,” Chaput recalled. “But it provided the animating ideal at the core of the Templars: To build a new order of new Christian men, skilled at arms, living as brothers, committed to prayer, austerity, and chastity, and devoting themselves radically to serving the Church and her people, especially the weak.”

Although the archbishop acknowledged, “The ideal of this ‘new knighthood’ was often ignored or betrayed.”

Noting that C.S. Lewis used to describe Christianity as a “fighting religion,” Chaput said that the spiritual warfare involved in the Christian life cannot be forgotten, and he encouraged the men in attendance to embrace justice and courage as necessary virtues for developing as Christian men.

“Men need a challenge. Men need to test and prove their worth. Men feel most alive when they’re giving themselves to some purpose higher than their own comfort. This is why young men join the Marines or Rangers or SEALs,” he said. “They do it not despite it being hard, but exactly because it’s hard; because it hurts; because they want to be the best and earn a place among brothers who are also the very best.”

That same drive, he said, is also what attracted men to join the Jesuits and the Capuchins, of which he is a member.

They joined, he said, “not to escape the world but to transform it; to convert the world by demanding everything a man had—every drop of his energy, love, talent and intelligence—in service to a mission bigger and more important than any individual ego or appetite.”

He then called for a recovery of an understanding of the differences between the sexes as a key to building respect for one another.

“Christian equality is based not in political ideology but in the reality of the differences and mutual dependencies of real men and women,” said Chaput. “As creatures we’re designed to need each other, not replicate each other. And this, by the way, is a key reason why modern culture is so conflicted about the body.”

He then enumerated a series of prohibitions and proscriptions for the development of “new men,” and

(see Chaput Laments, page 17)
Vatican City, February 22 (CNA/EWTN News) - The authentic development of doctrine is about making more explicit the revealed truths of faith, not changing, or "shifting," Church teaching — and to use this idea to defend an agenda is wrong, Cardinal Gerhard Müller has said.

In an essay published Feb. 20 in First Things, the prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said there can be no such thing as a "paradigm shift" in the interpretation of Catholic doctrine, and to push for one is to contradict God's commandments.

Anyone who calls a major shift in the Church's teaching in moral theology a "praiseworthy decision of conscience... speaks again the Catholic faith," wrote the 70-year-old prelate.

The idea of a "paradigm shift"—a "fundamental change in theoretical forms of thought and social behavior" — with respect to "the form of the Church's being and of her presence in the world" is not possible," Müller wrote, simply because "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever," as it says in Hebrews 13:8.

"This is, in contrast, our paradigm, which we will not exchange for anything," Müller said.

He also explained that the Pope and his fellow bishops have a duty to preserve the unity of faith and to prevent polarization and partisan mentalities. Therefore, it is also a duty of conscience to speak up in opposition when the term "pastoral change" is used by some to "express their agenda to sweep aside the Church's teaching as if doctrine were an obstacle to pastoral care."

In his essay, he explained the concept of the "development of doctrine" in the Church as taught by Blessed John Henry Newman, and how it relates to debates on the interpretation of Pope Francis' 2016 apostolic exhortation on love in the family, Amoris laetitia.

Chapter eight of Amoris laetitia "has been the object of contradictory interpretations," he said, stating that when a "paradigm shift" is spoken of in this context, it seems to be "a relapse into a modernist and subjectivist way of interpreting the Catholic faith."

According to Blessed Newman, a way to identify an authentic development of doctrine is to see if the surrounding cultural environment is growing in conformity with Christianity, or not the way around.

"Thus, a paradigm shift, by which the Church takes on the criteria of modern society to be assimilated by it, constitutes not a development, but a corruption."

The formal principle is a category within Christian theology which distinguishes the source of the theological teaching from the teaching itself.

In the Catholic Church, Müller said, the "proper method for interpreting revelation requires the joint workings of three principles, which are: Holy Scripture, Apostolic Tradition, and the Apostolic Succession of Catholic bishops."

He pointed out that the Protestant Reformation is an example in history of when a new formal principle was introduced, in this case, Scripture alone.

"This new principle subjected the Catholic doctrine of the faith, as it had developed up to the sixteenth century, to a radical change," he said. "The fundamental understanding of Christianity turned into something completely different."

Regarding debates surrounding the interpretation of Amoris laetitia, Müller noted that groups of bishops or individual bishops' conferences have issued directives recently on the reception of the Eucharist by divorced-and-civilly-remarried people.

He pointed out the teaching of St. John Paul II in Familiaris consortio, which says that "the divorced living in a new union must resolve to live in continence or else refrain from approaching the sacraments."

"Is there any logical continuity between John Paul II's Familiaris Consortio n. 84 ... and the change of this selfsame discipline that some are proposing? There are only two options," he said.

"One could explicitly deny the validity of Familiaris Consortio n. 84, thus denying by the same token Newman's sixth note, 'Conservative Action upon the Past.' Or one could attempt to show that Familiaris Consortio n. 84 implicitly anticipated the reversal of the discipline that it explicitly set out to teach. On any honest reading of John Paul II's text, however, such a procedure would have to violate the basic rules of logic, such as the principle of non-contradiction."

Cardinal Müller added that "when cardinals, bishops, priests, and laity ask the pope for clarity on these matters, what they request is not a clarification of the pope's opinion. What they seek is clarity regarding the continuity of the pope's teaching in Amoris Laetitia with the rest of tradition."

For the statements of bishops to be orthodox, "it is not enough that they declare their conformity with the pope's presumed intentions" in Amoris laetitia, he said.

"They are orthodox only if they agree with the words of Christ preserved in the deposit of faith."

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When a "paradigm shift" is spoken of in this context, it seems to be "a relapse into a modernist and subjectivist way of interpreting the Catholic faith."

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A Catholic ‘Paradigm Shift’ Would Be Corruption, Not Development — Cardinal Muller

By Hannah Brockhaus
St. Patrick’s Day Celebrations!

March 17th 30th Annual St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner fundraiser. St. Eugene’s Cathedral


On Saturday, March 17, 2018 the Blessed Sacrament Church (Elk Altar Society) will be celebrating its 125th annual Saint Patrick’s Party.

Saint Patrick’s parties were first documented by the Mendocino Beacon in 1893 and we have been hosting them every year since then. Saint Patrick’s Dinner and Dance is our only church fundraiser, with most of the proceeds directed toward maintenance and repair our lovely historic Blessed Sacrament Mission Church built in 1896 in addition to some community outreach. This year’s celebration is quite a milestone for our small congregation, as well as our village of Elk. We would like very much to make this 125th anniversary an extra special occasion.

This event has been a significant part of Greenwood/Elk for decades. It has been a time for friends and family come from far and wide to gather, catch up on news, socialize and just have a grand time. It is our expectation that this 125th anniversary of the Saint Patrick’s Dinner and Dance will encourage people to return to Elk to make this special occasion a reality.

The Party begins with Matthew Tyson singing Irish ballads at the Blessed Sacrament Church at 12:30pm. Father Lou Nichols will celebrate Mass at 1:00pm followed by a concert of lively gospel music featuring the Love Choir who are returning by popular demand. A delicious dinner of corned beef and cabbage will be served from 3pm to 7:30pm at the Greenwood Community Center followed by a dance featuring the Wild Elks from 9pm to midnight.

A significant part of Saint Pat’s fundraiser is a Silent Auction where numerous interesting and valuable prizes are available for people to bid on. In addition there will be a raffle drawing with the traditional grand prize being a completely filled Hope Chest.

We wish to extend our most sincere appreciation for those of you who have supported us in the past. Your continued support will contribute toward our ability to afford the ongoing maintenance and repair of our historic Blessed Sacrament Church where there is no shortage of projects.

If you wish, please view our website www.blessed-sacrament-elk.org to learn more about our church, its history, and the history of Saint Patrick’s Parties in Greenwood/Elk.

Brief History of Saint Patrick’s Parties in Elk

Saint Patrick’s parties in Greenwood (Elk) were first documented by the Mendocino Beacon in 1893 and members of the Blessed Sacrament Church have been hosting them every year since then. It has been said that it is the longest running annual party in the County of Mendocino taking place every March for well over a century. The celebration was first documented in a March 3, 1893 article in the Mendocino Beacon as a “grand ball in Greenwood on St. Patrick’s night. Prizes will be awarded as follows: To the most graceful lady and gentleman dancers and to the most improved gentleman and lady pupils.”

The tradition continues from that time to the present. This March 17th we will be celebrating our 125th annual Saint Patrick’s Party at the Greenwood Community Center in Elk. The event has been a significant part of Greenwood/Elk for decades. It has been a time when old friends and family and new friends have come from far and wide to gather, catch up on news, socialize and just have a grand time enjoying a delicious dinner and having the chance to win some grand prizes.

Although first documented in 1893, it is known that the Saint Patrick’s revelry actually began prior to that in Cufey’s Cove which was located about 1 mile north of present day Greenwood/Elk. The younger generation of Irish lads organized calling themselves “The Native Sons of Little Ireland” and sponsored the St. Patrick’s Day dances parties as a benefit for the Catholic Church in Cufey’s Cove, St. Mary’s Star of the Sea. With the abandonment of Cufey’s Cove because of fire and the construction of a mill further south, the Church of the Blessed Sacrament was established in Greenwood and the Catholic Ladies of the new church took over the practice of putting on the event.

The Catholic Ladies, however, were not the only organization involved in throwing the all night Saint Patrick’s parties in the early years. The Native Sons of Little Ireland continued to take part in sponsoring the events. The March 17, 1900 Saint Patrick’s Ball was given under the auspices of the N.S.I.L. along with the cooperation of the newly formed Civic Club according to an article in the Mendocino Beacon. Various other groups in Elk also pitched in to make the merrymaking a success. For example, the 1905 and 1907 balls were given by the Native Daughters of the Golden West. In 1917 the Civic Club took over the ball and the following year cooperated once again with the Native Sons of Little Ireland in holding the ball at the Greenwood Civic Club Hall.

Elk, known as Greenwood in those days, was a fairly sizeable community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with a population of around 1000 or so. One must bear in mind that there were few forms of leisure activity a hundred years ago and a dance was a genuinely important form of entertainment. Saint Patrick’s parties in Greenwood were considered one of the main events along the Mendocino Coast for decades drawing eager merry makers from Fort Bragg to Gualala with representatives from all the communities in between as well as the logging camps up Greenwood Creed and Elk Creed and inland from Willits, Ukiah and Boonville and from as far away as San Francisco. In the very early days people arrived by horse and buggy or walked idiom towarding towns for the merry making more often than not braving torrents of rain and difficult muddy roads. It was not uncommon for party goers to begin arriving in the town several days in advance of the event staying at hotels or with friends and family. On occasions the party was so well attended that it took two halls and two bands to accommodate the crowds.

Saint Patrick’s Ball was always held on Saturday nights with the exception of March 1945 when, due to increased fighting in the Pacific, it was changed to Sunday from 2:00pm until midnight because of a wartime curfew. In 1970 and 1971 it was held in Point Arena but still sponsored by the Catholic Ladies of Elk in cooperation with St. Aloysius in Point Arena. This was due to the Union Hall having closed in Elk and before the present day Community Center was constructed.

The format of the party has changed over the past 123 years, of course. Vaudeville performances and masquerades where people dressed up in elaborate costumes were a part of the early Saint Patrick’s Balls. Singers, violinists, pianists and comedians provided entertainment winning the admiration of enthusiastic party goers. Dancing lasted throughout the night until the wee hours of the morning when a hat was passed for the musicians and coffee served to bleary eyed party goers before they headed home. Dances were held in the Greenwood Hall and later the Union Hall, with supper served in the Greenwood or other eateries in town. Midnight snacks of sandwiches and refreshments would be provided by the Catholic Ladies. In the very early years, the party was primarily a dance with folks eating dinner at a pre-party get together at the home of friends or in one of the local restaurants. However, it eventually evolved to a dinner and dance, but not always corned beef and cabbage as is served today. The 1971 dinner to honor Ireland’s patron saint consisted of homemade, old fashioned Italian Ravioli and Chicken. 4,200 raviolis were made for the event taking 4 weekends. Subsequent years saw chicken and spaghetti dinners and in 1974 the food committee decided to serve chicken cacciatore with polenta and apple pie a la mode for dessert. The delicious Italian dinners have since evolved into what is considered the traditional Irish American Saint Patrick’s celebratory meal of corned beef and cabbage.

Raffle prizes appeared in the 30s with the first prize being a “market basket” comprised of generous donations from many friends. Eventually the raffle evolved to consist of a few more prizes which were put on display for all to see at Buchanan’s Store. The first mention of a Hope Chest as first prize was in 1939 and it too was displayed at the store. The Saint Patrick’s Ball was so well known along the coast that the Hope Chest was even put on display in Fort Bragg for people to view and purchase their raffle tickets prior to the chest being brought to Elk. A completely filled hope chest remains to this day, some 77 years later, the first prize in the raffle drawing.

(see St. Patrick’s Day, page 17)
A Christian woman who was left disfigured by a bombing at St. Peter’s Church in Cairo in December 2016 has said that Jesus miraculously kept her alive and continues appearing to her in visions.

Samiha Tawfiq Awad shared in an Open Doors USA piece last week that she and her husband, Qalini, attended the church on the morning of Dec. 11 when radicals detonated a large bomb in the women’s section, where she was sitting.

The twin suicide bombings that day at St. Peter and St. Paul’s Church in Cairo left 24 Christians dead and 49 injured, with many of the women close to the explosion suffering severe disfigurement to their faces.

Qalini rushed his wife to the hospital, though she was hardly recognizable after the attack, and doctors warned him she might not survive.

Awad not only pulled through, however, but experienced visions of Jesus she says have filled her heart not with anger toward the attackers, but with forgiveness.

“The doctors might’ve given up on Samiha, but God had another plan!” Qalini exclaimed.

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The woman recalled that doctors put her on the list of dead victims right from the beginning.

“The doctors thought it was useless to treat me, so they just came to check on me now and then to see if I was already dead. But I stayed alive,” she recalled.

Doctors eventually put her through surgery, and she is alive and well now, even though she is missing half her face.

“I remember that I saw Jesus on the ceiling when I was lying on the ground after the explosion,” she said of one of her first visions of Jesus.

Christ kept appearing to her in the hospital as well, she recalled.

“I would have been willing to die for Jesus,” Awad said, “but the fact that He kept me alive so miraculously tells me that He wants me to live.”

The Christian husband said that forgiving the people who attacked the church and put his wife through so much suffering is not an easy thing, but pointed to Jesus’ Words on the Sermon of the Mount, where Christ calls for the forgiveness of enemies.

Awad said that she doesn’t have anger for the attackers.

“If I would meet the family of the attacker, the only thing I would ask them is: ‘Do you know Jesus?’ I pray they will find the right way,” she expressed.

Coptic Bishop Anba Angaelos told The Christian Post days after the attack in December 2016 that despite the shock and the tragedy, Christians in Egypt are ready to forgive.

“Historically in Egypt, after everyone of these attacks or similar attacks, of course there has been anger and public outcry, but there hasn’t been retaliation or revenge,” Angaelos told CP. “That is one thing that we are very thankful for.”

Angaelos continued: “We are praying that there is healing in the community. We are ready to and we already have forgiven people for doing this because at the end of the day, a lack of forgiveness harms us more than anyone else. I think that is something that we need to be mindful of as Christians, and I am very proud to say that this is something we have seen Copts doing very naturally and organically for decades.”

The attacks against Copts in Egypt have continued in 2018, as Islamic State militants wage a terror campaign targeting believers.
INTO HIS LIKENESS

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News Briefs

Local

Archbishop Hanna High School Principal Dennis Crandall to Transition to New Role

SONOMA, CA February 7, 2018 - Hanna Boys Center announced today that effective August 15, 2018, Dennis Crandall, principal of its Archbishop Hanna High School, has decided to transition to a new role in the organization’s Development Department.

Crandall, who has served as principal of the school since 2004 and has led the high school through its initial and subsequent accreditation processes, expressed optimism, as well as a bittersweet feeling about his decision. “I have poured my heart and soul into our school these past fourteen years, and it will always be near and dear to me,” he said. “But I feel now is the right time for me to step aside and let others lead the school. I am excited about returning to fundraising and believe that is the platform from which I can have the greatest impact on Hanna Boys Center. I am looking forward to helping the Center prepare for a major capital campaign that will completely revamp the entire school and dining facilities.”

“Dennis’ leadership at the school has been nothing short of extraordinary, and we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for what he’s done,” said Brian Farragher, Hanna Boys Center CEO. “At the same time, I’m enthusiastic about his new role in our fundraising group. He brings a wealth of experience, and I think he is uniquely positioned to engage with our donors, many with whom he already has strong relationships.”

Crandall will be remembered for, among other things, leading a successful recent WCEA/WASC accreditation effort that resulted in the highest possible accreditation approval; but most importantly, he will be remembered for his unbridled enthusiasm for Catholic education, his devotion to his faculty and his love for the boys at Hanna Boys Center.

Prior to coming to Hanna Boys Center, Crandall spent more than 30 years at Cardinal Newman High School in Santa Rosa, serving as a teacher, Development Director, coach, Athletic Director, Assistant Principal and Principal.

Tullius Miller, Hanna’s Board chair, had this to say about Crandall’s transition. “I have to admit I’m a little sad, but I fully support Dennis’ decision. I know that everyone—including me—will sorely miss having him at the helm of our school. His leadership these many years has been authentic, charismatic, and rock-solid. I more than welcome his continuing support as a key organizer for our great organization.”

A search for a new school principal is expected to be launched later in February.

About Hanna Boys Center

Since 1945, Hanna Boys Center has changed the lives of tens 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 trained, caring adults who help kids create positive, permanent change in their lives. www.hannacenter.org

National

National Council of Catholic Women


The Executive Committee of the National Council of Catholic Women, along with board members from nearly forty provinces around the country convened in Washington, D.C. for the annual NCCW Board of Directors meeting. They discussed new national initiatives such as NCCW’s collaboration with the US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking to provide mentoring and other support for victims of human trafficking, a new Education Committee initiative to share Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium with Councils of Catholic women across the country and the creation of new Councils of Catholic women for young women from high school age to young adult. The Board also unveiled their new program linking school students in the US with their counterparts in the Holy Land.

Board members attended the Pro-Life Leadership Mass on Thursday, January 18th at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, D.C., and the Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

NCCW President Maribeth Stewart said, “It is always so wonderful for our Board to gather as it highlights the dedication to and work for our Mission of spirituality, leadership and service for all Catholic women. We were excited to explore our new initiatives and to mark the progress of all our programs.”

NCCW members then continued the long-standing tradition of participating in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. This year NCCW joined hundreds of thousands of marchers on January 19th where the mood was hopeful as attendees were addressed by President Trump in a live feed video, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and many other influential pro-life leaders.

On Susan B. Anthony’s Birthday, FFL releases “Recommendations for Best Practices at Colleges and Universities serving Pregnant and Parenting Students”

Alexandria, VA February 15th Feminists for Life of America has just released Recommendations for Best Practices at Colleges and Universities Serving Pregnant and Parenting Students.

Feminists for Life of America has released these recommendations to better serve pregnant women, expectant fathers, parents, and birthmothers attending colleges and universities.

“Our recommendations are based on over two decades of collaboration with administrators, student groups, and community leaders first begun at Georgetown University in January 1997,” said FFL President Serrin Foster, who moderated the first-ever FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum(SM) in the country and is the author of the “Recommendations for Best Practices.”

During the first Forum, Ms. Foster led a panel of key stakeholders, including both school administrators and those of an off-campus maternity home started by GU alumni to serve economically challenged women in a poor section of Washington, D.C.

First, they heard a letter from a pregnant student who was unable to find the support she needed. The audience participated as the moderator helped the panel identify resources on and off campus as well as areas of improvement. They presented a blueprint for progress to the Board of Trustees, who supported the measure. Over the years, they have built a child care center, established housing, expanded resources and information for pregnant students, and held a Forum with FFL every year after.

Since then, FFL moderators have led similar Forums at women’s colleges; state schools; and private, Catholic, and Christian universities and colleges across the country. The recommendations, which are a new component of FFL’s Tools for Schools, include policies, model resources and support, and communication strategies. In 2008, FFL released “Perception is Reality,” documenting the impression students have that they cannot complete their education if pregnant or parenting. Earlier, FFL’s efforts on campus inspired the Pregnancy Assistance Fund, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services providing grants to states and tribes.

FFL released the study on Susan B. Anthony’s birthday. “We felt this was the best way to honor Anthony, who wrote on the occasion of her 80th birthday in 1900, “What I have done has been done because I wanted to see better conditions, better surroundings, better circumstances for women.” said Foster, who is the creator of the Women Deserve Better campaign. “Anthony was a champion for mothers and women in higher education. She and Sarah Norton successfully advocated Cornell University to admit women. Today, we know from our own experience working with students and administrators, our work is far from over.”

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research reported the urgent need for resources and support in the fall, especially for mothers of color who are at highest risk for dropping out of college.

Last year, Feminists for Life unveiled a new online resource, WomenDeserveBetter.com, to help women WORK, LEARN, LIVE, and LOVE better.

Administrators and student groups interested in bringing an FFL moderator to campus to hold an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum, or for an updated FFL Pregnancy and Parenting Resource Survey(SM) and technical assistance, should contact info@feminstsforlife.org.

Former President of Franciscan U Posthumously Receives Poverello Medal

By Perry West

Steubenville, Ohio, Feb 22 (CNA/EWTN News) - Father Michael Scanlan, TOR, former president of the Franciscan University of Steubenville, will posthumously receive the 2018 Poverello Medal, the college’s highest non-academic award.

The medal will be given in recognition of the...
Billy Graham

By Christine Rousselle

Charlotte, N.C., Feb 21 (CNA/EWTN News) - The evangelist Billy Graham died Wednesday at his home in Montreat, N.C., his family has announced. He was 99.

Born in Charlotte, N.C., Graham was ordained a Southern Baptist minister in 1939. During his work in ministry, he wrote more than 30 books and conducted the annual Billy Graham Crusades until his retirement from active ministry in 2005. His last book, Where I Am: Heaven, Eternity, and Our Life Beyond the Now, was published in 2015.

During his time in ministry, Graham insisted that his crusades and rallies be racially integrated, and was friends with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1981, Graham first met with St. John Paul II, who said that the two were “brothers.” They would meet again several times. When John Paul II died in 2005, Graham said he believed that the Pope had been “the most influential voice for morality and peace in the world during the last 100 years,” and praised his “strong Catholic faith” and perseverance through his illnesses.

Prominent Catholics reacted with sadness to Graham’s death, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York. In a statement on the archdiocesan website, Dolan wrote that while his family was Catholic, there was a level of respect for Graham’s work in bringing people to Christ.

“There was no question that the Dolans were a Catholic family, firm in our faith, but in our household there was always respect and admiration for Billy Graham and the work he was doing to bring people to God,” said Dolan.

“As an historian, my admiration for him only grew when I studied our nation’s religious past, and came to appreciate even more the tremendous role he played in the American evangelical movement. May the Lord that Billy Graham loved so passionately now grant him eternal rest.”

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, offered condolences to the Graham family and said that he was praying for the repose of his soul. DiNardo praised Graham for his work spreading the gospel around the country, and said he was thankful for his ministry.

“His faith and integrity invited countless thousands around the world into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Billy Graham,” said DiNardo.

Dr. Robert George, a professor at Princeton University and a former chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, offered condolences to the Graham family and said that he was praying for the repose of his soul. DiNardo praised Graham for his work spreading the gospel around the country, and said he was thankful for his ministry.

“His faith and integrity invited countless thousands around the world into a closer relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for the ministry of Billy Graham,” said DiNardo.

Dr. Robert George, a professor at Princeton University and a former chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, compared Graham to St. John Paul II and other religious figures, saying that while he was “firmly rooted” in his denomination, Graham was able to reach all people.

**British Judge Allows Toddler’s Life Support Switched Off, Despite Parents’ Wishes**

Liverpool, England, Feb 20 (CNA/EWTN News) - A British court ruled Tuesday that physicians can stop providing life support, against his parents’ wishes, to Alfie Evans, a 21-month old boy who has an unknown neurological degenerative condition.

Evans is in a “semi-vegetative state” and on life support at Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool, where doctors have said further efforts are futile and went to court to argue that continuing treatment, as his parents wish, is not in Evans’ best interest.

Justice Anthony Hayden of the High Court ruled Feb. 20 that “Alfie’s need now is for good quality palliative care … He requires peace, quiet, and stability, so that he may conclude his life as he has lived it.”

“I am satisfied that continued ventilatory support is no longer in Alfie’s interests. This decision I appreciate will be devastating news to Alfie’s parents. I hope they will take time to read this judgement again.”

Alder Hey Children’s Hospital has said it always tries to agree with parents on plans for care: “Our aim is always to try and reach an agreement with parents about the most appropriate care plan for their child. Unfortunately there are sometimes rare situations such as this where agreement cannot be reached and the treating team believe that continued active treatment is not in a child’s best interests.”

The hospital may withdraw Evans’ ventilation on Friday.

Alfie’s parents, Tom Evans and Kate James, are considering appealing the decision.

His doctors have described his condition as untreatable, but his parents are requesting his son’s transfer to the Vatican-linked Bambino Gesu Pediatric Hospital in Rome for further diagnosis and possible treatment.

Evans’ case echoes that of Charlie Gard, a terminally ill English infant who died in July 2017 after being taken off life support against his parents’ wishes. Gard was 11 months old, and had been at the center of a months-long legal debate regarding parental rights and human life support.

Doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital treating Gard also went to court to take him off life support, saying his parents’ decision to maintain treatment was not in his interest.

Though Gard’s parents raised more than $1.6 million for his treatment and had offers from hospitals in Europe and the US to give him experimental treatment, a High Court judge ordered that he be taken off life support.

Discussing Gard’s situation with CNA in June 2017, Dr. Melissa Moschella, a Catholic University of America philosophy professor, said: “It seems to me completely wrongheaded that the state should be stepping in here when the decision that the parents are making is really aimed at the best interests of the child.”

“It’s not crazy, it’s not abusive, it’s not neglectful. It’s the decision of parents who want to, however they can, to give their very sick child a chance for life.”

She said such a decision “should be completely within the prerogative of the parent,” citing the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to Moschella, that declaration “clearly indicates that the parents, not the state will have primarily responsibility.” ∘
Music was generally violin, guitar and piano in the early years. In later years music was provided by local orchestras such as the Greenwood Hometown Harmony Boys in the late 20s and later Rubén’s Four in the 30s. Another local group was called the “melody Mixers.” Over the past several decades a variety of bands with many styles of music have played at the Saint Patrick’s event from local groups to others from Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Bovina, Santa Rosa, Petuluma and so on.

The town of Elk has dwindled in population since the early part of the 20th century. Most of the descendants of the Native Sons of Little Ireland have moved away as have the descendants of the Italians, Scandina...
Reconocer Su Amor en el Misterio de la Cruz

Recuerden que el Año Litúrgico puede ser para nosotros un tipo de ‘peregrinación’ a través de la vida de nuestro Señor. Cada año tenemos la oportunidad de encontrarlos de nuevo con el Señor si nos comprometemos por completo a toda la peregrinación. Durante el Tiempo de Cuaresma el reto que se nos presenta es el de Juan el Bautista quien proclamaba: “Arrepientanse y crean en la buena nueva.”

La obra del arrepentimiento es interminable porque no importa cuántas veces decidamos hacer solo el bien y evitar todo lo malo, la realidad es que continuamos siendo afectados por nuestra naturaleza humana caída. En este estado de caída es que continuamente nos apartamos de los misterios de Dios y nos atrae más el enfocarnos en anhelos inmediatos y muy a menudo desordenados de la fe. En este estado de caída es que continuamos siendo afectados por nuestra naturaleza humana caída.

Dios nos ha creado para que tengamos una intimidad con Él y tenemos un gran anhelo de esa intimidad. El Matrimonio Cristiano, un reflejo del amor de Cristo por la Iglesia, es una expresión humana legítima de este anhelo de intimidad. Cristo está buscando que cada uno de nosotros, como miembros de la Iglesia, nos apenemos de esa falta de amor auténtico, de esa falta de intimidad.

En el curso de la peregrinación Apostólica original, los apóstoles no fueron inmunes a esta influencia de naturaleza caída. Pedro, audazmente declaró en un momento que Jesús era el hijo de Dios y momentos después reprobó al Señor al declarar que el hijo de Dios sería llevado a la Cruz.

Más tarde, en el huerto de Getsemaní, este mismo apóstol audaz niega a nuestro Señor tres veces. Este es el mismo Señor con quien compartió la más íntima Última Cena unas horas antes. ¿Lo débil y vulnerable es el corazón humano?

Sabemos de cómo otro apóstol, Judas, debido a su exceso de preocupación por las posesiones materiales traiciona a nuestro Señor, ‘vendiéndolo’ a los escribas y fariseos por treinta piezas de plata. El Señor ciertamente quiere nuestra seguridad pero Él quiere que primero dejemos todo en sus manos. Judas, como nuestros primeros padres Adán y Eva, encontró fácil confiar en lo que estaba presente y disponible de inmediato, dinero fácil o fruta deliciosa, que confiar en la palabra de Dios y abrazar el misterio del auténtico amor de Cristo.

Al caminar por la presente senda de arrepentimiento, nos invita a reconocer en nosotros la audacia de Pedro, así como también su debilidad. Se nos invita a ver cómo Judas expresa preocupación por los pobres, pero en su corazón alberga la inseguridad de la codicia. Se nos invita a ver cómo cada apóstol en la última cena declara fidelidad total a Cristo y ver que unas horas más tarde, todos ellos lo abandonaron. Se nos invita a vernos a nosotros mismos. Que no nos sorprenda lo que encontraremos porque nosotros al igual que los apóstoles compartimos la misma naturaleza humana caída.

En última instancia, nuestra necesidad de arrepentimiento continuo es un síntoma de falta de fe. Adán y Eva carecieron de fe de que Dios cumpliría su promesa.

El pueblo del Antiguo Testamento, una y otra vez, vemos que carecían de fe de que Dios les daría de comer, que los libraría de los enemigos, que superaría todos los obstáculos por ellos, que Él sería su Dios.

Los apóstoles también enfrentaron las mismas tendencias humanas. Nosotros también. Nos falta fe en el misterio de que Dios es un Dios de amor. Vemos daños y desastres, ya sean hechos por otros que rechazan a Dios y sus caminos o por alguna calamidad natural y perdemos la fe. Así como Pedro no nos afloramos a la verdad del amor de Dios. Olvidamos fácilmente que la Cruz es la prueba más clara, más evidente de la profundidad del amor de Dios para nosotros y nos olvidamos también que Él se levantó de los muertos! Esta falta de fe en su amor por nosotros y en su resurrección, que son grandes misterios, nos llevan a abandonar el mundo de la fe y a buscar la felicidad temporal para saciar nuestras ansias más inmediatas y desordenadas.

Durante nuestra Peregrinación Litúrgica se nos invita a profundizar nuestra relación personal con Jesús, para experimentar Su gran amor, para ver Su tierna misericordia con el caído, para reconocer Su amor en el misterio de la Cruz. Una vez más se nos invita al arrepentimiento y a profundizar más nuestra fe en el Evangelio. ✯

(From page 14)

Feast of St. Lucy on Dec. 13, after Ash Wednesday, after Pentecost Sunday, and after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in September—corresponding with the four seasons.

In centuries past, the Lenten abstention was more austere. Catholics gave up not only meat but also animal products like milk and butter, as well as oil and even fish at times.

Why are today’s obligations in the Latin Rite so minimal? The Church is setting clear boundaries outside of which one cannot be considered to be practicing the Christian life, Deacon Carnazzo explained. That is why intentionally violating the Lenten obligations is a mortal sin.

But should Catholics perform more than the minimum penance that is demanded? Yes, said Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P., who is currently studying for a Pontifical License in Sacred Theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

The minimum may be “what is due to God out of justice,” he explained, but we are “called not only to be just to God,” but also “to love God and to love our neighbor.” Charity, he added, “would call us to do more than just the minimum that is applied to us by the Code of Canon Law today, I think.”

In Jeremiah 31: 31-33, God promises to write His law upon our hearts, Deacon Carnazzo noted. We must go beyond following a set of rules and love God with our hearts, and this involves doing more than what we are obliged to do, he added.

Be wary of your motivation. However, Fr. Lew noted, fasting “must be stirred up by charity.” A Catholic should not fast out of dieting or pride, but out of love of God.

“It’s always dangerous in the spiritual life to compare yourself to other people,” he said, citing the Gospel of John where Jesus instructed St. Peter not to be concerned about the mission of St. John the Apostle but rather to “follow Me.” (John 21: 20-23).

In like manner, we should be focused on God during Lent and not on the sacrifices of others, he said.

Lent (is referred to) as a joyful season...It’s the joy of loving Him more.

“We will often fail, I think. And that’s not a bad thing. Because if we do fail, this is the opportunity to realize our utter dependence on God and His grace, to seek His mercy and forgiveness, and to seek His strength so that we can grow in virtue and do better,” he added.

And by realizing our weakness and dependence on God, we can “discover anew the depths of God’s mercy for us” and can be more merciful to others, he added.

Giving up good things may seem onerous and burdensome, but can—and should—a Catholic fast with joy?

“It’s referred to in the preface of Lent as a joyful season,” Fr. Lew said. “And it’s the joy of deepening our relationship with Christ, and therefore coming closer to Him. It’s the joy of loving Him more, and the more we love God the closer we draw to Him.”

“Lent is all about the Cross, and eventually the resurrection,” said Deacon Carnazzo. If we “make an authentic, real sacrifice for Christ” during Lent, “we can come to that day of the crucifixion and say ‘Yes Lord, I willingly with you accept the cross. And when we do that, then we will behold the third day of resurrection.”

This article was originally published on CNA Feb. 20, 2016. ✯
Noticias en Español

La Fe es el Antídoto a Las Enfermedades de Estados Unidos. Afirma Mons. Chaput

WASHINGTON DC (ACI Prensa) - Una violencia que atraviesa toda la nación, tiroteos en las escuelas, tensiones políticas, drogas, desempleo, son algunas de las enfermedades que afectan a Estados Unidos, y ante ellos el antídoto es la fe, afirmó el Arzobispo de Filadelfia, Mons. Charles Chaput.

En un discurso pronunciado en la Universidad de Villanova, el Prelado señaló que en su experiencia este es el momento "más conflictivo" en la historia de Estados Unidos "desde la década de 1960".

Ante esto, afirmó, "una de las tareas de la Iglesia, y de cada uno de nosotros como creyentes, es vivir y trabajar de una manera que ayude a mejorar el mundo que nos rodea", y indicó que "no hay curación sin un buen diagnóstico".

El discurso del Arzobispo se tituló "Cosas por venir: el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica en su numeral 336. "

¿Ha aumentado o disminuido el porcentaje de matrimonios en Estados Unidos?

WASHINGTON DC (ACI Prensa) - Según un reciente estudio la mayoría de personas entre los 18 y 64 años en los Estados Unidos decide no casarse, en cambio la tasa de matrimonios entre personas mayores de 65 ha aumentado en los últimos 50 años.

El estudio, realizado por el Instituto de Estudios Familiares (IFS), mostró que en 2016 solo el 48.6% de los adultos en Estados Unidos entre 18 y 64 años están actualmente casados, lo que indica su nivel más bajo, según los datos del censo más reciente del IPUMS-USA. En 1960 contra matrimonio el 75.6%; y en 2010 lo hizo el 45.4%.

En el caso de las personas mayores de 65 años, los datos del IFS señalan que en 1960 se casaba el 51.3%, en 2010 el 54.2% y en 2016 el 55.3%.

Según Wendy Wang, directora de investigación del IFS, "la fluctuación a corto plazo en el número de nuevos matrimonios y divorcios está estrechamente relacionado con los cambios en la economía y otros factores".

A la larga, con el fallecimiento de las generaciones mayores, nos dirigimos a una edad en la que el matrimonio ya no será la institución en la que vive la mayoría de adultos", continuó Wang.

Según la investigación hay varios factores que influyen en este declive. Un factor es que cada vez más parejas se casan tarde o deciden convivir. Además, el porcentaje de adultos que nunca se casaron en este grupo de edad —de 18 a 64 años— aumentó del 26% en 1990 al 36% en 2016.

El estudio también halló que las personas menores de 35 años y las que no tienen educación universitaria son más propensas a permanecer solteras.

En cambio, señaló Wang, "el matrimonio sigue siendo la norma para quienes tienen una educación universitaria".

La disminución del matrimonio entre los jóvenes también se observó en todos los ámbitos, de diferentes grupos raciales y étnicos, e incluyó tanto a hombres como a mujeres.

Sin embargo, una tendencia positiva es la disminución en la tasa de divorcios, que alcanzó un mínimo histórico de 2.1 millones en 2016. Para los adultos casados, las posibilidades de divorcio son aún menores.

"Aunque una parte minoritaria de adultos está casada hoy, entre los que están casados, la buena noticia es que la probabilidad de divorcio también es menor", dijo Wang.

Por otro lado, el matrimonio entre adultos en sus años de jubilación, es decir mayores de 65 años, está experimentando un ligero aumento, pasando del 36% al 45% en 2016.

Factores como la mayor esperanza de vida, especialmente entre los hombres, influyeron en el aumento del matrimonio en los adultos mayores.

Hoy en día, por cada 100 hombres casados ??mayores de 65 años, hay 80 mujeres casadas, en comparación con 64 mujeres en 1960.

El estudio también señaló que la tasa de divorcios en este grupo de edad ha permanecido aproximadamente igual: alrededor de 3 nuevos divorcios por cada 1,000 adultos casados a lo largo de los últimos 5 años.

Para Wang, en el futuro la brecha entre los jóvenes casados ??y no casados ??probablemente continuará aumentando.

"Es probable que la brecha entre los adultos casados ??y los que no están casados, alineándose con la división de clases en los Estados Unidos, se profunde en el futuro cercano", concluyó.

Traducido y adaptado por Diego López. Publicado originalmente en CNA.

¿Preocupada por tus hijos? Reza esta oración de una madre a sus ángeles de la guarda

LIMA (ACI Prensa) - No es un secreto que el mundo cada vez es un lugar más peligroso y que cuando los hijos, sobre todo los niños, salen de casa, empiezan las preocupaciones por lo que les podría suceder.

Sin embargo, como padres no debemos olvidarnos que los hijos tienen ángeles de la guarda, brindados por Dios; y por tanto podemos rezar a ellos usando la mediación de nuestro ángel guardián, e invocar su poder protector sobre nuestros hijos.

Cuando no podemos estar físicamente ahí donde están nuestros niños, es más apropiado recurrir en la oración a quienes sí pueden protegerlos.

"Desde su comienzo hasta la muerte, la vida humana está rodeada de su custodia y de su intercesión. Nadie podrá negar que cada fiel tiene a su lado un ángel como protector y pastor para conducir su vida’ (San Basilio Magno). Desde esta tierra, la vida cristiana podrá proseguir con la presencia de sus guardianes celestiales, y de la divinidad por quién el hombre ha sido creado. Todo cuanto el hombre puede tener en el mundo de visiones, de pensamientos, de juicios, de decisiones, de inferencias, de ideas, de temores, de temeridades, de dudas, se debe a la intervención de los ángeles..."

(vea Noticias, pagina 21)
Update: As DACA Deadline Nears, Catholics Urge Fix for Immigration Woes

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Last September, as President Donald Trump pulled the plug on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, he also gave Congress a March 5 deadline to find a permanent legislative solution that would help some 800,000 young adults living in the U.S. who were brought into the country without legal permission as children.

As the deadline approaches, with no legislative solution in sight for DACA, the U.S. Catholic bishops and other Catholic leaders as well as Catholic organizations from around the U.S. have been loudly clamoring for relief for the young adults.

So far, lawmakers have failed to deliver any solution even as the deadline approaches and the president’s repeal of DACA gets tangled up the courts. Some beneficaries already face deportation and the loss of permits that allow them to work, drive and attend school.

“With the March 5th deadline looming, we ask once again that members of Congress show the leadership necessary to find a just and humane solution for these young people, who daily face mounting anxiety and uncertainty,” said a joint statement from Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president; Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president; and Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration.

They are asking Catholics to contact their members of Congress to urge them to: “Protect ‘Dreamers’ from deportation; to provide them a path to citizenship; and to avoid any damage to existing protections for families and unaccompanied minors in the process.”

Many U.S. bishops have been making personal pleas, peppering various social media channels, posting videos on Facebook and YouTube, and tweets urging Catholics to push lawmakers for action.

In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, a Mass dedicated to Dreamers was celebrated at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church in Los Angeles Feb. 25. It included testimonials from Dreamers, as DACA recipients are known.

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone made two videos, in English and Spanish, urging participation in the Feb. 26 call-in day. The archbishop’s videos can be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/ArchdioceseofSanFrancisco/videos and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESwLrj6tsJQ.

In his video message, Archbishop Cordileone said Catholics need to call members of Congress to demand “a legislative fix for DACA, so our brothers and sisters, young people who are here without proper documentation, can get on a track for citizenship and continue contributing to our country, to ask as well for reform of immigration policy that will favor keeping families together. Families are the basic unit of society and society stands and falls on family unity.”

In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Archbishop John C. Wester issued his second action alert in a week asking Catholics in the state to participate in the national call-in day.

“As Catholics, we believe the dignity of every human being, particularly that of our immigrant and refugee children and youth, must be protected,” he said in a late Feb. 22 statement. “The sanctity of families must be upheld. The Catholic bishops have long supported undocumented youth brought to the United States by their parents, known as Dreamers, and continue to do so.

“We ask you to engage with your elected officials to voice your support for these young people and call on your members of Congress to find a bipartisan legislative solution to protect Dreamers immediately,” added the archbishop.

To help tell the story of DACA recipients, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe also calling attention to a music video by the local band Reviva that depicts agents with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement picking up three workers, including a teacher and a construction worker. Its message reflects that reality some in the country are facing.

Workers are handcuffed and taken into custody in the “Take Me Away” video, as a little girl arrives home from school to find her parents gone. The songwriter graduated from St. Pius X High School, a Catholic school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. The video can be seen at https://youtu.be/HsN50uNofc.

The Ohio-based Association of U.S. Catholic Priests urged its members to fast and pray, but also to call their lawmakers in Washington asking that Congress pass permanent relief for the young adults affected. The group also asked priests to encourage their parishioners to take part in personal and public actions on behalf of DACA.

In a Feb. 21 newsletter, the association asked its members via email to “fast on Fridays in union with Father Gary Graf, the Chicago priest who has been fasting in support of Dreamers every day,” and to support Father Ray Pineda, an ordained priest in Atlanta, who has benefited from DACA and also is facing an uncertain future in the country.

Father Graf has announced he will march in March of the White House for 40 hours straight, from 9 a.m. (local time) March 4 through 5 p.m. March 5. The priest said it will be his final attempt to encourage Trump to extend DACA. As he marches he will hold placards illustrating the number of Dreamers who are losing their status per day, 916, and per week, 6,412. By the end of March, he said, 25, 648 will have lost DACA status.

Hundreds of Catholic leaders have declared Feb. 27 a “Catholic Day of Action” in Washington and planned to pray and sing inside the Russell Senate Office Building.

A news release that the group of leaders includes women religious, who will call on House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, a Catholic, to remember Catholic social teaching about the obligation to protect immigrants, and lead House Members in passing a clean DREAM Act.

The measure -- the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act -- has long been proposed. The bill is what gives DACA recipients the “Dreamer” name.

The USCCB also has created a series of videos available on its YouTube channel and Facebook.com/USCCB.

Activists and DACA recipients are seen in New York City Feb. 15. The group is walking 250 miles to Washington to demand Congress pass a “clean” bill with no conditions to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, such as the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act. (CNS photo/Shannon Stapleton, Reuters) CNS photo/Shannon Stapleton, Reuters

March 25: Annunciation of the Lord
Sex Trafficking, Elderly Suicide, and The Legacy of China’s One Child Policy

By Courtney Grogan

Washington D.C., February 25 (CNA/EWTN News) - Although China expanded its former one child policy to a limit of two children per family in 2015, decades of government-enforced population control have left China with significant gender and age imbalances that have far reaching societal consequences, including a rise in sex trafficking and elderly suicide, according to a Chinese pro-life advocate.

“There are an estimated 37 million more males living in China than females. What that has done is it has created a situation in China in which there is sex-trafficking within China and the surrounding countries as well, where women and girls become forced brides or prostitutes because of the lack of women in China,” the president of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers Reggie Littlejohn told CNA.

Littlejohn, who founded Women’s Rights Without Frontiers as an aid and advocacy organization in response to “forced abortion, forced sterilization, sex-selective abortion of baby girls under the one child policy, is now seeking to address the unanticipated consequences of population control.

“Right now the problem in China is not that they have too many people. It is that they have too few young people to support their rapidly aging population and, even under the two child policy, they are not getting the baby boom that they need to help with that situation or to help with the fact that their labor force is now declining,” according to Littlejohn.

The human rights advocate has seen the impact on the ground of this dramatic demographic shift, and is concerned about societal effect on the human dignity of the elderly.

“There is a steep rise in senior suicide in China,” explained Littlejohn, “historically, elderly people depended on having a large family that will support them in their old age and now a lot of them don’t have anyone to support them and now they are killing themselves in good numbers.”

In China, the suicide rate for the over-65 age group is four to five times higher than the general population according to a study in the American journal Aging and Disease.

“Something that we have not formally announced yet is that we have begun to start serving widows in China. We have elderly widows that have nobody to support them that are leading lives of grinding poverty and hopelessness that we have extended our hands to and said ‘we’re going to support you,’” said Littlejohn.

In her work with the elderly, Littlejohn’s team encountered one woman who exemplified the great need among China’s senior population. The woman told Littlejohn that “some days she only ate salt and she had bought a rope to hang herself when life got too tough.”

“These women are just grateful beyond any measure for the help that we are giving them. And, it doesn’t cost that much to support an elderly widow in China. We give them the American equivalent of $20 a month and it makes the difference between eating salt for a meal and actually having real food,” according to Littlejohn.

“The Chinese Communist Party expected more of a baby boom with the loosening up of the birth limit to two children and they have not experienced the births that they thought that they were going to experience,” explained Littlejohn, “and so my question to them is ‘why are you keeping any coercive population control in place at all?’ They should be giving people incentives to have children and not limiting births at all.”

In addition to the pro-life group’s expansion to aiding elderly widows, the majority of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers’ efforts are still dedicated to crisis pregnancies in China.

 “[The] two-child policy is not an abandonment of coercive population control in China,” according to Littlejohn. “Single mothers are still subject to forced abortion and third children are still subject to forced abortion.”

“We have a network on the ground in China where we are able to connect with women who are being pressured to selectively abort or abandon their babies because they are girls,” said Littlejohn.

Littlejohn told CNA that this is the message her team extends to the pregnant Chinese women they encounter: “Please don’t abort or abandon your baby because she is a girl. She is a precious daughter. Girls are as good as boys. We will give you a monthly stipend for a year to empower you to keep your daughter.”

Littlejohn says that this message and the monthly stipends have enabled her organization to save hundreds of baby girls.

Littlejohn’s efforts in China inspired in part by her work with St. Teresa of Calcutta. “I worked with her for six weeks in Calcutta,” remembered Littlejohn, who assisted the Missionaries of Charity in the home for the dying and in caring for abandoned babies.

“The way that she cared about every life, including lives of the most disabled, was a huge inspiration for me in saving baby girls in China and we hope to save baby girls in India as well.”

(Noticias en Español, cont. de pagina 19) ¡fieles amigos celestiales de mis hijos!

Les doy gracias de todo corazón por todos el amor y la bondad que les muestran.

En algún día futuro lo haré, con un agradecimiento más digno del que ahora se puede dar, ante la corte celestial entera reconociendo mi deuda para con su guía y protector.

Sigan velando sobre ellos. Provean todas sus necesidades de cuerpo y alma. Oren, del mismo modo, por mí, por mi esposa y mi familia entera, para que sea todo el día un regocijo en su bendita compañía.”
CALENDAR

Lenten Dates 2018
- Third Sunday of Lent (Sunday, March 4, 2018)
- Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) (Sunday, March 11, 2018)
- Feast of Saint Patrick (Saturday, March 17, 2018)
- Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday) (Sunday, March 18, 2018)
- Feast of Saint Joseph (Monday, March 19, 2018)
- Chrism Mass St. Eugene’s Cathedral (Thursday March 22, 2018)
- Palm Sunday (Sunday, March 25, 2018)
- Holy Thursday (Thursday, March 29, 2018)
- Good Friday (Friday, March 30, 2018)
- Holy Saturday (Saturday, March 31, 2018)
- Easter (Sunday, April 1, 2018)
- The Annunciation of the Lord (Transferred to Monday, April 9, 2018, because March 25 is Palm Sunday)

March 7th & 17th Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering
Come join us. Develop friendships, enjoy singing and fellowship, hear how other Catholics are living their life of holiness and pray as a group before the Blessed Sacrament. Fellowship gatherings of Catholics are held twice a month in the Diocese. Catholic Cursillo is a movement within the Catholic Church based on friendship. We would love to be your friend. Join us on March 7th from 6-8pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.
Join us on March 17th from 2-4pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park.
Our 2018 weekends have been scheduled. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Priscilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957.
Our website is: http://www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com/

March 11th Diocese Youth Day
Cardinal Newman gym & activity center.
YouthMinistryEvents

March 17th 30th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner Fundraiser
St. Eugene’s Cathedral. On Saturday, March 17, 2018, in the Becker Center at 2323 Montgomery Dr. Santa Rosa.
Join us for an evening of food, fun, auction prizes, Irish dancers & sing-a-long. No host Bar opens at 5:30pm, followed by dinner served at 6:30pm. Menu includes Corned Beef, Cabbage, Potatoes, Carrots, Bread & Ice Cream. Pre-sale tickets $20. Adult, $10. Child under 12.
At the door, $25. Adult, $15. Child under 12. Tickets available at the Rectory office Mon.-Fri. 9am to 4pm, or Sunday mornings in the Parish Life Center before noon.

March 22nd Fathers of Faith Series
An Introduction to the Lives & Teachings of the Church Fathers by Fr. Gary Sumpter. From September 21, 2017 to June 28, 2018 7:30pm. Join us for an inspiring series one evening a month on Thursdays.
Who were the early Christians? What did they believe, teach, and often die for? Is our faith today the same as the faith they professed? These are some of the basic themes to be covered in this 10-part series. Among the Church Fathers to be discussed will be Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr, Leo the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, Irenaeus, Cyranus, Basil, and more. Talks will be on the following Thursday nights at 7:30pm: March 22, April 26, May 31, June 28 Kolbe Academy & Trinity Prep. No Charge. Donations gratefully accepted.

April 4th & 21st 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 4th from 6-8pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.
Join us on April 21st from 2-4pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park.
Our 2018 weekends have been scheduled. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Priscilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957.
Our website is: http://www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com/

Ongoing in North Diocese
Catholic Cursillo Fellowship Gathering
Weekdays: Mondays Mass 9am Tuesday Commission Service 9am.
Friday Adoration 3pm followed by Mass 4pm
Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Missions, Hoopa: Sunday Mass 11:30am
HSU Newman Center, 700 Union St. Arcata: Sunday Mass 5:30pm followed by supper & learning about Catholicism.
St. Mary's Arcata
Fr. Pacheco will be celebrating Latin Masses every Sunday. The first Sunday of the month will be at 6:30am, and all the following Sundays of the month will be at 1:30pm.

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

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

First Saturdays: Oakville House of Prayer (Carmelite Monastery)
Morning of Recollection every First Saturday of the month; Confessions 10-11am; Mass 11am. Confessions (English/Spanish) Mondays and Fridays; 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm. Church Hours: Chapel opens at 7:00 a.m. Closes at 9pm only on Mondays and Fridays. All other days Church closes at 6pm. 20 Mount Carmel Drive, Oakville, CA 707-944-2454 oakvillecarmelites.org.
Weekly Mass 8am. Monday – Saturday (except for First Saturdays when Mass is at 11am) Sunday Mass 9am. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5pm - 8:45pm. Benediction. All are invited.

To have your calendar event listed please email us Media@srdiocese.org

Major Protestant YouTube Star Announces She’s Converting to Catholicism
By ChurchPOP Editor - February 19, 2018
LizziesAnswers, YouTube

YouTube star Lizzie Estella Reezay of the YouTube channel LizziesAnswers has announced that she’s converting from Protestantism to Catholicism.

“I want everyone to know that I hated that this was happening,” she explains in a recent video. “I fought so hard to get out of this intellectually. I did not want to be Catholic. Not only did I think Catholicism was wrong, I just didn’t like the vibe of Catholicism. I wanted to be anything but Catholic.”

She explains how hard it was for her to make her announcement video because she knew many of her Protestant family and friends would perceive it to be a betrayal. But, she explains, she was obliged to become Catholic by the force of one simple fact: it was true.

Lizzie grew up in the Protestant denomination Churches of Christ (CoC). She started her YouTube channel 8 years ago when she was just 16 years old and had a few videos giving teenage relationship advice go viral. Since the beginning, though, she wasn’t shy about also talking about her Christian faith.

As of this writing, she has amassed a huge following, with over +183k subscribers to her YouTube channel and over 34 million video views.

She attended Pepperdine University (which is affiliated with CoC), where she studied philosophy and religion, and she was planning on moving to Thailand soon to work as a CoC missionary. But in the last year or so she also started exploring Catholicism on her channel, with videos like “10 Lies Protestants Believe About Catholicism! (From a Protestant),” “PROTESTANT VISITS LATIN MASS! What I LOVED and HATED,” and “WHY ‘FAITH ALONE’ SALVATION IS WRONG! (From a Protestant).”

Then, on Ash Wednesday just a few days ago she announced she was converting to Catholicism! She said she would explain more in an upcoming video, which she released a few days later.

Reading the writings of the early Church fathers was particularly impactful for her, since she said they were so clearly Catholic. She also realized that the Catholic Church’s teaching about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist was more biblical than she thought. Finally, she said she decided to become Catholic rather than Eastern Orthodox after being convinced of the truth of the papacy by Steve Ray’s book Upon This Rock.

Here’s the full video of her explaining why she’s converting to Catholicism:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PscwMDR-t0 (or search YouTube for: WHY I’M BECOMING CATHOLIC (From an Ex-Protestant).”
Pope Francis to Youth: Face Your Fears with Discernment, Courage

Vatican City, Feb 22 (CNA/EWTN News) - Addressing youth around the globe, Pope Francis encouraged young people Thursday to face their fears with discernment and courage, looking to the Mother of God as their example.

"What are your fears? What worries you most deeply? An 'underlying' fear that many of you have is that of not being loved, well-liked or accepted for who you are," Pope Francis said in his Feb. 22 message, saying that many insecurities arise from a "sense of inadequacy."

"For us Christians in particular, fear must never have the last word but rather should be an occasion to make an act of faith in God…and in life!" the Pope continued.

Pope Francis' words come ahead of the 33rd diocesan-level World Youth Day, which will take place March 25. This localized event is a preparation for the international World Youth Day, which is set to occur in Panama in 2019.

The diocesan World Youth Day also coincides with the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will discuss the topic of "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." Pope Francis called this a "happy coincidence," which will place the gaze of the Church on young people.

While many youth are ruled by their fears and hide behind "masks and false identities," Pope Francis encouraged young people to remember the words from Scripture "do not be afraid," which have been "repeated 365 times with different variation, as if to tell us that the Lord wants us to be free from fear, every day of the year."

"In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, discernment becomes necessary," the Holy Father said, noting that it is also "indispensable when searching for one's vocation."

While many see discernment as an individual process, Pope Francis said that it is rather an interior

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Fake News Gossip

By Stephen Morris, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director

(From the second of a two part article- see NCC February edition by Stephen Morris)

Fake news is a product of our insatiable appetite to know stuff. I have to give it up, not the news garbage, although watching the news has been reportedly bad for one's health (look it up, you can totally find that on the internet), but the gossip stuff. I've realized, this sin comes in all forms.

My hunger for being in the know, and telling people what I know, has to stop.

Gossip covers so many sins, I had no idea.

For example, I constantly talk over people. While I normally preach the importance of listening and empathizing with the other—I need to take my own medicine here and shut up. I interject over people.

A friend will be in mid-story about, "this movie where this thing happened and it was a total plot twist, and I couldn't believe it and..." and then my mouth opens up and I crush the person talking to let them know I've seen that movie and knew the ending all along.

Doesn't seem like a big deal right? Wrong—these little things add up. And I know I'm not alone. We interject our show of knowledge, making sure other people know what we know, all the time.

Therefore I'm challenging myself and you this Lent: must I really share everything I know? How am I at listening without interjecting? When I approach people in discussion, can I curb my desire to want to know what they're talking about?

See the problem is we don't see this as a form of gossip and sin. Sin is sneaky. We consider information sharing in a good hearted way, "I meant well," we'll say—but the path to hell is paved with good intentions.

Consider our devastating and stunning fires. Everyone was in tune with the emergency text system, we watched the news 24/7, and listened to KRKO non-stop. We were constantly on social media and in touch with friends—all for "the good" to know information about the fires. But personally speaking, I found myself proclaiming whenever in conversation, what I knew about the fires and how I knew it first. Pathetic.

What I knew didn't matter, listening to others did.

Finally and simply, social media bears the essence of our prolific information sharing, providing a highway of sin/gossip. Therefore I must reflect: is social our modern day "tree of forbidden knowledge" of which we quench our appetite every minute of the day?
Pope to Artists: Your Gifts a Responsibility and a Mission

February 25th (From Zenit News Service)

Audience with Members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté” Movement

Pope Francis on February 24, 2018, reminded artists that, “The gifts you have received are for each one of you a responsibility and a mission.”

His comments came in the Consistory Hall of the Apostolic Palace, where he received the members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté” Movement in Rome on the occasion of the Symposium organized to commemorate the feast of Beato Angelico. The movement was founded in 2012, to be a service to give back artists to the Church and to bring the Church to artists.

Several hundred artists are already participating to put back the sacred meaning at the heart of art.

The following is the Pope’s address to those present:

Dear friends,

I welcome you on the occasion of the Symposium you have organized in Rome to commemorate the feast of Blessed Fra Angelico. I thank the Archbishop Robert Le Gall for the words he addressed to me on your behalf. Through you, I wish to express my cordial greeting to all artists who endeavor to make beauty shine, with their talents and their passion, as well as those people in a condition of fragility who are rehabilitated thanks to their experience of beauty.

Mary as an example, Pope Francis said that the universal Church awaits the gift that all youths have to offer in their unique personhood.

“Dear young people, the Lord, the Church, the world are waiting for your answer to the unique call of God”, the Holy Father said.

The gifts you have received are for each one of you a responsibility and a mission.

As the saint, Pope John Paul II wrote in his Letter to artists, “The artist has a special relationship to beauty. In a very true sense, it can be said that beauty is the vocation bestowed on him by the Creator in the gift of ‘artistic talent’. And, certainly, this too is a talent which ought to be made to bear fruit, in keeping with the sense of the Gospel parable of the talents (cf. Mt 25:14-30)” (4 April 1999, 3). This conviction illuminates the vision and the dynamic proper to the “Diaconie de la Beauté”, which has its roots precisely here in Rome, from the time of the Synod on the new evangelization, in October 2012. Together with you, I give thanks to the Lord for the journey that has been made and for the variety of your talents, which He calls you to develop in the service of your neighbor and for the whole of humanity.

The gifts you have received are for each one of you a responsibility and a mission. Indeed, you are required to work without letting yourselves be dominated by the search for a vain glory or easy popularity, and even less so by the often mean calculations of purely personal profit. In a world in which technology is often interpreted as the main resource for interpreting existence (cf. Encyclical Laudato si’, 110), you are called, through your talents and drawing from the sources of Christian spirituality, to propose “an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and [to encourage] a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption” (ibid., 222), and to serve creation and the protection of “nases of beauty” in our cities, too often “concrete jungles” without a soul.

Therefore I invite you to develop your talents to contribute to an ecological conversion that recognizes the eminent dignity of every person, his special value, his creativity, and capacity to promote the common good. May your search for beauty in what you create be inspired by the desire to serve the beauty of the quality of life of people, of their harmony with the environment, of encounter and mutual help (cf ibid., 150). So, I encourage you, in this “Diaconate of Beauty”, to promote a culture of encounter, of building bridges between people, between populations, in a world in which many walls are still raised out of fear of others. Take care also to witness, in the expression of your art, that believing in Jesus Christ and following Him “is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and a profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties” (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 167). The Church relies on you to make the ineffable Beauty of God’s love perceptible and to enable every person to discover the beauty of being loved by God, to be filled with His love, to live on it and to bear witness to it in attention to others, especially those who are excluded, wounded and rejected in our societies.

While I entrust you to the Lord, through the intercession of Blessed Fra Angelico, I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the members of the “Diaconie de la Beauté”. 

(Pope St. Francis to Youth, cont. from page 23) reflection on each person’s vocation, or “call from above.” Prayerful silence and dialogue with others, the Pope said, are necessary for the process of discernment.

On this note, the Roman Pontiff pointed to the example of Mary and her witness of love despite her fears, which was “full of boldness and focused completely on the gift of self.”

“Mary, like others in the Sacred Scriptures, trembles before the mystery of God’s call, who in a moment places before her the immensity of his own plan and makes her feel all her smallness as a humble creature,” Pope Francis said, noting her complete willingness even in the face of uncertainty.

“The first reason not to fear is the fact that God has called us by name. The angel, God’s messenger, called Mary by name,” Pope Francis continued, noting that God has also called “each of you by name.”

The angel’s words to Mary also ring true for youth today, the Pope said, noting that the all-knowing power of God will always sustain every individual, even amidst fear and darkness.

“The Angel’s words descend upon our human fears, dissolving them with the power of the Good News of which we are heralds: our life is not pure chance or a mere struggle for survival, rather each of us is a cherished story loved by God,” Pope Francis said.

However, the Pope said that courage is also needed for the youths of today to address their fears and discern what God wants for them, just as Mary did.

“From the certainty that God’s grace is with us comes the strength to take courage in the present moment: the courage to carry forward what God asks of us here and now, and in every area of our lives,” the Holy Father said.

Encouraging young people to face their fears with faith, discernment, and courage while looking to Mary as an example, Pope Francis said that the universal Church awaits the gift that all youths have to offer in their unique personhood.

“Dear young people, the Lord, the Church, the world are waiting for your answer to the unique call that each one receives in this life!” the Pope said.

“As World Youth Day in Panama draws closer, I invite you to prepare yourselves for our gathering with the joy and enthusiasm of those who wish to participate in such a great adventure… do you accept the challenge?”

March 17: St. Patrick