Advent is upon us. While the world seems to be a frenzy of Christmas shopping, traveling, decorating and entertaining, the Church presents us with a unique traditional alternative: a season of reflection, preparation and penance as we anticipate the birth of Christ.

Contrary to popular practice and belief, Advent is more than a frantic countdown to Christmas. Even some Catholics may not fully understand the potential spirit of the pre-Christmas season, as a time of fasting, prayer and almsgiving meant to prepare the faithful for Christ's birth. These traditional Advent practices date back to the earliest days of the Church.

The more faithfully the season of Advent is observed, the more joyful the season of Christmas will be. Without a time of fasting and self-denial, the joy of Christmas becomes routine and loses its value as a sacred feast.

The Church encourages participation at weekday Masses during Advent, because in the Eucharist we find the source and goal of our Advent preparation: Christ himself, whose sacrifice reconciles us with God.

Firestorm 2017

Work has only just begun to rebuild after the most devastating wildfire in California history. Thousands are grieving, revisiting, and reprocessing the traumatic hours when the fires erupted late Sunday evening October 8th. The rebuilding, reclaiming and healing has begun the long journey out from the ashes. Bishop Vasa has been offering information and inspiration on our #signofhope web page (www.srdiocese.org/signofhope). Here is one of his latest:

October 27th FIRE UPDATE – Diocese of Santa Rosa

The threat of fire has ceased and now the long and arduous job of restoring and rebuilding must begin. Yet, before anything can be rebuilt there is the necessary task of assuring that all toxic materials remaining within the confines of the burned out foundations is removed and disposed of properly. In the case of a single home, the task would be quick and easy. With the rebuilding, reclaiming and healing has begun the long journey out from the ashes. Bishop Vasa has been offering information and inspiration on our #signofhope web page (www.srdiocese.org/signofhope). Here is one of his latest:

Five Fire Relief Resources

(Compiled from a number of sources)

1. Here is a list of Catholic Charities Services and contacts for the parishes.
   - Fire Recovery Services including benefit enrollment and more – Cynthia King, (707) 867-8004
   - Parish Connections for parishes seeking info or to get more involved in Catholic Charities – Margie Pettibone - (707) 528-8712 x 161
   - Immigration and Citizenship – Isabel Ladd (707) 528-8712 x 128
   - Food, Financial Counseling, Benefit Enrollment, Referrals – Valerie Winkler (707) 528-8712 x 152
   - Alzheimer’s support, Senior check in calls, senior transportation – Michele Osmon (707) 528-8712 x 185
   - Homeless Outreach Street Team to reach out to people experiencing homelessness - (855) 707-4678
   - Coordinated Intake for all people seeking shelter and housing services – (866) 542-5480

The more faithfully the season of Advent is observed, the more joyful the season of Christmas will be. Without a time of fasting and self-denial, the joy of Christmas becomes routine and loses its value as a sacred feast.

The Church encourages participation at weekday Masses during Advent, because in the Eucharist we find the source and goal of our Advent preparation: Christ himself, whose sacrifice reconciles us with God.
The need to be conscious of the impact of the recent fire on many souls in our Diocese continues. This will be ongoing for months and even years. The Diocesan website (www.srdiocese.org/signofhope) carries occasional updates as well as ways in which to contribute. While conscious of the importance of fire updates, I also recognize that our consecration preparation work also needs to continue and so I focus my efforts today on this important spiritual work.

I have heard that there is a number of groups in a variety of parishes who have completed their preparation for personal consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I also understand that there are a number of groups presently engaged in the 33 days of preparation for both the personal consecration as well as the parish and diocesan consecration. I commend and encourage all who have decided to follow this path and encourage anyone who is considering doing so but has not yet committed to this spiritual pilgrimage. There is still time, starting in November, to complete the 33 days of preparation prior to the Diocesan Consecration on the weekend of December 9 and December 10.

While the choice of December 10 for our Diocesan Consecration was based on a desire to connect the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 and the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 there is another reason for this date. It is connected with an apparition to Sister Lucia eight years after the events of 1917. On December 10, 1925 the Infant Jesus appeared to Sister Lucia. Listen to her words as she describes the apparition. Sister Lucia avoids the personal pronouns, I and me, and speaks of herself simply as Sister Lucia.

“On December 10, 1925, the Blessed Mother appeared to Sister Lucia and beside her, suspended on a luminous cloud, a Boy on whose shoulder the Blessed mother rested her hand and at the same time, in her other hand, a heart surrounded with thorns. At the same time, the Boy said, ‘Have pity on the Heart of your Most Holy Mother which is covered with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment with no one to make an act of reparation to pull them out.’ Then, the Virgin said, ‘See, my daughter, My Heart surrounded with thorns with which ungrateful men pierce me at every moment with blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, make sure to console me and say that all those who for five months, on the first Saturday (of each month), go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary and keep me company for 15 minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to Me, I promise to assist them at the hour of one’s death, the person will receive all of the graces necessary for the salvation of their soul.’ This is a reassurance that the Blessed Mother will be attentive to her devoted son or daughter at the hour of their death. This is the main petition of the Hail Mary, ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.’ By fulfilling the request of Our Lady to especially honor her on five successive Saturdays we become the recipients of her promise. This is a great spiritual consolation. We know, in faith, that there will always be ‘sufficient grace’ available for us to lead holy lives and to persevere in faith until death but Our Lady wanted to give us additional assurance of her maternal love, especially at that hour which ultimately comes to each of us.

The usual emphasis of the first Saturday devotion is, unfortunately, the ‘guarantee of heaven.’ I say that this is unfortunate, not because it is not important, but rather because it misses the primary purpose of the devotion. Mary’s words to Sister Lucia ask her to see the Immaculate Heart of Mary surrounded with thorns and to recognize that this is symbolic of the blasphemies and ingratitude which she endures. Making amends for those blasphemies and that ingratitude forms the core of the first Saturday devotions. Once a deep and personal relationship is established between us and Mary as well as between us and Her Son, Jesus, we begin to recognize the extent to which both Mary and Jesus are the subjects of abuse. Our human response is one of great sadness and sympathy as well as a desire to make amends to them for that abuse. Mary calls to our attention the fact that God and the persons and things related to God are frequently treated with great disrespect. The Catholic response to that disrespect, as requested by Mary, is refection of sin, confession, Holy Communion and the recitation of the rosary. It is a way in which great consolation can be offered to our Dear Mother and Her Beloved Son.
The Least Religious Generation in U.S. History: A Reflection on Jean Twenge’s “iGen”

by The Least Religious Generation in U.S. History: A Reflection on Jean Twenge’s “iGen”

Whereas even twenty years ago, the overwhelming number of Americans, including youngsters, believed in God, now fully one third of 18 to 24 year olds say that they don’t believe. Jean Twenge's book iGen is one of the most fascinating—and depressing—texts I've read in the past decade. A professor of psychology at San Diego State University, Dr. Twenge has been, for years, studying trends among young Americans, and her most recent book focuses on the generation born between 1995 and 2012. Since this is the first cohort of young people who have never known a world without iPads and iPhones, and since these devices have remarkably shaped their consciousness and behavior, Twenge naturally enough has dubbed them the “iGen.”

One of her many eye-opening findings is that iGen'ers are growing up much more slowly than their predecessors. A baby-boomer typically got his driver’s license on his sixteenth birthday (I did); but an iGen’er is far more willing to postpone that rite of passage, waiting until her eighteenth or nineteenth year. Whereas previous generations were eager to get out of the house and find their own way, iGen’ers seem to like to stay at home with their parents and have a certain aversion to “adulthood.” And Twenge argues that smartphones have undeniably turned this new generation in on itself. A remarkable number of iGen'ers would rather text their friends than go out with them and would rather watch videos at home than go to a theater with others. One of the upshots of this screen-induced introversion is a lack of social skills and another is depression.

Now there are many more insights that Dr. Twenge shares, but I was particularly interested, for obvious reasons, in her chapter on religious attitudes and behaviors among iGen'ers. In line with many other researchers, Twenge shows that the objective statistics in this area are alarming. As recently as the 1980s, 90% of high school seniors identified with a religious group. Among iGen'ers, the figures are now around 65% and falling. And religious practice is even more attenuated: only 28% of twelfth graders attended services in 2015, whereas the number was 40% in 1976. For decades, sociologists of religion have been arguing that, though explicit affiliation with religious institutions was on the decline, especially among the young, most people remained “spiritual,” that is to say, convinced of certain fundamental religious beliefs. I remember many conversations with my friend Fr. Andrew Greeley along these lines.

But Twenge indicates that this is no longer true. Whereas even twenty years ago, the overwhelming number of Americans, including youngsters, believed in God, now fully one third of 18 to 24 year olds say that they don’t believe. As late as 2004, 84% of young adults said that they regularly prayed; by 2016, fully one fourth of that same age cohort said that they never pray. We find a similar decline in regard to acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God: one fourth of iGen'ers say that the Scriptures are a compilation of “ancient fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.” Her dispiriting conclusion: “The waning of private religious belief means that young generations’ disassociation from religion is not just about their distrust of institutions; more are disconnecting from religion entirely, even at home and even in their hearts.”

Now what are some of the reasons for this disconnect? One, Twenge argues, is the iGen preoccupation with individual choice. From their earliest years, iGen'ers have been presented with a dizzying array of choices in everything from food and clothes to gadgets and lifestyles. And they have been encouraged, by practically every song, video, and movie, to believe in themselves and follow their own dreams. All of this self-preoccupation and stress upon individual liberty stands sharply athwart the religious ideal of surrendering to God and his purposes. “My life, my death, my choice” (a rather iGen friendly motto which I recently saw emblazoned on a billboard in California) sits very uneasily indeed with St. Paul’s assertion, “whether we live or we die, we are the Lord’s.”

A second major reason for iGen dissatisfaction with religion is one that has surfaced in lots of surveys and polls, namely, that religious belief is incompatible with a scientific view of the world. One young man that Twenge interviewed is typical: “Religion, at least to people my age, seems like it’s something of the past. It seems like something that isn’t modern.” Another said, “I knew from church that I couldn’t believe in both science and God, so that was it. I didn’t believe in God anymore.” And a third—also attested to in lots of studies—is the “antigay attitudes” supposedly endemic to Biblical Christianity. One of Twenge’s interviewees put it with admirable succinctness: “I’m questioning the existence of God. I stopped going to church because I’m gay and was part of a gay-bashing religion.” One survey stated the statistical truth bluntly enough: 64% of 18-24 year olds believed that Christianity is antigay, and for good measure, 58% of those iGen'ers thought the Christian religion is hypocritical. Dismal stuff, I know. But Dr. Twenge performs a great service to all those interested in the flourishing of religion, for she lays out the objectivities unblinkingly, and this is all to the good, given our extraordinary capacity for wishful thinking and self-deception. Further, though she doesn’t tell religious educators and catechists how to respond, she unambiguously indicates what is leading this most unreligious generation in our history away from the churches. Her book should be required reading for those who wish to evangelize the next generation.
an estimated 6,000+ homes and businesses in need of waste remediation the task will be neither quick nor easy.

People are now being allowed to return to the sites of their former homes to search for any mementos which might have survived the blaze and to grieve their loss. The evacuation centers have served their emergency purposes and those evacuees who had not lost their homes have returned home. For those who have nowhere to go the shelters remain as a short term option but the number who have resorted to living on the streets or in their cars is unknown. Fortunately many souls have stepped forward to offer trailers, second homes or spare rooms to those who have been displaced by the fire. The human toll and the depth of the need will be realized only in the weeks and months to come. Besides the realistic loss of homes, in Sonoma County it is estimated that 1,500 businesses have been destroyed which translates, by one estimate, to 8,500 to 9,000 jobs. This will impact the entire County and the Catholic Parishes and Christian Churches in this County.

The National Guard which has been an invaluable security presence in addition to the local police are winding down their operations and I want to take this opportunity to once again reiterate the community’s gratitude for their presence and service. Of course, the local police will be called upon more heavily once the Guard leaves and recognition of and appreciation for their often valiant service cannot be mentioned too often. The same can be said of both the local fire fighters and the thousands who descended upon our area in the wake of the devastating events of October 8-9. Daily heroes, the story of the life risking actions of police and fire fighters as they entered areas from which most were fleeing in order to facilitate a safe escape.

One of the faith-based experiences referred to quite often is the fact that a number of private chapels, religious artifacts or statues were spared while all surrounding structures were destroyed. This was the case on the campus of Cardinal Newman High School. Undoubtedly thousands of homes had every trace of religious artifact destroyed but the exception was that of the chapel. One lady told me yesterday that she went to the ashes of her former home to search for a necklace which her departed husband had given her. She recounts that as she sifted through the ashes where she thought the desired object might be hidden she picked up a small pocket sized wooden cross from the midst of the ashes which was blackened but not destroyed. Once she found that, she rejoiced and told me that she had found all that she needed. She knew, in faith and in fact, that the Lord had not abandoned her. The occasional ‘miracle’ wherein some religious object is spared provides to each of us an opportunity, like this dear lady, to rejoice in the midst of the ashes that the Father, that Jesus, that Mary have not abandoned us.

The ‘miracles’ are more numerous than we can count: Miracles of bravery, miracles of safe escape, miracles of homes or religious icons being spared, miracles of resilient hearts, miracles of outstanding generosity, miracles of selflessness. While they may often be accounted for by way of a rational explanation we still find in these events a sign of God’s presence and love and, as all of you who read this also are, signs of hope.

God bless all of you + Robert F. Vasa

2. SVdeP Society: Disaster-related Rental Assistance may be available through St. Vincent De Paul Sonoma County Disaster Services. They can provide one-time rental assistance for uninsured renters who will lose their housing because of an inability to pay their November rent due to circumstances related to the fire. Local SVdeP representatives have a rental assistance intake form for record keeping.

Applicants will need two forms of verification:
1. Proof that the applicant will not get paid because of the fires,
2. Copy of a bank statement (through September 30) to verify their income.

SVdeP is also offering a ‘House in A Box’ for people who do find housing and have no means to acquire necessary furnishings. This includes brand new furniture, including living room, kitchen and bedroom, bed & bath linens, dishwasher, cookware, and clothing, scaled to family size. The application for this program has also been sent to SVdeP leadership.

Until SVdeP Society gets a better understanding of the financial capacity and demand for services, applicants for either program should have an income below the 60% AMI level to be eligible. (Please refer to the income limits for affordable housing on the CDC’s website: http://www.sonomacounty.org/cdc/cd_ah_income_limits.htm). SVdeP will retain everyone’s information, however, and evaluate if there is additional capacity to expand to families with higher incomes.

St. Vincent De Paul volunteers (called Vincentians) have been the cornerstone of the Society since it was founded. Individual assistance from volunteers in the community can help assess your needs and offer help or connect you with resources for food, household goods and other valuable services to help those in need. To be matched up with a volunteer in your community contact the District Council of Sonoma County office at (707) 584-1579 for a referral.

3. A very important update from Michael Weston, Deputy Director of Public Affairs and Outreach Program, Department of Social Services, (posted on srdiocese.org/signofhope)

I am reaching out to you to offer information regarding public services and assistance for individuals and families affected by the wildfires in northern California. The weblinks to the guides below are in English and Spanish and provide detailed information about the types of federal, state and local disaster assistance services available in California.

Although some of the resources are restricted to individuals or households with lawful immigration status, there are many services available to all Californians impacted by the wildfires.

One of the most pressing issues is a looming deadline to apply for Disaster CalFresh (food stamps) this benefit is available to all qualifying families, however the deadline to apply is Wednesday November 1, 2017.

Our hope is that as a trusted source of information you could leverage your close connections with the community to encourage those in need to take full advantage of the program available to them. A message to congregations during weekend services would be extremely helpful in this effort.

4. Disaster CalFresh Food Benefits Available to California Fire Victims

5. State Bar Legal Resources for Fire Victims

A coalition of private and public legal organizations have created a hotline in an effort to provide legal aid to fire victims across the state. The hotline number is (415) 575-3120. Callers can also leave a message. Spanish and Chinese language attorneys will be on the hotline too. The attorneys on the hotline will be able to guide victims through a variety of legal issues with a focus on the following:

- Landlord tenant legal issues - Life, medical and property insurance issues - Emergency aid applications (FEMA) - Home repair contracts - Mortgage foreclosure issues - Replacement of wills and other important legal documents

Additional legal resources related to disasters can be found on the State Bar’s website.

In addition to the State Bar-run hotline, there are two others for Napa and Sonoma counties. The Bay Area Legal Aid’s Legal Advice Hotline, 1(800) 551-5554, is the number for Napa County residents. Additionally, The Healthcare Consumer Center’s line, 1(855) 693-7285, has been set up to aid Sonoma and Napa county residents with medical insurance coverage issues, prescription coverage issues and for those who have relocated out of state.

The groups involved in the hotline’s creation include: Bay Area Resilience Collaborative or BARC (Bar Association of San Francisco, SF-Marin Lawyer Referral and Information Service and the Justice & Diversity Center; Alameda County Bar Association and the Volunteer Legal Services Corporation; State Bar of California, Bay Area Legal Aid; and Pro Bono (see Fire Relief Resources, page 6)
A Modern Horror: Global Persecution Of Christians At Historic Peak, Report Says

New York City, N.Y., Oct 17 (CNA/EWTN News) - Anti-Christian persecution is “worse than at any time in history” and in many cases genocide and other crimes against humanity “now mean that the Church in core countries and regions faces the possibility of imminent wipe-out,” says a new report from Aid to the Church in Need.

The report, titled “Persecuted and Forgotten?”, covers the years 2015–2017. Its contents are bleak, describing Christianity as “the world’s most oppressed faith community.” Anti-Christian persecution in the worst regions has reached “a new peak” and its impact is “only now beginning to be felt in all its horror.”

“In 12 of the 13 countries reviewed, the situation for Christians was worse in overall terms in the period 2015–17 than within the preceding two years,” said the report’s executive summary, released Oct. 12.

John Pontifex, the report’s editor, commented that “In terms of the numbers of people involved, the gravity of the crimes committed and their impact, it is clear that the persecution of Christians is today worse than at any time in history. Not only are Christians more persecuted than any other faith group, but ever-increasing numbers are experiencing the very worst forms of persecution.”

China, Eritrea, Iraq, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Syria were ranked “extreme” in the scale of anti-Christian persecution. Egypt, India, and Iran were rated “high to extreme,” while Turkey was rated “moderate to high.”

The report’s ratings draw from analyses like the Pew Forum’s Social Hostilities Index and Open Door’s World Watch List, in addition to other factors and sources, including fact-finding trips.

In some countries the state is the principal persecutor, while in other countries social groups are culpable, while in still others a combination of both are responsible.

Aid to the Church in Need, an international Catholic pastoral charity, provides emergency and pastoral relief in 140 countries. Its U.S. affiliate published the report.

The report’s foreword was written by Archbishop Issam John Darwish of the Melkite Archdiocese of Zahle and Fujeira, a Lebanese archdiocese near the Syrian border. He recounted the stories of Christian refugees fleeing the six-year-old Syrian civil war.

“Many refugees have told terrible stories of persecution: like the man whose brother, a priest, was kidnapped – and despite the family paying the ransom they killed the priest. They sent his family a box containing his severed wrist, tattooed with a cross, to show he was dead,” the archbishop said.

The Middle East is a major focus for the report.

“Governments in the West and the U.N. failed to offer Christians in countries such as Iraq and Syria the emergency help they needed as genocide got underway,” the report said. “If Christian organizations and other institutions had not filled the gap, the Christian presence could already have disappeared in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East.”

The exodus of Christians from Iraq has been “very severe.” Christians in the country now may number as few as 150,000, a decline from 275,000 in mid-2015. By spring 2017 there were some signs of hope, with the defeat of the Islamic State group and the return of some Christians to their homes on the Nineveh Plains.

However, the departure of Christians from Syria has also threatened the survival of their communities in the country, including historic Christian centers like Aleppo. Syrian Christians there suffer threats of forced conversion and extortion. One Chaldean bishop in the country estimates the Christian population to be at 500,000, down from 1.2 million before the war.

Many Christians in the region fear going to official refugee camps, due to concerns about rape and other violence.

The Islamic State group and other militants have committed genocide in Syria and Iraq. While Islamic State and other groups have been defeated in their major strongholds, many Christian groups are threatened with extinction and would not survive another attack.

In northern Nigeria, the radical Islamist group Boko Haram has engaged in genocide against Christians.

“There are reports from North Korea of forced starvation of Christians and forced abortion. Some Christians have been hung on crosses over fire, and others have been crushed by steamrollers. Protestants and Catholics are ranked among those least sympathetic to the state, which limits their access to food, education, and health care. Christianity is linked with American influence, and Christians are executed as spies.

In Sudan, the government’s pursuit of an extremist Islamist agenda led to orders to tear down Christian churches. Christians are arrested for alleged proselytism, and women face fines for wearing “obscene” or immodest dress. The government stripped citizenship rights of people with origins outside Sudan, leading many to leave for their ancestral homelands in South Sudan. Many had lived in their homes for three decades or more.

In January 2017 the U.S. put a six-month waiver on human rights sanctions against Sudan, on condition that the country improve its human rights and religious freedom record.

In Pakistan, banned fundamentalist cells pose a great threat to Christians, but some charge that the government’s failure to crack down on these groups worsens the problem of violence. On Easter Sunday 2016 as many as 24 Christians were killed in targeted violence in Lahore. A faction of the Pakistan Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

In India, persecution has increased since 2014, with the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Like-minded groups frequently accuse Christians of forced conversion, a charge local Christian leaders strongly deny. An India-based Catholic group reported 365 serious anti-Christian atrocities in 2016, with 10 people killed and more than 500 clergy or church
The Long Journey Ahead

by Chris Lyford

October 12th 1962 my home was significantly damaged by 80 mile-per-hour winds that devastated my home town of Eugene during the Columbus Day Storm. I was almost 3 years old, and though most of my 6 sisters were huddled on the couch in our living room when the big crash happened, I was standing in the corner next to two floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows.

I remember watching in fascination as I saw the metallic garbage-can-lid fly off one of our family garbage cans and up the street. When I looked to my right I could see the lid fly, bounce and roll around the corner, and down the street. In my three-year-old logic, I believed I saw it go all the way around the block and end up back in our front yard. I later realized that since everyone had those same garbage cans, those lids were flying virtually everywhere in the 80 mile per hour wind. Thankfully, I was able to run for cover when our garage roof flew off our house and into the neighbor’s yard, knocking off our chimney which was a few feet from where I was standing.

Earth-shaking, mind numbing trauma; now just a memory. I still don’t like wind, but since that day I have had a bench-mark to which I can measure all storms I experience. Rarely have I encountered anything close to 80 mph winds since that Columbus Day in 1962.

If you are reading this you have made it through the Northern California Firestorm of Columbus Day, October 8th 2017. We have experienced an event as serious as we may ever remember. Some of us stayed up all night praying, and watching as we called loved ones and family members to alert them to the advancing devastation, so that through the grace of God, we could offer emotional support in the midst of the confusion and grief as door to door evacuation sweeps advanced even while we were on the phone. Others were leaving their homes for the last time, never to return. Still others lost loved ones and family members, and are still reeling with grief.

We all have a lot of work to do. Each of us can help immensely not just in prayer support (although that can never be too much) but in practical ways that really make a difference in the lives of those whose lives were turned upside down. As we turn our gaze to the long journey ahead, we work to alleviate the secondary trauma and post-traumatic stress that can occur. Let us work a first responders in this next season to do our little part. Every little bit goes a long, long way. It does make a difference. And we must resign ourselves to a lifestyle of selflessness for the sake of our brothers and sisters. Not just those who experienced material and personal loss directly, but for the countless thousands who have been emotionally affected by this October of sorrows.

Every day we can do a little something. Pray, call, show up, support. God does not ask us to do great things, but small things with great love. And in doing so we will all become, for our brothers and sisters, a sign of hope.

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

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Rev. James Lantsberger, OMI 1928-2017


Fr. Jim was an avid baseball player in his younger years, as a strong left-handed pitcher in amateur baseball. He had great mechanical abilities, and was often found taking things apart and working on them. These abilities led him to a lifelong interest in clocks and clock repair. He achieved certification as a master clock maker. His home was filled with the sounds and chimes of many clocks over the years, and many benefited from his repair work and clock restorations.

He began his education at St. Henry’s Seminary in Belleville, Ill., and Our Lady of the Snows in Pass Christian, Miss. He also received education at Our Lady of the Ozarks, in Carthage, Mo. He professed his first vows as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate at the Oblate Novitiate in Godfrey, Ill., in 1952, and was ordained a priest on May 30, 1957, at Our Lady of the Snows in Pass Christian, Miss.

His ministry began at St. Casimir Parish in St. Paul, Minn., where he was an assistant Pastor for one year. He then served at King’s House of Retreats in Belleville, Ill., for 11 years as the Bursar and later Director. He then moved to California in 1971, and was a hospital chaplain for six years at Queen of the Valley Hospital in Napa, Calif. He continued as a Chaplain at the Napa State Hospital for 40 years in Napa, Calif., before coming to the Apartment Community at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Ill., where he resided at the time of his death.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Richard; and a sister, Lorraine.

Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.rennerfh.com.

Visitation was held Thursday, October 12, 2017, at George Renner & Sons Funeral Home, Belleville, Ill., and on Friday, October 13, 2017, at the Apartment Community Chapel at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Ill.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Friday, October 13, 2017, at the Apartment Community Chapel at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Ill.

Burial will be at St. Henry’s Oblate Cemetery, Belleville, Ill.

Arrangements by George Renner & Sons Funeral Home, Belleville, Ill.
Is It Our Culture?

by Julie Sparacio

When you Google child sexual abuse, a ton of articles pop up, ranging from prevention and statistics, to stories about people who have been arrested for abusing a child. It is always disturbing to read the statistics, and gut wrenching to read about someone who was finally arrested. Today, I read a very disturbing ‘opinion’ article about our culture.

In this article, the writer cited information about the USA Gymnastics physician accused of multiple cases of sexual abuse. He compared that case to the Penn State cases and the USA swimming cases, and even the cases within the Catholic Church. He wrote that all of these share the common problem of delayed or non-reporting of sexual abuse. In the case of the USA Gymnastics physician, one of his victims was a student athlete at Michigan State when this man was the team doctor there. When she reported his abuse, she was told to keep her mouth shut and to continue to see him as a physician.

The reluctance to report is symptomatic—according to the author—of our ‘rape’ culture, a culture that objectifies women and makes inappropriate behavior by the rich and powerful somewhat acceptable and not worth making a fuss over—after all—the people are probably just after money-right? I am not sure that I am ready to make the leap to saying we have a ‘rape culture’ and I definitely don’t believe that is what brings on child sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of a child is about so much more than rape or sexual gratification, so simplifying it like that only confuses the issue. But the reluctance to report is something important to think about.

Unfortunately, in spite of all of our knowledge and awareness, there is reluctance to report. We are a culture that wants to think the best of people, a culture that wants to encourage and help someone to be better. Very few people are comfortable with contributing in any way to destroying someone’s life. What we forget though, is that reporting child sexual abuse is SAVING someone’s life—the child victim, and not just that victim—the lives of future victims as well. Reporting someone may wreak havoc in the lives of the perpetrator—but what we must remember is that we have not wreaked that havoc—the perpetrator has. He or she has made choices—and those choices cause the damage to their life. While we may have compassion for the perpetrator and the resultant fallout, it is essential that we stand firm with the victim—no matter how difficult! I think about the families of those children on the USA teams—was the thought of a gold medal so compelling that lifelong damage to your child was worth it? Was it fear that kept them from doing anything? Or did they try, and like the Michigan State athlete, were they told to shut up and play nice?

Thankfully, the Catholic Church can be removed from that list these days. We do thing differently now and no longer have any reluctance to report sexual abuse of minors by anyone within the Church. But do we take the same stand within our families? Are we willing to report family, neighbors, coaches, or teachers? Think of this though—what does it say to yours or someone else’s child, when we stand up with courage (even though our knees may be shaking) and say ‘This is wrong and it must stop now!’

We need to be brave, to be willing to do the uncomfortable stuff. If you suspect someone is abusing a child—report it! If you need help with reporting—call or email me. I will walk with you through the process. Contact me at jsparacio@srdiocese.org, or (707) 566-3308.

Exorcist Says There’s a Demon That Targets the Family

When I think of our culture, I think about that exorcism, in which the demon was described as a beast—Asmodeus. In that regard, the priest added that the devil also seeks to attack the family through ideologies and lifestyles, as well as individualistic thinking and the spread of divorce.

“They think ‘if I don’t like my husband anymore, I would be better off divorcing’ but they forget about the consequences to the children and society,” he said.

“After 20 years of marriage, the couple asks for the annulment, but the man has already moved on and is now married to another woman. He is trying to get the ex-wife to agree to the annulment.”

“After 20 years of marriage, the couple asks for the annulment, but the man has already moved on and is now married to another woman. He is trying to get the ex-wife to agree to the annulment.”

“Even today, and I’m more than 50 years old, just thinking that my mother and father love each other forever, I find comfort and courage. In contrast, the children of separated parents are more fragile and wavering,” he said.

In 2014, Pope Francis gave an address to the Charismatic Renewal, in which he pointed out that the devil seeks to destroy families because that is where Jesus grows, in the midst of the love of the spouses and in the lives of their children.

“He grows in the love of the spouses, he grows in the lives of the children. And that’s why the enemy attacks the family so much. The devil does not love the family. He seeks to destroy it, he wants to eliminate love there,” he warned at Rome’s Olympic stadium before 52,000 people.

On that day Francis reminded that “families are these domestic churches. The spouses are sinners, like everyone, but they want to progress in the faith, in their fruitfulness, in the children and their children’s faith.”

And so he asked the Lord to “bless the family, make it strong, in this crisis in which the devil wants to destroy it.”
Pope Francis: In The Eucharist
We Receive the Grace to Love

by Hannah Brockhaus

Vatican City, Oct 29 (CNA/EWTN News) - On Sunday Pope Francis reflected on Jesus' command to love God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself, saying that it is in the Eucharist that we receive the grace to carry this out.

"God, who is Love, has created us to make us part of his life, to be loved and to love Him, and to love all other people with Him. This is God's 'dream' for man. And in order to accomplish it we need his grace, we need to receive in us the ability to love that comes from God himself."

For this reason "Jesus offers himself to us in the Eucharist..." the Pope said Oct. 29. "In it we receive his Body and His Blood, that is, we receive Jesus in the best expression of his love, when He has offered himself to the Father for our salvation."

Pope Francis reflected on Sunday's "short, but very important" Gospel passage from St. Matthew in his brief message before leading the Angels with around 30,000 people in St. Peter's Square.

In the Gospel passage, a Pharisee asks Jesus what, among the more than 600 Jewish laws, is the greatest. And Jesus, not hesitating at all, answers: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself."

The Ten Commandments, which were communicated directly to Moses by God, are a covenant with the people. And in his answer, "Jesus wants to make it clear that without love of God and neighbor there is no true fidelity to this covenant with the Lord," the Pope pointed out.

In answering this question, Jesus is trying to help the Pharisees understand the proper order and importance of things, and how all other laws depend on these two.

"What Jesus proposes on this evangelical page is a wonderful ideal that corresponds to the most authentic desire of our heart," he said. "In fact, that we have been created to love and to be loved."

Francis emphasized that we can do many good things, follow all the laws, but if we do not have love it is useless. This is how Jesus lived his life: preaching and performing works always with what is "essential, that is, love."

"Love gives momentum and fecundity to life and to the journey of faith: without love, both life and faith remain sterile."

In fact, even if we have known the commandment to love from the time we were children, we must never stop trying to reform ourselves to this law, putting it into practice in whatever situation we find ourselves in, he concluded.

And as we try to live out this commandment to love, we can turn to the Blessed Virgin Mary for help, he said: The Holy Virgin helping us "to welcome into our lives the 'great commandment' of love of God and of neighbor."

(Footnotes:)

Modern Religious Freedom. However, President Donald Trump signed a $110 billion arms deal with the country, a deal which had been held up under the Obama administration due to human rights concerns. The Aid to the Church in Need report said sources in the country are supplying arms and finances to Sunni extremist groups including the Islamic State, known in the region as "Daesh."

"Given that Islamist groups such as Daesh are likely to be heavily reliant on undeclared external sources for weapons and intelligence, there is an urgent need to step up action to stop all entities collaborating with them," the report continued. "Persecuted Christians are among the many who stand to be beneficiaries of progress in this area."

Archbishop Darwish said it is imperative to help persecuted Christians.

"When the Christian families who have turned to us need the very basics for daily life – food, shelter and medical care – how can we refuse to help?" he asked, lamenting a lack of aid from the U.N. and other humanitarian organizations.

He praised Aid to the Church in Need's efforts to report anti-Christian persecution and aid those persecuted.
Awaiting hearing, Georgetown pro-marriage group draws support from Catholic leaders

Washington D.C., Oct 26 (CNA) - A pro-marriage student group at Georgetown University has drawn support from prominent Catholic scholars, after a student petition accused the group of promoting intolerance.

Love Saxa is a pro-marriage student group at Georgetown, which faces an Oct. 30 hearing before the Student Activities Commission, an advisory body to the university’s Vice President of Student Affairs.

Fr. James Martin, SJ, author of “Building a Bridge,” a book on dialogue between the Catholic Church and LGBT groups, said that he supports the right of “Love Saxa,” to promote its views at Georgetown.

“Why should a student group that espouses Catholic teaching respectfully be defunded by a Catholic university? As long as Love Saxa treats LGBT people (both on campus and off campus) with ‘respect, compassion and sensitivity,’ as the Catechism requires, then they should be able to have their say on campus,” Martin told CNA.

The group, which says it “exists to promote healthy relationships on campus through cultivating a proper understanding of sex, gender, marriage, and family among Georgetown students,” has been accused by a student petition of violating university standards for student organizations by “fostering hatred and intolerance.”

Robert P. George, a professor of constitutional law at Princeton University and noted scholar of marriage and religious liberty, also voiced support for Love Saxa.

“The illiberal – even authoritarian – spirit infusing the effort to defund Love Saxa at Georgetown ought to be a matter of grave concern for honorable people across the ideological spectrum,” he said.

“And on top of that, as Fr. Martin suggests, there is something approaching absurdity in the idea that at a Catholic university a group ought to be defunded for upholding and teaching the idea of marriage and the principles of sexual morality upheld and taught by the Catholic Church.”

If Love Saxa is found to be in violation of university standards, as the student petition alleges, the commission could recommend that the university impose sanctions, including a loss of funding and access to university facilities.

A spokesperson for Georgetown University told CNA that such sanctions are only used as a last resort, and that groups in violation of university standards are first given opportunities to rectify violations.

“We strongly support a climate that continues to provide students with new and deeper contexts for engaging with our Catholic tradition and identity. Love Saxa is one of many groups operating on campus with positions that affirm the teachings of the Catholic Church. We also support a climate that is welcoming to all students and supporting of our LGBTQ communities,” the spokesperson added.

As the complaint is reviewed by the Student Advisory Commission, Georgetown’s spokesperson told CNA that “we encourage all students to follow our community commitment to open dialogue and mutual respect.”

Martin also encouraged respectful dialogue, rather than conflict, at Georgetown.

“Groups that oppose the point of view of Love Saxa should also be able to have their say,” he told CNA. “For a true dialogue to happen around LGBT issues, especially at Catholic universities, all participants should be willing to, first, treat one another respectfully and lovingly; second, listen to one another with open minds; and third, be willing to learn from one another.”

George also called for respectful conversation on the matter.

“The sheer, brute, undeniable fact is that reasonable people of goodwill disagree today about fundamental questions having to do with the nature and social purposes of marriage and with sexuality and sexual morality,” he said.

“When reasonable people of goodwill find themselves in disagreement, even on issues of profound social importance and deep personal meaning, they engage each other in robust but civil and respectful discourse – they do not attempt to win cheap victories by smearing those who disagree with them as ‘bigots’ or ‘haters,’” he continued. “They recognize their own fallibility and do not try to immunize their beliefs from responsible criticism. They acknowledge that their deepest, most cherished, even identity-forming beliefs could be wrong. That motivates them to listen to critics, rather than trying to banish them.”

George added that as a Catholic university, Georgetown “does not present itself as a non-sectarian institution that maintains a stance of neutrality on moral questions currently in dispute among reasonable citizens.”

“So it would be fully within its rights in declining to fund a group that promoted values contrary to its own,” he said. “But, as Fr. Martin observed, it is Love Saxa that is upholding the values of Georgetown as a Catholic institution. It is those who are pressing Georgetown to defund Love Saxa who teach doctrines concerning marriage and sexual morality that are contrary to those of the Catholic Church.”

Fr. James Martin, SJ, and Robert P. George, a professor of constitutional law at Princeton University and noted scholar of marriage and religious liberty, also voiced support for Love Saxa.
Feed the Hungry Program in Calistoga OLPH Parish Hall
by Bette Ann Fleischacker

In the days following “The Fire” there has been no end to meetings where everyone seems to agree that the problems associated with rebuilding are monumental and that, to address these problems, numerous groups in the community must work together. Talk is one thing, but it takes work to make things happen! An excellent example how to make things work under the most challenging conditions occurred last Tuesday, October 24th.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church is a small, unpretentious church located in Calistoga. OLPH, in conjunction with the Community Action of Napa Valley Food Bank, operates a “Feed the Hungry” program in the church hall. Every third Tuesday of the month, the food bank delivers a truck-load of food to the church where volunteers unload the food (both non-perishable and perishable), divide it into packages (based on the size of the family who are to receive it), and then distributes the packages to the families or individuals in need who arrive at the hall. The food supplied by the food bank is provided due to loss of power. But then something wonderful started to happen. Individuals in the community, with no prior connection to the food distribution program, heard about the special distribution through social media and came to the church and volunteered.

The OLPH “Feed the Hungry” program is a beautiful example of a community working together to solve a common problem.

Prior to “The Fire”, the OLPH “Feed the Hungry” program had been growing at a slow but steady rate. Under the direction of Charlotte Williams, a parishioner of OLPH with overall responsibility for management of the program, a small cadre of volunteers had been recruited and trained, and operating procedures had been documented. Charlotte worked with Shirley King, Director of the Community Action of Napa Valley Food Bank to plan the amount of food to be delivered (based on the prior month’s requirement) and it was assumed that the October distribution, scheduled for Tuesday the 17th, would take place as previously planned.

And then “The Fire” happened. There were numerous mandatory evacuations including the entire city of Calistoga. On October 17th, many local people were still returning back home. Conditions then were such that it was impossible for the food distribution to occur as had been scheduled.

As soon as Charlotte returned home she got in contact with Shirley, who had already been participating in numerous meetings and was absolutely convinced that the number of people needing food assistance was huge and the need was immediate. Together, they decided to schedule a special food distribution activity for Tuesday, October 24th - and with double the amount of food that they had planned to distribute on the 17th. The date for this special distribution was publicized, and Charlotte contacted her small team of dedicated volunteers. Juan Torras of Catholic Charities also called with an offer of food.

October 24th arrived and the regular volunteers were quickly overwhelmed by the size of the turnout. There were so many people who came to the church for the first time to receive food. Some had last lost food due to the fire and/or lost food in their refrigerators due to loss of power. But then something wonderful started to happen. Individuals in the community, with no prior connection to the food distribution program, heard about the special distribution through social media and came to the church and volunteered. One young person who accompanied her parents to the church for the purpose of receiving food, stayed and volunteered.

In the end, more than 97 households comprising a total of 372 persons received food – more than twice the number of any previous month.

The scope of this disaster is overwhelming. The loss of lives, homes, businesses, jobs, and schools is almost beyond what the mind can process. However, in the middle of all of this suffering, we must never forget that we are a community of God’s children, and working together we can do whatever needs to be done.
Our Lady of Good What?

Mary has many names, or shall we call them titles? The Litany of Loreto refers to many different titles of Mary, but not all of them. Some of her titles refer to a city name corresponding to an apparition location, for example, Our Lady of Lourdes or Our Lady of Fatima. There are also devotional titles of Our Lady such as Our Lady, Undoer (or Unier) of Knots. And then there are many variations of titles which all have a unique history. One such devotion is to Mary under the title of Our Lady of Good Help.

Each year pilgrims from around the world visit the first and only approved Marian apparition site in the United States of America located in Champion, Wisconsin (close to Green Bay). Pilgrims arrive at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, and learn the story of Mary’s apparition to Adele Brise, a 28-year-old Belgian immigrant, who the Queen of Heaven visited three times, speaking only once, on October 9, 1859. Mary asked Adele to offer her Holy Communion for the conversion of sinners, make a general confession, and gather the children in the area and teach them what they needed to know for salvation.

I’ve reflected at great lengths on the Wisconsin apparition, writing about its theological, spiritual, and pastoral implications, and I speak about the apparition often at conferences and gatherings. In my conversations, I often hear people refer to the National Shrine as “Our Lady of Good Health,” “Our Lady of Good Hope,” “Our Lady of Prompt Succor,” and “Our Lady of Perpetual Help” to name only a few.

The National Shrine welcoming pilgrims to commemorate the 1859 Wisconsin apparition is dedicated to Our Lady of Good Help, and I can understand the confusion. The title Our Lady of Good Help, is rather obscure, and not common in the United States; the title’s historical roots lie in France, Belgium, and Canada. Since Adele came from Belgium, she had a devotion to Our Lady under this title, and asked for the chapel to be dedicated to Notre Dame de Bon Secours (Our Lady of Good Help). Thus, the reason we call it the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, instead of the title by which Mary revealed herself to Adele as the Queen of Heaven, or even by the geographic location (Our Lady of Champion). Further confusion occurs, especially among Wisconsinites, with some calling it “Our Lady of Good Hope” because in Milwaukee, a popular exit is called Good Hope Road, which also has a church dedicated to that title of Mary.

When it comes to Mary’s many titles, a lot of them use the adjective good or refer to her help. Each title of Mary is unique, and has its own history. None of the deviations are the same. To distinguish these titles of Mary, I’d like to offer brief snippets of the historical origin of each title, thereby making clear the history of Our Lady of Good Help, as set apart from the other various “Good” and “helping” titles of Mary.

Our Lady of Good Health—A title associated with a Marian apparition to a young boy in the 16th or 17th century in Velankanni, India. Beyond the apparition, perhaps people called upon Mary with this title asking her to intercede in times of sickness.

Our Lady of Good Hope—The 19th century apparitions of Mary in Pontmain, France are known as Our Lady of Hope, but not Good Hope. A devotion to Mary exists under the title “Nuestra Senora Esperanza” and is oftentimes modified with the word “buena” translating to Our Lady of Good Hope. The Spanish devotion centers around the Virgin Mary and the Advent season, in which the Christian people are given hope by the birth of the savior. As mentioned earlier, also the name of a parish in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, I did not have time to contact the parish to ask about their parish’s namesake.

Our Lady of Good Counsel—The image of Our Lady of Good Counsel is often associated with some book covers of St. Louis de Montfort’s True Devotion to Mary. The image of Mary miraculously appeared in a Génazano church in 1467. Our Lady of Good Success—A title of Mary rooted in different cultures. The first dates to the 1400s in Belgium where a statue from Scotland (formerly called Our Lady of Aberdeen) quickly became known as Our Lady of Good Success, winning the conversion of Calvinists to Catholicism. A second emergence of Our Lady of Good Success arises out of Ecuador in the late 1500’s and early 1600’s following apparitions of Mary received by a Conceptionist nun named Mother Mariana. People devoted to Our Lady of Good Success, like Matthew Arnold, have suggested remarkable similarities between the words Mary spoke then and our culture today.

Our Lady, Help of Christians—The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help is not the only National Shrine in Wisconsin dedicated to a helping title of Mary. The Carmelite friars at Holy Hill serve the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Huber tus, Wisconsin. Historically this title of Mary was promoted by St. John Bosco and the Salesian order. The title dates back as far as St. John Chrysostom, and spread during the time in which Our Lady’s assistance was invoked by Christians during war. St. John Bosco constructed a basilica in Turin to Mary under this title.

Our Lady (or Mother) of Perpetual Help—This title of Mary is associated with one of the most popular icons of Mary, in which two angels hover around Mary and the Christ-child with the instruments of the passion. The icon hung in various churches over the years and today the Redemptorist order promotes this devotion and has custody of the Church in which it is enshrined. The image has been venerated by countless pilgrims and has also received the attention of many popes throughout history.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor—A title of Mary associated with the Ursuline order and venerated by Catholics in New Orleans. Today her intercession is invoked against storms.

Who is Our Lady of Good Help?

Sanctuaries to Notre Dame de Bon Secours can be traced as early as the eleventh century by oral tradition, or to the 13th century in the historical record. The popularization of this title arises out of Mary’s assistance to those who call upon her, especially in 1477 when the Duke of Lorraine, Rene II, defeated Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, during the Battle of Nancy. In Nancy, France, this victory prompted the building of a chapel to Our Lady of Good Help.

Devotion to Our Lady of Good Help exists principally in France and Belgium, but made its way to North America, to Canada and the United States. In France, there are at least four basilicas, six churches, and seven chapels dedicated to this title of Mary. Within the devotional cult to Bon Secours, we find the origination of the pilgrimage church, accompanied by the prayers and hymns pilgrims recited and sung. And each devotional center possesses a statue of Mary, niche away in a quiet place of prayer for the pilgrims who seek Mary’s intercession. Presumably, from France, the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Good Help in Montreal, founded by St. Marguerite Bourgeoys in 1657, takes its inspiration.

The Belgian people also honor Mary under this title. In Belgium, the principal site of devotion dates to 1637 with a basilica constructed on the location of “Mary between two oak trees” in Peruwelz. Adele Brise, the Wisconsin visionary, born in the province of Brabant (Dion le Val), in Belgium, lived approximately 100 kilometers from Peruwelz. There are, at least, two other churches to Bon Secours in Belgium, Zetruand-Lumay (22 km) and Brussels (39 km). In the Church of St. Steven, in Ohain, 20 kilometers

(see Our Lady, page 14)
He Overcame Prison and Drug Addiction - Thanks To The Rosary

by Giselle Vargas

Santiago, Chile, Oct 26 (ACI Prensa) - A life of crime and drug addiction landed Kristian Briones, 39, in prison for ten years. During that time, he paid his debt to society, and he set out on a path of faith and conversion that began with praying the rosary.

Briones was raised by his grandparents in Chile. They lived in poverty. Alcoholism, domestic violence and drug addiction were a regular part of his home life. Lacking opportunities, and hungry all the time, he began to admire criminals who robbed food trucks and distributed the food to the people of his neighborhood.

Briones spent his childhood and adolescence in juvenile detention centers, where he became “acculturated in crime.” He stole, gambled, and tried drugs. “I became more and more addicted and violent,” Briones told ACI Prensa.

Despite their life of crime, many criminals in Chile have a superstitious devotion to Our Lady of Montserrat, whom they consider their patroness. They believe she will protect them as they commit their crimes or that she will get them released from prison. 

Like others, Briones prayed to Our Lady of Montserrat for protection during his life of crime. Many nights in prison he asked God and Our Lady to spare him from death. Nevertheless, he made enemies in prison, and he ended his sentence with 20 stab wounds, two gunshot wounds and one third of his body burned.

While serving his sentence, Briones spent five years in the Rosary Workshop program run by the Paternitas Foundation, which is dedicated to the rehabilitation, job training and transition back into society for convicts. His prison workshop constructed made 3500 wood rosaries per month, earning some money the prisoners sent back to their families. 

Briones told ACI Prensa that “the rosary is a light in the darkness of the prison,” since it helps “the guys to get closer to God. Most of them believe in God, in Our Lady of Montserrat, but their faith is misguided. That’s where I was; I was Catholic in my own way.”

During his time in prison, Briones did not learn to pray the rosary or understand its value. But when he got out of prison, he went to the Paternitas Foundation and worked as a cleaning assistant, began to give motivational talks, study social work, and eventually he became an instructor at the Rosary Workshop.

It was at this time, he said, that he began to love Our Lady and understand the mystery of faith. He began to sell rosaries on buses; he shared “his job” with eight other convicts who also were getting out of prison, as a way to start supporting themselves.

Eventually, Briones spiraled into depression and fell back into drug addiction. He turned away from God and quit praying. But one day he gave someone a cigarette, and the recipient offered simple words of thanks. The words “God bless you” set Briones back on the path of faith.

“I cried, I prayed and I clung to the rosary, I started practicing my faith again,” he said. “Prayer is very powerful.”

In this reencounter with Jesus, Briones began promoting a prayer campaign, “A Million Rosaries for the Pope, the Faith, Life and the Family” in Chile “to get the people in ‘pope mode’ so we can give him a good reception and so his message reaches the hearts of Chilenos” during his January 15-18 visit next year. “Thanks to working on this campaign I’m understanding my Church more. I’ve gotten to know parishioners and priests. I’m preparing to receive Confirmation and I want to get married and have children. I never thought about that before.”

“I have faith that God does exist and Our Lady is with us, and she can change you. Our Lady kept me from dying, she’s helped me move forward, to prepare myself as a person and as a professional, to bear witness. God is working on me to become a better Christian, he’s working on me, transforming a clay vessel into a new vessel,” he reflected.

Briones wants to share a message of hope with people who are in prison and to do it through “a rosary workshop about four times a week with catechesis and Mass included.”

He also wants to begin a prisoners’ rehabilitation and reintegration foundation. Briones is certain that “with prayer the goal can be reached.”

For now, he is continuing his motivational talks in schools so students can “become aware and make a difference in society. And if they happen to fall, they can get back up on their feet,” he said.

Also during this time, Briones is taking advantage of spreading the “Million Rosaries” campaign. He says he knows that Pope Francis’ visit will be good for the country and especially for the female inmates at the Women’s Penitentiary Center in Santiago, the prison the pontiff will visit.

“It will be a blessing for the prison to receive this visit of hope, love and joy that the pope himself represents; he’s very charismatic, close to us, always smiling. That will do a lot of good. It will do all of us good because he invites us to go out, to be close to others. With his Franciscan spirit he calls us to go out and evangelize, and to be a Church that goes out” to the peripheries, he said.
Suffering Transformed By Faith

"With heart and intellectual verve, Fr. Spitzer explores why a loving God allows – must allow – pain. More importantly, he shows how suffering can teach us compassion, shape our character for the better, and bring us closer to God."
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— Scott Hahn, Ph.D., Author, Rome Sweet Home

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— Most Reverend Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia

“Fr. Spitzer responds to the most powerful objection to God’s existence: the problem of suffering. He dares do what very few are willing to articulate how evil and pain are ingredients in the providential design of a loving God.”
— Bishop Robert Barron, Host, Catholicism film series

Why would an all-loving God allow suffering? Aren’t suffering and love opposed to one another? Does suffering have any benefit for this life? Or for eternal life? Is there any objective evidence for God, for a soul that survives bodily death, for the resurrection of Jesus? Who is God anyway — benevolent and loving, or angry and retributive?

Fr. Spitzer gives a comprehensive response to these questions and many others, explaining the contemporary evidence for God, the soul, and the resurrection, and how God uses suffering to lead us to the resurrection, and to compassion for others. He also shows how the Holy Spirit guides us through times of suffering toward our salvation — and other’s salvation, explaining the signs and interior movements that reveal the Spirit’s actions.

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from Dion le Val, the faithful venerate a statue of Bon Secours from the 1700s. We know from the chapel’s commemorating the apparitions received by Brise, that she herself had a devotion to Mary under this title. Around Dion Le Val, the Belgian people erected roadside chapels to house a statue of the Madonna. Passersby would stop and pray briefly in front of the image. Wherever they went, on the street corners or in the fields, they would find the Bon Secours, and offer an Ave.

The cult of Our Lady of Good Help originating in Europe, called upon Mary for help during the time of Revolution, war, plague, pestilence, and in the organic development of the cult, took on a unique maritime devotion. The devotion to Our Lady of Good Help existed long before the 1859 apparitions received by Brise, in which, Mary does not reveal herself as the Lady of Good Help, but instead as the Queen of Heaven. The only semblance of help, spoken of by the Queen of Heaven, were her parting words, “go, and fear nothing, I will help you.” Adele relied on the intercession of Mary throughout her years of service in the Lord’s vineyard. This help came through answered prayers when food or money was needed and just happened to show up. Locals received helped on the night of October 8, 1871, when a fire threatened the area of the chapel, and people flocked there seeking Mary’s help. The property was spared and lives were saved, all this being realized on the morning of the 12th anniversary of Mary’s apparition. To this day, pilgrims receive help from Mary as they seek her intercession for miracles in their lives.

Conclusion:
Each title of Mary with reference to its modifier good, or the help Mary provides, has a unique history, and each devotion is different. All these titles of Mary might leave her devotees confused, especially when you talk about Perpetual Help, Good Hope, Good Health, and Good Help, among others. As we celebrate another anniversary since Mary spoke to Adele Brise in 1859, I hope you will consider making a pilgrimage to this special place in Wisconsin and the only place of its kind in the United States, where Mary still offers her good help to those who seek her intercession. But when you enter it into your phone app or GPS, make sure you head to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, otherwise you might get lost, and need to call upon her help to find her shrine.

Fr. Edward Looney was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin on June 6, 2015. A member of the Mariological Society of America, Fr. Looney publishes regularly on Marian topics, including the approved 1859 Wisconsin apparition. He is the author of the best-selling rosary devotional, A Rosary Litany and his latest book is A Heart Like Mary's: 31 Daily Meditations published by Ave Maria Press. You can also follow Fr. Edward on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Soundcloud. 
NAPA

Brother Christopher Brady, FSC, has accepted President Robert Jordan’s invitation to serve as Principal of Justin-Siena High School. Brother Christopher has held numerous leadership positions in our Lasallian District of San Francisco, including roles as Principal at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory in San Francisco, De La Salle High School in Concord, and most recently at La Salle High School in Pasadena. He also served as Dean of Students and as a Religion and History teacher at Justin-Siena from 1979 to 1983. Br. Christopher begins his new role Friday October 27th, and will be a valuable addition to the leadership of Justin-Siena.

NATIONAL

Trump Declares Opioid Crisis a Public Health Emergency

Washington D.C., Oct 26 (CNA/EWTN News) - President Donald Trump on Thursday declared the U.S. opioid crisis a public health emergency, calling for federal government agencies to focus their resources on finding solutions to the growing problem.

“We can be the generation that ends the opioid epidemic,” Trump said as he announced the declaration, which instructs federal agencies to use resources to fight the crisis through various avenues, including preventing drugs from entering the country and treatment for those with addictions.

The declaration itself does not provide additional money to address the opioid crisis but it allows for the reallocation of existing grants to combat the epidemic. Money to address the opioid crisis but it allows for the reallocation of existing grants to combat the epidemic.

Trump also announced initiatives the diocese was taking to respond to the crisis, including educational initiatives at the parish level and developing family recovery groups.

Last March, Massachusetts bishops also issued a statement in response to the state’s rising drug-overdose deaths. The rate of overdose deaths had reached record levels there.

“We encourage our sisters and brothers who are suffering addiction or the addiction of loved ones to turn to their faith community for support, counsel and compassion, and we pray that those most affected will receive the physical, emotional and spiritual help that they need,” the state’s bishops stated.

Vice President Pence Promises Direct US Aid To Persecuted Christians

Washington D.C., Oct 26 (CNA/EWTN News) - US Vice President Mike Pence’s promises Wednesday of better aid for persecuted Christians and others in the Middle East has drawn praise from Supreme Knight Carl Anderson of the Knights of Columbus.

Pence addressed In Defense of Christians’ annual Solidarity Dinner for Christians in the Middle East Oct. 25. The vice president said groups such as the Islamic State have singled out Christians for persecution. He noted that Christianity could disappear from some parts of the Middle East.

“Let me assure you tonight, President Trump and I see these crimes for what they are — vile acts of persecution animated by hatred for Christians and the Gospel of Christ,” said Pence.

Pence said that President Donald Trump has told the State Department to stop funding “ineffective” U.N. relief efforts.

“Our fellow Christians and all who are persecuted in the Middle East should not have to rely on multilateral institutions when America can help them directly,” he said.

Instead, the U.S. will provide humanitarian assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development, faith-based groups, and private organizations “to help those who are persecuted for their faith.”

“This is the moment, now is the time, and America will support these people in their hour of need,” the vice president said.

Pence charged that the U.N. has often failed to help the “most vulnerable communities, especially religious minorities” and has repeatedly denied funding to faith-based groups with “proven track records.”

“We will no longer rely on the United Nations alone to assist persecuted Christians and minorities in the wake of genocide and the atrocities of terrorist groups,” he said.

Commenting on Pence’s speech, Anderson noted that “A year ago the United States used the right word to describe what was happening to Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East. That word was genocide,” said Anderson, referring to a March 2016 State Department declaration.

For Anderson, Pence’s speech meant “those words were put into action.”

(see News Briefs, page 16)
Grief puts us in the middle of our life. To face this head on is to be able to create new traditions while mourning what is no longer there. Look at your Thanksgiving table this year as a time of gratitude. See the people who are working beside you, family sending gifts of love and assistance, perhaps from afar, and all the promise of prayer that bolsters hope and gives comfort.

This year try a “Remembering Tree.” Write on colored paper or small ornaments all the losses you have experienced and wish to remember. Balance these ornaments by writing all the new people and things that are happening to make the best of a difficult situation. Look for quiet joy. Write your fears and worries, your concerns and your sadness, and place these in the empty crib at the foot of the tree recalling that God, who wishes us true happiness, has never left our side.

Grief puts us in the middle of our life. There is no turning back. Forward is yet to make clear. As faith filled people God walks with us and has sent miracle people to stand beside us journeying with us into the “new”. The message of the season is: Faith-filled people have hope. God IS Here. 

November 11: St. Martin of Tours

The end is not the real end in the story of any tragedy when “good persons” are left behind. Rather it is “our middle life” when the reality of all we have lost becomes real and we know that no matter who we are, where we are going, “backwards is not an option.”

Recognize that the adrenaline rush that has kept you going is beginning to fade, decisions regarding change and possibilitiesloom before you and the choices you make will live with you for life after the fire (or any tragedy) that has become a life event this year.

Grieving people were never asked: “Is this a good time?” Are you ready? Rather life happens and we are expected to adjust using all the God given gifts that rest within us. The reality of the holidays, fast approaching, can be another source of deep grief.

You have been “robbed of your place of gatherings, your community of friends, your thanksgiving table and traditions. Christmas trees, decorations, the stuff of family history is no longer in the “boxes of keepers”- the symbolic past times of ornaments and love reminders”.

To face this head on is to be able to create new
Vegas Shooting: The Land of the Stars & Stripes Has Become a Country Of Stress & Strife

(October 2) Max Lucado, Maxlucado.com
Four ways prayer can help us step back from digital lives awash in adrenaline.

How much more can we take? A mass shooting in Las Vegas. Puerto Rico continues to reel in the wake of yet another devastating hurricane. Mexico City remains in a state of earthquake induced decimation — families left homeless and innocent lives taken. Wars and rumors of wars rumble in North Korea, threatening our allies and our homeland. And when we turn to our personal lives, it doesn't seem much better: financial stress, health crises and relational strife.

Do you ever just feel worn out? Ready to check out, turn off the TV, shut down your phone, pull the blanket over your head and hope it will go away by morning?

What you're feeling has a name: chronic anxiety. It's a feeling of dread, an edginess, a cold wind that won't stop howling. And even when the storms abate, there is a sense that the next one is coming. Always... coming. Sunny days are just an interlude. You can't relax. All peace is temporary, short term. Anxiety is a thief, taking our sleep, our energy, our well-being and our peace.

Chances are you or someone you know seriously struggles with anxiety. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders are reaching epidemic proportions. In a given year more than 50 million Americans will feel the effects of a panic attack, phobias, or other anxiety disorders. The United States is now the most anxious nation in the world. Congratulations to us! The land of the stars and stripes has become the country of stress and strife.

Why? What is the cause or our anxiety?

Certainly the onslaught of natural disasters, global tensions and personal challenges is real. You or someone you know is facing foreclosure, fighting cancer or mucking out their home decimated by a flood.

And we have to navigate our lives awash in a constant sea of adrenaline. Every few seconds changes and new threats are imported into our lives thanks to smart phones, TVs and computer screens. In our grandparents' generation news of an earthquake in Nepal would reach around the world some days or weeks later. In our parent's day the nightly news communicated the disaster. Now it is a matter of minutes or even seconds. We've barely processed one crisis before we hear of another.

We are experiencing the exhaustion that comes with a life steeped in turmoil and chaos. And this leads to sagging compassion (“I can't give any more to Salvation Army”) and personal hopelessness (“If this world's as good as it gets, it's just not that good.”)

Where can we turn? First of all, don't beat yourself up. Don't feel anxious about being anxious. We all worry at times. Even Jesus experienced anxiety. The night before his crucifixion, he was filled with dread. I think we can take our cue from him. When Jesus felt anxious he turned to prayer.

When your anxiety threatens to overwhelm you, take these steps:

Pray immediately. Don't stew over the problems that besetting you or your neighbor. Ask God for help as soon as you identify a need.

Pray specifically. When we boil our concerns down to a specific request, they become right-sized. Vague threats loom larger than concrete challenges.

Pray for and with others. When we consider the problems of others and enlist their help with ours, our concerns become more manageable.

Pray with thanksgiving. Anxiety and gratitude cannot occupy the same space. When we catalog what we are thankful for, our list of challenges grows less powerful.

Anxiety comes with life, my friend, but it doesn't have to dominate your life. The path to peace is paved with prayer. Let's invite God to reframe the way we face our fears and win the war on worry. With his help, we can find calm in a chaotic world.


Our Time: Reflections On the Women’s Convention

by Laura Doroski

Atlanta, Ga., Oct 27 (CNA) - Today, October 27, the organizers of January’s historic Women’s March are starting their convention in Detroit with the theme “Reclaiming Our Time.” But while the event was covered in the news, is it really “new” that women are doing just that?

The theme reminds me of a proclamation from Pope Paul VI at the Second Vatican Council, “The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never hitherto achieved.”

Saint John Paul II expanded on this special quality in his 1995 Letter to Women, noting that women, “perhaps more than men...acknowledge the person.” Through their gift of seeing and acknowledging others, women find new ways to give of themselves, and in doing so, achieve what they were made for: relationship with others.

It is easy to see truth about women at work in the sweeping vision of the Women’s March. Their unity principles state, “We must create a society in which women...are free and able to care for and nurture their families, however they are formed, in safe and healthy environments free from structural impediments.” They seek to build a world in which people of all genders, races, sexual preferences, religions, and abilities are protected and respected and in which the environment is cared for. In a beautiful, feminine way, they connect the welfare of all human beings to each other and clearly recognize the goodness of each person “in their greatness and limitations.”

Yet the movement also misses the mark in some important ways. Sadly, their goals include “open access to safe, legal, affordable abortion and birth control for all people,” and they seem to embrace the view that sexual expression, marriage, and children are independent of each other.

(see Women’s Convention, page 18)
Continúa la necesidad de ser conscientes de las repercusiones del reciente incendio en muchas almas en nuestra Diócesis. Esta será continua durante meses e incluso años. La página diocesana en el internet (www.srdiocese.org/signofhope) contiene actualizaciones ocasionales, así como maneras de contribuir. Aunque consciente de la importancia de actualizarnos con el caso del incendio, también reconozco que nuestro trabajo de preparación de Consagración Personal, debe continuar y así que enfocar mis esfuerzos hoy en esta importante labor espiritual.

He oído que hay un número de grupos en una variedad de parroquias que han completado su preparación para la consagración personal a la Santísima Virgen María. También entiendo que hay un número de grupos que se dedican en la actualidad en los 33 días de preparación para la consagración personal, así como la consagración parroquial y diocesana. Elogio y animo a todos los que han decidido seguir este camino; y animo a aquellos que estén considerando la posibilidad de hacerlo pero todavía no se han comprometido a esta peregrinación espiritual. Todavía hay tiempo, a partir de Noviembre, para completar los 33 días de preparación antes de la Consagración Diocesana el final de Semana del 9 y 10 de Diciembre.

Aunque la decisión de nuestra Consagración Diocesana el 10 de Diciembre se basó en un deseo de conectar la solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción el 8 de Diciembre y la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de Diciembre, hay otra razón para esta fecha. Está conectado con la aparición a Sor Lucía ocho años después de los acontecimientos de 1917. El 10 de Diciembre de 1925 el niño Jesús se le apareció a Sor Lucía. Escucha sus palabras al describir la aparición. Sor Lucía evita los pronombres personales, ‘yo’, y describe el encuentro en tercera persona.

“El día 10 de Diciembre de 1925, la Santísima Virgen se le apareció a Sor Lucía, y al lado, suspendido en una nube luminosa, un Niño. La Santísima Virgen, poniéndole una mano en el hombro, le mostró al mismo tiempo un corazón que tenía en la otra mano, cercado de espinas.

Al mismo tiempo le dijo el Niño, ‘Ten compasión del Corazón de tu Santísima Madre que está cubierto de espinas que los hombres ingranen continuamente le clavan, sin haber quien haga un acto de reparación para arrancarlas’.

Enseñada la Santísima Virgen le dijo, ‘Mira, hija mía, mi Corazón cercado de espinas que los hombres ingranen me clavan continuamente con blasfemias e ingratiudes. Tú, al menos, procura consolarme y digo que todos aquellos que durante cinco meses, el primer Sábado (de cada mes), se confiesan, reciban la Santa Comunión, recen cinco décadas del Rosario y me hagan 15 minutos de compañía, mediando en los 15 Misterios del Rosario, con el fin de desagraviarme, yo prometo asistirles en la hora de la muerte con todas las Gracias necesarias para la salvación de sus almas.

La devoción de “hacer los cinco primeros Sábados” tiene que ser entendido correctamente. No es una automática ‘garantía’ de que cualquier persona completando los cinco primeros Sábados sin duda irá al cielo. La promesa es que, a la hora de la muerte, la persona recibirá todas las Gracias necesarias para la salvación de su alma. Se trata de un promesa que la Santísima Virgen estará atenta a su devoto hijo o hija en la hora de su muerte. Esta es la principal petición del Ave María. “Santa María, madre de Dios, ruego por nosotros pecadores, ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.” Cumpliendo con la petición de Nuestra Señora para honrarla especialmente en cinco Sábados consecutivos nos convertimos en recibidores de esa promesa. Este es un gran consuelo espiritual.

Sabemos, en la fe, que siempre habrá ‘suficiente gracia’ disponible para nosotros para llevar una vida santa y perseverar en la fe hasta la muerte, pero, Nuestra Señora quiso darnos seguridad adicional de su amor maternal, sobre todo a esa hora que en última instancia viene a cada uno de nosotros. Generalmente, y desafortunadamente, el énfasis de la devoción de los primeros Sábados se presenta como la garantía de ganar ‘el cielo’. Digo que esto es desafortunado, no porque no sea importante, sino porque pierde el objetivo principal de la devoción. Las palabras de María a Sor Lucía le invitaron a ver el Inmaculado Corazón de María rodeado de espinas y a reconocer que esto simboliza las blasfemias e ingratiudes que ella recibe. Tratar de enmendar esas blasfemias e ingratiudes es la base fundamental de la devoción de los primeros Sábados. Una vez que se establece una relación profunda y personal entre nosotros y María, así como entre nosotros y Su Hijo, Jesús, empezamos a reconocer cuánto María y Jesús son sujetos de abuso. Nuestra respuesta humana es de gran tristeza y simpatía, así como de un deseo de enmendar ese abuso. María llama nuestra atención el hecho de que Dios, y las personas y cosas relacionadas con Dios, con frecuencia son tratados con mucho irrespeto. La respuesta Católica a esa falta de respeto, como lo pidió María, es el rechazo del pecado, confesión, Sagrada Comunión y el rezo del Rosario. Es una manera en que podemos ofrecer un gran consuelo a Nuestra Querida Madre y a Su Amado Hijo. “

(Cont. from page 17)
Cataluña Declara Su Independencia De España

MADRID (ACI) - El Parlamento autonómico de Cataluña aprobó hoy 27 de octubre la independencia de Cataluña de España por 70 votos a favor, 10 en contra y 2 en blanco; tras lo cual el Senado español autorizó al Gobierno de Mariano Rajoy para aplicar el artículo 155 de la Constitución para intervenir en esta región.

El Portavoz de la Conferencia Episcopal Española, P. José María Gil Tamayo, se pronunció sobre estos hechos y afirmó en su cuenta de Twitter: “Nuestra oración y dolor por acontecimientos de hoy. El respeto del Estado de Derecho y de la Constitución aseguran nuestra convivencia en paz”.

Con la votación del Parlamento de Cataluña se inicia un proceso de constitución para proclamar “la república catalana como Estado independiente y soberano”. Los diputados autonómicos del Partido Socialista Catalán (PSC), PP y Ciudadanos abandonaron el Parlamento antes de que se produjera la votación.

Por su parte, el Senado de España autorizó al Gobierno para aplicar el artículo 155 de la Constitución que determina la intervención del Estado para garantizar la vigencia de la Carta Magna en esa región.

El Consejo de Ministros se encuentra reunido durante la tarde del 27 de octubre para aprobar las medidas que se llevarán a cabo de acuerdo al artículo 155 de la Constitución, que contemplaría, entre otras cosas, la destitución inmediata del Gobierno de Cataluña y de su presidente, Carles Puigdemont, y sus consejeros.

Tras esta declaración de independencia, el presidente del Gobierno español, Mariano Rajoy, ha publicado un mensaje en su cuenta oficial de Twitter donde pide calma a los españoles y asegura que “el Estado de Derecho restaurará la legalidad en Cataluña”.

Pido tranquilidad a todos los españoles. El Estado de Derecho restaurará la legalidad en Cataluña. MR—(vea Noticias, página 20)

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RESPUESTA DE LA OPOSICIÓN

Arrimadas, líder de Ciudadanos, principal partido de la oposición en Cataluña, fue la primera en responder a Carles Puigdemont en el Parlamento catalán.

Le acusó de “romper la convivencia de los catalanes” y aseguró que se trata de “la crónica de un golpe anunciado, un golpe a la democracia, a este Parlamento y España y a la Unión Europea”.

“Ustedes son del peor nacionalismo que ha existido en Europa” y subrayó que “representan la división, el supremacismo y la insolencia; frente a la unidad, la igualdad y la solidaridad que representa Europa”.

Arrimadas aseguró que este desafío independentista ha conseguido “despertar a una mayoría silenciada por ustedes, por sus discursos y por sus medios de comunicación” e insistió en que “la mayoría de catalanes se sienten catalanes, españoles y europeos”.

La líder de Ciudadanos en Cataluña lanzó un mensaje a sus compatriotas: “No estamos solos, vamos a seguir luchando y vamos a salir a ganas en las elecciones de verdad, en las que no se pueden votar tres o cuatro veces y que dan mucho miedo al Gobierno”, porque “la mayoría de los catalanes creen que Cataluña es su tierra, España su país y Europa su futuro”.

El Papa Francisco Denuncia Las “Cadenas De Corrupción Y Violencias” En América Latina

VATICANO (ACI) - En el prólogo de un libro que analiza el proceso de independencia de América Latina dos siglos después, el Papa Francisco denunció las “cadenas de corrupción y violencias” que han afectado la historia de los países de la región.


“Una onda larga de depresión provocada por la crisis económica mundial, combinada por cadenas de corrupción y violencias, marcaron una transición hasta nuestra actualidad, en la que América Latina parece quedar en la zozobra y en la incertidumbre, con estructuras políticas resquebrajadas, incrustándose nuevas la pobreza y ahondándose los abismos de la exclusión social para muchos”, dice el Santo Padre.

“Nos duele la Patria que no acoge y custodia, de hecho, a todos sus hijos. Anhelamos, sí, la Patria Grande, pero sólo será grande cuando lo sea para todos, y con mayor justicia y equidad”, agrega.

Francisco se pregunta “¿qué es lo que está pasando en América Latina?”, “¿en qué queda el apelativo de continente de la esperanza?”, “¿volvemos a confiar en ideologías que han demostrado fracasos económicos y devastaciones humanas?”.

“Necesitamos cultivar y debatir –responde él mismo– proyectos históricos que apunten con realismo hacia una esperanza de vida más digna para las personas y sus familias, de hombres y mujeres”.

A este respecto, “urgo poder definir y emprender grandes objetivos nacionales y latinoamericanos, con consensos fuertes y movilizaciones populares, más allá de ambiciones e intereses mundanos y lejos de maniqueísmos y exasperaciones, de aventuras peligrosas y explosiones incontrolables. Más que acomodarnos en la indiferencia y la chatura, se nos desafía a levantar utopías de auténtica libertad y liberación integral, sostenidas por una renovada gesta patriótica”.

El Papa también escribe que en sus viajes apostólicos a países latinoamericanos, “he podido admirar nuevamente las energías de fe y sabiduría, dignidad y solidaridad, alegría y esperanza que laten en el corazón de nuestra gente y animan su ethos cultural”.

El Papa a niños víctimas del terremoto en México: Miren siempre adelante

ROMA (ACI) - Miren siempre adelante, lo que están viviendo es un paso en el camino de la vida para poder vivir después mejor. Estas fueron las palabras de ánimo que el Papa Francisco dirigió en la tarde del 26 de octubre a algunos niños víctimas del terremoto que el pasado mes de septiembre golpeó México causando numerosas víctimas, heridos y daños materiales.

El Santo Padre, en un encuentro organizado en Roma por la fundación Scholas Occurrentes, dialogó con ellos a través de videoconferencia.

El primero en hablar con él fue Joaquín, de 8 años, de la localidad de Morelos y obligado a vivir en un albergue porque su familia ha perdido su casa a causa del terremoto. Luego le habló Teresa, de 10 años, quien le mostró un dibujo que realizó tras su experiencia.

“Nos duele la Patria que no acoge y custodia, de hecho, a todos sus hijos. Anhelamos, sí, la Patria Grande, pero sólo será grande cuando lo sea para todos, y con mayor justicia y equidad”, agrega.

Con los niños, el Papa Francisco les invitó también a “construir la libertad, la paz, la armonía y todas esas ilusiones que ustedes tienen dentro”.

En el encuentro, el Papa Francisco se dirigió a jóvenes de diversas edades de México, Argentina, Paraguay y Puerto Rico para hablarles de drogas, inmigración, el cuidado del medioambiente o la problemática del suicidio. ▲
Dear Every Single American,

Every Single American. Including President Trump, Colin Kaepernick, and my brothers in arms overseas who are wondering, “what in the hell is going on back there?” I’m sitting in the same chair, in the same apartment that I sat in almost a year ago when I wrote an open letter to Colin Kaepernick. I was hurt when I saw him sitting on the bench during the national anthem, but I’m much more hurt now. Not by him, not by where we’re at now with the protests, but by us.

Simply put, it seems like we just hate each other; and that is far more painful to me than any protest, or demonstration, or rally, or tweet. We’re told to pick a side, there’s a line drawn in the sand “are you with us or against us?” It’s just not who we are, or at least who we’re supposed to be; we’re supposed to be better than that, we’re Americans. This doesn’t even seem to be about right or wrong, but more about right or left.

Today it feels like this national divide isn’t even really about the anthem, or the flag, or kneeling, or sitting, or fists in the air. It’s not about President Donald Trump, it’s not about Colin Kaepernick, it’s not about the military, or even police brutality. It feels like it’s about winning. That’s what makes America so great, our sheer competitiveness. We’re winners, and we won’t quit until victory is ours.

We see it in sports everyday, we “live and die” by the outcomes of our teams. That desire to win at all cost is costing us greatly now among our neighbors. This winning mentality seems to have spilled over into an obsession with being right and not willing to admit that maybe, just maybe we were wrong. We repeat mantras to ourselves like, “no matter what I get this thing fixed together, you and me. I love you our country together. Wait...what? I know it sounds crazy, but maybe that’s exactly what we need to see. Maybe that’s how we start to heal. Two men sit in a room and talk, simple as that.

That’s how it all started with Colin and I, neither of us knew that kneeling would be the result of our conversation. Colin wanted to sit, I wanted him to stand, and so we found a common ground on a knee alongside his teammates. I believe that progress and real change happens in this world when you reach across the divide, you build a bridge, you swallow your pride, you open your mind, you embrace what you don’t understand, and ultimately you surrender.

Now I don’t pretend to speak for everyone who fought overseas, many veterans rightfully disagree with my position. But I do feel that I echo the sentiments of most war fighters when I say that what we hope for more than anything right now in America is unity. To deploy overseas, train, live with, fight alongside, and ultimately defend foreigners that you have little in common with is truly a challenging task. But returning home to a country that is so divided, so judgmental, and so hateful of one another is almost as difficult to deal with as burying a fallen comrade.

In fact we’re still losing our brothers in arms overseas right now and it’s hardly mentioned it in the media; but that’s OK, we don’t risk our lives and sacrifice so much for fanfare or recognition. It’s not at all why we do what we do. We do what we do because you are worth it, because we love you. I would love for those two leaders to have that conversation, but more than anything I just want us to love one another again.

I would love for those two leaders to have that conversation, but more than that. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

So please, no more lines in the sand, not at home, not among our people. No more choosing sides, no more “for or against.” I believe our Veterans will be called upon to lead the way in healing the world and solving its problems; right now our country needs that leadership more than I can remember. So I’ll be here, standing in the radical middle, doing what I can to continue fighting for those that can’t fight for themselves. Let’s get this thing fixed together, you and me. I love you all with all my heart. — Nate Boyer
Denver Archbishop Addresses Teen Social Media Use, Suicide Spike

Denver, Colo., Oct 24 (CNA/EWTN News) - The growing problem of teen suicide is one that should be met with prayer and efforts to help young people develop healthy use of social media, said Archbishop Samuel Aquila of Denver in a recent column.

"Suicide by teens in Colorado is tragically on the rise," Archbishop Aquila said in an Oct. 24 column for the Denver Catholic.

"In 2014 there were 50 students who took their own life, but in 2015 the toll rose to 72 and remained elevated with 68 in 2016," he noted, pointing to several local middle school and high school students who committed suicide at the beginning of this school year.

As the community struggles to make sense of these increasing tragedies, it is important to address the role of social media and its effect on teens’ sense of self-worth and struggle with suicidal thoughts, he said.

While the teenage years have “always been a time of uncertainty, as physiological and emotional development takes place,” the archbishop said, the pervasive influence of social media in today's world adds a new dimension to adolescence in the 21st century.

“Bullying has always existed, and it always attacks the basic dignity of another human being through demeaning the person. But when we crossed the threshold in 2012 of more than 50 percent of Americans owning a smartphone, bullies gained access to their peers on a scale never seen before.”

With studies showing that 3 in 4 teens use Snapchat and Instagram daily, these bullies have access to “a virtual megaphone, around-the-clock availability, and a greater level of anonymity than in previous generations, he said.

“The introduction of these apps has also led to a new phenomenon in which about six percent of teens resort to ‘digital self-harm’ by posting anonymous hateful messages about themselves for their friends to see,” the archbishop continued. “This allows them to get attention from their friends while also airing their internal feelings.”

The problem is not just local. Data from recent government surveys indicate a huge spike in rates of adolescent depression and related mental health issues. And a new study in the journal Clinical Psychological Science shows a correlation between social media use and mental health problems among teenagers.

To counter this alarming trend, Archbishop Aquila asked the faithful of the archdiocese to pray for “those who are despairing and are searching for their true identity.”

“As Catholics, we need to be people who bring our experience of encountering Jesus’ love in prayer, the sacraments, and authentic community with others to those who are awash in the digital realm,” he said.

The archbishop also noted to the words of Pope Francis in his 2014 message for World Communications Day: “It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply ‘connected,’ connections need to grow into true encounters. We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves. We need to love and to be loved. We need tenderness.”

Archbishop Aquila pointed to some signs of hope in the culture, particularly an “Offline October” petition in which 1,600 students pledged to delete their social media apps for a month, with the hope that “morale and confidence will be boosted” by doing so.

Efforts such as the Offline October pledge can help today’s young people remember that their identity is not rooted in online interactions, the archbishop said.

The most important thing that we can do for those who are consumed with their online existence is to consistently, lovingly show them that they are a son or daughter of God the Father, and that this is what matters most,” he stressed.

A new study in the journal Clinical Psychological Science shows a correlation between social media use and mental health problems among teenagers.

Religious Freedom, Not Secularism, Key to Europe’s Future, Vatican Official Says

by Elise Harris

Rome, Italy, Oct 28 (CNA/EWTN News) - In 2003, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was asked about his faith during a magazine interview. As Blair began to offer an answer, he was interrupted, cut off by Alastair Campbell, the prime minister's director of strategy and communications.

“We don't do God,” Campbell said. “I'm sorry.”

Campbell seemed to know, in the not-so-distant past of European politics, that any public mention of religion was a serious taboo.

This week, as top ecclesial and political leaders gather in Rome to discuss the future and identity of Europe, Vatican Secretary for Relations with the States Archbishop Paul Gallagher said that religion is no longer a forbidden subject in European politics.

“The days when you could say 'we don't do religion' are over,” Gallagher said.

“Many diplomatic services throughout Europe and elsewhere are now running courses, literally accelerated courses to make up time on religion,” he said, explaining that political leaders are beginning to recognize that “the world is a very religious place.”

Increase in religious affiliation worldwide continues to grow around the world, he said, explaining that this fact “brings with it a very big responsibility for believers.”

“I think we have to take that responsibility very seriously, and make sure that religion is making a positive contribution, and that religion, and if you want to say even the Catholic religion, is a part of the solution and not the problem.”

Archbishop Gallagher spoke alongside German Cardinal Reinhard Marx at an Oct. 27 press conference on a major conference titled “(Re)Thinking Europe: A Christian Contribution to the Future of the European (see Religious Freedom, page 22)
CALENDAR

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

November 1st, 18th
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 Cursillos 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 November 1 from 6-8pm at St. Eugene’s in Santa Rosa.
Join us on November 18 from 2-4pm at St. Elizabeth Seton in Rohnert Park.
Our 2018 weekends are scheduled: June 7-10 Men’s Cursillo Weekend, Angela Center, Santa Rosa. August 2-5 Women’s Cursillo Weekend, Angela Center, Santa Rosa. For further information call Debbie Simonson in Petaluma at 904-463-1070 or Priscilla Silvey in Napa at 707-567-7957. Our website is: www.catholiccursillomovementofsantarosa.com/

November 4th
Italian Dinner Dance
St. Francis Solano Elementary School Tickets are on sale Saturday, November 4th at 6PM $45 per ticket. Cocktails & Appetizers, Family Style, Italian Dinner, Dancing to a Live Band! http://stfrancissolanoolo.org/ 707.996.4994

November 5th
St Rose of Lima Catholic Church Blood Donation Drive
A BLOOD DONATION drive is being sponsored by St Rose of Lima Catholic Church and the Blood Centers of the Pacific on November 5th, Sunday from 8:00 to 11:00 in the morning. Help save a life! Donors are invited for screening and donation of blood at St Rose Parish Hall at 322 10th St, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. Blood Centers of the Pacific supply blood to 50 hospitals in Northern CA, including all hospitals in Sonoma County. Appointments highly encouraged. To schedule your life-saving appointment: visit www.bloodheroes.com, click ”Donate Blood” and enter the sponsor code; St Rose; or contact Ian Kanekis, Donor Recruitment Representative at 707-239-6424 or for more information, may contact Belinda Biscocho at 415-994-4224.

November 11th - 12th
Second Collection Communications & Catholic University of America

November 30th
Faiths of Fathers Series
An Introduction to the Lives & Teachings of the Church Fathers by Fr. Gary Sumpter. From September 21, 2017 to June 28, 2018 7:30 pm 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, Cyprian, Basil, and many more. Talks will be on the following Thursday nights at 7:30pm: Nov. 30, Dec. 14, Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 22, April 26, May 31, June 28 Kolbe Academy & Trinity Prep 2055 Redwood Rd, Napa. No Charge. Donations gratefully accepted.

Ongoing in North Diocese
Christ the King Church Parish, McKinleyville
Weekdays: Monday Mass 9:00am Tuesday Communion Service 9:00am. Friday Adoration 3:00pm followed by Mass 4:00pm
Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, Hoopa: Sunday Mass 11:30am
HSU Newman Center, 700 Union St, Arcata: Sunday Mass 5:30pm followed by supper & learning about Catholicism.

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

Ongoing in South Diocese
Oakville House of Prayer (Carmelite Monastery)
Morning of Recollection every first Saturday of the month; Spiritual Talk 9-10am; Confessions 10-11am; Mass 11:00 am. Bible Study Tuesdays with Father Mi-

chael Buckley, O.C. D. will no longer be offered as our dear Fr. Michael has gone to be with the Lord. Confessions (English) Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm Confessions (Spanish) Wednesday 10-12pm, 3-5pm, 8-9pm 20 Mount Carmel Drive, Oakville, CA 707-944-2454 oakvillecarmelites.org

Napa
Series on the Fathers of the Church
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 themes and more will be covered in a 10-part series on the Fathers of the Church given by Fr. Gary Sumpter. Church Fathers discussed include St. Clement, St. Justin, St. Cyril, St. Ignatius, St. Athanasius, St. Irenaeus and many more. It will be one Thursday a month from Sept thru June, begin-
ing on Sept. 21, 7-30pm at Kolbe Academy & Trinity Prep, 2055 Redwood Rd., Napa. No charge. Donations gratefully accepted.

To have your calendar event listed please email us! srdiocese1@gmail.com

(see Religious Freedom, page 24)
The Cardinal Newman football program family gathered a few days after the North Bay fires were sparked. They were given refuge from the dense smoke at the Santa Rosa Country Club. Coach Paul Cronin understood how vital it was for them to come together to begin healing. Players and parents shared stories of tragedy and heroics.

The boys chatted while digesting fistfuls of pizza—crisis or not, a teenage boy can always eat. Before anyone asked for dessert, Principal and unofficial Cardinal Newman historian Graham Rutherford addressed the sea of football enthusiasts. Teenage angst was calm and eerily attentive as they looked addressed the sea of football enthusiasts. Teenage angst was calm and eerily attentive as they looked for words of hope.

Principal Rutherford reminded everyone of the 2017-18 school motto: “One School, Undivided.”

President Laura Held gave Mr. Rutherford credit for having the foresight to establish the school’s theme at the beginning of the year. How could anyone have guessed its future relevance?

In a humble and fatherly way, Rutherford reminded everyone, ”Books and things that we lost at the school were only vehicles for the experience. We’ll never lose our memories.”

Cronin, spoke next. The Newman football community’s very well respected leader serves his team in a variety of capacities besides coach. He is their guru, therapist, family counselor, mentor, pseudo-father, brother, taxi, miracle worker, spiritual guide, and most importantly an authentic witness of moral character. He promised to, “normalize the lives of our children.” And to do this, he declared that we would need to “just take the next step.”

Cronin spoke of lessons learned when he watched a mentor battle cancer. Coach Cronin did not mix words, “It’s going to be really hard, everything’s hard, life’s hard… who cares, just make the next step.”

Most importantly was his concluding message and promise to his football program family, “What we do as a football team will be important to the community. When we have our first game, and our entire community is in the stands—that’s going to be a powerful and healing moment. Let’s work towards that.”

The hopeful quiet hung in the air when the team’s four “faith-captains” walked to the mic and delivered their normal “Weekly Virtue” message. Each week the team doesn’t start off with game-film, drills, or the weight room… they gather in a classroom and discuss improving character. The varsity football team has adopted Sports Leader’s sports-ministry program, which comes with a weekly virtue message. The week of the fires, the virtue was MATURITY, and these boys valiantly exuded it.

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**Santa Rosa Religious Education Conference**

**Conferencia de Educación Religiosa de Santa Rosa**

**Saturday, December 2, 2017 / 9am - 3pm**

**St. Bernard Catholic School, 222 Dollison Street, Eureka**

**Due to the Fires this Event will be FREE**

- Registration is now open.
- The Registration Form available on the website, parish & DRE office.
- The registration fee covers admission. Tickets are required.
- $10.00 - by Monday, November 20 - Early Bird.
- $15.00 - for registrations received after November 20th & day of event.
- Bring your own lunch.
- Ministries & Exhibitors showcasing Books & Gifts.

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**Cardinal Newman “Retreat Day”**

Led by campus ministers John Contreras and Melissa Lobbregt at St. Elizabeth Seton, one of Newman’s new temporary homes. Please continue to pray for the families and school communities dealing with the serious challenges arising from the aftermath of the Nor Cal fires.
Father Gregory McGivern Joins Hanna Boys Center

Hanna Boys Center, a 72-year-old residential treatment center for at-risk youth located in Sonoma, CA., has changed the lives of thousands of motivated youth through faith, education and caring, helping them grow into functional, responsible adults and productive members of society.

Recently, Hanna welcomed Father Gregory McGivern as its new resident chaplain. For the past 11 years, Father McGivern has served as chaplain for Mercy High School, an all-girls Catholic school in San Francisco. The following conversation with Father McGivern outlines his background, experience and role as a spiritual leader to Hanna's boys and staff.

Father Greg, how long have you been a priest and where have you served?

McGivern: I was born in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, where I was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Dromore on June 16, 1985. I earned Master’s degrees in both theology and counseling psychology. I have worked in different parishes in the Diocese of San Jose, the Archdiocese of San Francisco, as well as my home Diocese of Dromore in Northern Ireland. Presently, I’m a member of Voluntas Dei, a Secular Institute of Pontifical Right. www.voluntasdeiusa.org.

My last appointment was Mercy High School where I served for the last 11 years. My areas of responsibility included school chaplain and counselor, as well as head of the counseling department. I am a licensed marriage and family therapist in the state of California, a certified spiritual director, and a pastoral counselor with special interest in the intersection of psychology and spirituality and their important roles in mental well-being and recovery. I also worked with victims of violence during “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland through pastoral outreach and care.

What excites you about the opportunity at Hanna?

McGivern: I am very excited to join a community of people who value and celebrate faith, education, and care as the core values in their support of Hanna boys. In Catholic teaching, we are reminded that the dignity of every human being is valued and cherished. We are all created in the image and likeness of God. This respect and dignity for the boys at Hanna was very much in evidence during my early visits to campus. I was moved and impressed by the love, care and commitment by all the staff in their outreach and support of these young men. The caliber, determination and resilience of the young men themselves with whom I had the opportunity to interact was likewise truly inspirational in their quest to turn their lives around and plan for a better future. I have tremendous gratitude, as well as excitement, to be part of a professional supportive and caring community where “Turning Hurt to Hope” are not just words, but a living reality.

What is your understanding of the mission of Hanna and how do you plan to contribute as a priest?

McGivern: The mission is rooted in the gospel values of the Catholic tradition in which the dignity and respect of each young man is affirmed and cherished. The Hanna community celebrates the unique and diverse gifts of each of these young men who come to us both from Catholic traditions and other rich and diverse spiritual backgrounds. With faith, education and care, the well-being of each of these young men is nurtured and cultivated.

As Hanna’s resident chaplain, I hope to contribute through a ministry of presence, compassion, pastoral care, support and—perhaps most important—listening. I know there are many programs in place in terms of care and support, and I am looking forward to learning more about these. By building on these existing programs, in collaboration with others, I will utilize my pastoral and counseling experience. An important part of my outreach is to get to know the boys personally, encourage them to become their very best, and acknowledge and affirm their unique gifts and talents. I want to listen and understand their stories, hopes, dreams, and find out what speaks to them in terms of meaningful spiritual care and support.

Planning retreats, facilitating centering prayer, organizing para-liturgies and celebrating Eucharist and the other sacraments are at the core of my spiritual vision, which I also hope to develop with all in the Hanna community.

What is the role of faith in the supporting Hanna’s boys?

McGivern: The role of faith has always been an integral part in the support of Hanna boys. The very essence of Hanna is rooted in the Catholic tradition and inspired by gospel values that reassure us that God loves us unconditionally and will never abandon us no matter how difficult life may seem at any particular moment. Jesus is the Divine Physician who wills and desires each of us as his beloved, and reassures us of health and healing. I believe this to be an unequivocal endorsement and an affirmation of the role of faith in the support of the Hanna community.

What do you want Hanna’s boys and local community to know about you?

McGivern: I have a lot of gratitude that I’ve been able to serve as a priest. My faith and spirituality are important to me. I am a collaborator in terms of leadership style. I like to think of myself as approachable and friendly, welcoming open dialogue and the sharing of ideas. Likewise, non-judgment and compassion are things I strive for in my interactions with others. I see myself as a student of life, always open to new learnings and ideas. Although I like to remain light-hearted in many situations, I also value mutual respect, professionalism and a strong work ethic.

For more information about Hanna Boys Center, visit www.hannacenter.org.

(Religious Freedom, cont. from page 22)

For Christians in particular, the Second Vatican Council said the People of God, the Church, are “a sacrament of unity for all human beings,” and not just those inside the Church.

“We are not only for us, and the Pope is underlining this,” Marx said. “We are not narcissistic, inside ourselves, we are part of a solution for all human beings.”

“I do not see that the Church is ‘less interesting’ in the public world,” he said, and stressed the need to continue pursuing a dialogue with Islam, which he noted isn’t new to Europe.

“So for the future, I think the Catholic Church has to play a very important role to find ways of dialogue, ways of relating to this religion, which is very important for the 21st century and Europe,” he said.

The cardinal said his greatest fear moving forward is not so much that religion will be ignored or eroded, but that “it will be instrumentalized for other reasons, for political reasons. That will be perhaps the great fear for the 21st century.”