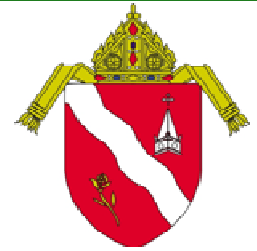




DIOCESAN NEWSLETTER

Diocese of Laredo



January, 2012

Annual Diocesan Conference

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known, that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen

What can you find inside?...

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Annual Diocesan Conference
 Serve one another with the love of Christ
 Servir al prójimo con el amor de Cristo

"His Love"

Art by Jocelyn Lizalde - Santa Margarita Parish

Opening Keynote
 Rev. Bill Dickinson of Catholic Leadership Institute
 Saturday, January 28, 2012
 Laredo Civic Center
 956.727.2140 www.dioceseoflaredo.org
 Register online or at your parish

2012

The Diocese of Laredo presents the Annual Diocesan Conference on Saturday, Jan. 28th at the Laredo Civic Center beginning at 8 a.m.

This conference is for, and is open to, everyone. The opening keynote is Fr. Bill Dickinson of the Catholic Leadership Institute. There will be workshops in English and Spanish to help you grow in the faith. You can register online at www.dioceseoflaredo.org or at your parish.

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Most Rev. James A. Tamayo, D.D., Bishop
1901 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78043
Phone: (956) 727-2140 • Fax: (956) 727-2777



From the Bishop's Office...

**C
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Rev. Toribio C. Guerrero

January 5

Rev. Edward Vrazel, OMI

January 6

Rev. Francisco J. Hernández

January 8

Rev. Salvador Uribe, CFI

January 8

Rev. William Davis, OMI

January 17

Rev. Juan Ayala, OMI

January 18

Rev. David Muñoz, OMI

January 18

Rev. James A. Loiacono, OMI

January 28

Rev. Salvador Pedroza

January 28

Rev. José Alfredo Gaytan, SOLT

January 2, 1982

Rev. John Jesus Moloney, CFI

January 7, 1995

Rev. Michael A. de Leon

January 14, 1995

Rev. Daniel Ramirez-Portugal

January 19, 1991

Msgr. Alejandro Salazar

January 19, 1991

Rev. Francisco Stodola

January 21, 1989

Rev. P. Nolasco Hinojosa, Jr.

January 27, 1996

Happy Ordination
Anniversary!!!

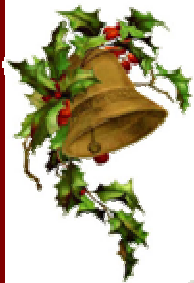
Priests' Meeting

January 19, 2012

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

at San Martin de Porres Church, Laredo

*Bishop's Christmas Party
for the Clergy
and Consecrated Life ...*



Pictures of attendees

January 6, 2012

San Martín de Porres Church, Laredo



Diocese of Laredo

The ***Committee on Liturgy and Divine
Worship*** will meet on January 16, 2012
at 6:30 pm at the
San Agustin Cathedral Rectory.

Fr. David Muñoz, OMI
Master of Episcopal Liturgical Ceremonies

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Maria de la Luz R. Cárdenas, Chancellor
1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140. • Fax: (956) 764-7842

**From the
Office of the
Chancellor...**



Safe Environment.

The Diocese of Laredo is proactively engaged, through the education, training and screening of its clergy, lay personnel and volunteers, in maintaining a safe environment for children and young persons in all its churches, facilities and sponsored events. If you, or someone you know, has been a victim of child sexual abuse by any church personnel, please contact the

office of the Victim Assistance Coordinator, María de la Luz Rodríguez Cárdenas at (956) 764-7825.

**International
Good Neighbor
Council**



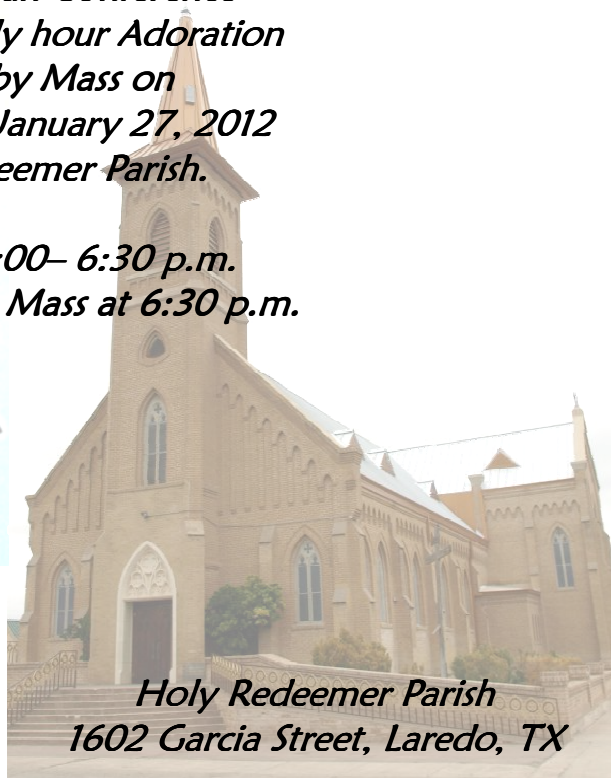
Thank you!!

to St. Augustine High School Students for their help in the International Good Neighbor Council Christmas Project.

Annual Diocesan Conference 2012

The diocesan staff and other interested Catholics are invited to join in prayer for the success of the Annual Diocesan Conference by attending Holy hour Adoration followed by Mass on Friday evening, January 27, 2012 at Holy Redeemer Parish.

*Holy Hour: 5:00– 6:30 p.m.
followed by Holy Mass at 6:30 p.m.*



*Holy Redeemer Parish
1602 Garcia Street, Laredo, TX*

*Quinquennial Report:
The Office of the Chancellor is
currently working on the
Quinquennial Report
which precedes the Bishop's
Ad Limina upcoming Visit*

Diocesan Directory 2012

An updated Diocesan Directory will be completed by March 2012. This Directory will be available on the website and can be downloaded for each office.



MEMORANDUM

Office of the Chancellor

TO: *Diocesan Family*

FROM: *María de la Luz R. Cárdenas, Chancellor*

SUBJECT: *Announcements*

DATE: *10 January, 2012*

“Rejoice in the Lord rejoice!” His generosity presents us another year of opportunities to serve Him joyfully!

As you well know, the Annual Diocesan Conference is upon us! Scheduled for Saturday January 28, 2012, at the Laredo Civic Center from 8:00 AM – 5:00PM, the deadline for **early registration has been extended to Friday January 13, 2012**. Late registration fees apply after the new deadline. We ask that everyone help foster great interest and participation in this annual conference as it is the major opportunity for the local church to gather together, learn, share, pray and commit itself to serving the Lord. This year's conference focuses on promotion of our diocesan vision, sacred purpose, core values and the means to live these. Bulletin inserts are being sent to the parishes for publication. Standardized announcements are also provided to encourage parishioners during Sunday Liturgies to attend. We count on your support.

In addition, certification programs for Catholics involved in ministries have begun. Pastoral Institute classes will commence in January and February. We ask the support of everyone in these courses. Adult formation and Education strengthens our apostolate. Please invite and encourage others to enroll in these classes.

1 | *DoL/LRC/Chancellor/10January2012*

Adult Religious Education & Pastoral Institute

Reynaldo Montemayor Jr., Ph. L., Director
 1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
 Phone: (956) 727-2140 • Fax: (956) 764-7842



Pastoral Institute
 Spring 2012
 Pastoral Institute
 Spring 2012
 Schedule courses

Our Bishop James Tamayo has requested that all persons serving in ministry in the Church get certified. A catechist or lay minister would take these eight courses for Basic Level 1 Lay Ministry Certification in the next 3 years:
Introduction to the Bible
Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church
The Ten Commandments (CCC III-2)
The Seven Sacraments (CCC II-2)
The Christian's Prayer (CCC IV-2)
Formation for Ecclesial Leaders (Part 1)
Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (USCCB) (mini-course)
Our Hearts Were Burning Within us (USCCB) (mini-course)

Preparing Catholics
 for the New
 Evangelization

COURSES IN ENGLISH

- **PI1912 Introduction to the Bible**
 Dc. Frank Huerta
 Sacred Heart Church- Crystal City-
 Mondays 7-9p- **POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**
- **PI2612 The 10 Commandments (CCC III-2)**
 Mrs. Gloria Rivera
 Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
Carrizo Springs
 Tuesdays 7-9pm. - starting Jan. 17
- **PI1712 Intro. to the Catechism of the Catholic Church**
 Dc. Joel Pérez
San Martín (St. Bernadette's Room)
 Thursdays 7-9pm. - starting Feb 09
- **PI1712 Intro. to the Catechism of the Catholic Church**
 Dr. Miroslava Vargas
San Agustín Cathedral
 Mondays 9:30-11:30 a.m. -Starts Jan. 30
- **PI1912 Introduction to the Bible**
 Mr. David Reuthinger
San Martín- Room St. Bernadette
 Wednesdays 7-9pm. - Starts Feb. 01

Two other classes are pending, one from 4-6p.m. Keep checking website: www.dioceseoflaredo.org
 Inscríbete hoy!!
 Sign up now!!

Preparando Católicos
 para la Nueva
 Evangelización

CURSOS EN ESPAÑOL

- **IP1712 Intro al Catecismo de la Iglesia-Católica**
 Hna. Martha Pérez, MPS
 Immaculate Conception- Asherton
 jueves. 7-9pm. - inicia Enero 19
- **IP1912 Introducción a la Biblia**
 Dc. Frank Huerta
 Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón- Crystal City-
 lunes 7-9p-SE POSPONE HASTE PREVIO AVISO
- **IP1912 Introducción a la Biblia**
 Dc. Hector Martínez
 Sacred Heart- Eagle Pass
 martes 7-9pm. - inicia Enero 17
- **IP1712 Intro. al Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica**
 Dc. Leandro Contreras
 Sacred Heart- Eagle Pass
 jueves 7-9pm—Inicia Enero 19
- **IP2612 Los 10 Mandamientos (CIC III-2)**
 Hna. Sandra Lerma, MPS
 Our Lady of Refuge- Eagle Pass
 viernes. 7-9pm. - inicia Enero 20
- **IP2412 Los 7 Sacramentos**
 Hno. Esteban González, CFJ
San Vicente de Paúl
 martes 7-9pm. - inicia Feb. 07
- **IP1912 Introducción a la Biblia**
 Dc. Joel Pérez
Parroquia Sto. Niño
 martes 7-9pm. - inicia 07 feb.
- **IP1912 Introducción a la Biblia**
 Lic. Miguel Robles
Misión Sagrado Corazón- Peñitas
 lunes 7-9pm - inicia 06 feb.
- **IP1912 Introducción a la Biblia**
 Fr. Salvador Uribe, CSJ
Centro de Retiros Espíritu Santo (Convento de los Hnos. de San Juan-501 Century Dr. South)
 lunes 7-9pm - inicia 16 enero

Nuestro Obispo Jaime Tamayo ha pedido que todos los que sirven en un ministerio en la Iglesia se certifiquen. Un catequista o ministro laico tomaría estos 8 cursos del Nivel Básico Uno en los próximos 3 años:
Introducción a la Biblia
Introducción al Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica
Los Diez Mandamientos (CIC III-2)
Los Siete Sacramentos (CIC II-2)
La Oración Cristiana (CIC IV-2)
Colaboradores en la Viña del Señor (mini-curso)
Sentíamos Arder Nuestros Corazones (USCCB) (mini-curso)
Formación para el Liderazgo Eclesial (Part 1)

Instituto Pastoral
 Primavera 2012
 Instituto Pastoral
 Primavera 2012
 Horario de Cursos

Family Life Ministry
Martha Miller, Director
1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140 • Fax: (956) 764-7842



Pre-Cana Retreats 2012

- March NO PRE-CANA*
- April 14 & 15 English*
- May 5 & 6 Spanish*
- June 2 & 3 English*
- July 7 & 8 English*
- August 4 & 5 Spanish*
- Sept 1 & 2 English*
- October NO PRE-CANA*
- November 3 & 4 English*
- December 1 & 2 English*

Pre-Cana and Natural Family Planning

Pre-Cana is a two-day marriage preparation retreat for engaged couples and designed to inform couples of the spiritual and practical aspects of Catholic Sacramental Marriages. This retreat includes an evangelization component proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ as the central focus of Catholic family life.

Registration for Pre-Cana classes is on-going.

Engaged couples must register and attend at least **FOUR** months prior to their wedding date. The classes fill quickly. Please contact the Family Life Office promptly to register.

Retreat Location:
San Luis Rey Parish,
3502 Sanders Ave., Laredo,
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To register for Pre-Cana or for more information, please contact the office of Family Life at (956) 727-2140.

Marriage Support Program

Programa de apoyo para los Matrimonios

The Marriage Support Program's mission is to enrich marriages by providing spiritual and moral guidance to the sacramental union and focus on its call to Faith and Love.



La misión del Programa De Apoyo a los Matrimonios es de enriquecer la relación de pareja al proveer guía espiritual y moral en su unión sacramental y así enfocar su llamado a la Fe y el Amor.

For more information, or to schedule your appointment contact the Family Life Office (956) 727-2140

Para más información o para hacer su cita hable a la Oficina del Ministerio de la Familia (956) 727-2140.

2012 Annual Laredo Pro-Life Rosary Walk Caminata Anual del Rosario Pro-Vida

Sunday, January 22, 2012 at 2:30 pm
Domingo, 22 de enero, 2012 a partir de las 2:30 pm

Acompáñenos en nuestra caminata de 2 millas, rezando el rosario y culminando con una Hora Santa en la Catedral San Agustín, rogándole a Dios que proteja la vida humana desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural.

Domingo,
22 de Enero, 2012
en la intercepción de las
calles Boston y Santa
Ursula (cerca de la
Funeraria Hernández-
López), a las 2:30 p.m.

Servicio de transportación para el área donde se empezará la caminata estará disponible de la 1:00 p.m. a 1:45 p.m. en la Catedral San Agustín.

Para más información llame a la Oficina del Ministerio a la Familia, Diócesis de Laredo, (956) 727-2140.



Join us as we pray the rosary on a 2 mile walk culminating with a Holy Hour at San Agustín Cathedral, as we implore God to protect human life at all stages from conception to natural death.

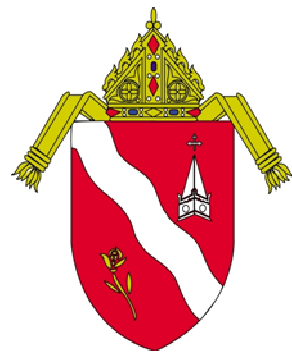
Sunday,
January 22, 2012.
The start site will be
the intersection of
Boston Street and
Santa Ursula (by the
Hernandez-Lopez Fu-
neral Home)

Shuttle service to the start site will be available from 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 pm at San Agustín Cathedral.

For more information call the Family Life Office, Diocese of Laredo, at (956) 727-2140.

Sponsored by:
Diocese of Laredo –Family Life Department-Respect Life Program, the Knights of Columbus
and a generous contribution from the Kenedy Memorial Foundation

Religious Education For Children
Sr. Luz María Mondragón, HMRP, Director
1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140. • Fax: (956) 764-7842

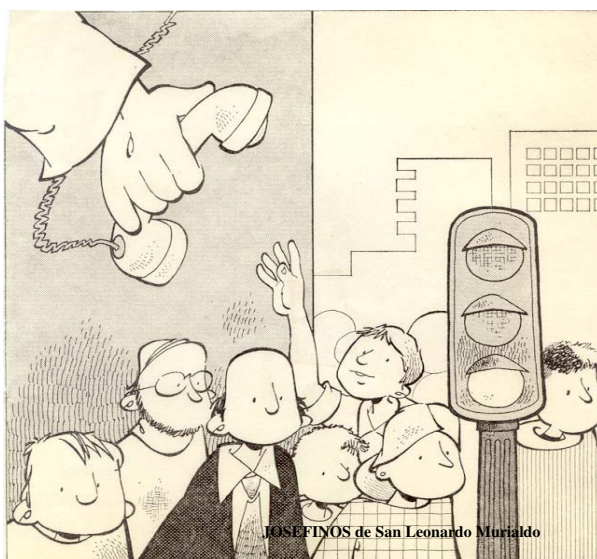


DIOCESE OF LAREDO

The office of Religious Education for Children
and Vocation Office.

INVITE YOU TO
A ONE DAY VOCATIONAL RETREAT

“JESUS IS CALLING YOU”



Have you asked God
what he wants of you?

COME TO THIS ONE
DAY
VOCATIONAL
RETREAT
AND FIND OUT...

ST. AUGUSTINE HIGH SCHOOL
1300 Galveston St., Laredo, Tx.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2012
10– 4 p.m. BRING YOUR “BROWN
BAG” LUNCH

Confirm your attendance via e-mail to
“Sr. Luz” sisterluz@diocesoflaredo.org .
(Girls) (956) 764.7833
"Fr. Iden Bello" frbello@diocesoflaredo.org
(Boys) (956) 568-0463 or 764.7824
by Friday, **February 10**, 2012
A \$5.00 fee will be collected upon arrival at
the workshop site

BOYS AND GIRLS
14-17 years old

Youth Ministry

Christopher Osgood, Director
1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140. • Fax: (956) 764-7842



January 29, 2012

Vocation Retreat
Real Men in Christ

When: 9:00AM – 6:00 PM
Where: Casa Guadalupe
(2302 Corpus Christi St.
Laredo, TX)

January 14, 2012:

World Youth Day Meeting
When: 1:00 – 2:15 PM
Where: Pastoral Center
(1201 Corpus Christi St.)
in Laredo

January 14, 2012:

Ignite Youth Conference
planning meeting:
When: 2:30 – 4:00
Where: Pastoral Center
(1201 Corpus Christi St.)
in Laredo

January 21, 2012:

1 Day Vocation Retreat
When: 1:00 – 4:00 PM
Where: Immaculate
Conception Church
Asherton, Texas

February 1, 2012:

Logo Contest DEADLINE
When: Must be postmarked,
emailed or faxed by
February 1, 2012.
Where: Office of Youth Minis-
try @ 1201 Corpus Christi St.

February 4, 2012:

Central Deanery
Connect
When: 10:00AM –
1:00PM Lunch will be
provided
Where: St. Patrick's
Church
(555 E. Del Mar
Blvd., Laredo)

Catholic Schools office

Rosa Maria Vida, Ph.D., Director
1201 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140. • Fax: (956) 753-5203



Faith. Academics. Service.

Catholic Schools
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2012
January 29th - February 3rd

Human Resources

Melinda Mendoza, Director
1901 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78043
Phone: (956) 727-2140 • Fax : (956) 727-9904



Safe Environment:

Help protect children from child abuse. If you suspect child abuse, please fulfill your moral and civil obligation-Report within **48 hours** to CPS (1-800-252-5400) or local law enforcement. Children count on caring adults for protection. Help children live a life full of the simple joys of being a child. Thank you for protecting God's children.

Technology Department

Luis Martinez, Information
Technology Specialist
1901 Corpus Christi St.
Laredo, TX 78043
Phone: (956) 727-2140
Fax : (956) 523-0828



Consecrated Life



CHRISTMAS/NEW YEARS PARTY

Men and women in consecrated life in the Diocese of Laredo gathered to celebrate Christmas and the New Year at the Senior Center on December 30, 2011



Tribunal Office

Rev. Oliver Angel, J.C.L., Judicial Vicar
 1901 Corpus Christi St. • Laredo, TX 78043
 Phone: (956) 764-7864. • Fax: (956) 712-1343

**DISPENSATIONS/PERMISSIONS FOR MARRIAGES*****Procedures for Marriage outside Diocese of Laredo***

- Review all marriage packets and include all documents properly executed and signed
- Send completed marriage packets for couples preparing for marriage outside the Diocese of Laredo six weeks prior to the scheduled wedding date.
- Include the pastor's letter granting the couple permission to marry outside his parish.
- Include current Baptismal certificates and Affidavits of free status.

It ought to be noted that some (Arch) dioceses will not allow the wedding to take place if the required letters of special permission are missing from the marriage packets.

Adhering to the practices listed above will allow sufficient time to issue the required *Nihil Obstat*. The Tribunal can then provide the letter granting permission for the couple to marry outside the diocese. It will also allow sufficient time for couples to meet any additional requirements of the (Arch) diocese they will marry in.

Requests for permissions/dispensations and Absence of Canonical Form cases should be forwarded to Lupita Luna, Tribunal Office Manager, Diocese of Laredo.

Communications Department

Gregorio M. Lopez, Editor
 1901 Corpus Christi St., Laredo, TX 78043
 Phone: (956) 722-4167—Fax: (956) 722-4464



La Fe, The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Laredo tells stories of faith, hope and love. Do you know someone who has something to share that is uplifting and inspiring? Does your parish need to publicize or promote an event? If you've answered yes to either of these questions, please contact me at glopez@dioceseoflaredo.org or via telephone at (956) 722-4167

Calendar of upcoming events

February 2012

- Jan. 29-Feb3-** Catholic Schools' Week (*Catholic Schools' Office*)
- 2-5-** CCM Acts Retreat (*Campus Ministry*)
- 3-** First Friday Mass, Pastoral Center (*Bishop's Office*)
- 3-** Catholic Schools' Talent Show (*Catholic Schools Office*)
- 4-5 & 11-12-** Catholic Sharing Appeal 2012 Campaign (*Office of Stewardship and Development*)
- 4-5-** Pre-Cana (*Family Life*)
- 11-** Catholic Wedding Jubilee Mass (*Family Life*)
- 14-** Priests' Amistad Luncheon (*Bishop's Office*)
- 16-** Department Heads' meeting (*Bishop's Office*)
- 22-** Ash Wednesday
- 26-** Rite of Election, San Agustín Cathedral, (RCIA Liturgy)
- 28-** SPARC (*Adult Religious Education*)

DIOCESE OF LAREDO

Pastoral Center
1201 Corpus Christi St.
Laredo, TX 78040
Phone: (956) 727-2140 Ext. 7801
Fax: (956) 764-7842
Sr. Raquel De León, MRF
Secretary to the Chancellor
sisterraquel@dioceseoflaredo.org
Visit us online at www.dioceseoflaredo.org

"Building unity within our diocesan community."

La Fe

Welcome to the digital edition of **La Fe Magazine**.

This interactive format allows you to easily read, share with friends and click on websites links to access different resources.

Getting started with your digital edition:



Front Cover: Click to go to the digital magazine front cover.



Page Navigation: Use the arrow buttons to turn to the next and previous page. Type a particular page into the box or flip the page from any corner.



Pointer Icon: Click to zoom in for a closer look, and zoom out again



Contents: Show the table of contents to quickly access a particular article.



Search: Use the search box or click on the search icon to find any word or phrase.



Share With Friends: E-mail a link to an article or issue to a friend.



Image Clipping: Crop part of the magazine and send to a friend.



Print: You may choose for print one page or all magazine.



Download: If you want you can download the magazine in a PDF format.

We hope you enjoy this digital edition! If you have questions or suggestions for additional features, please let us know at info@ezwsisolutions.com

E-publication Developed and Maintained

Work Life: Competing in the workplace — how do we refrain from judging others?

May/June 2007

www.LaFeMagazine.com

LaFe

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LAREDO

Dear Fr. Joe:
What's the difference
between mortal and
venial sin?

from the bishop

**The rainbow
promise**

marriage matters

He says: When
we're on vacation,
I want to see all
the sights.

She says: I want to
sit on the beach.

**What do
they do?**

Rebuilding a community

A look into the lives affected by the Eagle Pass Tornado

A New Way...A Better Way

The
Paul Young
Family Way

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9-8 M-F 12-6 Sunday



LaFe

The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Laredo

Most Reverend James A. Tamayo, DD
PUBLISHER

Bennett McBride
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

May/June 2007 • Volume 5: Issue 3

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Cover Story
After the devastating loss of life and materials in Eagle Pass, a community unites.

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inside what you'll get out of this issue

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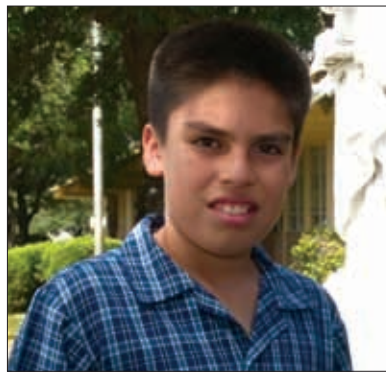
culture

A snapshot of new life

► a gift to celebrate the birth of a baby
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– Goyo López



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Catholic Cowboy – This young community leader looks to his faith for guidance.

– Goyo López



I've discovered in my years of writing and attending writing workshops that sharing personal experiences, personal anecdotes and personal stories are what make a column most interesting and impressionable. In this, our fourth issue of the 2007, we focus on modesty as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Obviously, there are many ways in which we can define modesty.

I've chosen a personable manner in which to talk about modesty. My parents, Gregorio and Consuelo, serve as personifications of modesty in my life.

No one will disagree with that description of my mother, but some will about my father. Then again, they don't know him as I do.

My mother, just like yours, was the one always pushing for all of us to attend church, receive our sacraments and attend Catholic schools. Throughout her life of public service as a music teacher – 40-years at LISD – and her full-time career of motherhood, she has always made time to give to the church.

As a good steward of her time, talent and treasure, she has given many years of her life to her parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Laredo by volunteering as a CCD teacher, as a Secret Angel (mentoring teens) and as a choir director and member as well as in many other capacities.

So when people ask me why I do what I do, I merely reply that they look no further than my models of modesty.

In addition to this, she has also spent numerous hours in various capacities, including president more than once, of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Queen Isabella Court.

Then, there's her beloved Casa de Misericordia. As a

founding board member for this shelter for battered women and their children, she has assisted Sister Rosemary Welch in launching a second phase of Casa de Misericordia through the Lamar Bruni Vergara Educational Center that provides opportunities for the women to train and hone their skills to enter the workforce.

So when people ask me why I do what I do, I merely reply that they look no further than my models of modesty.

– Gregorio "Goyo" López is editor of *La Fe*, the magazine of the Diocese of Laredo.



Yo he descubierto durante mis años de escribir y de asistir a talleres de trabajo sobre comunicación escrita que, al compartir las experiencias, las anécdotas y las historietas personales, es lo que hace que las columnas que escribimos sean más interesantes e impresionables. En esta, nuestra cuarta edición del 2007, nuestro enfoque es sobre la modestia, como uno de los frutos del Espíritu Santo.

Obviamente, existen muchas maneras en que podemos definir la modestia.

Yo he escogido una manera personal para hablar sobre la modestia.

Mis padres, Gregorio y Consuelo, sirven como personificaciones de modestia durante mi vida.

Nadie estará en desacuerdo con esa descripción de mi madre, pero algunos si lo estarán en cuanto a mi padre.

Pero, desde luego, ellos no lo conocen como yo lo conozco.

Mi madre, tal como la de ustedes, fue la que siempre nos insistía para que todos asistiéramos a la iglesia, recibiéramos los sacramentos y estudiáramos en escuelas Católicas. Durante toda su vida, dedicada a servicio público como profesora de música – 40 años en LISD – y su carrera de tiempo completo como madre, siempre ha encontrado tiempo para brindarle a la iglesia.

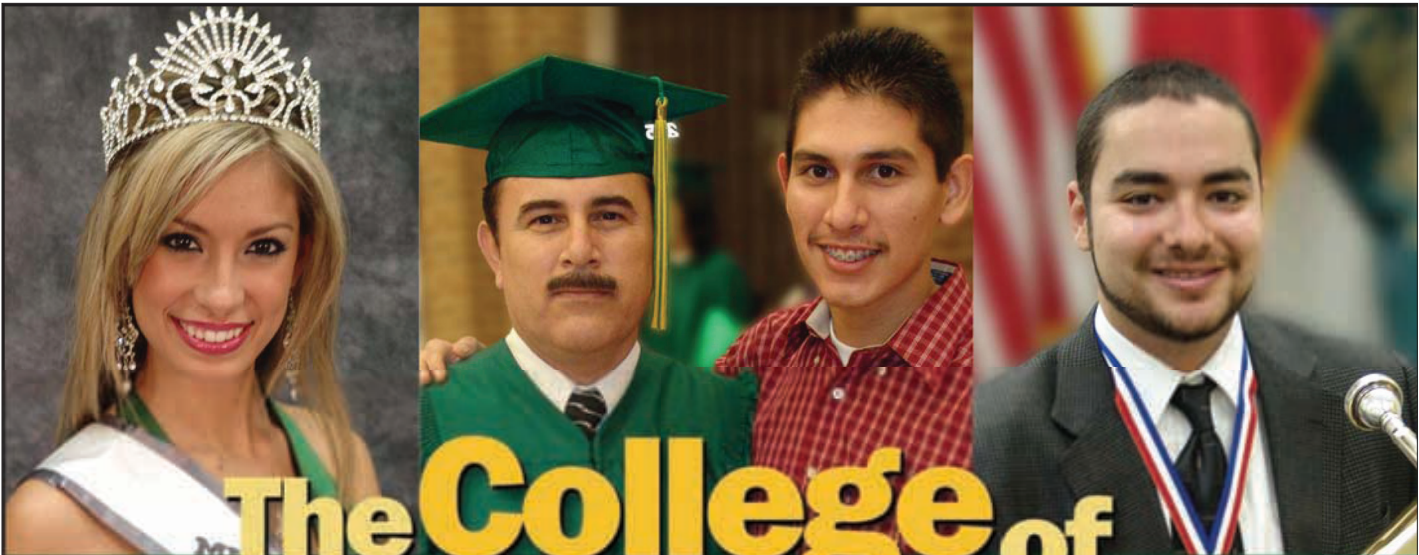
Como buena administradora de su tiempo, talento y tesoro, ha dado mucho años de su vida a su parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Laredo, al ser voluntariamente maestra de CCD, como Ángel Secreto (monitora de adolescentes) y como miembro y Directora del Coro.

Además de esto, también ha dedicado muchas horas en varias capacidades, incluyendo ser Presidente en más de una ocasión, de la Hijas Católicas de America, Corte de la Reina Isabela.

Luego, está su queridísima Casa de Misericordia. Como miembro fundadora del Consejo de este albergue para mujeres maltratadas y sus hijos, ha ayudado a Sor Rosemary Welch en la inauguración de una segunda fase de Casa de Misericordia mediante el Centro de Educación Lamar Bruni Vergara, que provee oportunidades a las mujeres para entrenar y mejorar sus habilidades para ingresar a fuentes de trabajo.

Y hace todo esto sin buscar ni atraer la atención hacia ella misma.

Así que cuando la gente me pregunta que por qué hago lo que hago, simplemente les contesto que no tienen que ver más allá de mis modelos y ejemplos de modestia.



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Dear Fr. Joe

What's the difference between mortal and venial sins

OK, first we need to establish the fact that there are a lot of different types of sin. The Bible, as well as our catechism, is filled with examples of how we sin (as is television!) The catechism sums it all up nicely in section 1853:

►► Sins can be distinguished according to their objects, as can every human act; or according to the virtues they oppose, by excess or defect; or according to the commandments they violate. They can also be classed according to whether they concern God, neighbor, or oneself; they can be divided into spiritual and carnal sins, or again as sins in thought, word, deed, or omission. The root of sin is in the heart of man, in his free will, according to the teaching of the Lord: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man." But in the heart also resides charity, the source of the good and pure works, which sin wounds.

That's a pretty helpful summary. Through it, we see that sin can be classified by what it attacks and how and why it attacks the good. We can sin by doing something; we can sin by not doing something. The catechism makes clear that our hearts are the problem, as is our abuse of free will. The cool thing is, and this is classic God, the heart is a place where hope is – as Jesus, who redeemed us, lives there.

Now, in general, all sins fall into one of two categories: mortal and venial. What is the difference? The difference tends to be manifested most clearly in the consequences of our actions (or inaction!).

When we commit a mortal sin, we damage our soul in a very specific way: We wound our hearts' ability to repent and receive mercy. The damage we do is real and intense, and the catechism tells us that it takes a special initiative of mercy on God's part to heal us. (1856)

So, what are the mortal sins? Well, it's easier to describe how a mortal sin is committed than what specific sins are mortal. Here is an easy way to remember it:

C.I.A.

That acronym works like this:

C – Circumstance: We have to be completely free to choose to sin or not.

I – Intent: We have to know that it is a sin, be free to not do it and do it anyway.



►► One morning, a certain American senator instructed his attorney to notify him as soon as a judgment was handed down in a case concerning his involvement in an influence-peddling scheme. Early that afternoon, he received a fax: "JUSTICE HAS PREVAILED. "The Senator immediately faxed back: "APPEAL AT ONCE!"

A – Action: The sin needs to be of a serious matter.

If we commit a sin and all three of these things are simultaneously true, then we have committed a mortal sin. The consequences are that we should not receive Communion without either going to confession or making sure that we are going to go to confession as soon as is possible.

So, then, what is venial sin? Venial sin is, simply, all the rest. Venial sins are those sins that damage our hearts and souls, but still allow God's love to live and work within us. The danger of venial sins is that they are a choice we make toward something less than God and what he wants for us. According to the catechism, venial sins also have the ability to

condition us to commit a mortal sin. You know how it goes, the more we sin, the more open we are to sinning and the more difficult it is to recognize the sin and repent.

I hope this is helpful. The key to all of this is to remember the power and consistency of God's mercy. There is nothing we can do that God can't forgive; we need to remember to ask.

Enjoy another day in God's presence. – Father Joseph Krupp

Send your questions to:
"In the Know with Fr. Joe"

LaFe
1901 Corpus Christi
Laredo, TX 78043

Or: JoelInBlack@priest.com

¿Cuál es la diferencia entre el pecado mortal y el venial?

Buena pregunta! Vamos a con-
testarla inmediatamente:
Primero tenemos que
establecer el hecho de que
existen muchos tipos diferentes de
pecado. La Biblia, así como nuestro
catequismo, están llenos de ejemplos
de pecados (¡y también la televisión!) El
catequismo sintetiza esto muy bien en la
sección 1853:

►► Se pueden distinguir los pecados según su objeto, como en todo acto humano, o según las virtudes a las que se oponen, por exceso o por defecto, o según los mandamientos que quebrantan. Se los puede agrupar también según que se refieran a Dios, al prójimo o a sí mismo; se los puede dividir en pecados espirituales y carnales, o también en pecados de pensamiento, palabra, acción u omisión. La raíz del pecado está en el corazón del hombre, en su libre voluntad, según la enseñanza del Señor: "De dentro del corazón salen las intenciones malas, asesinatos, adulterios, fornicaciones, robos, falsos testimonios, injurias. Esto es lo que hace impuro al hombre." En el corazón reside también la caridad, principio de las obras buenas y puras, a las que hiere el pecado.

Este es un resumen bien útil. A través de él podemos ver que el pecado puede ser clasificado según a lo que ataque, cómo y por qué ataca a lo bueno. Podemos pecar al hacer algo o al no hacer algo. El catequismo deja claro que nuestro corazón es el problema, así como también lo es el abuso de nuestra libre voluntad. Lo bueno es, y esto es típico de Dios, que el corazón es el lugar donde está la esperanza; porque Jesús, que nos redimió, vive allí.

En general, todos los pecados se pueden poner en una de estas dos categorías: mortal y venial. ¿Cuál es la diferencia? La diferencia tiende a manifestarse más claramente en las consecuencias de nuestras acciones (¡o inacción!).

Cuando cometemos un pecado mortal dañamos nuestra alma de una manera muy específica: herimos la capacidad de nuestro corazón de arrepentirse y de recibir misericordia. El daño que causamos es real e intenso, y el catequismo nos dice que se

►► Una mañana un cierto senador americano le dio instrucciones a su abogado para que le notificara tan pronto como la sentencia fuera dictada en relación con el caso concerniente a la participación del senador en un plan de tráfico de influencia. Esa tarde, temprano, el senador recibió un fax: "PREVALECIÓ LA JUSTICIA". El inmediatamente envió otro fax: "¡APELE INMEDIATAMENTE!"

necesita que Dios tome una iniciativa especial de misericordia para sanarnos. (1856)

Así que, ¿cuáles son los pecados mortales? Es más fácil describir la manera en que se cometen los pecados mortales que decir qué pecados específicos son los mortales. Esta es una forma fácil de recordarlo: **C.I.A.**

La sigla significa lo siguiente:

C. - Circunstancias: Tenemos que estar completamente libres para elegir pecar o no.

I. - Intención: Tenemos que estar conscientes de que es un pecado, estar libres para cometerlo y cometerlo de todos modos.

A. - Acción: El pecado tiene que ser de naturaleza grave.

Si cometemos un pecado y estas tres cosas ocurren simultáneamente, entonces hemos cometido un pecado mortal. Sus consecuencias son que no debemos tomar la Comunión sin primero ir a confesarnos o asegurarnos de que vamos a ir a confesarnos lo antes posible.

¿Qué es un pecado venial, entonces? Los pecados veniales son simplemente todos los otros pecados. Los pecados veniales son los que dañan nuestras almas y corazones, pero que todavía permiten que el amor de Dios viva y trabaje dentro de nosotros. El peligro está en que el pecado venial es una elección que hacemos por algo que es menos que Dios y menos que lo que él quiere para nosotros. De acuerdo con el catequismo, estos pecados tienen la capacidad de condicionarnos a cometer un pecado mortal. Ustedes ya saben cómo es la cosa, cuanto más pequeños, más expuestos quedamos a cometer más pecados y más nos cuesta reconocer el pecado y arrepentirnos.

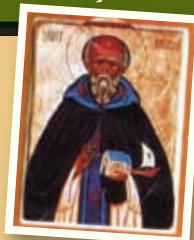
Espero que esto les resulte útil; la clave de todo esto está en recordar el poder y uniformidad de la misericordia de Dios. No existe ninguna acción que Dios no pueda perdonar; recordemos que tenemos que pedir.

Disfruten de otro día en la presencia de Dios.

Who's the real patron saint of travelers?

No, St. Christopher is a myth

Saint Brendan of Clonfert
Birthplace: Ireland
Feast Day: May 16



►► **Claim to fame:** One of the great leaders of Irish Christianity, Brendan was born in Ireland around 464. He was raised by St. Ita, after which he completed his education with the bishop of Kerry. As St. Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland, monastery life became a popular vocation, and Brendan became a monk. He gathered his own followers and settled as abbot in his own community. It is said that an angel appeared to give Brendan his order's rules. Each day the monks prayed for several hours, observed long periods of silence, studied, ate just enough to survive and slept on cold floors in their cells. The monks also painstakingly copied manuscripts of Greek and Roman literature to create exquisite illuminated manuscripts.

►► **Best quote:** A popular legend called *The Voyage of St. Brendan* tells how Brendan and a group of monks traveled in a wooden boat looking for the paradise of Adam and Eve. Brendan had enough supplies for 12 monks, but two more begged to go along. Brendan said, "Ye may sail with me, but one of you will go to perdition ere you return." Near the end of the journey, one of them leapt overboard to escape a volcano, fulfilling Brendan's prophecy.

►► **What made him a saint:** Brendan became a missionary, traveling through Ireland to Europe, and even across the Atlantic. The monasteries he established became vital centers of art and learning. The most important one Brendan founded was Clonfert in Ireland, where as many as 3,000 monks may have lived. For many centuries, sailors have prayed to St. Brendan for protection, hoping that some day they would find the promised land — St. Brendan's Isle. But Brendan's true legacy lies in his tireless zeal, which introduced God's teaching to many.

►► **Prayer:** *Dear Lord, as Brendan took risks to proclaim your word, help us to be risk-takers in our own lives for you. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.* —Jan Rynearson

God added: This is the sign that I am giving for all ages to come, of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you. I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. – Genesis 9:12-14

On the Tuesday before Good Shepherd Sunday, a violent and unprecedented tornado struck this humble community as well as our brothers and sisters across the Rio Grande in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico.

That evening, as gusting winds whipped through what most journalists mistakenly call Rosita Valley neighborhood, Rev. James Loiacono, pastor of Our Lady of Refuge in Eagle Pass, kept me apprised of this devastating development.

My instruction to Father Loiacono was to keep me informed of the situation no matter the time of night. The second request I didn't have to convey. Father Loiacono sprang into action immediately, casting aside any worries for his personal safety, and coming to the aid of the hundreds of victims seeking medical attention at Fort Duncan Medical Center in Eagle Pass as well the masses huddled at the different shelters. He consoled the many who were injured and he comforted the medical staff who themselves were traumatized by the degree of injuries they were witnessing.

The following morning, as shepherd of this diocese, I traveled to Eagle Pass, first visiting the ravaged area. I could not believe what I was witnessing. An Eagle Pass police officer escorted me through the site, explaining the pattern that the tornado took. *The San Antonio Express-News* described the area as a war zone, and it did look like that.

Hearing about the loss of life and seeing the devastation became emotionally overwhelming.

However, equally comforting was witnessing the response of hundreds of people helping to restore order and provide relief.

I followed this visit by concelebrating a special Mass at Our Lady of Refuge Church with all the Eagle Pass priests and with a standing-room-only congregation from all our Catholic churches and missions in the area.

During my homily, I spoke of what I had witnessed firsthand – the coming together of brothers and sisters in Christ. That fraternal action brought forth by our faith generates hope. And it is hope that will help us rebuild the *Loma Linda* neighborhood. It is that hope that will encourage all people of faith and goodwill to give what they can to help rebuild this section of our diocese.

It is the same hope that everyone saw with a sign in the sky reminiscent of Scripture – the rainbow. The rainbow that appeared in Eagle Pass just moments after the tornado was a sign that God was present to his people.

The rainbow is a reminder not to lose hope because God always responds to our needs *Todo Con Amor!*

Dios agregó: Pondré mi arco en las nubes, y será la señal de la alianza entre mi y la tierra. Y cuando yo cubriere el cielo de nubes, aparecerá mi arco en ellas y me acordaré de la alianza con vosotros. – Génesis 9: 12-14

En el martes antes del Domingo del Buen Pastor, un tornado violento y sin precedente le pegó a esta humilde comunidad, así como a nuestros hermanos y hermanas del otro lado del Río Grande en Piedras Negras, Coahuila, México.

Esa tarde, al pasar violentos vientos a través de lo que la mayoría de los periodistas erróneamente llamaban la vecindad del Valle de Rosita, el Rev. James Loiacono, párroco de Nuestra Señora del Refugio en Eagle Pass, me mantuvo al corriente de este desarrollo devastador.

Mis instrucciones a Fr. Loiacono eran de mantenerme informado de la situación, no importando la hora de la noche. La segunda petición no la tuve que expresar. Fr. Loiacono entró en acción inmediatamente, poniendo a un lado cualesquier preocupaciones de su seguridad personal y yendo a la ayuda de los cientos de víctimas que requerían atención médica en el Centro Médico de Fort Duncan en Eagle Pass, así como a las cantidades de personas acurrucados en diferentes albergues. Consoló a muchos de los que estaban lastimados y confortó al personal médico, quienes ellos mismos estaban traumatizados por la cantidad de lastimaduras de las que eran testigos.

La mañana siguiente, como pastor de esta diócesis, viaje a Eagle Pass, primeramente visitando el área desbastada. No podía creer lo que estaba viendo. Un Oficial de Policía de Eagle Pass me acompañó a través de sitio explicando el rumbo que tomó el tornado. El periódico *The San Antonio Express-News* describió el área como una zona de guerra, y eso es lo que parecía.

Al escuchar lo de la pérdida de vidas y viendo la devastación se volvió emocionalmente estremecedor.

Sin embargo, igualmente tranquilizante fue ser testigo de la respuesta que cientos de personas ayudando a restaurar el orden y proveer alivio.

Después de esta visita fui a concelebrar una Misa especial en la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora del Refugio, con todos los sacerdotes de Eagle Pass y con una congregación de gente, sólo de pie, de todas nuestras Iglesias Católicas y Misiones en esa área.

Durante mi homilia, hablé de lo que había presenciado personalmente – la reunión de hermanos y hermanas en Cristo. La acción fraternal que surgió por la esperanza que es generada por nuestra fe. Y es la esperanza que nos ayudará a reconstruir la vecindad de *Loma Linda*. Es esa la esperanza que animará a toda la gente de fe y buena voluntad, a dar lo que pueden para ayudar a reconstruir esta sección de nuestra diócesis.

Y en esta misma esperanza, que todos vimos como un signo en el cielo recordado en las escrituras – el arco iris. El arco iris que apareció en Eagle Pass, sólo momentos después del tornado, fue una señal de que Dios estaba presente con Su pueblo.

El arco iris es un recordatorio de no perder la esperanza, porque Dios siempre responde a nuestras necesidades: *¡Todo Con Amor!*



Un hombre fuerte para apoyarse en un momento difícil.

Estimado Caballero Supremo:

Cuando mi esposo se hizo Caballero de Colón, nos presentaron a nuestro agente de seguros, Mike Walter, e inmediatamente nos dimos cuenta que Mike se ocupaba de su carrera como si fuera un "ministerio" en vez de un cargo de ventas. Nunca me imagine en ese entonces lo que ese ministerio habría de significar para mí.

Durante nuestras reuniones, no fuimos fáciles de persuadir. Mike nunca se dio por vencido y siempre buscó la forma como demostrarnos que la necesidad existía. Nos ayudó hasta que por fin pudimos comprender el valor de contar con la protección de un seguro de vida.

Mi esposo murió repentinamente el otoño pasado. Su muerte fue un golpe para todos nosotros. Aunque desde el punto de vista médico no debería haber sucedido, me imagino que Dios pensó que había cumplido con su labor en esta tierra. Pude contar con Mike de inmediato. Estuvo en el velorio, asistió al funeral y permaneció a mi lado para ayudarme en cuanto fuera posible. Lloré por mi esposo igual que yo.

En este mundo en donde todos se preocupan sólo de las ganancias, presencie lo que los Caballeros son verdaderamente capaces de hacer. Pude contar con ellos cuando más lo necesité.

— Amber Díaz*



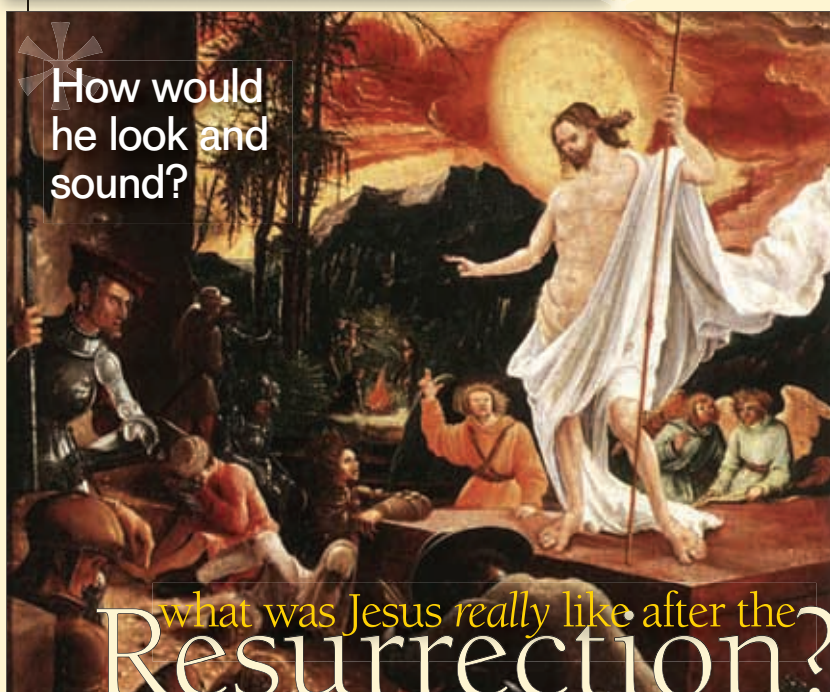
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How would he look and sound?

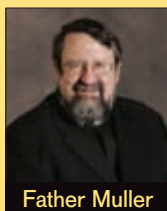
what was Jesus *really* like after the Resurrection?

This year, *La Fe* is exploring Christology – the study of Jesus Christ. We asked several eminent seminary professors some questions about Jesus. Their answers are enlightening and thought-provoking.

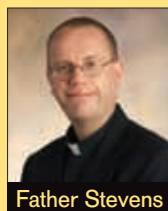
Meet the professors



Father Acklin



Father Muller



Father Stevens

- ▶ **Father Thomas Acklin** is a monk of St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pa. He is a graduate of Duquesne University, St. Vincent Seminary, The Catholic University of Louvain and Pittsburgh Psychoanalytic Institute.
- ▶ **Father Earl Muller** is The Bishop Kevin M. Britt Professor of Theology/Christology at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit. He formerly taught at Marquette University in Wisconsin.
- ▶ **Father Gladstone Stevens** is on the faculty of St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore.

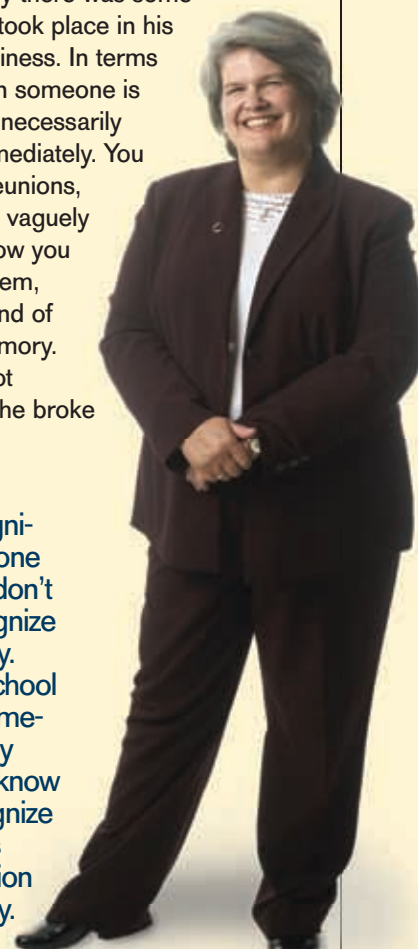
FAITH: If we met Jesus the moment after the Resurrection, how would he look and sound? Could we touch him? Why did so many of his friends not recognize him?

Father Acklin: All we have to go by are the Gospel accounts. The skepticism of the last several centuries has affected us overmuch. I am not a literalist or fundamentalist in a negative sense, but we go too far if we become very skeptical about what really happened. The historical elements are very important. But the most important element is faith – it is not so much proving what “really happened” as understanding

that the Resurrection was an event that took place in time, yet reaches into every moment of time and beyond time. I think the appearance of the risen Lord – the variety of the Gospel accounts – is explained by the subjectivity of the recipients. Jesus had already gone beyond space and time. He had already descended into hell and come back into space and time in some ways. Yet, Jesus invites people to touch him – to eat meals with him. The tendency to explain away the bodily resurrection diminishes our own bodily significance – we are going to live exactly as Jesus: in transformed bodies. As Paul says, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our faith is in vain.

Father Muller: According to the Gospel accounts, you could touch Jesus after the Resurrection. When he tells Mary not to do so, it's cryptic – he is letting her know that their relationship has changed. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, it could have given them the impression that their relationship was going to go back to what it had been before the crucifixion. Jesus is saying that isn't the case – their relationships will be transformed. In terms of his appearance, we don't have a clear idea of the properties of a resurrected body. Jesus could appear behind locked doors; clearly there was some sort of change that took place in his relationship to bodiliness. In terms of recognition, when someone is changed, you don't necessarily recognize them immediately. You go to high-school reunions, and someone looks vaguely familiar and you know you should recognize them, but it takes some kind of action to jar the memory. And so some did not recognize him until he broke bread with them.

In terms of recognition, when someone is changed, you don't necessarily recognize them immediately. You go to high-school reunions, and someone looks vaguely familiar and you know you should recognize them, but it takes some kind of action to jar the memory.



Father Stevens: It is interesting how reticent the Gospels are about providing a physical description. There are two texts about how we recognize him after the Resurrection. One is Paul's conversion story, where Jesus says, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" In this, Jesus makes no distinction between himself and his community. This is how we are to recognize him – it is in the lowly that we find Christ. (Mt 25) His followers also recognized him in the breaking of the bread – at that moment, they said, "Our hearts were burning within us." The recognition makes us more, bigger. Read the *Magnificat* – Mary's heart is enlarged, increased. We are made bigger because the Word is made present – whenever our hearts burn, that's the recognition.

– Elizabeth Solsburg



what does that symbol mean?

Alpha and Omega

▶▶ **Jesus is called the alpha and omega in the Book of Revelation.** Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and omega the last. So, this symbol indicates that Jesus is the beginning and end – the all.

La Fe: ¿Si nos encontráramos con Jesús el momento después de su Resurrección, cuál sería su apariencia física y su voz? ¿Podríamos tocarlo? ¿Por qué es que muchos de sus amigos no lo reconocieron?

Padre Acklin: Lo único que tenemos para guiarnos son las descripciones del Evangelio. El escepticismo de los últimos siglos nos ha afectado en exceso. Yo no soy literalista o fundamentalista en un sentido negativo, pero si nos volvemos muy escépticos, nos alejamos mucho de lo que realmente sucedió. Los elementos históricos son muy importantes. Pero el elemento más importante es la fe - no se trata tanto de proporcionar lo que "realmente sucedió" sino de entender que la Resurrección fue Cristo entrando en lo que realmente existía allí. Pienso que la apariencia del Señor resucitado - la variedad de las descripciones del Evangelio - se explican por la subjetividad de los espectadores. Jesús ya había estado más allá del tiempo y espacio. Ya había descendido al infierno y había vuelto al tiempo y espacio de alguna manera. Y todavía, Jesús invita a las personas a que lo toquen - a que coman con él. La tendencia a buscar una explicación convincente de la resurrección del cuerpo disminuye nuestra propia relevancia corporal - nosotros vamos a vivir exactamente como Jesús: en cuerpos transformados. Como dice Pablo, si Jesús no se levantó de los muertos, entonces nuestra fe es en vano.

Padre Muller: De acuerdo a las descripciones del Evangelio, luego de la resurrección se podía tocar a Jesús. Cuando él le dice a Maria que no lo toque, el pedido tiene un sentido criptico - él le está haciendo saber que la relación entre ellos ha cambiado. Cuando Jesús se les apareció a los discípulos, podría haberles dejado la impresión de que su relación con ellos iba a volver a ser la que había sido antes de la crucifixión. Jesús les está diciendo que ese no es el caso - la relación entre ellos será transformada. En cuanto a su apariencia física, no tenemos una idea clara de las propiedades de un cuerpo resurrecto. Jesús puede aparecerse aún cuando las puertas están cerradas; claramente ha ocurrido algún tipo de cambio en su relación con la corporalidad. En cuanto al reconocimiento de Jesús; cuando

una persona cambia, esa persona no es necesariamente reconocida inmediatamente. Vamos a las reuniones de exalumnos y alguien nos parece vagamente familiar y sabemos que tenemos que conocerlo, pero tenemos que hacer algún tipo de esfuerzo para refrescar la memoria. Y es de esta manera que algunos no lo reconocieron hasta que partió el pan con ellos.

¿Cómo era Jesús después de la resurrección?

Padre Stevens: Es interesante que los Evangelios se muestren reticentes a suministrar una descripción física. Hay dos textos concernientes a la forma en que lo reconoceremos luego de la Resurrección. Uno es la historia de la conversión de Pablo, donde Jesús dice, "Saulo, Saulo, por qué me persigues?" Con respecto a esto, Jesús no hace ninguna distinción entre él mismo y su comunidad. Es así como debemos reconocerlo - es en los humildes que encontramos a Cristo. (Mateo 25) Sus seguidores también lo reconocieron cuando partió el pan - en ese momento, ellos dijeron, "Nuestros corazones ardían en nosotros." El reconocimiento nos expande. Lean el *Magnificat* - el corazón de Maria crece y se expande. Nos agrandamos porque la Palabra está presente - siempre que nuestros corazones ardan, allí está el reconocimiento.

¿Que significa?



Alfa y Omega

▶▶ **Jesús es llamado el alfa y omega en el Libro del Apocalipsis.** Alfa es la primera letra del alfabeto griego y omega es la última. Así que este símbolo indica que Jesús es el principio y el fin - de todo.



Rebuilding a COMMUNITY

A look into the lives affected by the Eagle Pass Tornado



It was the phone call that Eagle Pass Police Officer Joe de la Garza hoped he would never get – family in distress.

It was his family.

Big Joe, as he's known in this close-knit community, received a call on his personal cellular phone from his nephew, Cesar Villa, II. However, before Cesar could fully explain to Big Joe what was happening, the call was cut off. Officer de la Garza's battery had died.

Fue la llamada telefónica de Eagle Pass que el Oficial de Policía Joe de la Garza nunca esperaba recibir – familia en angustia.

Era su familia.

Big Joe, como se le conoce en esta hermanada comunidad, recibió una llamada en su propio teléfono celular de su sobrino Cesar Villa, II. Sin embargo, antes de que Cesar pudiera explicar completamente a Big Joe lo que estaba sucediendo, la llamada se cortó. La batería del Oficial de la Garza se había muerto.

ity



After following protocol and seeking permission, Big Joe sped to the *Loma Linda Colonia* – what most journalists have renamed Rosita Valley neighborhood – to find Cesar and his family.

When Big Joe pulled up to the colonia, Cesar was standing in the side of the road, bloodied.

Después de seguir el protocolo y buscando el permiso, Big Joe se fue rápidamente a la *Colonia Loma Linda* – lo que la mayoría de los periodistas habían renombrado la vecindad de Valle Rosita – para encontrar a Cesar y su familia.

Cuando Big Joe llegó a la colonia, Cesar estaba parado a un lado del camino todo sangrado.



“As they sat in the car, terrified – the children in their car seats and my nephew in the front with his wife – a big log came crashing through the front windshield.”

“I opened the door and he started trying to explain to me that there was a tornado and I yelled at him to be quiet and to get in the car,” explained Officer de la Garza.

Cesar went on to explain that he was with his entire family – wife and two children, ages 2 and 4 – when the tornado blew in. They were trying to reach Rosita Valley Elementary School because they thought it would be safe.

They were wrong. Fortunately for the Villa family, they could not beat the tornado to the school. Instead, they remained in the car because they had no other choice.

“I consider what happened next to be a miracle,” said Officer de la Garza, one of the first responders on the scene. “As they sat in the car, terrified – the children in their car seats and my nephew in the front with his wife – a big log came crashing through the front windshield.”

Just like in medieval times where knights jostled, Mother Nature’s lance pierced the front windshield, entering at the angle where the rearview mirror is affixed. Then, something even more bizarre occurred.

“They are in shock because of everything that is happening and because this big log is dividing their car and no one is hurt,” said Officer de la Garza. “Then, just as it came in, the tornado sucked it out of the car and this is when the pole hit some of them on the side of the head. Then it was gone. Just like that and with no serious injuries.”

Not everyone was as fortunate.



“Abri la puerta y él comenzó tratando de explicarme de que había un tornado y yo le grité que se quedara callado y que se metiera al carro,” explicó el Oficial de la Garza.

Cesar siguió explicando que él estaba con su familia entera – esposa y dos hijos de 2 y 4 años – cuando llegó el tornado y que estaban tratando de llegar a la Escuela Primaria de Valle Rosita porque pensaron que sería lugar seguro.

Estaban equivocados. Afortunadamente para la familia Villa, no pudieron ganarle al tornado la llegada a la escuela. En vez, se quedaron en el carro porque pensaban que no tenían otra alternativa.

“Yo considero que lo que sucedió después era un milagro,” dijo el Oficial de la Garza, uno de los que primero respondieron al escenario. “Al estar sentados en el carro, con terror, los hijos en sus asientos especiales y mi sobrino en frente con su esposa, un enorme palo de madera entro rompiendo en para brisas de enfrente.”

Tal como en los tiempos cuando los Caballeros se peleaban a caballo, con lanzas, la lanza de la Madre Naturaleza rompió él para brisas entrando por un ángulo donde está sujeto el espejo revisor. Entonces algo aún más sorprendente ocurrió.

“Están en un estado de choque por todo lo que está sucediendo y porque este pedazo de madera está dividiendo su carro y nadie está lastimado,” dice el Oficial de la Garza, “y entonces justamente cuando entró el tornado succionó el pedazo de madera y lo sacó del carro, y esto fue cuando la madera les raspó a algunos de ellos en la cabeza. Y luego desapareció. Así nada más y sin dejar lastimaduras serias.”

No toda la gente es tan afortunada,

El jueves, el primer día en que los residentes fueron permitidos a regresar para asesorar los daños a sus propiedades y salvar algunos artículos, Big Joe escuchó al Obispo Jaime A. Tamayo y a Rev. Diacono Leandro Contreras, Jr., por Loma Linda.

Al ir el Diacono Contreras, quien encabeza el comité de Fe para Comunidades de Alcance Mayor, y el Obispo Tamayo por primera vez a asesorar los daños a la Escuela de Valle Rosita, una mujer anciana, sentada en el lado de pasajeros de una camioneta pick up, se paró y le

On Thursday, the first day that residents were allowed back in to assess the damage to their property and to salvage any items, Big Joe escorted Bishop James A. Tamayo and Rev. Deacon Leandro Contreras, Jr. through *Loma Linda*.

As Deacon Contreras, who leads the Faith Communities Outreach committee, and Bishop Tamayo first stopped to assess the damage to Rosita Valley Elementary, an elderly woman riding on the passenger side of a pick-up truck stopped and thanked the bishop for being present.

Two Texas State University students followed suit, stopping to thank the bishop for his support. They explained that were former students of Rosita Valley and had driven down to check on their family.

Bishop Tamayo's presence among the hundreds of law enforcement, fire fighting, military and other emergency personnel was emotionally comforting.

One soldier stopped her humvee to take a picture of the bishop.

As they made their way through the rummage, they encountered Maria Elena Gonzalez, who lost her entire home to the tornado.

More importantly, she lost her mother, Aurora T. López, to the storm.

"The neighbors found her over here," Gonzalez explained tearfully to Bishop Tamayo as she pointed in a southwesterly direction from her property. "The wind lifted her and threw her over here by the road."

Mrs. Lopez had been thrown about 60-feet.

Cornelio Romo, who walks with the assistance of a crutch, was more optimistic in his outlook as he watched his family pick up the pieces.

"At least we're all alive. We give thanks for that," Romo said with a smile. "The other stuff can be replaced. I don't

know how we're going to do that, but I am grateful that we're all O.K."

Others were just as grateful and welcomed the opportunity to pause and pray with Bishop Tamayo and Deacon Contreras.

Upon seeing Bishop Tamayo, Maria Gua-

dio las gracias al Obispo por estar presente.

Dos estudiantes de la Universidad de Texas State hicieron lo mismo deteniéndose para darle gracias al Obispo por su apoyo. Ellos le explicaron que eran previos estudiantes de Valle Rosita y que habían venido manejando para ver a su familia.

La presencia del Obispo Tamayo entre cientos de personal de emergencias, policiaos, bomberos, militares y otras personalidades, fue emocionalmente agradable.

Una mujer militar detuvo su camioneta para tomar una fotografia del Obispo.

Y al ir pasando por todos los daños se encontraron con Maria Elena Gonzalez, quien perdió su hogar completo en el tornado.

Y lo peor, es que perdió a su madre, Aurora T. López durante la tormenta.

"Los vecinos la encontraron por aqui," explicó Gonzalez llorando ante el Obispo Tamayo al apuntar su dedo en una dirección suroeste de su propiedad. "El

aire la levantó y la dejó caer acá junto al camino."

La fallecida había volado como 60 pies de distancia.

Cornelio Romo, quien camina con el ayudante de la muleta, fue más optimista es su narración al ver a los miembros de su familia recoger escombros.

"Cuando menos todos estamos vivos. Damos gracias por eso," Romo dijo sonriendo. "Lo demás se puede reponer. No sé como lo vamos a hacer, pero estoy agradecido de que todos estamos bien."

Otros también sentían gratitud y aceptaban la oportunidad de pausar y rezar con el Obispo Tamayo y el Diacono Contreras.

Al ver al Obispo Tamayo, Maria Guadalupe Gómez, parada junto a un monton de escombros, que una vez fueron su casa, comenzó a llorar. Gómez, una activa participante de la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Eagle Pass, buscó alivio en el gentil abrazo de su pastor.

"Estoy muy preocupada por mi madre (Ermenegilda Padrón) que está en el hospital," Gómez le dijo al Obispo Tamayo, mientras apuntaba hacia la desbaratada cama de hospital de su madre, que aún tenía pegadas las unidades intravenosas cubiertas de escombros. "No sé como vamos a cuidarla ahora:"



► “I don’t believe that Manuel knows how to say ‘no’ to anyone. If he has the time, he’ll help you. **Ask any department in the diocese and they have probably been helped at one point or another by**”

“At least we’re all alive. We give thanks for that. The other stuff can be replaced. I don’t know how we’re going to do that, but I am grateful that we’re all O.K..”

dalupe Gomez, standing on a pile of rubble that once was her home, began sobbing. Gomez, an active parishioner at Sacred Heart Parish in Eagle Pass, sought comfort in the gentle embrace of her shepherd.

“I’m worried about my mother (Ermengilda Padron) who’s in the hospital,” Gomez told Bishop Tamayo as she pointed toward her elderly mother’s mangled hospital bed with the intravenous units still attached, covered by debris. “I don’t know how we are going to care for her.”

Gomez’s neighbor, Susette Pola, a catechist at Sacred Heart Church, described the only undamaged area of her home.

“It was the *altarcito* (home shrine) in my bedroom,” Pola said. “Every other room is damaged except for this small area.”

Pedro and Berta Gutierrez were relieved to see Bishop Tamayo touring the area. Berta, a catechist at Perpetuo Socorro Catechetical Center serving Sacred Heart parishioners, explained that the material loss was devastating but that they were more concerned about their young daughter, Ivette, who still showed signs of emotional trauma from the tornado.

As bishop consoled the teenager, Berta and Pedro counted their blessings, including the safe arrival of their son, Pete, Jr., who had driven in from Houston to help with the recovery effort.

“He was just discharged from the Marines,” explained Berta. “We’re so glad to have him home alive.”

The visit ended with a prayer centered on the theme encountered throughout the area – of hope in rebuilding a modest community. ☕



La vecina de Gómez, Susette Pola, una catequista de la Iglesia del Sagrado Corazón, describe solamente el área no dañada de su hogar.

“Fue el altarcito en mi recamara,” dijo Pola. “Todos los demás cuartos están dañados, menos esta pequeña área”.

Pedro y Berta Gutiérrez se sintieron calmados al ver al Obispo Tamayo pasando por el área. Berta, una catequista en el Centro de Catequesis del Perpetuo Socorro, sirviendo a los parroquianos del Sagrado Corazón, explicó que la pérdida material fue devastador pero que ellos están más preocupados acerca de su pequeña hijita, Ivette, quien sigue mostrando señales de trauma emocional por el tornado.

Al esta consolando el Obispo a la adolescente, Berta y Pedro contaban sus bendiciones, incluyendo las llegada segura de su hijo, Pete Jr. quien había manejado desde Houston para ayudar en los esfuerzos de recuperación.

“Lo acaban de dar de baja de la Fuerza Militar Naval”, explicó Berta. “Estamos contentos de tenerlo en casa con vida.”

La visita terminó con una oración centrada sobre el tema encontrado por todo el área – de esperanza de reconstruir una comunidad modesta. ☕



Grandparents as Mom and Dad when you are raising your grandchildren.

A stroller was positioned next to the minivan's sliding door. I watched as a silver-haired man swung a toddler from car seat to stroller, heading quickly toward the Epiphany Cathedral, diaper bag in hand.

The event would have slipped quickly from memory had I not received a copy of The Florida Catholic after Mass. The issue included a story by Bishop Nevins (retired, Diocese of Venice) saluting "all grandparents who are 'alive with love'", especially grandparents raising their grandchildren. He asked: "What can our society do to be more helpful?"

"Grand" households – In the United States, 4.5 million children reside with grandparents. According to Amy Goyer, coordinator of the AARP Foundation Grandparent Information Center, this number represents a 30 percent increase from the 1990 Census. The National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (Georgia State University) notes the 10 states with the highest number of these households: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and North Carolina.

An unanticipated role – Grandparents become primary caregivers of their grandchildren for many reasons. Adult children may be abusing drugs or alcohol. Sometimes they are in prison. Grandparents assist young families when military parents are deployed overseas. In some cases, grandchildren are orphaned. Whatever the situation, it is normal for grandparents to grieve the loss of the expected role. Raising grandchildren involves personal sacrifice. A time of life that was to be spent on adult pursuits suddenly becomes a time for supervising homework and giving baths

Support groups – There might be feelings of guilt about long-ago parenting decisions or anger at the adult child for having been placed in this position. Legal concerns about the grandchildren's welfare add to the stress. Many individuals find grandparent-support groups useful in order to share these common feelings and learn about available resources. The AARP Web site has links to find these groups and helpful information: <http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/>. We may discover that Christ uses the hands and hearts of others to answer our prayers.

Society's help – Under some conditions, grandchildren, and even step-grandchildren, can qualify for Social Security benefits when a grandparent retires (1.800.772.1213).

In 1998, the GrandFamilies House opened in Boston, providing affordable housing in 26 apartments.

Intergenerational safety designs were included, such as ramps and grab bars for grandparents and child-proof outlets for grandchildren. The YWCA offers an on-site preschool and after-school program. Many other states are building similar projects. – Dr. Cathleen McGreal

Los abuelos se desempeñan como Mamá y Papá cuando crían a sus nietos

La sillita estaba puesta junto a la puerta corrediza de la furgoneta. Observé cómo el hombre con cabello plateado pasó a un niño pequeño del asiento de la furgoneta a la sillita, dirigiéndose rápidamente a la Catedral de la Epifanía, acarreado la bolsa de pañales. El suceso se me hubiera escapado rápidamente de la memoria a no ser por la copia del The Florida Catholic que recibí luego de la Misa. Ese número incluía una historia del Obispo Nevins (jubilado de la Diócesis de Venecia) rindiéndole homenaje a "todos los abuelos que están 'animados por el amor'", especialmente los abuelos que están criando nietos. El Obispo preguntó: "¿Qué más puede hacer nuestra sociedad para ayudarlos?"

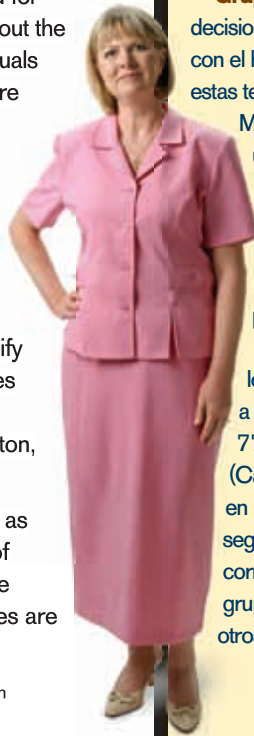
Hogares "Abuelos" – En los Estados Unidos, 4.5 millones de niños viven con sus abuelos. De acuerdo con Amy Goyer, coordinadora de AARP Foundation Grandparent Information Center (Fundación del Centro de Información para Abuelos de AARP), esta cifra representa un aumento de un 30% con respecto al censo del 1990. El National Center on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Georgia State University (Centro Nacional de Abuelos que Crian Nietos) nota que los 10 estados con el número más alto de este tipo de hogares son: California, Texas, Nueva York, Florida, Illinois, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan y Carolina del Norte.

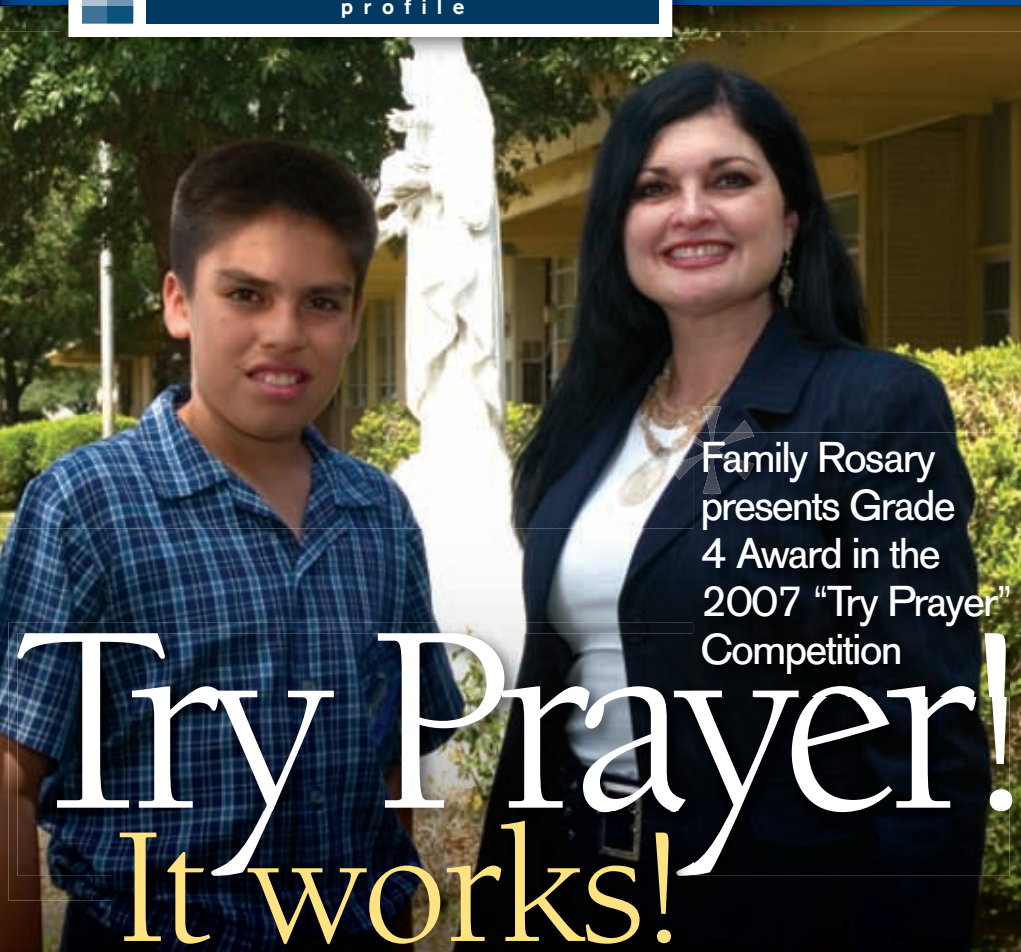
Un Papel Inesperado – Los abuelos pueden transformarse en los guardianes principales de sus nietos por muchas razones. Sus hijos adultos pueden ser víctimas de la drogadicción o el alcoholismo. A veces están en la cárcel. Los abuelos asisten a las familias con niños pequeños cuando los padres que están prestando servicio militar son desplegados en el extranjero. En algunos casos, los nietos son huérfanos. Cualquiera sea la situación, es normal que los abuelos lloren la pérdida del papel que esperaban desempeñar. Criar a los nietos requiere sacrificios personales. La parte de la vida que iba a ser dedicada a actividades de adultos de repente se transforma en un periodo de supervisión de tareas escolares y de baños para niños.

Grupos de Apoyo – Los abuelos pueden tener sentimientos de culpa por decisiones de crianza tomadas hace muchos años o pueden estar enojados con el hijo adulto por haberlos puesto en esta posición. Se le agregan a estas tensiones los asuntos legales asociados con el bienestar de los nietos.

Muchas personas encuentran que los grupos de apoyo de abuelos son útiles para compartir estos sentimientos comunes y para informarse de los recursos puestos a disposición de ellos. El sitio de la red de AARP tiene enlaces para buscar estos grupos y hallar información útil: <http://www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/>. Podremos descubrir que Cristo utiliza las manos y corazones ofrecidos de buen grado por otras personas, para contestar nuestras oraciones.

La Ayuda de la Sociedad. – Bajo ciertas circunstancias, los nietos, y aún los que no sean consanguíneos, pueden tener derecho a beneficios de Seguro Social cuando los abuelos se jubilan (1-800-772-1213). En 1998, se abrió en Boston la GrandFamilies House (Casa de Familias de Abuelos), ofreciendo vivienda a precios asequibles en 26 apartamentos. Se incorporaron detalles intergeneracionales de seguridad, como rampas y pasamanos para los abuelos y tomas de corriente a prueba de niños para los nietos. La YWCA ofrece localmente grupos para preescolares y programas para después de clase. Muchos otros estados están desarrollando proyectos similares.





Family Rosary presents Grade 4 Award in the 2007 "Try Prayer" Competition

Try Prayer! It works!

"The contest enables children of all ages to express creatively the importance of Jesus and Mary in their daily lives."

Family Rosary has selected Mario F. Garcia Jr. of Mary Help of Christians School in Laredo, as the second-place winner in the Grade 4 division of the 2007 U.S. "Try Prayer! It Works!" contest, a national competition that encourages students to express their faith through art, poetry and prose. Mario was selected from more than 3,000 entries and more than 50,000 participants in the 12th annual contest.

Each year, children and teens from Catholic schools, parishes and other Catholic organizations utilize their creative skills to illustrate a different faith-based theme. This year, the theme was, "There's A Knock on the Door – It's Jesus!" and students from kindergarten through 12th grade creatively depicted, in various art forms, how they would answer the call from Jesus and Mary.

For his award-winning entry, Mario submitted a poem in Spanish about being asked by Jesus to serve his church.

Mario lives in Laredo with his parents, Mario and Ana, and three siblings. He enjoys sports, choir, games and math and science in school. The 10-year-old is in the fourth grade at Mary Help of Christians

School, which is located in the Diocese of Laredo.

"The contest enables children of all ages to express creatively the importance of Jesus and Mary in their daily lives," said Father John Phalen, CSC, president of Holy Cross Family Ministries. "Accepting Jesus as our savior can change us in profound ways and is a marvelous occasion for children to examine their faith. They can look at the miracles around them and show how they have an impact upon each of us. All of the entries demonstrate how prayer, thought and creativity are an inspiration to young and old."

In addition to the "Try Prayer! It Works!" contest in the United States, separate competitions are conducted in Mexico,

East Africa, West Africa, Bangladesh, Brazil, Peru, Ireland, Chile, Haiti and the Philippines. Entries are judged on content, ability to capture and interpret the theme, artistic and technical proficiency and adherence to rules.

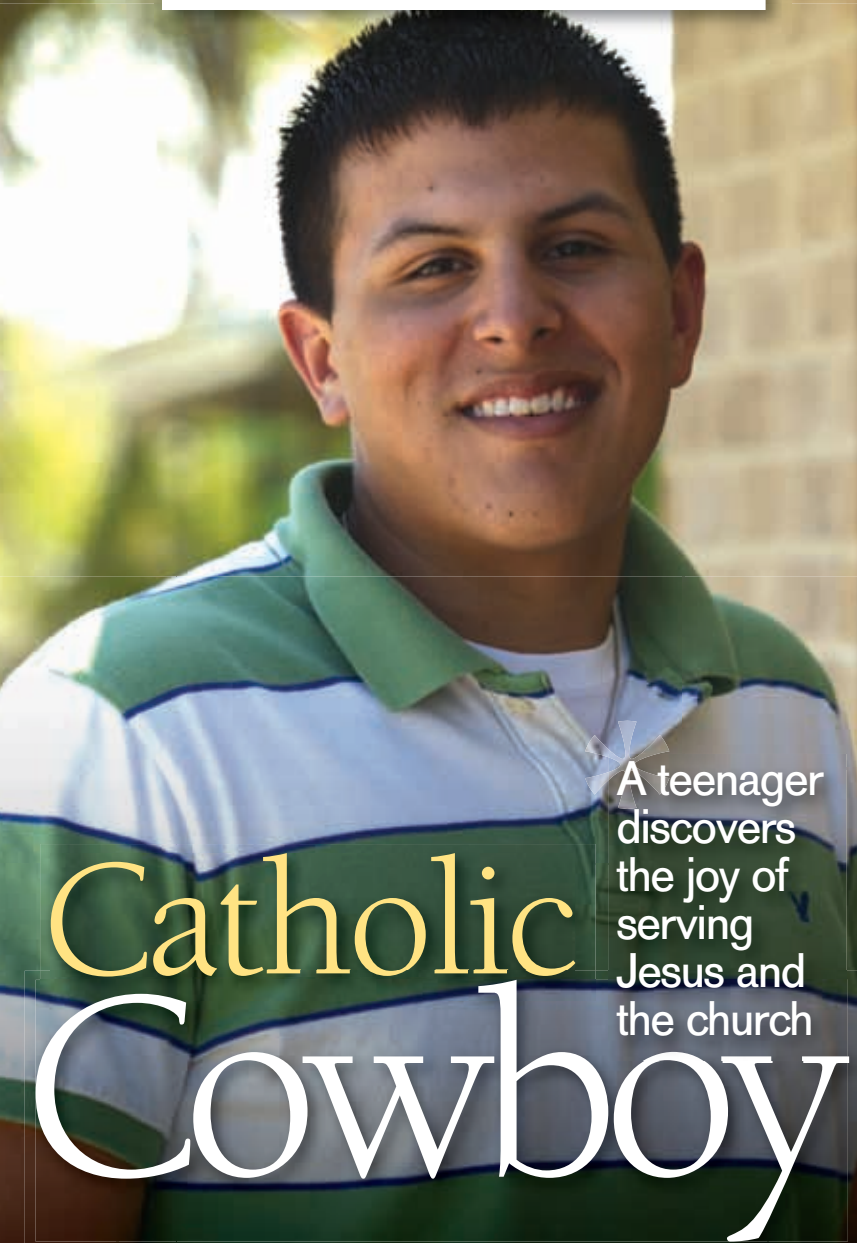
In the United States, up to three winners are chosen per grade: first-place winners are awarded \$100, while the sponsoring organization earns \$200. Runners-up win a set of Family Theater Productions movies.

Family Rosary was founded in 1942 by the late "Rosary Priest," Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, CSC. The "Try Prayer! It Works!" contest derives its name from an experience in the life of Father Peyton. While a seminarian, he was stricken with severe tuberculosis. At one point, a frustrated physician said, "Try prayer! We have done all we can for you." Father Peyton prayed his rosary to the Blessed Mother and he made a miraculous recovery.

This experience – coupled with his spiritually rich family life as a youth in Ireland, where his family prayed the rosary each night – inspired Father Peyton to devote his life to Mary, Mother of God, and to the spiritual well-being of the family. His famous slogan, "The Family That Prays Together, Stays Together™," still resonates today.

In the spirit of its founder, Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, CSC, Holy Cross Family Ministries serves Jesus Christ and his church by promoting and supporting the spiritual well-being of the family. Faithful to Mary, the Mother of God, the Family Rosary in the U.S.A., a member ministry, encourages family prayer, especially the rosary. ☪





Catholic Cowboy

A teenager discovers the joy of serving Jesus and the church

Rene Ricardo Garza is called a humble servant of the Lord. “That’s the best way I can describe him,” said Rev. Francisco Hernandez (in Spanish), pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Cotulla. “His commitment and sincerity belie his age. He’s a good young man.” Such high praise for the 18-year-old senior at Cotulla High School normally comes from biased individuals, like his mother. “He’s a very sincere man. He’s a gentleman,” explained Raquel Garza. “I know I’m biased because I’m his mom, but he’s a very active person in the community.”

Rene Ricardo Garza se le llama Humilde Servidor de Nuestro Señor. “Esta es la mejor manera en que puedo describirlo,” dijo el Padre Francisco Hernández (en español), Párroco de la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Cotulla, Texas. “Su entrega y su sinceridad desmienten su edad. Es un buen hombre joven.” Tan alto elogio para el estudiante de preparatoria de 18 años, en la Preparatoria de Cotulla, viene de personas parciales, como su madre. “Él es un hombre muy sincero. Él es un caballero,” explica la madre de René, Raquel Garza. “Yo se que estoy bendecida, porque soy su mamá, pero es una persona muy activa en la comunidad.”

Activa, quizá sea una interpretación inadecuada, cuando se trata de como se involucra René en la escuela y en la iglesia.

René ha servido a sus compañeros estudiantes como presidente de la clase durante los últimos cuatro años, como presidente del consejo estudiantil durante los últimos dos años y vicepresidente de los Agricultores Futuros de América durante los últimos dos años.

También es miembro de la Sociedad Nacional de Honor y participa como un orador persuasivo de la Liga Universitaria Escolástica.

Y es un “Vaquero” también. Como jugador de segundo tiempo, René fue parte del equipo de fútbol Cotulla Cowboy que avanzó a los finales estatales el otoño pasado perdiendo ante el eventual 2A campeón Tatum.

Y cuando no está lazando a sus oponentes en el campo de fútbol, René está acorralando a sus premiados toros y a su marrano.

“La exhibición de ganadería es realmente algo grande por acá, en la Feria de Ganadería del Condado de LaSalle,” dijo René con voz excitante y animada. “Es el festejo anual de carne de marrano silvestre, y todos logramos mostrar nuestros animales. Yo estuve en segundo lugar este año y vendí mi toro por mucho dinero.”

Su dedicación y disciplina se aplican igualmente a sus actividades en la



Active perhaps is an understatement when it comes to Rene's involvement at school and at church.

Rene has served his classmates as the class president each of the last four years, the student council president for the last two years and the Future Farmers of America vice president the last two years.

He's also a member of the National Honor Society and competes as a University Interscholastic League persuasive speaker.

He's a cowboy, too. As a second string tackle, Rene was part of the Cotulla Cowboy football team that advanced to the state semifinals last fall before losing to eventual 2A champ Tatum.

And when he isn't roping opponents on the gridiron, Rene is corralling his prized steers and hog.

"The LaSalle County Fair Jr. Livestock Show is a really big deal down here," Rene said with his voice rising in excitement. "It's the annual wild hog cook-off and we all get to show our animals. I placed second this year and sold my steer for a lot of money."

His dedication and discipline apply equally to his activities in the church. Just about every Sunday, you can find Rene assisting Father Francisco as an altar server for the first Mass of the day.

"I chose that one because no one wants to get up that early on a Sunday," said Rene laughingly. "It's just me."

Although he started serving at Mass as a sixth-grader, he resumed his duties about two years ago after his parents lived the ACTS retreat.

"I saw a change in my parents after they lived that retreat," said Rene. "And that change affected me in a good way. I mean, we had always gone to church, but after the retreat, it seemed to be on a deeper level. It's more in-depth now."

As a result, Rene now helps with the adult ACTS group active in his parish. One of the endeavors undertaken by the team includes the preparation of food baskets for the elderly and the economically disadvantaged during the season of Advent.

"It's a great way to remember the Christ in Christmas and to prepare for his birth," added Rene. "It feels good to give, especially like this when it helps people."

The future civil engineering student at Texas A&M University knows the feeling well, having assisted Father Francisco with a renovation project at Sacred Heart Parish.

"There were a lot of people involved and I'm glad I was one of them that helped to renovate the parish. We've really done a lot," emphasized Rene. "We increased the space on the altar, installed new tile, painted the interior of the church and installed new wooden pews."

His efforts, matched by his fellow parishioners, reflect the energy that Father Francisco has brought to the parish.

"He's brought a lot of new ideas to our church," said Rene. "Father Francisco has continued what Father John (Van Lare, CM) began and has brought us all together. And he does it with a little more energy."

More than likely, the enthusiasm is a reflection of the joy he sees in parishioners like Rene. ☩



iglesia. En casi todos los domingos puedes encontrar a René ayudando al Padre Francisco como monaguillo en la primera Misa del día.

"Yo escogí esa Misa porque nadie quiere levantarse temprano en un domingo," dijo René, riéndose. "Soy yo, solamente."

Aunque comenzó sirviendo en la Misa como estudiante de Sexto grado, regresó a sus deberes hace unos dos años después de que sus padres vivieron el Retiro de ACTS.

"Observé un cambio en mis padres después de que vivieron el retiro," dijo René. Y ese cambio me afectó a mí de una manera buena. Es decir, siempre asistíamos a Misa, pero después del Retiro, parecía ser a un nivel más profundo. Es algo de mayor profundidad ahora."

Como resultado, ahora René ayuda con los adultos del grupo ACTS que están activos en su parroquia. Uno de los quehaceres en que participan los miembros del equipo incluye la preparación de canastos de alimentos para los ancianos y los económicamente necesitados, durante la época de Adviento.

"Es una manera maravillosa de recordar a Cristo en la Navidad y de hacer las preparaciones para el Nacimiento," agregó René. "Se siente uno bien al dar, especialmente, cuando así se ayuda a la gente."

El futuro estudiante de Ingeniería Civil en Texas A & M University, conoce bien el sentimiento por haber ayudado al Padre Francisco con el proyecto de renovación en la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón.

"Había mucha gente involucrada y estoy contento de que yo fui uno de ellos que ayudó a renovar la parroquia. Realmente hemos hecho mucho," enfatizó René. Aumentamos espacio en el altar, instalamos nuevos pisos, pintamos el interior de la iglesia e instalamos nuevos bancos de madera."

Sus esfuerzos, igualados por sus compañeros parroquianos, reflejan la energía que el Padre Francisco ha traído a la parroquia.

"Él ha traído muchas nuevas ideas a nuestra iglesia," dijo René. "El Padre Francisco ha continuado lo que el Padre John (Van Lare, CM) ha hecho para juntarnos a todos. Y lo hace con un poco más de energía."

Los más probable es que el entusiasmo, es un reflejo de la alegría que él ve en los parroquianos como René. ☩

"I saw a change in my parents after they lived that retreat. And that change affected me in a good way. I mean, we had always gone to church, but after the retreat, it seemed to be on a deeper level. It's more in-depth now."

romance



Who's the giver here?

►► Here's an important question to ask yourself: "Am I more of a giver or a taker?" The amount of sustained romance and success in your marriage may depend on your answer. The healthiest marriages are the ones where both spouses are givers.



Mike and Cyndi have been planning a vacation to Hawaii for a year. But they have very different ideas about what they want to do when they get there.

When we're on vacation, I want to see all the sights!

he says

Mike says: Cyndi and I have always dreamed of going to Hawaii – the warm breezes, the palm trees, the surf. And now we're finally getting our chance. However, I guess we didn't really talk about why it was we wanted to go. I want to hike up to the volcanoes – really experience the islands. Cyndi doesn't want to do anything except sit on the beach!

I want to sit on the beach!

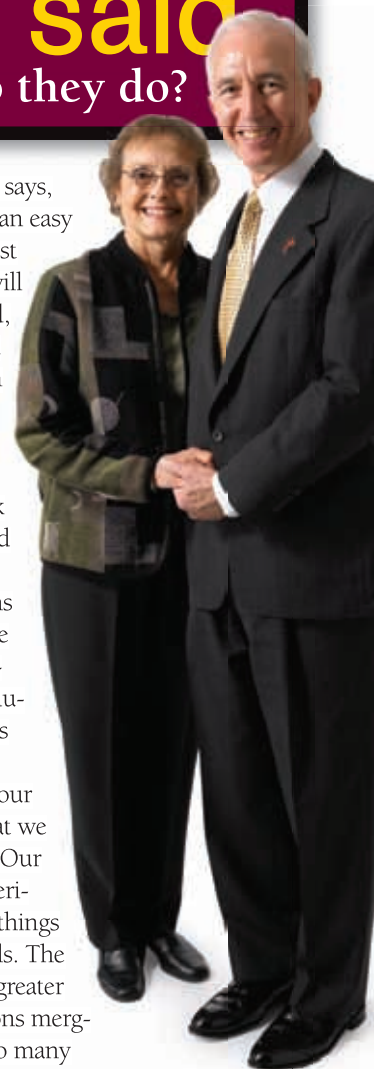
she says

Cyndi says: When I think of Hawaii, I think of orchids and romantic walks on the beach. I want to lie in the sand all day and soak up the sun. This is the first vacation we've taken in years where it's just the two of us – no kids, no pets, no responsibilities. I'm afraid that if we follow Mike's schedule, we're going to come back more tired than before we went. When I go on vacation, I really want to "vacate."

He said
She said
what do they do?

experts say

Jo Anne says, "This is an easy one – just tell him which beach you will be on!" I, on the other hand, believe a different approach may be needed so that both may enjoy the *aloha* spirit. Clearly, Mike identified the central issue when he said, "I guess we didn't really talk about why it was we wanted to go ..." This is not an unusual situation when dreams are involved. No two people are going to "dream" identically. We are unique individuals first and married couples second. Simply because we are "two becoming one" in our marriage does not mean that we see things in the same way. Our eyes are filtered by our experiences and therefore we see things mostly as unique individuals. The longer we are married, the greater chance we have of our visions merging, because we have had so many



money



We've all got to go sometime

►► Although we may avoid thinking about death, it's important to think about those we would leave behind. If you haven't appointed a guardian for your children and provided for them financially, make a will or trust now!

shared experiences.

Our first recommendation is for Mike and Cyndi to communicate realistically, share feelings with each other and work toward a compromise. By nature, vacations are limited by time, so you cannot expect to fulfill every wish on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. The initial shared dream of going to Hawaii is now a close reality. Now what? First, sit down together and begin the planning process by making the easy decisions first: What flight? What hotel? How long are we going to stay? Where will we eat? Do we rent a car?

After answering these “easy” questions, we recommend that Mike and Cyndi ask four more questions: Why is it important for us as a couple to go to Hawaii? How does it make me feel to help you satisfy your dream? How will our marriage relationship be strengthened by going to Hawaii at this time? Is this what we believe God wants us to do?

An easy way to accomplish this is for Mike and Cyndi to use old-fashioned pencil and paper. Divide the paper into two columns labeled “Mike” and “Cyndi.” On the left side, write the question and place the answers under each person’s column. Where both answers match, an agreement is reached and the total plan is getting closer to satisfying each other’s needs, wants and desires. Where both have different ideas and answers, list the pros and cons of each answer, then discuss the results. If Mike and Cyndi focus on meeting each other’s needs and not their own, they will be surprised with the results. They will discover a little-known fact that their individual needs will be met beyond their expectations if they focus on their spouse’s wants and desires. The results become a gift and not an imposed obligation.

– Tom and Jo Anne Fogle

communication



What’s good about us?

▶▶ When we talk about communication in marriage, we often seem to focus on problems and how to handle them. Take a few minutes to look at the bright side – sit down to talk about what is working in your marriage, what both of you are doing right. Positive reinforcement can keep the good times rolling!

time



It’s about time ...!

▶▶ Share a prayer together. There is recent empirical data that indicates, “A family that prays together stays together.” Divorce rates for couples who regularly pray out loud together (more than just at meal times) is only .01 percent (one couple in a thousand) compared to one couple in two for all first marriages in the United States.

Chuck y Elaine son recién casados. Cuando van a salir de noche, Elaine le prepara a Chuck la ropa para que se la ponga. Esto crea un poco de resentimiento por parte de Chuck.

Ella dice: Sin mi ayuda, él no sabe cómo vestirse bien.

Elaine dice: Yo lo quiero a Chuck, pero hay que reconocer que él no es ningún experto en lo que se refiere a vestirse bien. Si yo no le preparo la ropa, puede terminar vistiéndose como un ganso. Por ejemplo, cuando fuimos al casamiento de un amigo el mes pasado, Chuck se hubiera puesto vaqueros, calcetines blancos y zapatillas. ¡Para ir a un casamiento! El queda absolutamente despampanante cuando se viste bien - no entiendo por qué no puede simplemente aceptar algunos consejos para vestirse adecuadamente.

El experto dice: Este problema parece ser bastante simple y sencillo. Sin embargo, al ocurrir tan pronto en la vida matrimonial puede ser señal de posibles problemas más adelante. La manera en cómo se traten estos problemas tempranos establece el trabajo de base para la futura relación matrimonial de Chuck y Elaine.

Creo firmemente en la comunicación. Chuck nos da una idea clara de cómo él ve/percibe los consejos sobre la vestimenta. No los considera útiles ni necesarios. Es importante que las parejas de recién casados hablen abiertamente y honestamente sobre sus roles y responsabilidades. Me pregunto si Elaine desempeña el rol de madre en otras situaciones. A veces éste parece ser el papel natural de la mujer en una relación, pero puede resultar abrumador cuando nos comportamos como la madre de aquéllos que son capaces de hacerse cargo de sus propias decisiones y acciones. Además, dentro de algunos años cuando hayan niños para criar, es posible que Elaine llegue a resentirse por lo que se percibe como su necesidad de hacer el papel de “madre” de Chuck. Ella y él deben ser compañeros, no padre y madre uno del otro. De vez en cuando, todos necesitamos que nuestra pareja se identifique con nosotros y nos apoye, pero este apoyo debe ser claramente solicitado u ofrecido - no es lo que se espera del otro compañero.

Los roles en un nuevo matrimonio necesitan ser mutuamente aceptables y beneficiosos. La comunicación es crítica. Con frecuencia es fácil dejar que estas pequeñas irritaciones se disipen y evitamos enfrentarlas. Después de todo, sólo se trata de “sugerencias” sobre la apariencia y la vestimenta. Chuck puede pensar, “estoy haciendo una tormenta en una taza de te.” Hay que resistir la tentación de quitarle importancia a los sentimientos y al problema. Yo no creo que exista una comunicación excesiva en el matrimonio. Sabemos que es posible tener una comunicación insuficiente. Esto sucede siempre con resultados negativos.

Es importante establecer expectativas claras en las relaciones. Frecuentemente, es útil usar la técnica de hablar/escuchar para comunicar estas expectativas. Primero, reserva tiempo para hablar de los problemas en privado y con regularidad. Escucha a tu pareja. Luego repite lo que hayas escuchado. Pídele a tu pareja confirmación del asunto que estén discutiendo: ¿Lo que yo entendí es lo que tú realmente dijiste o quisiste decir? Luego responde: Este asunto me hace sentir así.

Así que, ¿hubiera sido tan horrible que Chuck no fuera el mejor vestido en el casamiento? Quizás no. ¿Querría Chuck vestirse de manera que Elaine lo encontrara más atractivo? ¡Seguro que sí! Si hubieran hablado primero, habrían llegado a un compromiso. Ellos pueden averiguar el uno con el otro, qué es lo más importante en su relación - y probablemente no sea la ropa.

Por favor, recuerda que si tú y tu pareja se encuentran en una situación en la que no puedan resolver los problemas matrimoniales con estas técnicas, te recomendamos que obtengas ayuda y terapia matrimonial profesional. Las agencias de Caridades Católicas locales pueden ofrecerte ayuda.

El dice: Ella no es mi madre - yo puedo elegir mi propia ropa.

Chuck dice: No son solamente consejos; es más bien vigilancia y control de la vestimenta. Elaine se olvidó de mencionar que el casamiento fue una barbacoa al aire libre - si, había invitados vestidos elegantemente, pero también había unos cuantos que llevaban vaqueros. Cuando Elaine pone la ropa sobre la cama para que yo me la ponga, me hace sentir como si tuviera 5 años. Elaine es mi esposa - no es mi madre.

“**W**hat dirty windows we have here!” That was the comment of a group of workers who came to volunteer their time to clean the church and rectory. They were right. The windows were dirty. It was hard to look through them and clearly see what was outside. Not only that, the light from outside was diminished and unable to illuminate the interior of the rooms.

This situation is a good analogy of our souls' relation to God. Our souls were created to be like windows that are open to God. God's presence fills us as light fills a room. The purity of our souls allows God's light to shine within us. A soul that is not pure cannot see God because the impurities block God from entering the soul and block the person's vision of God.

What does it mean to have impurities inside the soul? Impurities are a soul's attachment to things, images, memories and desires that block a person from considering the truth about God and about one's relationship with God. Impurities weaken the will and discourage a person. Impurities are very harmful. A person loses the will to have a clean soul and allow God to come inside. A person with an impure heart will lose faith and not want to pray or go to church anymore. The impurities are like mud that a person is wallowing in and cannot escape from. People may lose heart and despair. They may throw in the towel and give themselves over to their impurities, and their condition will grow worse.

For example, there was a young person who got on the Internet and, without his parents' knowing, got curious and went to some sites that had pornography on them. Before long, the person got other buddies to join in, and the whole group of them began to find other sites. In a short while, many of them could not stop thinking about these images. The parents of the young man began to suspect something was wrong because they noticed a change in their son. He did not want to go to Mass anymore and did not seem interested in doing things with the family. He kept to himself more and more and they noticed he was up very late at night. The young man was trapped. He had boarded up the windows of his soul to keep his behavior a secret. The light of God was not able to get in.

Of course, God does not stop shining on us. Even a dirty window does allow some light to get in! In the case of this young man, he began to realize what he was doing was very wrong. He felt miserable inside. He started to act out his sexual thoughts through masturbation, which brought him only more sadness.

Spiritual progress through purity

how to rid your soul of impurities that block your vision of God

His experience of God's light and presence when he was younger did not leave him and he longed for it. God came to his aid and helped move the young man to go to the sacrament of reconciliation. He had to close the windows of his soul to all forms of pornography and sexual images. He had to wash the windows of his soul with prayer and the sacraments. He had to go through a purgation that eliminated the impurities inside. It took patience and perseverance through trials and falls. He had to learn to trust God and surrender to God. The more he did so, the easier it became. God was cleaning his windows for him. The light and brightness of his personality came back!

We all must go through a purgation of our soul if we want a closer relationship with God. As time goes on, and we respond to the grace of purification, we will find our prayer life changing as well. The Doctors of the Church, such as St. John of the Cross and others, describe three classical stages of the spiritual life

– the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways. Because of the limited scope of this article, I will not be able to go into much detail about each stage, especially the unitive way and the experience called the dark night of the soul. Let's just say that as one draws closer to union with God, God continues to purify the soul through passive purifications that are experienced by the person as “dark nights.” It is as though God has left them. The words of Jesus on the cross come to mind, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps. 22).

Our spiritual journey to God begins with an awakening of faith. God becomes real!



► The purity of our souls allows God's light to shine within us. **A soul that is not pure cannot see God because the impurities block God from entering the soul and block the person's vision of God.** We all must go through a purgation of our soul if we want a closer relationship with God. As time goes on, and we respond to the the grace of purification, we will find our prayer life changing, as well.

We then realize in our relationship with God we must make a choice. Either we make a choice for God, or not. We are in the purgative way. That is where the major impurities of our soul are purged. Our focus is moral integration, living the commandments, overcoming sin, growing in faith and trust in God. We struggle along they way. We sometimes fall. We get back up. We keep going. There are trials of faith, moral trials and trials of trust. Our prayer life at this time is mostly characterized by petition prayer – “Dear God, help!”

In time, we learn to spend more time with God. We grow more comfortable with prayer. We begin to practice a form of prayer that is called meditation. Meditation is when we think about the life of Jesus in the Gospels, or some truth of the faith. Some people are blessed with a good imagination and are able to picture the biblical scene in their minds. The movie “The Passion of the Christ” has some powerful images in it concerning the suffering of Jesus that could be a good aid in meditation. Stations of the Cross or holy pictures can help. Nature offers plenty of food for thought, too! God teaches us much through meditation.

Sometimes, after a person has learned to pray this way, they may find their hearts and minds growing quieter and still. Distractions disappear. Their heart longs for more. Our heart aches and pines for God. They have come to a deeper recollection of spirit, and their prayer is more felt. Prayer is simple and comes more from the heart. Instead of just petition prayers, there are prayers of heartfelt thanks and praise, gratitude and attitudes of love and devotion. At times, a person may find oneself being caught up in a deep and powerful encounter with God. This is the beginning of contemplative meditation, or even simple contemplation that is characteristic of the illuminative way.

Most of the spiritual authors I

►► spiritual exercise – meditation and contemplation

- 1 Prayerfully read John 9.** It is the story of Jesus healing the man born blind. Meditate on the story by imagining yourself to be the blind man as you read it.
- 2 Ponder what it would be like to be blind.** Imagine yourself trying to do the various things you do now without the power to see. How does it feel to be in darkness? Spiritually we are all blind until God gives us the gift to see. Seeing is receiving the gift of faith. Our spiritual sight is clouded and darkened by sin.
- 3 Ask Jesus to come into your soul.** Pray, “Jesus, you are the light of the world. O Radiant Light, O Son Divine, shed your light on me. Help me to see myself as you see me. Help me to see my sin and impurities.” Pray this prayer slowly from your heart. Imagine yourself as the blind man who was just given sight by Jesus. You open your eyes for the first time and you are looking directly into the face of Jesus your Savior. He is with you as light helping you to see.
- 4 Express your love for Jesus as your heart is moved to.** At any time – and I mean any time! – when you feel yourself drawn deeper in the prayer where you experience your mind becoming recollected and quiet and focused and peaceful, and you feel your heart being drawn to God – just let yourself go where the Spirit is leading you. Do not break away from this pull and tug from God to focus back on the meditation. Let your mind be docile before God. This prayer is more felt but it will engage all of you. If a person is generous in living the Gospel and generous in the amount of time he spends in prayer with God, God will lead him to union and contemplation. This is not just for some, but is intended for all. Keep the windows of the soul clean and God will shine all the time. Even in the dark night – God is shining so bright that the powers of the soul are totally blinded by Him.

have ever read make a big distinction at this point in terms of prayer. Meditation is a prayer form we can do with the help of God, but our efforts are very important. Contemplation is a sheer gift of God that requires no effort on the part of the person receiving this gift! Contemplative prayer is something that God initiates. Nevertheless, contemplative prayer can be prepared for by our efforts. It usually does not occur until a person has made good spiritual progress along the way. The virtues of humility, purity, generosity, faith, hope and love are more strongly rooted in the person. The windows of the soul are wide open to God, and God enters in as God chooses. The person is supernaturally one with God. For we “have died, and our lives are hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:3)

The gift of contemplative prayer is united to the gift of union with God Himself. It is something God wants for all of us! No exceptions. How do we keep moving along the journey? We can keep our windows clean and God will take us there!

– Father Bill Ashbaugh is pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Howell, Mich.

►► ejercicio espiritual – meditación y contemplación

- 1 En actitud de oración lean Juan 9.** Es la historia de Jesús que sana a un hombre que nació ciego. A medida que vayan leyendo, mediten sobre la historia imaginando que ustedes son el hombre ciego.
- 2 Reflexionen sobre cómo sería ser ciego.** Imaginense a ustedes mismos tratando de hacer las diferentes tareas que realizan ahora, pero sin tener el poder de la vista. ¿Cómo es estar en la oscuridad? Espiritualmente todos estamos ciegos hasta que Dios nos da el regalo de la vista. Ver es recibir el regalo de la fe. El pecado nos nubla y oscurece la vista espiritual.
- 3 Pídanle a Jesús que venga a las almas de ustedes.** Oren, “Jesús, tú eres la luz del mundo. Oh Luz Resplandeciente, Oh Hijo Divino, ilumíname con tu luz. Ayúdame a que yo me vea como tú me ves a mí. Ayúdame a ver mis pecados e impurezas.” Recen esta oración lentamente y con el corazón. Imaginen que son el hombre ciego al que Jesús recién le ha devuelto la vista. Abren los ojos por primera vez y están mirando directamente el rostro de Jesús el Salvador. El está con ustedes como si fuera luz, ayudándolos a ver.
- 4 Expresen su amor por Jesús según los impulse el corazón.** ¡En cualquier momento – y repito, en cualquier momento! – si se sienten absorbidos más profundamente en la oración, cuando sientan que la mente se ordena y se calma, se concentra y está en paz y cuando sientan que el corazón esté siendo atraído hacia Dios - déjense llevar adonde el Espíritu los esté guiando. No se alejen de esta atracción y llamado de Dios para que se concentren nuevamente en la meditación. Permitanle a la mente que sea dócil en la presencia de Dios. Esta oración es principalmente sentida pero comprometerá a la totalidad de la persona. Si una persona es generosa en cuanto a vivir el Evangelio y a la cantidad de tiempo dedicado a orar con Dios, Dios la guiará hacia la unión y la contemplación. Esto no es solamente para algunas personas, sino que es para todos. Mantengan las ventanas del alma limpias y la luz de Dios brillará todo el tiempo. Aún en la noche oscura – ¡Dios brilla con tanta intensidad que los poderes del alma quedan totalmente deslumbrados por El.

Oblate Eco-missions

▶▶ Rev. Darrell Rupiper, OMI, visited the Diocese of Laredo for a two-week period in March conducting an eco-mission.

The traveling Oblate priest facilitated six educational workshops and one organizational meeting during his stay at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Laredo. In these eco-missions, Fr. Rupiper educated those in attendance about the plight of the earth and global warming and our duty as Christians to be good stewards of our God-given natural resources. Fr. Rupiper also showed the Academy Award-winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* to educate Laredoans on the hazards of global warming.



Feast of the Annunciation

▶▶ People of faith and goodwill gathered at San Agustin Cathedral for a Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord on Monday, March 26.



The feast marks the date when the Virgin Mary was asked to be the mother of God's son, Jesus Christ. This date precedes Christmas by nine months.

Mary Help of Christians' students participated in the flower ceremony during the Mass as part of this homage.

If you would like to become more involved in the different activities sponsored by the office of Respect Life, please call 956.727.2140.

Sonia Sanchez performs in Laredo

▶▶ Mariachi singer Sonia Sanchez of Basilica de San Juan del Valle Texas fame performed during the first week of Easter at two local parishes. Sanchez made her first appearance at Holy Family Parish in Laredo and on the following night performed at Holy Redeemer Church in Laredo. The events were free and open to the public.



Mi Cristo Roto

▶▶ Renowned Mexican actor Alberto Mayagoitia presented his stage performance of *Mi Cristo Roto* during Holy Week at San Luis Rey Parish in Laredo.

The event, a fundraiser for those traveling to World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney, Australia, is a theatrical production that allows you to see Jesus Christ in the face of your neighbor. With more than 25 years experience in television and theater, Mayagoitia bases this one-actor play on two books written by Spanish priest Rev. Ramón Cué, SJ. Mayagoitia began this ministry as a Lenten performance at el Altar del Perdón de la Catedral Metropolitana in México City back in 2003. After an overwhelmingly positive response to this play, Mayagoitia embarked on an international tour in 2004.



Visit the Web site www.micristoroto.com for more information on *Mi Cristo Roto*.



Annual Migrant Send-off Mass

▶▶ Bishop James A. Tamayo celebrated the annual Mass for the migrant community at St. Vincent de Paul Parish during the weekend of Divine Mercy. Numerous migrant children also received the sacraments of holy Communion and confirmation during this Mass. The liturgy is for those in our community who will migrate north for seasonal employment.

Who do you say that I am?

▶▶ About 500 people gathered at St. Augustine High School in early March for the annual diocesan ministries conference.

This year's event, entitled *Who do you say that I am?*, united the different ministries active in the Diocese of Laredo and featured two keynote speakers as well as four breakout sessions. Additionally, there was an exhibit area of local and out-of-town ministries and merchants. Chief Fiscal Officer Lourdes Martinez of the Diocese of Laredo chaired the event.



▶ If you would like to participate in next year's event, please call **956.727.2140**.

School Choice Support

▶▶ A Laredo contingent of Catholic school students, teachers, administrators and parents traveled to Austin recently to campaign for legislation advocating for a school voucher system in Texas. Rosa Maria Vida, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Laredo, led the group to a rally on the steps of the State Capitol.



St. Augustine High School parent Rick Moreno discusses the school voucher proposition with Warren von Eschenbach, PhD, the director of the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education.

2007 Chrism Mass

The Diocese of Laredo joined millions of Catholics worldwide in Holy Week activities that included the annual Chrism Mass.

During this Mass held annually at San Agustin Cathedral, Bishop James A. Tamayo blesses the different oils used throughout the diocese in the celebration of sacraments. In addition, Bishop Tamayo invites his presbyters to publicly renew their priestly promises. An estimated 50 priests and deacons were on hand for the Mass.



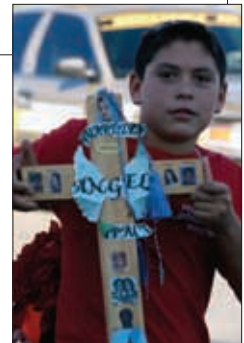
NCLR honors Cardinal Mahony

▶▶ Laredoan Rene Gonzalez, who works for the Texas Migrant Council, poses with His Eminence Roger Cardinal Mahony, archbishop of Los Angeles at right. The National Council of La Raza honored Cardinal Mahony with the Public Service Award recently. During its annual gala, which brings together more than 800 elected and appointed officials, Hispanic leaders, community activists, executives from Fortune 500 companies, philanthropic leaders, and scholars to honor members of Congress from both sides of the aisle for their outstanding support of public policies that are vital to Hispanic Americans. The Public Service Award also honors others outside of Washington who courageously and tirelessly advocate on behalf of the Latino community.



6th Annual Pro-Life Rosary Walk

▶▶ Hundreds marched down Santa Ursula Avenue in late January at the 6th annual Pro-Life Rosary Walk organized by the Knights of Columbus and Rev. Anthony Mendoza, director of the Respect Life Office for the Diocese of Laredo. Fr. Mendoza, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in La Pryor, led his parishioners and additional marchers in this peaceful family event that prayed for the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, as well as for the conversion of those who advocate abortion. Flag-bearing Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus representing the Laredo councils led the procession, along with the Matlachines from St. Joseph Church in Laredo. In addition, parishioners from San Agustin Cathedral, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Patrick, Santa Margarita, San Martin de Porres, Divine Mercy and Holy Redeemer participated in the walk, as well as the members of the Brothers of St. John congregation. If you would like to become more involved, call the Respect Life office at **956.727.2140**.



2007 Youth Spectacular

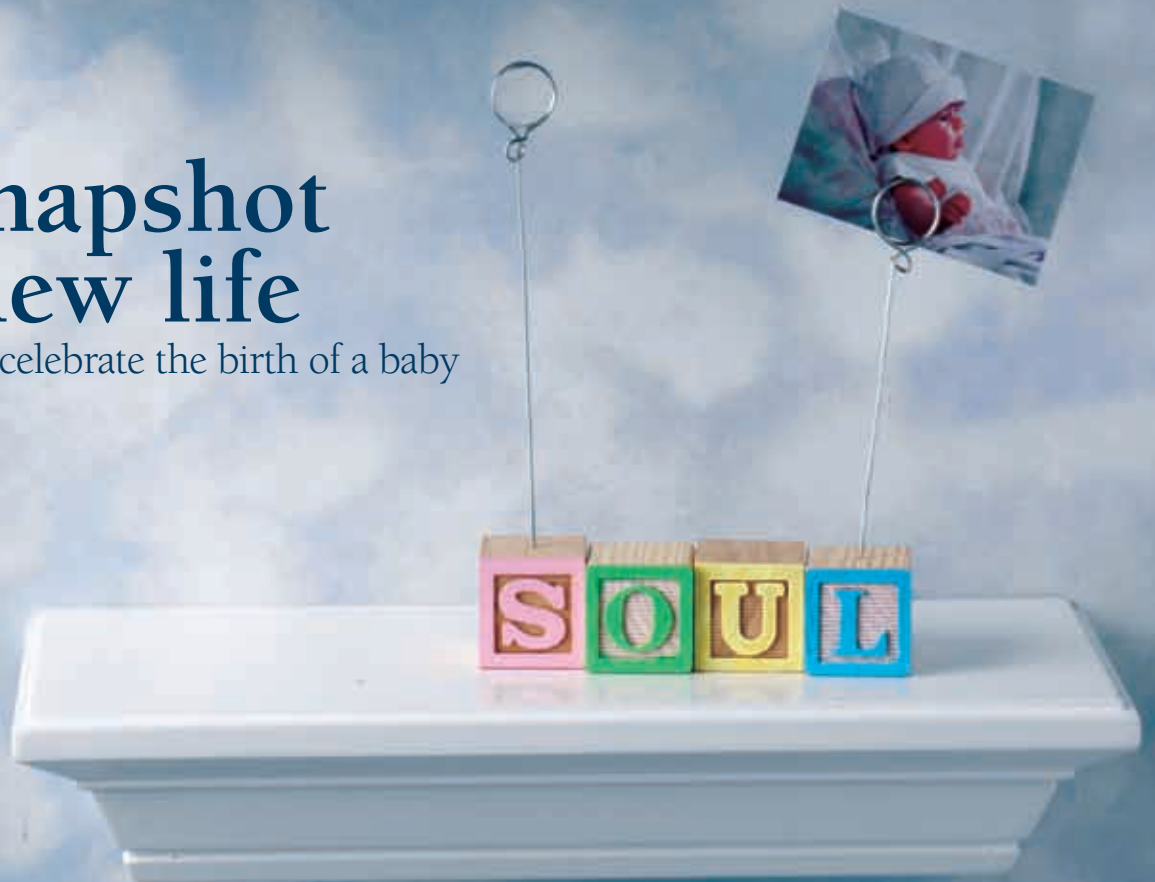
▶▶ Nearly 1,000 high school students from throughout the Diocese of Laredo participated in the 2007 Youth Spectacular held in April at the Laredo Civic Center. The event, organized by the Office of Youth Ministry, attracted teenagers from Laredo, Zapata, Carrizo Springs, Crystal City, Eagle Pass and Cotulla. The Youth Spectacular featured two keynote speakers, numerous workshops, the sacrament of reconciliation, a live rock band and a special celebration by Bishop James A. Tamayo.





A snapshot of new life

► a gift to celebrate the birth of a baby



L experience one of those difficult parenting moments as I watch my 2-year-old daughter purposely dump a tub of hot cocoa mix all over herself and my kitchen floor. Infuriated inside, I rush over to clean up the mess before she runs off to track it all over the rest of the house. Half an hour later, after a new outfit and mopped floor, I am feeling totally inconvenienced, annoyed and overwhelmed. It is then that I take a good look at her and remind myself of the positive; of the humorous and loving things she does. I also think of what we receive as parents as we work to raise her. Most important, I remind myself of what a huge blessing she is: a gift from God that brings joy to our life every day – spilled cocoa mix and all.

▶▶ **Here is a fun and simple project we can do to encourage and thank all mothers and fathers for choosing life.**

Yet as a Catholic, being a parent is more than just cleaning up messes. It is an awesome responsibility with which God entrusts us – to lead our little ones down a path to holiness. That is a pretty huge task, since they'll be faced with significant outside pressures to the contrary. While it's easy to get caught up in decorating a nursery, buying cute clothes and reading bedtime stories, we need to recognize the job ahead of setting a good Christian example as moms and dads. We need to remember our primary responsibility of teaching them what they will need to one day get to heaven.

Are you expecting a baby or know of anyone else who is? Do you know of anyone struggling with the responsibility of being a parent? Or perhaps, are you aware of anyone in a crisis pregnancy? These mothers are faced with the challenge of choosing a difficult “right thing” amidst a torrent of fears, anxieties and social pressures that obscure the beauty of their unborn child.

Here is a fun and simple project we can do to encourage and thank all mothers and fathers for choosing life. It is a photo holder that is designed to remind us of the blessing and responsibility each child is. When we look at that photo of a little one, let it remind us that it's not just a snapshot of a cute baby or smiling child but a precious soul to take care of and lead back to God.



For this project, you will need:

Wooden toy blocks (can be purchased unfinished at an arts and crafts store)
 Acrylic craft paint in colors of your choice
 Paintbrush
 Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
 18-gauge craft wire
 Wire-cutting pliers
 Needle-nose pliers
 Hammer
 Puncture tool or ice pick
 Wooden dowel (1/2 - 3/4 inch in diameter)
 (A thick magic marker or broom handle will work also.)



▶▶ Begin by painting the letters on the blocks in alternating colors of choice. Set aside to dry.

Hot-glue the blocks together, staggering them slightly to give some dimension. Set aside so glue hardens.

Using your needle-nose pliers, make a small loop at the end of the wire and wrap around the wooden dowel twice. Remove from dowel and bend the rest of the wire to create the stem of the photo holder. Repeat this to create five more stems and then trim to different lengths.

Make a hole in the top (center) of the blocks using your puncture tool (or ice pick) and hammer. Apply hot glue to the end of each wire and push into holes in the blocks. Let glue harden.

More ideas:

- Get a group of friends together to make several to donate to a crisis pregnancy center.
- Going to a baby shower? They make a great gift to go along with an outfit.
- Personalize it with the baby's name.

competing in the workplace

how do we refrain from judging others?

Carl says: *I changed jobs and joined a consulting firm so that I could learn more and gain experience. I had a good basic skill set, but lacked somewhat in the specific subject matter they were covering in the first project. Management agreed that it would be a great experience for me to build on my existing background. The two guys I'd be working with had a lot of experience to learn from. However, once we got into the project, my two teammates became overly critical. They sent unfair feedback to management and thus, when the project ended, I came very close to losing my job. Fortunately I had one person supporting me, so I was given another chance, albeit at a lower salary. In the coming months, I worked on projects with excellent people, performed well and I received outstanding feedback.*

►► **The expert says:** Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, writes about the concept of the win-lose philosophy of human interaction. This is a situation where a person feels that in order to win, someone else has to lose. "Value does not lie within them, it lies outside. It's in comparison to someone else, or against some expectation" (p 207). Sometimes this attitude manifests itself obviously, as certain people outwardly try to bring others down. But more typically this attitude is subtle. If we feel threatened by someone, we are critical and judgmental of their shortcomings. These criticisms may seem as harmless as expressing them to our friends, or as purposeful as judging someone publicly. Instead of trying to improve ourselves, we feel it necessary to bring others down.

Christ taught that the more we evaluate and condemn others, the more we can expect to be judged. In Luke's Gospel, Christ refers to hypocrites who worry more about the splinter in their brother's eye than the beam in their own (Luke 6:37-42). We are more critical of small faults in others than we are of our own. He says we need to focus first on removing the beam from our own eye before we can help our neighbor with his/hers. We should concentrate on rectifying our own flaws first, before we worry about someone else's. We need to constructively work on improving ourselves, and helping others in order to be successful. Covey echoes Christ's message by explaining that the result is a win-win situation, which is actually a manifestation of love. – Tim Ryan



competir en el lugar de trabajo

¿Cómo nos abstenemos de juzgar a los otros?

Carl dice: *Dejé mi trabajo anterior y comencé a trabajar para una firma de consultores para aprender y adquirir experiencia. Yo contaba con buenas aptitudes básicas, aunque me faltaban algunos conocimientos del tema que estaban cubriendo con el primer proyecto. La gerencia consideró que el proyecto iba a ser una gran experiencia para mí y que me permitiría construir sobre las bases de conocimiento que yo tenía. Las dos personas con las que iba a trabajar tenían mucha experiencia de la que yo podría aprender. Sin embargo, cuando comenzamos a trabajar en el proyecto, ellos comenzaron a criticarme excesivamente. Enviaron evaluaciones injustas a la gerencia y a raíz de esto cuando se concluyó el proyecto, yo casi pierdo el trabajo. Afortunadamente, había una persona que me apoyaba, así que me dieron otra oportunidad, aunque con un sueldo más bajo. En los meses siguientes trabajé con personas excelentes, me desempeñé bien, y recibí evaluaciones sobresalientes.*

►► **El experto dice:** Stephen Covey, el autor de *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Los 7 Hábitos de la Gente Altamente Eficaz), escribe sobre el concepto de la filosofía de ganancia-pérdida en la interacción humana. Esta es la situación en la que una persona piensa que para ganar, alguna otra persona tiene que perder. "El valor no reside dentro de ellos, se encuentra afuera. Es por comparación con otra persona, o con alguna expectativa" (pág. 207). A veces esta actitud se manifiesta obviamente cuando alguien aparentemente trata de derribar a los otros. Aunque típicamente esta actitud es sutil. Si nos sentimos amenazados por alguien, lo criticamos y nos erigimos en jueces de sus defectos. Estos criticismos pueden parecer tan inocuos como los que les expresamos a nuestros amigos, o con tanta determinación como cuando juzgamos a alguien públicamente. En vez de procurar mejorarnos a nosotros mismos, sentimos que es necesario derribar a los otros.

Cristo nos enseñó que cuanto más evaluemos y condenemos a los otros, más debemos esperar ser juzgados por los otros. En el Evangelio Según San Lucas, Cristo se refiere a los hipócritas que se preocupan más de la pelusa en el ojo de nuestro hermano que de la viga en nuestro ojo (Lucas 6:37-42).

Criticamos más las pequeñas faltas en los otros que las faltas en nosotros mismos. El dice que necesitamos concentrarnos primero en eliminar la viga en nuestro propio ojo antes de poder ayudar a nuestro prójimo con la pelusa de él o ella. Debemos concentrarnos primero en rectificar nuestras propias imperfecciones, antes de preocuparnos de las de los otros. Para tener éxito necesitamos trabajar constructivamente para mejorarnos a nosotros mismos y ayudar a los otros. Covey se hace eco del mensaje de Cristo al explicar que el resultado es una situación en la que todos ganan lo que es en realidad una manifestación de amor.

Modesty and Chastity

In this issue, we've followed the theme of modesty and chastity as fruits of the Holy Spirit.

And, as I reflected on this column, I remembered an interactive session I had recently with a group of youth. I participated in a search retreat at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Carrizo Springs during the fifth week of Lent. My talk was titled *Dating, Dignity and Sex*.

You can imagine how I had everyone's attention.

I started the session by yelling, "Who wants to have lots of money?"

Everyone yelled.

Then I asked, "Who wants to have a new car?"

Everyone yelled.

Finally, I asked, "Who wants to be a priest or religious?"

And this time no one yelled.

Silence.

At least I knew they were listening.

I went on to talk about dignity and gave examples of the Old Testament. After that, I started talking about dating and they all looked at me as if I was crazy.

How would a priest know about dating?

Hey, I was once young and so I told them how when I was a teenager just like them that I had dated.

They gasped and giggled just like teenagers do.

I also told him that I have a family and they've dated. I've even taken classes on the subject.

They looked at me like I had a point.

I went on to tell them how they could make a promise of celibacy until marriage during a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament. That raised some eyebrows.

I thought it was tough, but it was straightforward and I think that the teenagers appreciate it.

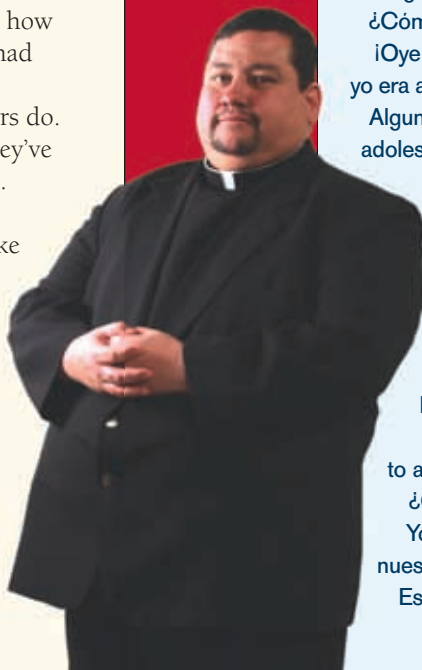
What does a priest know about this?

I know that modesty and chastity are lacking in today's world.

Hopefully, someone was listening.

— Father Toribio Guerrero is director of vocations for the Diocese of Laredo.

“What does a priest know about this? I know that modesty and chastity are lacking in today's world. Hopefully, someone was listening.”



En esta edición hemos seguido el tema de modestia y castidad, como frutos del Espíritu Santo.

Y al estar reflexionando sobre esta columna recordé una sesión activa que tuve recientemente con un grupo de jóvenes. Yo participé en un retiro de Búsqueda en la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Carrizo Springs, durante la quinta semana de Cuaresma.

Mi plática tenía el título de *Noviazgo, Dignidad y Sexo*.

Ustedes se pueden imaginar como obtuve la atención de todos.

Comencé la sesión gritando: "¿Quién quiere tener mucho dinero?"

Todo el mundo gritó.

Entonces pregunté: "¿Quién quiere tener un auto nuevo?"

Todos gritaron.

Por fin, pregunté: "¿Quién quiere ser sacerdote o religiosa?"

Y entonces, nadie gritó.

Silencio.

Cuando menos sabía que me estaban escuchando.

Continué hablando sobre la dignidad, y di ejemplos del Antiguo Testamento. Después de eso comencé a hablarles de noviazgo y todos me miraban como si estuviera loco.

¿Cómo sabría un sacerdote cosas de noviazgo?

¡Oye! Una vez yo también era joven, así que les dije cuando yo era adolescente tal como ellos que tuve citas de noviazgo.

Algunos se asombraron, y se reían tal como lo hacen los adolescentes.

También les dije que yo tenía familia y que ellos también echaban novio. Yo hasta tomé clases sobre el asunto.

Me miraban como que si yo tenía razón.

Continué diciéndoles como podrían ellos hacer la promesa de celibato hasta el matrimonio, durante una hora santa ante el Santísimo Sacramento. Eso hizo que algunos tuvieran mirada de asombro.

Pensé que era duro lo que hacía, pero que era directo al asunto y creo que los adolescentes lo agradecieron.

¿Qué sabe un sacerdote de estas cosas?

Yo sé que la modestia y la castidad son faltantes en nuestro mundo de hoy.

Espero que alguien estuvo escuchando. ¡Ojalá!

I know what I want out of life!

**Paul Bussenius,
France**

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