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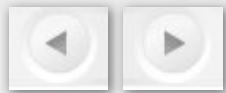
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Dear Fr. Joe : How do I handle the Christmas pressure?

November/December 2007

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LaFe

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LAREDO

parenting
journey

Is Christmas making you crazy? How a shift in focus can help you be a more peaceful parent.

spiritual
fitness

Feeling down? How to find joy when you feel joyless – beating depression during the holidays.

ELEVEN YEARS AGO CORDY WAS

48 HOURS FROM DEATH

How she and her children are miracles of the Holy Spirit

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A modest servant—At 24-years old, Manuel Osorio is a young lay leader in the Diocese of Laredo. – Goyo López

The aroma of freshly baked turkey, ham and pies gives way to those of tamales, menudo, buñuelos and, in my family, semita as the holiday themes shift from Thanksgiving to Advent to Christmas.

As schedules, as well as finances, tighten more than ever during this time of the year, life for me, actually, slows down.

Just as it did three years ago, when our middle child, Isabella, entered the world, life again takes new meaning and provides a newfound appreciation for the miracle of life.

As we prepare in our homes and in our parishes for the celebration of the greatest gift ever given to us, in our home, Blasita and I welcome our third child. Already blessed with Goyo (9) and Isabella (3), we now welcome our newest baby.

Witnessing this birth during this season of Advent gives me a deeper and a more profound comprehension of the preparation for the coming of Christmas.

Peace, hope and love fill and warm the air in our home these days as our tiny infant, swaddled in a soft blanket, elicits the affection of her siblings, family and friends.

This birth reminds me of the all that I am grateful for – and all that I quite often take for granted.

I did not have a need to go knocking from one stranger's home to another in search of lodging on a cold winter night. Nor did I endure the stressful facilitation of a birth in a manger surrounded by animals in an environment far from sterile.

Instead, we found ourselves in a climate-controlled environment, surrounded by an experienced staff and the latest in technological equipment.

However, there is some commonality.

When the Christ-child entered this world, he was surrounded by his loving parents and visited by the three kings.

In our case, our infant was surrounded by her immediate family and visited by grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and numerous well-wishers.

It is here that I find peace. It is here that life slows down for me during a time that hastens for everyone else.

Let the bells toll as the angels herald the arrival of our daughter. She may not be the king of kings, but she's indeed a treasure to us.

May this Christmas season bring you the good tidings and joy we are experiencing anew!

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



El aroma de pavo recién homeado, jamón y pastel relleno, ceden el lugar a tamales, menudo y buñuelos, y en mi familia, semitas. Al irse cambiando los temas de la fiesta de Thanksgiving (De dar Gracias) a la de Adviento a Navidad.

Y los programas, así como las finanzas, se aprietan más que nunca en estas épocas de año; la vida para mí, sin embargo, se hace más lenta.

Tal como ocurrió hace tres años cuando entró al mundo nuestra segunda criatura, Isabella, la vida vuelve a tener un nuevo significado y provee un nuevo encuentro de gratitud por el milagro de la vida.

Al ir preparando nuestros hogares en nuestra parroquia para la celebración del más inmenso don que jamás se nos ha dado, en nuestro hogar, Blasita y yo le damos la bienvenida a nuestro tercer hijo. Ya bendecidos con Goyo (9) e Isabella (3) ahora damos la bienvenida a nuestro nuevo bebé.

Siendo testigo del nacimiento durante esta temporada de Adviento me da una honda y más profunda comprensión de lo que es la preparación para la Navidad que viene.

La paz, la esperanza y el amor llenan y dan calor al aire en nuestro hogar en estos días, mientras que nuestro pequeño infante, envuelto en suave cobija, evoca la atención de sus hermanitos, familia y amistades.

Este nacimiento me recuerda de todo lo que me siento agradecido y de todo lo que con mucha frecuencia tomo como natural y normal.

No tuve la necesidad de ir tocando las puertas de un extraño en otro, buscando alojamiento en una noche fría invernal. Ni tuve que aguantar el enervante nacimiento, en un pesebre rodeado por animales, en un ambiente muy lejos de ser saludable.

En vez, nos encontramos en un ambiente de clima controlado, rodeado por personal con experiencia y los más adelantados equipos tecnológicos.

Sin embargo, si hay algo en común.

Cuando Cristo, el niño, entró a este mundo, sus padres que lo amaban y recibieron como visitas a tres reyes, lo rodeaban.

En nuestro caso, nuestro infante fue rodeado por su familia inmediata y visitado por sus abuelos, tíos, tías, primos y numerosas personas de buenos deseos.

Es aquí donde encuentro paz. Es aquí donde mi vida es tranquila, durante el tiempo que, para a otros, es inquietante.

Que las campanas suenen mientras que los ángeles anuncian la llegada de nuestra hija. Quizá no es el rey de los reyes, pero es realmente un regalo y un tesoro para nosotros.

¡Que esta temporada de Navidad les traiga las buenas noticias y la alegría que nosotros estamos experimentando nuevamente!



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Dear Fr. Joe

How do I handle the Christmas pressure?

▶▶ *A descendant of Eric the Red, named Rudolf the Red, was arguing with his wife about the weather. His wife thought it was going to be a nice day, and he thought it was going to rain. Finally she asked him how he was so sure. He smiled at her and calmly said, "Because Rudolf the Red knows rain, dear."*

Q: I always feel so much pressure at Christmas time. There's so much that has to be done and I have to make sure I get the right gift for each person. How can I balance my perspective so that Christmas is the prayerful experience it is meant to be?

A: Many of us, in this Christmas season, may be experiencing the same kinds of pressure. We are ready to take a big bite out of the season and enjoy what God has cooked up for us, but we find that, in the end, all we've got is a cheap, dry hamburger bun. I mean, hey, it's that time of the year again. Christmas is here and we are running around like crazy. Now, just to be clear, this isn't going to be one of those "You are missing the reason for the season!" lectures. I figure we have enough guilt over other things that we don't need any more. Let's face it: We've got shopping to do!

How do we do the shopping, the running and handle the seasonal craziness and still stay focused? That is the big question. Before I answer it, though, let me give a disclaimer: We're going to talk about money, and the one thing we have to remember is the need to be financially responsible. Our money is a gift from God and we always need to be thoughtful in how we spend. Got it? Good. Now, let's get to the meat of our discussion on Christmas.

It's a natural tendency on our parts to be worried about taking Christmas gift-giving to an extreme. Some have even said that we need to dump the whole gift exchange practice, so we can go to the "real meaning" of Christmas. But I think we have to ask ourselves an

important question: What if gift-giving IS a big part of the real meaning of Christmas?

Here's what I mean:

Christmas recalls the day of Jesus' birth. We celebrate the fact that God took flesh and walked among us. God became one of us in order to save us. THAT is God's gift to us, and the greatest gift we will ever receive. We celebrate these two realities by giving gifts to each other. First, we give gifts to Jesus by using all he gave us to glorify God. Second, we give gifts to Jesus by loving his people and celebrating the presence of God within them. Third, we give gifts to Jesus by giving gifts to his people. For instance, there's that sweater you gave your brother last Christmas (you know the one – that real ugly green-and-red number with the flashing lights). Jesus dug it and says "thank you."

Do you see what I mean? We don't have to feel guilty for running around like crazy people, buying presents for those we love, because it is a way of expressing our thanks to God when we do it responsibly. So, this year, in the midst of your shopping, offer it all as a prayer. You'll find Christmas more rewarding, gift-giving more exciting and the whole season will be a time of celebrating God's love for us and our love for him and his people. And you just might not buy another ugly sweater, too. Enjoy another day in God's presence! – Father Joseph Krupp

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

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Estimado Padre Joe: ¿Cómo manejo la presión de la Navidad? ¿Cómo honro a Cristo en la Navidad?

Siempre siento demasiada presión en la época de Navidad. Hay tanto que hacer y tengo que asegurarme de comprar el obsequio adecuado para cada persona. ¿Cómo puedo equilibrar mi perspectiva de tal manera que la Navidad sea la experiencia espiritual que debiera ser?

Es posible que muchos de nosotros en esta época navideña experimentemos el mismo tipo de presiones. Estamos listos para dar la gran mordida a la temporada y disfrutar lo que Dios ha cocinado para nosotros, pero al final nos damos cuenta de que lo que tenemos es un bollo para hamburguesas barato y seco. Es decir, ¡oigan! ya llegó de nuevo esta época del año. La Navidad ha llegado y corremos como locos. Bueno, hay que aclarar que este no será otro de esos sermones de "¡Estás perdiendo la razón por la ocasión!" Supongo que también nos sentimos bastante culpables por otras cosas que ya no necesitamos. Seamos realistas: ¡Tenemos que ir de compras!

¿Cómo podemos hacer las compras, andar a las carreras y manejar la locura de la temporada y aún así seguir concentrados? Esa es la gran pregunta. Pero antes de contestarla, permítanme aclarar algo: Vamos a hablar de dinero y lo único que debemos recordar es la necesidad de ser financieramente responsables. Nuestro dinero es un regalo de Dios y siempre debemos ser juiciosos para gastarlo. ¿De acuerdo? Bueno. Ahora vayamos al meollo de nuestra discusión sobre Navidad.

Tenemos una tendencia natural a preocuparnos en extremo por obsequiar regalos en Navidad.

Incluso hay algunos que dicen que debemos abandonar por completo la práctica de intercambiar obsequios para poder llegar al "significado real" de la Navidad. Sin embargo, creo que debemos hacernos una pregunta importante: ¿Qué tal si dar regalos ES una parte importante del significado real de la Navidad?

A esto me refiero:

La Navidad rememora el día del nacimiento de Jesús. Celebramos el hecho de que Dios tomó carne y caminó entre nosotros. Dios se volvió uno de nosotros para salvarnos. ESE es el regalo de Dios para nosotros y el regalo más grandioso que jamás recibiremos. Al damos obsequios celebramos estas dos realidades. Primero, le damos regalos a Jesús al utilizar todo lo que Él nos dio para glorificar a Dios. Segundo, le damos regalos a Jesús al amar a Su gente y celebrar la presencia de Dios entre ella. Tercero, le damos regalos a Jesús al darle regalos a Su gente. Por ejemplo, ese suéter que le regaló a su hermano la Navidad pasada (ya sabe cuál: ese modelito realmente feo verde con rojo con luces llamativas). Jesús lo tomó y dijo 'gracias'.

¿Entienden lo que quiero decir? No necesitamos sentirnos culpables por andar a las carreras como locos, comprando regalos para la gente que amamos, porque ésta es una manera de expresar nuestra gratitud hacia Dios cuando lo hacemos de manera responsable. Así que este año, en medio de sus compras, ofrezcan todo como una plegaria. Encontrarán la Navidad más gratificante, dar obsequios, más emocionante y toda la temporada será época de celebrar el amor de Dios por nosotros y nuestro amor por Él y por Su gente. Además, tal vez en esta ocasión no comprarán otro suéter feo. ¡Disfruten de otro día en presencia de Dios!

— Padre José Krupp

What year did the Blessed Virgin Mary appear to Juan Diego?

▶ Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Ala., **Dec. 1, WHAT YEAR?** Her courage marked an important turning point in the Civil Rights movement.

▶ The Atomic Age began at 3:25 p.m. on **Dec. 2, WHAT YEAR?** at the University of Chicago's Stagg Field when scientists, led by Enrico Fermi, engineered the first controlled nuclear fission chain reaction.

▶ The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego at Guadalupe in Mexico on **Dec. 12, WHAT YEAR?** delivering a message of hope and compassion that was a consolation to the poor.

▶ Wilbur and Orville Wright took turns piloting and monitoring their flying machine on **Dec. 17, WHAT YEAR?** in Kill Devil Hills, N.C. Orville piloted the first flight, which lasted a mere 12 seconds.

Answers: 1955, 1942, 1531, 1903

Este mes en la historia

▶ Rosa Parks se rehusó a ceder su asiento a un hombre blanco en un autobús segregado en Montgomery, Ala., **el 1 de diciembre, ¿DE QUÉ AÑO?** Su valentía marcó un momento decisivo en el movimiento de los derechos civiles.

▶ La Era Atómica comenzó a las 3:25 p.m. **del 2 de diciembre, ¿DE QUÉ AÑO?** en estadio Stagg Field de la Universidad de Chicago cuando los científicos, encabezados por Enrico Fermi, diseñaron la primera reacción en cadena controlada por fisión nuclear.

▶ La Santa Virgen María se le apareció a Juan Diego en villa Guadalupe en México **el 12 de diciembre, ¿DE QUÉ AÑO?** para entregar un mensaje de esperanza y compasión que fue un consuelo para los pobres.

▶ Wilbur y Orville Wright se turnaban para pilotear y monitorear su máquina voladora **el 17 de diciembre, ¿DE QUÉ AÑO?** en Kill Devil Hills, N.C. Orville piloteó el primer vuelo, que duró apenas 12 segundos.

Respuestas: 1955, 1942, 1531, 1903



Through the years, humankind has attempted to define peace as being the absence of war.

This season of Advent, and the upcoming Christmas season, has always been recognized as a time of peace, even bringing warring factions to a momentary truce.

However, peace is much more than the absence of war.

Finding peace in our everyday lives is a spiritual journey that requires us to place our lives completely and without reservation in the hands of our Creator.

This path to finding peace begins with prayer. Every day, we should make the time to speak intimately with our Father.

Whether you are alone or in a group, whether you do it aloud or in silence, prayer is available anytime and anywhere.

And when we pray, we should always give thanks for all that we have, pray for those who are less fortunate and place our burdens, as well as our petitions, in his hands.

In addition, you can participate in the perfect prayer by attending Mass. In our Catholic community, we come to be fed spiritually every time we attend church. Our souls are fed every time we receive the Holy Eucharist as it is the source and summit of our Christian life.

In addition to these spiritual steps for finding peace, make the time to read the Bible. While this can be done on your own, sometimes it is beneficial to join a Bible reading or Bible study group in your parish. These weekly gatherings can help further the understanding of the many parables told in the Bible. Understanding the metaphorical examples often used in the Bible will enable you to utilize these lessons in daily life further fortifying your faith and soul.

In the Nativity story found in Luke's Gospel, you will read how the angel said peace and goodwill to all men.

The angel didn't say to get lost in the commercialism of the season. Nor did the angel tell us to stress about buying gifts on a budget that cannot afford them, or squeezing parties and extra events into a schedule that was already too full.

Instead, this is a time when we need to slow down and enjoy the season.

Take time instead to light the candles on the Advent wreath and explain the true meaning of Christmas to the family and especially to the children.

Participate in the novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose feast day falls in the season of Advent.

Do these activities in preparation for the coming of the Prince of Peace.

After all, Christmas should be a time of love centered in the greatest love story ever told – the story of God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Christmas is the story of God's greatest gift given to meet our need for unconditional love – because God is Love.

Christmas, then, is a time of love.

The Christmas story is a tale retold year after year that never loses its majesty, nor ceases to fill our hearts with wonder. A tiny baby came into a grim and dark world, shining light across the barren landscape – a light that still invites men to come into the warmth of God's grace and find peace, hope and love.

Join me this season for Christ-centered family traditions and create a sanctuary of peace in your life, in your home and in our world

Todo Con Amor!

- Most Rev. James A. Tamayo is bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Laredo.

Atravez de los años, la humanidad ha intentado de definir la paz como siendo la ausencia de la guerra.

La época de Adviento, y la temporada, por llegar, de Navidad, ha sido siempre reconocida como un tiempo de paz, aún llevando a los participantes en guerra a una tregua de momentánea.

Sin embargo, la paz es mucho más que la ausencia de guerra.

Encontrando la paz en nuestra vida cotidiana, es un viaje espiritual que requiere que nosotros coloquemos nuestras vidas, completamente y sin reserva, en las manos de Nuestro Creador.

Esta senda para encontrar la paz comienza con una oración. Cada día debemos tomar el tiempo para hablar íntimamente con Nuestro Padre.

Ya sea que estemos solos o en un grupo, si lo hacemos en voz alta o en silencio, la oración está siempre disponible en cualquier lugar.

Y cuando oramos, debemos siempre dar gracias por todo lo que tenemos, pedir por los que son menos afortunados y colocar nuestras pesadumbres así como nuestras peticiones en las manos del Señor.

Además, usted puede participar en la oración perfecta asistiendo a Misa. En nuestra comunidad Católica, venimos a ser alimentados espiritualmente cada vez que asistimos a la iglesia. Nuestras almas son alimentadas cada vez que recibimos la Sagrada Eucaristía, ya que es la fuente y la cumbre de nuestra vida Cristiana.

Además de estos pasos espirituales para encontrar la paz, tome tiempo para leer la Biblia.

Mientras que esto se pueda hacer por su propia cuenta, a veces es de beneficio ingresar a un grupo de lectura y estudio de la Biblia en su parroquia. Estas juntas semanarias pueden ayudarlo al mayor entendimiento de muchas parábolas citadas en la Biblia. Comprendiendo los ejemplos metafóricos, frecuentemente usados en la Biblia, le permitirán utilizar estas lecciones en la vida diaria, fortaleciendo su fe y su alma.

Es aquí, en el Evangelio de Lucas, donde leerá como el ángel dijo: paz y buena voluntad a todos los hombres.

El ángel no dijo que nos perdiéramos en la comercialización de la temporada. Ni nos dijo el ángel que nos preocupemos por comprar regalos con un presupuesto limitado o de meter eventos extras en un programa que ya está saturado.

En vez, este es el tiempo en que necesitamos detenernos y gozar la temporada.

Tómese el tiempo para prender las velas en la corona de Adviento y explique el significado real de la Navidad a la familia y especialmente a los hijos.

Participe en la Novena de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, cuya fiesta está en la temporada de Adviento.

Haga estas actividades en preparación para la llegada del Príncipe de Paz.

Después de todo, la Navidad deberá ser un tiempo de amor, centrado en la más grande historia de amor que jamás se ha contado – la historia de Dios que amo tanto al mundo que dio a su Hijo unigénito.

La Navidad es la historia del regalo de mayor inmensidad que Dios ha dado para cubrir nuestra mayor necesidad de amor – porque Dios es amor.

Las historia de Navidad es un relato que se repite año tras año pero que nunca pierde su soberanía ni deja de llenar nuestros corazones con maravillas. Un pequeño bebé llegó a un mundo desolado y negro, y con luz brillante por toda la tierra infértil – una luz que todavía invita a los hombres a entrar al calor de la Gracia de Dios y encontrar la paz, la esperanza y el amor.

Acompañenme en esta temporada en las tradiciones de familia que son centrado en Cristo y construya un santuario de paz en su vida, en su hogar y en nuestro mundo

– Todo Con Amor.



TR Esquivel

Who is the Immaculate Conception?

Hint: It's not Jesus

Mary, the Mother of God
Feast of the Immaculate Conception:
Dec. 8

▶ **Claim to fame:** The mother of God, mother of Jesus, wife of St. Joseph and greatest of all Christian saints.

▶ **What made her a saint:** The principal events of her life are celebrated as liturgical feasts of the universal church. Mary's life and her role in the history of salvation is prefigured in the Old Testament, while the events of her life are recorded in the New Testament. Traditionally, she was declared the daughter of Sts. Joachim and Anne. Born in Jerusalem, she was presented in the Temple and took a vow of virginity. Living in Nazareth, she was visited by the archangel Gabriel, who announced that she would be the mother of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. She became betrothed to Joseph and went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who was bearing St. John the Baptist. Acknowledged by Elizabeth as the Mother of God, she burst forth into the Magnificat. When Emperor Augustus declared a census throughout the vast Roman Empire, she and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, his city of lineage, as he belonged to the House of David. Mary was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died, and was present in the upper room with the apostles when the Holy Spirit descended on all of them.

▶ **Best quote:** Jesus performed his first miracle at Cana in response to his mother's request. Her words, "Do as he commands," have meaning for all Christians as they walk their faith journeys.

▶ **How she died:** No scriptural reference concerns Mary's last years on earth. According to one tradition, she went to Ephesus; another tradition states that she remained in Jerusalem. The belief that Mary's body was assumed into heaven is one of the oldest in the church. Pope Pius XII declared this belief to be Catholic dogma in 1950. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception, that Mary was free of original sin at the moment of her conception, was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

▶ **Prayer:** *Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus; O clement, O loving, O sweet virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.* – Jan Rynearson



María, Madre de Dios

Día de la Inmaculada Concepción:
 8 de diciembre

▶ **La hija más joven Aclamación de la fama:** La madre, de Dios, Madre de Jesús, esposa de San José y la más grande de los santos cristianos.

▶ **¿Qué la convirtió en Santa:** Los principales eventos de su vida se celebran como festividades litúrgicas de la iglesia universal. La vida de María y su papel en la historia de la salvación está augurada en el Viejo Testamento, en tanto que los eventos de su vida están registrados en el Nuevo Testamento. Por tradición, ella fue declarada hija de los Santos Joaquín y Ana. Nacida en Jerusalén, fue presentada en el Templo

e hizo votos de virginidad. Cuando vivía en Nazaret, recibió la visita del arcángel Gabriel, quien le anunció que sería la madre de Jesús, por el Espíritu Santo. Se desposó con José y fue a visitar a su prima Isabel quien llevaba a San Juan Bautista en su seno. Reconocida por su prima Isabel como la Madre de Dios, prorrumpió el Magnificat. Cuando el emperador Augusto declaró que se llevaría a cabo el censo a lo largo del vasto Imperio Romano, ella y José viajaron a Belén, la ciudad de su linaje, ya que pertenecía a la casa de David. María se encontraba al pie de la cruz cuando Jesús murió y estuvo presente en la habitación superior con los apóstoles cuando el Espíritu Santo descendió sobre todos ellos.

▶ **Mejor cita:** Jesús realizó su primer milagro en Cana en respuesta a la petición de su madre. Sus palabras, "Haz lo que él diga" tienen significado para todos los Cristianos a medida que recorren su camino de la fe.

▶ **Cómo murió:** No existen referencias en las Escrituras sobre los últimos días de María en la tierra. De acuerdo con una tradición, ella fue a Efeso; otra tradición afirma que permaneció en Jerusalén. La creencia de la ascensión de María al cielo es una de las más antiguas de la iglesia. El Papa Pío XII declaró esta doctrina como dogma Católico en 1950. El dogma de la Inmaculada Concepción, que María estaba libre del pecado original en el momento de la concepción, fue proclamado por el Papa Pío IX en 1854. El natalicio de María es la celebración más antigua de la iglesia, que tiene lugar el 8 de septiembre, a partir del siglo VII.

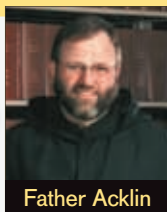
▶ **Oración:** ¡Dios de salve Reina y Madre de Misericordia! Vida, esperanza y dulzura nuestra; A Ti clamamos los desterrados hijos de Eva, a Ti suspiramos gimiendo y llorando, en este valle de lágrimas. Ea, pues, Señora abogada nuestra, vuelve a nosotros esos tus ojos misericordiosos, y, después de este destierro, muéstranos a Jesús, fruto bendito de tu vientre, ¡Oh clementísima, oh piadosa, oh dulce Virgen María. Ruega por nosotros, Santa Madre de Dios, para que seamos dignos de alcanzar las promesas de Cristo. – Jan Rynearson

Why does Jesus always refer to himself as the Son of Man, rather than the Son of God?

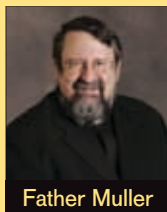
Son of Man?

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.

LA FE: Why does Jesus always refer to himself as the Son of Man, rather than the Son of God? What does that mean?

Father Stevens: Jesus identifies himself as the Son of Man rather than the Son of God. The concept of the son of God is not uniquely Jewish – it also reflects Oriental kingship and emperor worship. Why didn't Jesus then identify himself as the Messiah, as understood by

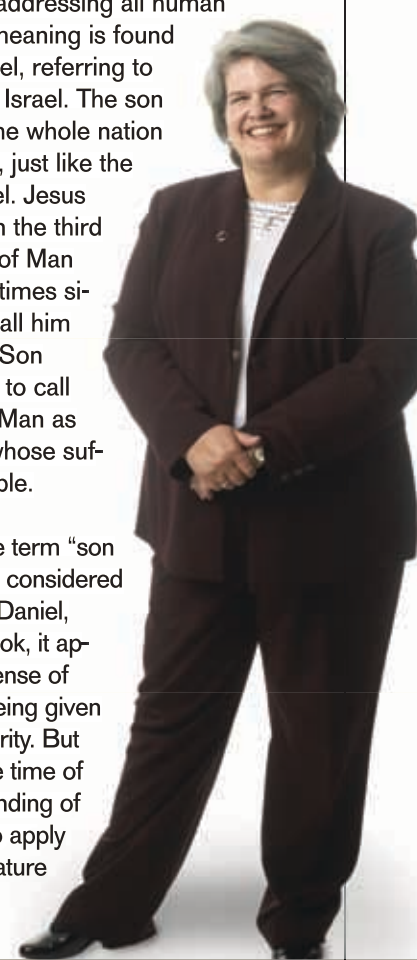
the Jews? He was reluctant to adopt this due to its connotations of earthly glory and power. The concept of the Son of God is a way of speaking of David, and Jesus does align himself with that occasionally. He clearly does believe himself to be the Messiah.

The son of man is based on the mysterious figure from the Book of Daniel. Somehow, this figure's purpose is not to establish earthly rule, but to mediate. Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God, bridges the gap between the world of God and the world of humanity.

Jesus, the Son of Man and Son of God, bridges the gap between the world of God and the world of humanity.

Father Acklin: The term "Son of God" could be used for angels, saints, holy persons and prophets. In Jewish understanding, it did not mean what we now understand it to mean. It is rather a lot like our word "mankind," meaning all of humanity. The son of man is the name used in Ezekiel by God when he is addressing the prophet – thereby addressing all human beings. The other meaning is found in the prophet Daniel, referring to the whole nation of Israel. The son of man comes as the whole nation rising up to heaven, just like the dry bones in Ezekiel. Jesus speaks of himself in the third person as the Son of Man to say "I." He sometimes silences those who call him by "Messiah" and "Son of God," preferring to call himself the Son of Man as suffering servant, whose suffering is for all people.

Father Muller: The term "son of man" is generally considered to be an allusion to Daniel, chapter 7. In that book, it appears to have the sense of Israel corporately being given dominion and authority. But from that time to the time of Jesus, the understanding of the term changed to apply to the personified nature of a messianic and



eschatological figure. It is in this context that Jesus applies that term to himself. A number of Scripture scholars would have seen nothing more than the kind of reference that you would get in Ezekiel, where the prophet himself is referred to as the son of man. Jesus clearly intends more by this term than human descent. He attaches eschatological significance to the term.

The clearest examples of Jesus as the Son of God are in John's Gospel, where he talks explicitly about his relationship to the Father. Even in the synoptics, he distinguishes himself from the rest of us when he says things like, "your father and my father." In a variety of oblique ways, Jesus makes the claim of being the Son of God.

– Elizabeth Solsburg



what does that symbol mean?

INRI and IHS

▶ **These letters are often seen as representative of Christ.** IHS stands for the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. INRI are the first letters of the Latin inscription that was ordered placed on the cross by Pilate – "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

LA FE: ¿Por qué Jesús se refiere a sí mismo como Hijo de Hombre, en vez de Hijo de Dios? ¿Qué significado tiene esto?

Padre Stevens: Jesús se identifica a sí mismo como Hijo de Hombre en vez de Hijo de Dios. El concepto de hijo de Dios no es solamente judío – también refleja la realeza oriental y el culto al emperador. Entonces, ¿por qué no se identificó Jesús como el Mesías, conforme al concepto judío? Él estaba renuente a adoptarlo debido a sus connotaciones de gloria terrenal y poder. El concepto de Hijo de Dios es una forma de hablar de David y Jesús se alinea con ello en ocasiones. Es claro que él cree ser el Mesías.

Hijo de hombre se basa en la figura misteriosa el Libro de Daniel. De cierto modo, el propósito de esta figura no es establecer el reinado terrenal, sino mediar. Jesús, el Hijo de Hombre e Hijo de Dios, tiende un puente entre el mudo de Dios y el mundo de la humanidad.

Padre Acklin: El término "Hijo de Dios" podría usarse para los santos, las personas sagradas y los profetas. En el concepto judío, no tenía la connotación que ahora tiene. Es más semejante a la connotación de nuestra palabra "humanidad" refiriéndose a todo el género humano. Hijo de hombre es el nombre usado en Ezequiel por Dios cuando se dirige al profeta – y con ello se dirige a todos los seres humanos. El otro significado se encuentra en el profeta Daniel, refiriéndose a toda la nación de Israel. Hijo de hombre quiere decir que toda la nación se alzó al cielo, igual que los huesos secos en Ezequiel. Jesús habla de sí mismo en tercera persona como Hijo de Hombre para decir "yo." En ocasiones silencia a aquellos que le llaman "Mesías" e "Hijo de Dios," prefiriendo llamarse Hijo de Hombre como un siervo que sufre, cuyo sufrimiento es por toda la gente.

Padre Muller: El término "hijo de hombre" por lo general se considera una alusión a Daniel, capítulo 7. En ese libro, parece tener el sentido de que Israel recibió de manera colectiva el dominio y la autori-

¿Hijo de Hombre? ¿Por qué Jesús se refiere a sí mismo como Hijo de Hombre, en vez de Hijo de Dios? ¿Qué significado tiene esto?

dad. Sin embargo, de esa época a la época de Jesús, el concepto del término cambió para aplicarlo a la naturaleza personificada de una figura mesiánica y escatológica. Es en este contexto donde Jesús aplica ese término a sí mismo. Varios estudiosos de las Sagradas Escrituras no pensarían que hay nada más que una especie de referencia que se obtiene en Ezequiel, donde se refieren al profeta mismo como hijo de hombre. Por supuesto, para Jesús este término tiene un sentido más amplio que la descendencia humana. Le confiere al término un significado escatológico.

Los ejemplos más claros de Jesús como Hijo de Dios están en el Evangelio de Juan, donde habla de modo explícito sobre la relación con el Padre. Incluso en los evangelios sinópticos, él se distingue del resto de nosotros con las frases como, "su padre y mi padre." En diversas maneras oblicuas, Jesús afirma ser el Hijo de Dios.

Elizabeth Solsburg

¿Que significa?

INRI e IHS

▶ **Estas letras a menudo se consideran como representativas de Cristo.** IHS representa las primeras tres letras del nombre de Jesús en griego. INRI representa las primeras letras de la inscripción latina que Poncio Pilato ordenó poner en la cruz – "Jesus Nazareno, Rey de los Judios."





They call her the goodbye girl. David Gates wrote in his 1970s hit song *Goodbye Girl* that goodbye doesn't mean forever.

This is a story of an individual who, even though she had to say goodbye to her loved ones, knew they'd be together again.

For the last seven years, Advent and Christmas have taken extra special meaning for Cordy Perez and her family.

And 7-year-old Matthew Jacob Perez is one big reason why.

For Cordy, he's a miracle baby.

However, before the story delves into the against-all-odds birth of Matthew Jacob and his younger brother, Gilbert, the story of their mother must be told.

A 16-year veteran of the Laredo Police Department, Detective Cordy Perez vividly recalls thinking nothing of the bruises appearing almost magically throughout her body.

"I was always tired and I was bruising everywhere," begins Cordy. "And

it was those awful black and purple bruises that I was getting everywhere."

As a precaution, she called her personal physician, Dr. Arturo Garza-Gongora

"It was New Year's Eve of 1996 and I was calling hoping to be seen in a few days, but he wanted to see me right away. I didn't understand what the big deal was."

Still thinking nothing of her doctor's urgency, she complied and had a Complete Blood Count done that afternoon in his office.

"He told me to go home and he would call me as soon as he had the results," said Cordy. "Dr. Garza-Gongora called that very evening and asked

me to bring my family and Ivan and to meet him at the hospital. There, they gave me a second CBC."

A normal person's white blood cell count is usually in a range of seven to 10-thousand. Mine," continued Cordy, "was 220,000."

By this time, family and close friends had gathered at the old Mercy Hospital speculating that this was a grave situation.

"My doctor spoke to my parents and explained the situation to them and then he came and told me that I needed to go to San Antonio immediately," said Cordy.

The local physician arranged for a seamless transfer to the San Antonio facility.



ELEVEN YEARS AGO CORDY WAS
**48 HOURS
FROM DEATH**

How she and her children are
miracles of the Holy Spirit

Le llaman la niña adiós. David Gates escribe, en su canción de éxito de la década de 1970, Goodbye Girl, que decir adiós no quiere decir para siempre.

Esta es una historia de un individuo, quien aunque tuvo que decirle adiós a sus seres queridos, ella sabía que estarían juntos otra vez.

Durante los últimos siete años, el Adviento y la Navidad han tenido un especial significado para Cordy Pérez y su familia.

Y Matthew Jacob Pérez, de siete años de edad, es una enorme razón del por qué.

Para Cordy, él es un Bebé de Milagro.

Sin embargo, antes de que la historia se profundice en el nacimiento, contra todas las posibilidades y esperanzas, de Matthew Jacob y su hermano menor Gilbert, es necesario decir la historia de la madre de ambos.

Una veterana de 16 años del Departamento de Policía de Laredo, la Detective Cordy Pérez, vividamente recuerda que nada pensaba de los moretones que aparecían como por magia en todo su cuerpo.

“Siempre estaba cansada y moreteada por

todos lados,” comienza diciendo Cordy. “Y eran aquellos terribles moretones, negros y morados, que me estaban saliendo por todos lados.”

Como una precaución, ella llamó a su médico personal para hacer una cita.

“Era la tarde del Año Nuevo de 1996, y le estaba hablando con la esperanza de que me podría ver en unos cuantos días. Pero cuando le dije al doctor lo que eran mis síntomas, me pidió que lo viera en el hospital inmediatamente,” continuó Cordy. “Era la tarde del Año Nuevo, y él quería verme enseguida. Yo no entendía cuál era la importancia tan aguda.”

Aun sin darle importancia a la urgencia del doctor, ella cumplió y le hicieron un Conteo Completo Sanguíneo (CBC) esa tarde.

Cuando llegaron los resultados, los asuntos comenzaron a empeorarse.

“El conteo de células blancas de la sangre en una persona normal, usualmente está en un rango de 7 a 10 mil. La mía,” continuó diciendo Cordy, “era 220,000.”

Para esa hora, la familia y los amigos cercanos, se juntaron en el viejo Hospital de la Merced, suponiendo que esto era una situación grave.

“Mi doctor le habló a mis padres y les explicó la situación, y entonces vino a decirme a mí que necesitaba irme inmediatamente a San Antonio,” dijo Cordy.

El médico local arregló una transferencia sin obstáculos a las instalaciones en San Antonio.

As Cordy left the Laredo hospital, Maria Teresa Hinojosa, a close family friend, handed her an item wrapped in aluminum foil.

"I thought they were tamales," said Cordy laughingly. "I mean, it was New Year's Eve and we were supposed to be gathered for this celebration and I hadn't eaten dinner. So I thought they were tamales. I swear the package felt hot, like tamales do."

Instead, it was something inexplicable.

"When I finally opened it that night, I was just shocked to what I find inside. It was a pair of ceramic hands holding the Holy Spirit," Cordy said with eyes watering. "I couldn't believe it and I can't explain it other than He was there with me in my time of need."

With her then-boyfriend Ivan by her side and her family in tow, Cordy finally arrived in San Antonio, only to hear disconcerting news.

"The oncologist, Rohit Kapoor, at Northwest Baptist told me that I had acute lymphoblastic leukemia. I was blown away."

On top of the devastating news, came more urgent news.

"He then told us that the next two weeks would be critical and that if she had waited another 48 hours, she would be dead," said her husband Ivan Perez. "Then he told us that if we believed in God, that this would be a good time to start praying."

And they did.

Fourteen days turned into three months, as Cordy endured therapy that required an intensive dosage of radiation and steroids.

"My immune system was so weak, I had to wear a mask and no outside food was allowed in my room. Nothing from the outside that could contaminate me was allowed into the room," explained Cordy. "And my hair just fell out in clumps."

But she never lost hope and her attitude was always positive.

"I received so much support from Ivan, my family and my friends. But it was the unexpected support that was really beautiful," said Cordy. "I received cards and letters wishing me well from people I didn't even know. This was very touching."

At that point in her law enforcement career, Cordy was involved in community outreach projects and had established a good rapport with many of the elementary schools in Laredo. Their fondness of this police officer was reflected in the outpouring of support she received during her stay in San Antonio.

"There were so many get-well cards and letters that they literally covered the wall in the hospital," said Cordy. "It was very uplifting."

After spending three months in San Antonio, Cordy was discharged and allowed to return to Laredo. But the chemotherapy didn't end there.

"For the next three years after that, I had to travel to San Antonio once a week for continued treatment," explained Cordy. "That's 156 consecutive weeks of chemo. It didn't matter if it was Christmas, New Year's or Easter, I still had to go and receive my treatment."

Finally, in January 2000, with the start of the new millennium came a new beginning for Cordy, as her chemotherapy finally ended.

"I survived and I felt I had been given a second chance," said a teary-eyed Cordy. "I often ask why I was allowed to live and not others. Why does God spare some of us and not others? I remember how Christy Garcia used to come and visit me when I was sick and so when she died, it was really very hard for me to accept. You almost feel guilty that



Al salir Cordy del hospital de Laredo, María Teresa Hinojosa, una amiga íntima de la familia, puso en manos de Cordy algo envuelto en papel de aluminio.

"Yo pensé que era tamales," dijo Cordy riéndose. "Es decir, como era la Noche de Año Nuevo, y se supone que nos juntamos para esta celebración, y yo no había cenado. Así que pensé que eran tamales. Les juro que el bulto se sentía caliente, tal como los tamales."

En vez de eso, era algo inexplicable.

"Cuando por fin lo abrí me sentí tan sorprendida de lo que encontré dentro de bulto. Era un par de manos cerámicas sosteniendo al Espíritu Santo," dijo Cordy con lágrimas en los ojos. "Yo no podía creerlo y no puedo explicarlo, salvo para decir que Él estaba allí conmigo en mis momentos de necesidad."

Con su entonces novio, Ivan, a su lado, y su familia enseguida, Cordy por fin llegó a San Antonio, solamente para escuchar noticias desconcertantes

"El oncólogo del hospital Northwest Baptist me dijo que yo tenía Leucemia Linfoblástica Aguda. Mi mente se fue volando."

Además de estas noticias devastadoras, llegaron más noticias urgentes.

"Entonces él nos dijo que las siguientes dos semanas serían críticas, y que si ella se hubiera esperado otras 48 horas, ya estaría muerta," dijo su esposo Ivan Perez. "Y entonces el médico nos dijo que si nosotros creíamos en Dios, que éste sería buen tiempo para comenzar a orar."

Y ellos lo hicieron.

you're alive. I questioned why me? And then I think of Alyssa Resendez. Why her and not me? She had a full life ahead of her."

However, the blessings would continue for Cordy, Ivan and the rest of her family. After being told that her chances of ever conceiving were

slim to none as a result of the treatment, Cordy and Ivan discovered that they were expecting five months after the chemotherapy had ended.

"I couldn't believe it," said Cordy. "After everything that we had been through and everything we had been told, I just couldn't believe it. We even ran the pregnancy test twice."

But the pregnancy came with challenges.

"We call Matthew the miracle baby for two reasons. The first, we weren't supposed to be able to conceive. The other was that he was born prematurely," explained Cordy.

Six months into the pregnancy, Cordy began feeling strong discomfort in her abdomen and was admitted into the emergency room at a local hospital. From there, she was taken to a San Antonio facility.

"It was Halloween night and they took me to the hospital at three in the morning," continued Cordy. "And Ivan wasn't there because he was at the National FBI Academy in Quantico, Va., for training. Things got very stressful."

Two days later, on All Souls Day 2000, Matthew entered this world weighing a scant one pound and 15 ounces.

"Fortunately, the FBI allowed Ivan to take a short leave and he was there for the birth. We immediately had Matthew baptized and we couldn't believe how small he was. He completely fit in my hand."

In a repeat of what initially happened with her bout with leukemia, Cordy again stayed in the hospital for three months before she was allowed



Los catorce días se convirtieron en 3 meses, mientras que Cordy aguantó la quimioterapia que requería una intensa dosis de radiación y esteroides.

"Mi sistema inmune estaba tan débil, que tuve que usar una máscara y ningún alimento de fuera se permitía en mi cuarto. Nada de afuera que podría contaminarme se permitía entrar a mi cuarto," explicó Cordy, "Y mi cabello comenzó a caerse en manojo."

Pero nunca perdió la esperanza y su actitud siempre fue positiva.

"Recibi tanto apoyo de Ivan, de mi familia y mis amigos. Pero fue el apoyo inesperado que realmente era hermoso," dijo Cordy, "Recibi tarjetas y cartas deseándome alivio de la gente que ni siquiera conocía. Eso fue una ternura gentil."

En ese momento de su carrera profesional policial, Cordy estaba involucrada en proyectos comunitarios y había establecido una buena comunicación con muchas de las escuelas primarias en Laredo. El cariño que le tenían a esta Oficial de Policía, se reflejaba en el cuantioso apoyo que ella recibía durante su estancia en San Antonio.

"Había tantas tarjetas y cartas deseándome alivio que casi cubrían la pared en el hospital," dijo Cordy. "Era algo muy animador."

Después de pasar un trimestre en San Antonio, le dieron de alta a Cordy y se le permitió regresar a Laredo. Pero la quimioterapia no terminó allí.

"Por los siguientes tres años, después de eso, tuve que viajar a San Antonio una vez por semana para tratamiento continuado," explicó Cordy. "Fueron 156 semanas consecutivas de quimioterapia. No importaba que fuera Navidad, Año Nuevo o Semana Santa, yo seguía teniendo que ir y recibir mi tratamiento."

Por fin, en enero de 2000, con el comienzo de un nuevo milenio, una nueva vida se inició para Cordy cuando su quimioterapia por fin terminó.

"Yo sobreviví y sentía que me habían dado una nueva oportunidad," dijo Cordy con ojos llorosos. "Yo con frecuencia pregunto: ¿por qué se me permitió vivir y a otros no? ¿Por qué Dios nos permite a algunos de nosotros y a otros no? Yo recuerdo como Christy Garcia me venía a visitar cuando yo estaba enferma, así es que cuando ella murió, fue muy difícil para mí aceptarlo. Uno se siente casi culpable de que todavía está viviendo. Y yo preguntaba: ¿Por qué yo? Y entonces me acuerdo de Alyssa Resendez. ¿Por qué ella, y yo no? A ella le quedaba una vida llena por adelante."

Sin embargo, las bendiciones continuarían para Cordy, para Ivan y el resto de su familia. Después de que le habían dicho que sus oportuni-



to bring Matthew home.

"I consider it all a miracle. It's a miracle that I was able to conceive and that Matthew was able to survive being born so prematurely," said an emotional Cordy. "He wasn't supposed to be born until February 2001 and he came on the second day of November and he survived. I was blessed again."

The miracle didn't end there.

In 2002, Cordy again defied the odds and gave birth to their second child – Gilbert.

But not before undergoing a series of complications.

"In 2002 when I was pregnant with Gilbert, I began to dilate at 18-weeks and my doctor told me that I would more than likely lose the baby," explained Cordy.



"I went in for emergency surgery and was given full bed rest. I was also diagnosed with Gestational Diabetes. Despite everything, I still had a healthy and beautiful boy."

And it was through these tribulations that Cordy's faith grew stronger.

"I don't understand how anyone can question if there is a God," said Cordy. "I can't recite Scripture, but I can tell you that God exists and has given us so much. To say that I am blessed is an understatement."

Taking the road less traveled has cultivated an immense appreciation for everything in life and has cemented her faith.

"Throughout this whole ordeal, she was never sad," said Ivan. "Through everything that we've been through over the years, she was always laughing and having a good time."

And it was her faith in God that has enabled her to smile and find peace in her turbulent life.

"More of us need to have faith. This is what has gotten me through everything," said Cordy.

To this day, Cordy is reminded of her travails. Every year she has a needle a foot long pricked into her hip bone. It withdraws bone marrow for analysis in an effort to monitor the recurrence of leukemia.

Even now, the goodbye girl is able to smile and give thanks for simply being here. After all, she's home at last. ☺

dades de concebir casi nulas, como resultado del tratamiento, Cordy e Ivan descubrieron que estaban esperando bebé a los seis meses de haber terminado la quimioterapia.

"Yo no lo podía creer," dijo Cordy. "Después de haber pasado por todas las cosas y todo lo que nos habían dicho, pues yo simplemente no lo podía creer. Hasta hicimos la prueba de embarazo dos veces."

Pero el embarazo vino con retos.

"Le llamamos a Matthew el Bebé de Milagro por dos razones. La primera es que, supuestamente, no podíamos concebir. La segunda es que nació prematuramente," explicó Cordy.

A los cinco meses de embarazo, Cordy comenzó a sentir fuerte dolor en su abdomen y fue admitida a un cuarto de emergencia de un hospital local. De allí fue llevada a unas instalaciones en San Antonio.

"Fue la Noche de Halloween y me llevaron al hospital a las tres de la mañana. Ivan no estaba allí, porque estaba en la Academia de Quantico, Virginia, tomando un curso de entrenamiento del FBI," dijo Cordy. "Las cosas estaban de mucha presión."

Dos días después, el Día de Todos los Santos del 2000, Matthew entró este mundo con el peso de escasamente una libra y 15 onzas.

"Afortunadamente, el FBI le permitió a Ivan un corto recreo y estuvo allí para el nacimiento. Inmediatamente logramos que se bautizara Matthew y no podíamos creer que estaba tan pequeño. Caba completamente en mi mano."

En una repetición de lo que inicialmente sucedió en su lucha con leucemia, Cordy otra vez se quedó en el hospital por tres meses, antes de que se le permitiera llevarse a casa a Matthew.

"Yo lo considero un milagro. Es un milagro de que yo pudiera concebir y que Matthew pudo sobrevivir habiendo nacido prematuramente," dijo emocionalmente Cordy. "El no debía haber nacido hasta febrero de 2001, y llegó el segundo día de noviembre... y sobrevivió. Yo fui bendecida otra vez."

El milagro no termina allí.

En 2002, Cordy, una vez más, se lidió con las desventajas, y dio a luz al segundo hijo de la pareja – Gilbert.

"Yo no entiendo como cualquiera puede preguntar si hay un Dios," dijo Cordy. "Yo no puedo recitar las Escrituras, pero si le puedo decir que Dios existe y nos ha dado tanto. Decir que yo he sido bendecida es una declaración insuficiente."

Tomando el camino menos viajado ha cultivado en ella una inmensa gratitud por todo en su vida y ha cementado su fe.

"A través de todo estos tumultos, ella nunca estuvo triste," dijo Ivan. "A través de todo lo que hemos pasado durante los años, ella siempre reía y se divertía."

Y era su fe en Dios que le ha permitido sonreír y encontrar la paz en su turbulenta vida.

"La mayoría de nosotros necesitamos tener fe. Esto es lo que a mí me ha permitido pasar por todo," dijo Cordy.

Hasta este día, Cordy ha tenido que recordar sus problemas. Cada año, una aguja de 12 pulgadas es inyectada en el hueso de su cuádril para extraer médula ósea para análisis en un esfuerzo de monitorio de la ocurrencia de leucemia.

Aun ahora la niña adiós (goodbye girl) puede sonreír y dar gracias simplemente por estar aquí. Después de todo, está, por fin, en su casa. ☺

Is Christmas making you crazy? How a shift in focus can help you be a more peaceful parent

As we pray for international peace during the Advent season, parents often have immediate concerns for preparing a tranquil family Christmas. I've found Advent challenging because it coincides with deadlines for exams and grades. When my four children were young, I began spreading Christmas shopping over months, searching for bargains. Now that they make purchases on their own as Christmas nears I wonder if I've done a "good job." I start balancing amounts in my head. Is this fair? Should I make one more purchase? Even things out? I have to rein myself in, reminding myself that when the voice cries, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him" (Mt 3:3) that our preparation is not about giving the right gifts to one another in honor of Jesus' birth! The straight path is an interior preparation and peace comes from our relationship with God.

Allow time as parents to experience the gentle guidance of the shepherd.

▶▶ "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young." (Isaiah 40:11) Many a stained glass window shows the comforting sight of Jesus carrying a lamb. But it is reassuring to know that he is guiding parents as well. How is God relating to you as a parent this Advent? Are there discoveries that will lead to stronger relationships or healing in the family? The parenting journey is one that lasts a lifetime. Has a younger generation expressed interest in hosting the Christmas dinner? Has there been a spiraling trend toward more expensive gifts? It may be that, despite the gentleness of the dialogue, there are prospects of change that seem disconcerting. Following God's will might not feel "peaceful" at first because it runs contrary to our habits.

"A heart at peace gives life to the body ... " (Proverbs 14:30)

▶▶ There are many physical demands to parenthood, as Mary and Joseph knew well with their journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth in the stable and the flight to Egypt. Parents struggle to get up night after night with newborns, wondering when the baby is going to sleep through the night. Preschoolers have bad dreams and there are long nights tending to feverish children. Parents of adolescents catch catnaps waiting for teens to come home from dates. Sometimes, "empty" nests are re-feathered and grandparents help out young families. Being a parent can be exhausting! This Christmas season, try to find one personal activity that brings your own heart peace. Make time for prayer and connect with your church community — it may help bring life to your body!

— Dr. Cathleen McGreal



¿La Navidad lo está volviendo loco? Cómo un cambio de enfoque puede ayudarle a ser un padre más paciente

Mientras oramos por la paz mundial durante la época del Advenimiento, los padres con frecuencia tienen preocupaciones inmediatas por preparar una tranquila Navidad familiar. Encuentro que el Advenimiento es un desafío toda vez que coincide con fechas de exámenes y calificaciones. Cuando mis cuatro hijos eran pequeños comencé a espaciar las compras navideñas durante meses, en busca de ofertas. Ahora que ellos hacen sus propias compras a medida que se acerca la Navidad, me pregunto si he hecho un "buen trabajo." Comienzo a hacer cuentas en la cabeza. ¿Es razonable? ¿Debo hacer esta otra compra? ¿Equilibrar las cosas? Debo controlarme, debo recordar que cuando la voz exclama, "Preparad el camino para el Señor, enderezad todas sus sendas" (Mateo 3:3) inuestra preparación no es para darnos los obsequios adecuados en honor al nacimiento de Jesús! La senda recta es una preparación interna y la paz emana de nuestra relación con Dios.

Dediquen tiempo como padres para experimentar la noble orientación del Pastor.

▶▶ "Como pastor que apacienta a su rebaño: que recoge en su brazo a los corderitos y los lleva en su seno y conduce suavemente a las ovejas que amamantan." (Isaías 40:11) Muchos vitrales muestran la reconfortante visión de Jesús llevando un cordero. Sin embargo, también es reconfortante saber que nos guía también como padres. ¿Cómo se relaciona Dios con usted como padre en este Advenimiento? ¿Existen descubrimientos que llevarán a establecer relaciones más sólidas o curación en la familia? La travesía de ser padres dura toda la vida. ¿La generación más joven ha expresado su interés en fungir como anfitriona de la cena de Navidad? ¿Ha habido una tendencia disparatada hacia obsequios más costosos? Es posible que a pesar de la apacibilidad del diálogo, existan prospectos de cambio que parezcan disconcertantes. El seguir la voluntad de Dios tal vez no sea "apacible" en un principio ya que es contraria a nuestros hábitos.

"Un corazón tranquilo es la vida de la carne ... " (Proverbios 14:30)

▶▶ Ser padres implica muchas exigencias físicas, como bien lo sabrían María y José con su viaje a Belén, el nacimiento de Jesús en el establo y la huida a Egipto. Los padres luchan por levantarse noche tras noche con los recién nacidos, preguntándose cuándo dormirá el bebé la noche completa. Los preescolares tienen pesadillas y hay noches largas en donde se cuida a niños con fiebre. Los padres de adolescentes dormitan mientras esperan que sus hijos lleguen a casa de sus citas. A veces, los nidos "vacíos" se vuelven a emplumar y los abuelos ayudan a las familias jóvenes. ¡Ser padres puede resultar agotador! En esta época Navideña traten de encontrar una actividad personal que les traiga su propia paz al corazón. Destinen tiempo para orar y pónganse en contacto con la iglesia de su comunidad, ¡puede traerles vida al cuerpo!

— Dr. Cathleen McGreal

Manuel the modest has a good ring to it, right?

No, it's not the title of a past pope or anything of the sort. Instead, it's a good description of Manuel de Jesus Osorio of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Laredo.

There are people like Manuel throughout this diocese active in their respective parish. But few, if any, are just like Manuel.

At 23 years of age, Manuel has dedicated the last 17 years of his life to the Catholic Church – and he's a jack of all trades and an invaluable asset to his parish.

Just ask his former mentor at St. Louis Catholic University in Missouri. Whether in Laredo or St. Louis, Manuel has always put church first and has always been a resource.

"There's Manuel taking care of the church's finances. There's Manuel planning and leading a Spanish Mass for students. No, I must be wrong. There's Manuel pastoring and nourishing the lives of Reinert residents,"

A Manuel, el Modesto, ¿suena bonito, ¿verdad?

No, no es el título de un Papa del pasado, ni nada semejante. En vez, es una buena descripción de Manuel de Jesús Osorio, de la Parroquia de San Vicente de Paúl en Laredo.

Hay personas como Manuel por toda esta diócesis, activas en sus respectivas parroquias, pero son pocas, si es que hay alguna, tal como es Manuel.

A la edad de 23 años, Manuel ha dedicado los últimos 17 años de su vida a la Iglesia Católica y es perito en todas las actividades, así como un valioso tesoro para su parroquia.

Nada mas pregunténle a su anterior mentor en la Universidad Católica en St. Louis, Missouri. Ya sea en Laredo o en St. Louis, Manuel siempre ha colocado a la Iglesia en primer lugar y siempre ha sido una fuente de bien.

"Allí está Manuel, cuidando las finanzas de la Iglesia. Allí está Manuel, planeando una Misa en Español para estudiantes. No, creo que me equivoque. Allí está Manuel pastoreando y alimentando de los Residentes Reinert," dijo Sor Jeannine Declue. "A veces estoy segura de que Manuel es

A lay person's vocation

A modest
Servant



“After taking that course, I began to better and further understand the sanctity of the Mass ... the significance of everything that goes on during the liturgy. It’s beyond fulfilling a Sunday obligation.

said Sister Jeannine Declue. “At times I’m sure that Manuel has been my personal savior by helping me in my duties as campus minister and saving me when I needed help. Isn’t that Manuel preaching in action?”

He began his lay vocation as an altar server. By the time Manuel enrolled at Cigarroa Middle School in Laredo, he had assumed oversight of the entire altar server program for his parish.

“By that time, I was already training other kids to be altar servers and was assigning them to serve at the different Masses,” said Manuel.

As time passed, Manuel’s thirst for knowledge and love of the church grew. As a freshman at Cigarroa High, Manuel was invited by his CCD coordinator, Graciela Ramirez, to attend a liturgy and sacraments workshop offered by the Pastoral Institute of the Western Vicariate of the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

“Brother Bob Warren taught the course and I was the only teenager at the seminar,” said Manuel. “Almost everyone there could’ve been my parent. I was a little afraid because of the age difference.”

But he knew he loved church and, through this seminar, he discovered a new love – the liturgy.

“After taking that course, I began to better and further understand the sanctity of the Mass,” explained Manuel. “I mean, your mind opens up to beyond what you see on Sunday like the procession. Now I began to really understand the significance of everything that goes on during the liturgy. It’s beyond fulfilling a Sunday obligation. It was understanding what the Mass is.”

After completing the 14-week course, Manuel’s responsibilities grew within the parish.

“I became the sacristan for St. Vincent,” said Manuel. “Be-

mi salvador personal, ayudándome en mis deberes como ministra de estudiantes, y salvándome cuando he necesitado ayuda. ¿Verdad que este es Manuel, predicando en acción?”

Comenzó su vocación laica como monaguillo, y para cuando Manuel se inscribió en la escuela Secundaria Cigarroa en Laredo, ya se encargaba de vigilar todo el programa de servicios de monaguillos en su parroquia.

“Para esas fechas yo ya estaba entrenando a otros niños para ser monaguillos y los estaba asignando para servir en distintas Misas,” dijo Manuel.

Al paso del tiempo, la sed que Manuel tenía para conocer y amar a la iglesia, fue creciendo. Como principiante de la Preparatoria Cigarroa, Manuel fue invitado por su coordinador de CCD, Graciela Ramirez, a asistir a los cursos de liturgia y sacramentos ofrecidos por el Instituto Pastoral del Vicario Occidental de la Diócesis de Corpus Christi.

“El Hermano Bob Warren (FMS), dirigía el curso y yo era el único adolescente en el seminario,” dijo Manuel. “Casi todos podrían haber sido mi padre. Yo tenía un poco de miedo debido a la diferencia entre edades.”

Pero, él sabía que amaba a la iglesia y mediante este seminario descubrió un nuevo amor—la liturgia.

“Después de tomar ese curso, yo comencé a mejor, y más ampliamente, entender la santidad de la Misa,” explicó Manuel. “Es decir, tu mente se abre más allá de lo que estas viendo el Domingo, como la procesión. Ahora comencé realmente a entender el significado de todo lo que sucede durante la liturgia. Es algo más allá de sólo cumplir con una obligación dominical. Era estar entendiendo lo que la Misa es.”

Después de terminar el curso de 14 semanas, las responsabi-



lidades de Manuel crecieron dentro de la parroquia.

“Yo llegué a ser Sacristán para San Vicente,” dijo Manuel. “Entre la escuela, la banda de música y la iglesia, no tenía tiempo para hacer otras cosas.”

Otros lo notaron también, como su madre, Amanda.

“Desde que llegue a sacristán, ella se ha vuelto un poco celosa por el poco tiempo que paso en casa. Pero como le dije entonces, y se lo sigo diciendo ahora, yo podría estar haciendo mucha otras cosas que son bastante más malas. Pasando mucho tiempo en la iglesia, no es una cosa mala.”

Mientras que más se emergió en la parroquia Manuel, con mayor gozo lo aceptaba. Al pasar el tiempo, él descubrió un viejo órgano en la iglesia cubierto con un mantel de vinilo.

Lo destapé un día y comencé a tocar las teclas y el Padre

tween school, band and the church, I didn't have time to do much else."

Others noticed this, like his mother Amanda.

"Ever since I became the sacristan, she's become a little jealous of the little time I spend at home. But, as I told her then and I still tell her now, I could be doing a lot of other things that are a whole lot worse. Spending a lot of time at church isn't a bad thing."

The more immersed Manuel became in the parish, the more he took on with glee. As time went on, he discovered an old organ in the church covered by a vinyl tablecloth.

"I uncovered it one day and messed around with it and Father Alberto heard me and asked if I knew how to play," said Manuel. "Obviously, I didn't. So he gave me some lessons and it took off from there."

Before he knew it, the man of many talents was performing for weddings at the church.

Then came the hard part. Upon graduating from Cigarroa High, Manuel left Laredo for St. Louis Catholic University in Missouri.

"I was shocked! It was culture shock," he exclaimed. "I never knew what it was like to be a minority. I don't even think of myself as a minority. But at St. Louis University, Hispanics comprise about 1 percent of the student population."

The apprehension soon gave way as Manuel found common ground in the universal Catholic Church through the campus ministry.

"The chapel on campus is bigger than any church I've ever been to," Manuel said laughingly. "It's called a chapel, but it seats about 2,000 people. It's huge."

The size of the church wasn't the only thing to catch his attention.

"It was there that I realized what an important role lay Catholics play in the day-to-day activities of the church," Manuel said. "It was there that I learned that we all are the church."

His affinity for the liturgy also grew as he took various courses during his three-year stint at St. Louis University. Lisa Reiter, the current director of campus ministry at the university, took Manuel under her wing and taught him more about the liturgy.

"The most important thing that I learned from her was that

no matter how much or how little you know about the liturgy, there is always a place for you in the church," said Manuel. "It doesn't matter if you are a man or woman, religious or lay, the church needs us all and we are all the church. I also learned to be by the book without sacrificing

Alberto me escuchó y me preguntó que si sabía tocar", dijo Manuel. "Obviamente, no sabía. Así que me dio algunas lecciones... y de allí empezó la cosa."

Antes de darse cuenta, el hombre de muchos talentos estaba tocando en Misas de Matrimonio en la Iglesia. Luego llegó la parte dura. Al graduarse de la Preparatoria Cigarroa, Manuel se fue de Laredo para estudiar en la Universidad Católica de



St. Louis en Missouri.

"¡Yo estaba sorprendido! Era un choque cultural," exclamó. "Nunca había sabido como era estar en un minoría. Ni siquiera se me había ocurrido que yo era parte de una minoría. Pero en la Universidad de St. Louis, los hispanicos componen sólo como el 1% de la población escolar."

Esta preocupación pronto desapareció cuando Manuel encontró suelo común en el universo de la Iglesia Católica, mediante del ministerio estudiantil.

"La Capilla en la Universidad es más grande que cualquier templo que he conocido," dijo Manuel riendo. "Se le llama Capilla, pero tiene lugar para 2,000 personas. ¡Es enorme!"

Y el tamaño de la iglesia no fue lo único que le llamó la atención.

"Fue allí donde me di cuenta del importante papel que desempeñan de los Católicos laicos en las actividades cotidianas de la iglesia," dijo Manuel. "Fue allí donde aprendí que todos somos la iglesia."

Su afinidad para la liturgia también creció al estar en varios cursos durante su estancia de tres años en la Universidad de St. Louis. Lisa Reiter, la Directora de Ministerios Estudiantiles en la Universidad Católica, colocó a Manuel bajo sus alas y le enseñó mucho más acerca de la liturgia.

"La cosa más importante que aprendí de ella, fue que no importa que tanto sabes, o lo poco que sabes, de la liturgia, siempre habrá un lugar para ti en la Iglesia," dijo Manuel. "Y no importa si tú eres hombre o mujer, religioso o laico, la iglesia nos necesita a todos y todos somos la iglesia. También aprendí que debemos actuar sin sacrificar las costumbres tradicionales locales. Como los matlachines, ellos no están incluidos en las Instrucciones Generales del Misal Romano (GERM) pero son un regalo de nuestra cultura indígena y son aceptados en toda esta región."

Viniendo de un hogar humilde, Manuel regresó a Laredo un año antes de recibir su título de licenciatura, debido a problemas económicos. Los préstamos de estudiantes se aumentaron y los



local and traditional customs. Like the matlachines – they aren't included in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal but are a gift from our indigenous culture and are accepted throughout this region.”

Coming from a humble household, Manuel returned to Laredo a year shy of graduating with a bachelor's degree as a result of economics. The student loans mounted and the financial resources at home were strained. It was a difficult time.

“It was a very emotional time for me. I made a lot of close friends over there and I was singing in the church choir among other things,” said Manuel. “Leaving them was difficult and made me very sad. I lost sleep as I was frustrated and felt somewhat like a failure.”

In the summer of 2005, Manuel was back in Laredo and unemployed. So he turned to the one place he knew well – the Catholic Church.

“I was very lucky to find a job at KHOY, the Catholic radio station,” explained Manuel. “I quickly came to love my new job and returned to the same level of activity at my old parish.”

That would be an understatement. In addition to playing the organ for weddings and Mass, Manuel resumed his sacristan duties and began teaching CCD classes at St. Vincent. He also became a popular request for leading the praying of the rosary as part of the Vigil of the Deceased.

In addition to all this, Manuel is also a licensed bingo operator for his parish and spends three days a week fundraising for St. Vincent de Paul.

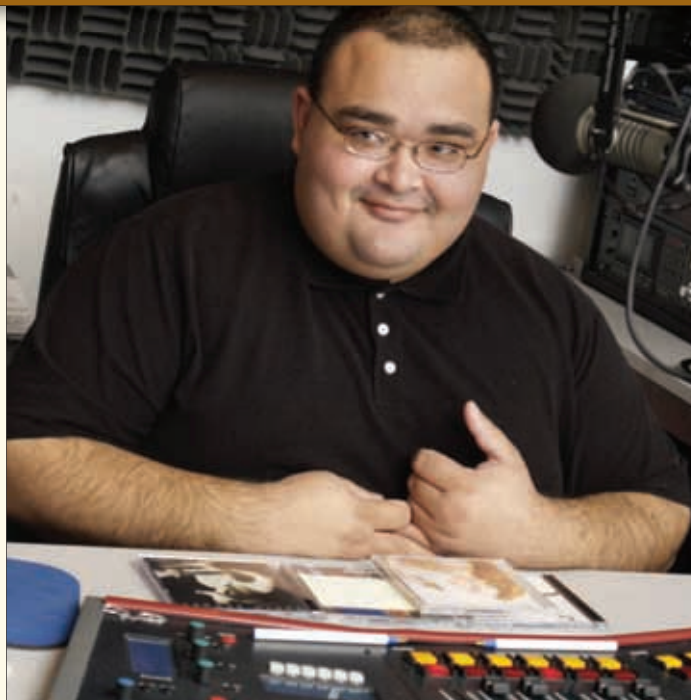
“The most important thing that I learned from her was that no matter how much or how little you know about the liturgy, there is always a place for you in the church.”

On a diocesan level, Manuel became the go-to guy for multiple projects and endeavors, from driving Bishop James A. Tamayo on out-of-town trips to designing the diocesan Web site.

“Manuel became an invaluable asset to this diocese very quickly,” said Bennett McBride, general manager and vice president of Laredo Catholic Communications. “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 Manuel.”

Bishop Tamayo agrees.

“I believe Manuel is shining example of good stewardship. He is giving of himself in time, talent and treasure without asking for anything in return,” explained Bishop Tamayo. “He gives his all for the church and he does it Todo Con Amor.” ☺



recursos financieros en casa eran escasos. Era un tiempo difícil.

“Fue una época muy emocional para mí. Había hecho muchos amigos cercanos allá y estaba cantando en la iglesia, entre otras cosas.” Dijo Manuel. “Yéndome entonces fue difícil, y me entristeció mucho. Perdí el sueño y estaba frustrado, y me sentía como un fracasado.”

En el verano del 2005 Manuel se encontraba en Laredo, sin empleo. Así es que se dirigió al único lugar que conocía bien – la Iglesia Católica.

“Tuve la gran fortuna de encontrar un trabajo en KHOY, la estación de radio Católica,” explicó Manuel. “Rápidamente me enamoré de mi nuevo trabajo y regresé al mismo nivel de actividad en mi parroquia anterior.”

Esa sería una declaración no muy apropiada. Pues, además de tocar el órgano para Matrimonios y Misas, Manuel continuó sus deberes de sacristán y comenzó a dar clases de CCD en San Vicente. También llegó, por demanda popular, a guiar las oraciones del Rosario como parte de la Vigilia de los Difuntos.

Además de todo esto, Manuel también es un Director de Lotería (bingo) con licencia, para su parroquia y dedica tres días de la semana a recaudar fondos para San Vicente de Paúl.

Al nivel diocesano, Manuel llegó a ser la persona a quien acudir para múltiples proyectos y esfuerzos, desde manejar como chofer del Obispo James A. Tamayo en viajes fuera de la ciudad, hasta diseñar la página de computacional de la diócesis.

“Manuel llegó a ser una fuente muy valiosa para esta diócesis muy rápidamente,” dijo Bennett McBride, gerente general y vicepresidente de Laredo Catholic Communications. “Yo no creo que Manuel sabe como decir “no” a cualquiera. Si tiene tiempo, te ayudará. Pregúntenle a cualquier departamento de la diócesis y ellos probablemente han sido ayudados, en un momento u otro, por Manuel.”

El Obispo Tamayo está de acuerdo.

“Yo creo que Manuel es un brillante ejemplo de buena administración. Está dando de tiempo, talento y tesoro sin pedir nada de regreso,” exclamó el Obispo Tamayo. “El da su todo para la iglesia y lo hace Todo Con Amor.” ☺

romance



The couple that prays together ...

► When going to church, we may not always be mindful of how our marriage sacrament is alive to others. If possible, avoid sitting in the pew as “bookends,” separated with your children between the two of you. Sit next to each other, side-by-side. Hold hands as you pray and sing together.

money



Acquaint yourself with your finances

► Both partners in a marriage should know the ins and outs of the joint finances. Make sure you know what’s in your accounts, what your household debts are and where all the important papers are. Consider a folder labeled “important stuff” containing account numbers, passwords and insurance information.



He said She said what do they do?

Dawn and Sam have been married for 15 years. They have three children under the age of 14. Sam’s mother is widowed and has some health problems. Sam wants her to move in.

I want my mother to move in

he says

Sam says: My mom is a diabetic and I worry about her living alone now that my dad is gone. I believe families should stick together and take care of each other, so I’d like her to live with us. We have room, as long as two of the kids share. This is my mother we’re talking about; I can’t believe Dawn doesn’t understand why we should ask her to move here.

I don’t

she says

Dawn says: Sam’s mom is not an invalid, and could live on her own quite easily. And we hardly have any time to ourselves as it is, after we’ve taken care of the kids. I know Sam loves his mother, but she is not the easiest woman to get along with, believe me. I don’t think I can deal with two women in the same household.

I know Sam loves his mother, but she is not the easiest woman to get along with ...

expert says

Intergenerational care-taking is becoming a hot topic in many families. We have all heard about the “sandwich generation” – those who have elderly parents and are still caring for children. In a family, the core unit is the marriage – it is the heart and stabilizing force. Couples should prioritize this important relationship always. This is easier said than done. Often, we take our spouse for

granted and assume he or she is self-sufficient. In caring for elderly parents, we always need to talk to our partners and listen to their thoughts, feelings and needs.

So, first and foremost, Sam needs to listen to Dawn’s concerns: What are the problems and challenges she sees? What are the benefits? How will this decision impact their home life and their children? Sam can talk about his concerns for mom and his feelings now that his father is



not there to care for her. I would also encourage Sam to talk to any other siblings in his family who could help ensure their mom's safety and well-being. It's possible that some of his brothers or sisters may feel the same worry and together they can ensure Mom's health and safety and not overburden one child/family. Having a relative move in to your household is not a decision to be taken lightly. Dawn's concerns of getting along and two women in a household are very valid and need to be discussed thoroughly. Is there a solution to this issue that will create a win-win solution? Helping his mom at the cost of a marriage does not seem like a win-win answer. It's important that the couple work as a team. Remember, the marital relationship is priority.

Another very important step is to talk to Mom. What is she thinking and feeling? Does she think she needs help? Often, elderly people do not agree with their families about what should be done for them. They want to remain independent for as long as possible. Often, with a minimal amount of support from us, our loved ones can remain independent and are usually happier. The first step is to do an objective assessment of what Mom needs help with. She should be included in this assessment. It is not helpful for Mom to feel overlooked or ignored in this process. She will be more willing to accept needed help if she is respected in this process, and this means treating her like an adult. She should make her own decisions if possible.

There are many alternative answers to this issue without Sam's mom moving in with Dawn and Sam.

communication



Good marriage

► While it's important to do things as a couple, you also need to develop interests of your own. By spending time on your hobbies, reading or community activities, you enrich your creativity and gain something new to talk about with your spouse!

time



It's about time...!

► Make loving memories, not misery. Spouses make a choice each time they are together. It is either a choice to make loving memories of how God has blessed you with your spouse, or it is a choice to focus on the rough and bumpy road behind us, with us, and stretching out in front of us. God gave us a free will to make the choice. Loving memories take less effort to maintain.

Dawn y Sam se casaron hace 15 años. Tienen tres hijos menores de 14 años. La madre de Sam es viuda y tiene algunos problemas de salud. Sam desea que se mude con ellos.

El dice: Quiero que mi madre se mude con nosotros

Sam dice: Mi madre es diabética y me preocupa que viva sola ahora que mi padre ya no está. Creo que las familias deben mantenerse unidas y cuidarse entre sí, por ello me gustaría que viviera con nosotros. Tenemos lugar, si dos de los niños comparten una habitación. Se trata de mi madre; no puedo creer que Dawn no entienda que le debemos pedir que se mude con nosotros.

Ella dice: Yo no

Dawn dice: La madre de Sam no es una inválida y bien podría vivir sola. Además, tal como están las cosas, casi no tenemos tiempo para nosotros, ni siquiera después de haber atendido a los niños. Sé que Sam quiere a su madre, pero no es fácil llevarse con una mujer como ella, créanme. Pienso que no podré lidiar con dos mujeres bajo el mismo techo.

Los expertos dicen: El cuidado entre generaciones se está convirtiendo en un tema candente en muchas familias. Todos hemos escuchado sobre la "generación sándwich" – aquellos que tienen padres mayores y aún cuidan de niños.

En la familia, el núcleo es el matrimonio – es el corazón y la fuerza estabilizadora. Las parejas siempre deben priorizar esta importante relación. Resulta más fácil decirlo que hacerlo. A menudo, no apreciamos a nuestro cónyuge como es debido y suponemos que él o ella son autosuficientes. Cuando nos hacemos cargo de nuestros padres mayores, siempre debemos hablar con nuestras parejas y escuchar lo que piensan, lo que sienten y necesitan.

Así que, ante todo, Sam debe

escuchar las inquietudes de Dawn: ¿Cuáles son los problemas y retos que ella considera? ¿Cuáles son los beneficios? ¿Cómo impactará esta decisión en su vida familiar y en sus hijos? Sam puede hablar acerca de su preocupación por su madre y de sus sentimientos ahora que su padre ya no está allí para cuidarla. También sugiero a Sam que hable con algún otro hermano o hermana en su familia que pudiese ayudar a garantizar la seguridad y el bienestar de su madre. Es posible que alguno de sus hermanos o hermanas sienta la misma preocupación y que juntos puedan garantizar la salud y la seguridad de la madre y no abrumar a un hijo o a una familia. El hecho de que algún familiar se mude al hogar de uno no es una decisión que deba tomarse a la ligera. Las preocupaciones de Dawn sobre llevarse bien y sobre dos mujeres compartiendo el mismo techo deben discutirse a fondo. ¿Existe una solución a este problema que cree una solución en donde ambas partes se beneficien? Ayudar a su madre a costa de su matrimonio no parece ser una solución que beneficie a ambas partes. Es importante que la pareja trabaje en equipo. No hay que olvidar que la relación matrimonial es prioritaria.

Otro paso importante es hablar con mamá. ¿Qué piensa y qué siente? ¿Considera que necesita ayuda? A menudo, la gente mayor no está de acuerdo con sus familiares sobre lo que debe hacerse por ellos. Desean seguir siendo independientes el mayor tiempo posible. Con frecuencia, con una cantidad mínima de apoyo por parte de nosotros, nuestros seres queridos pueden continuar siendo independientes y por lo general así están más felices. El primer paso es realizar una evaluación objetiva de qué tipo de ayuda necesita mamá. Ella debe ser tomada en cuenta en esta evaluación. No es de gran ayuda para mamá que la pasen por alto o la ignoren en este proceso. Ella estará más dispuesta a aceptar la ayuda necesaria si se le respeta en este proceso y ello significa tratarla como un adulto. Ella debe tomar sus propias decisiones si es posible.

Existen muchas soluciones alternativas a este problema sin que la madre de Sam se mude a casa de Dawn y Sam. – Deb McCormack

This has been difficult for me to write because, just before I was asked to write it, I was going through a dark time myself! God's timing, though. I'll reveal some of the fruit of my own struggle. How can we work through our dark times – and even find joy – when we feel joyless?

We all go through times when we are down or low. Some people suffer from this more than others, especially during the holidays. Why is this? Holidays are supposed to be fun and joyful! Many times they are, but they also can open up painful memories and instill extra anxieties. Sometimes depression is related to a chemical imbalance caused by a lack of light. The winter blues are real; doctors have studied the condition and appropriately named it Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. During the winter months, daylight wanes and darkness grows, triggering chemical changes in our bodies that can lead to sadness or anxiety.

Of course, the holidays bring other factors that can trigger "the blues." They add stress to people who are already stressed, work for people who are already over-worked and expectations on those already pushed to the limit. There are increased financial and social demands. People may feel overwhelmed because they have to shop, go to parties, host parties themselves, decorate, send cards – and do it all in a couple weeks. Somewhere in all this, we can lose Jesus. Now that is depressing!

Also, because holidays are often very special family times, those who have lost loved ones may feel their absence more acutely. Holidays become a painful reminder of loss. And then, of course, we all are faced with the emptiness of over-commercialization, which blurs the true meaning of the season and real source of our joy – Jesus Christ.

How can a person deal with the blues that can come in this season? We cannot be little Grinches who try to steal Christmas, nor Scrooges who "bah! humbug!" it away. Feelings of gloom do not go away by turning off the season.

One thing I have found helpful is to understand that dejection is not an enemy, but a sign. It is emotional darkness that points us to "move on, change your attitude and thinking." My little nephew was reaching for a hot plate and someone yelled, "NO! HOT!" He stopped immediately. The words "No! Hot!" were a sign



Feeling down?

how to find joy when you feel joyless – beating depression during the holidays

he understood. When people suffer feelings of melancholy, they may become frozen in a place of pain or anxiety. The dark feelings produce more sad thoughts that, in turn, produce more bad feelings. "O what a wretch I am," says St Paul. "Who will save me from this? Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord." (cf. Romans 7:13-25)

Yes, Jesus saves us from all things! He saves us from this. To draw out of our distress we make a choice to draw close to Jesus. We stand in his light. When we do, the darkness shrinks. How interesting to know that to treat SAD, the sufferer is treated by being exposed to more light! He or she feels better by being in the light!

The good news of this season is this, "Today in David's city a Savior has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord." (Lk 2:11) Today! Just hearing that proclamation can bring us out of a dark place. The present, the here and now, is the moment at which eternity touches us. God is eternally now. Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. God makes every day and every moment new.

If we start to think of sadness as a sign that says, "No! Hot!," we can begin to break the pattern of dark thoughts and feelings. We can turn our thoughts to Jesus, our light. His light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it. (John 1:2) So when we focus on dark feelings, we must hear our minds say, "No! Hot! Do not go there." Instead, seek Jesus. Say his name. Think about him as a baby in the manger. How poor. How little. He wants you to be there with him. He is happy you are there with him.

When the shepherds were in the fields, it was night. But in the darkness, God was there! Angels exploded the darkness and the message given to the shepherds was believed! The shepherds did not just sit around after the angels told them that a Messiah had been born. They were not frozen in the darkness. The light of God was breaking through and moving them to act. They chose to act in faith and considered the possibility that the Messiah had come to them. When they acted in faith at that moment, they found Jesus!

The same will be true for us in this holiday season. Jesus said, “Your father in heaven knows all that you need. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides.” (Matt 6:33) In our holiday madness, we must not miss the

moment! Jesus is there.

– Fr. Bill Ashbaugh



►► For our Spiritual Fitness this Christmas season, we practice being present to the “present” of Jesus Christ.

Make a list of all the activities you think you must do. Cut out what is unnecessary; prioritize. Include time for quiet and rest, time for immediate family and, especially, time for Jesus. Remember that “Jesus is the reason for the season.”

1 Focus on the present. Do not compare today with the “days of the past.” When you notice yourself feeling sad, say to yourself, “No! Hot!” Consider the gift of the moment and express your faith that God is with you. A simple sign of the cross or praying the Our Father may be helpful. Repetition is the mother of learning, so keep working on this new mental habit. Good feelings will eventually follow.

2 Sadness is often associated with loneliness. When we are down, we do not want to be with others. Resist this. Be like the shepherds who went to Bethlehem – volunteer some time by visiting hospitals or nursing homes. Jesus is there. Go Christmas caroling. Jesus is there. Say “yes” to party invitations. Do not be a Scrooge. Jesus is there.

3 Take some time to enjoy the beauty of the season. Turn on some Christmas music. Take a walk or drive to enjoy the lights and decorations. Live in the moment. Some people hate snow – but really look at a snowflake sometime and appreciate its intricate and delicate beauty. God created it for us.

Think about the wondrous gift of Jesus. God made everything through him and for him. Jesus is the central point of the whole universe. He is not only the reason for the season. He is the reason for everything. Can we really ever make a big enough deal out of His birth? “God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die, but might have eternal life.”

(Jn 3:16)

God bless you and have a merry Christmas!

►► Para la Aptitud Espiritual de esta temporada navideña, practiquemos estar presentes para el “presente” de Jesucristo.

Haga una lista de todas las actividades que considera que debe hacer. Elimine las que son innecesarias, priorice. Incluya tiempo de tranquilidad y descanso, tiempo para la familia inmediata y en especial, tiempo para Jesús. Recuerde que “Jesús es la razón de la ocasión.”

1 Concéntrese en el presente. No compare el día de hoy con los “días del pasado.” Cuando se sienta triste, dígame a si mismo, “¡No! ¡Cuidado!” Considere el regalo del momento y exprese su fe en que Dios está con usted. Puede resultar útil simplemente persignarse o rezar un Padrenuestro. La repetición es la madre del aprendizaje, así que continúe trabajando en este hábito mental. A la larga fluirán los sentimientos nobles.

2 Con frecuencia, la tristeza se asocia con la soledad. Cuando estamos deprimidos, no deseamos estar con los demás. Resistase a ello. Sea como los pastores que fueron a Belén – ofrézcase como voluntario para visitar hospitales o casas de reposo. Jesús está allí. Vaya a cantar villancicos. Jesús está allí. Diga “sí” a las invitaciones a las fiestas. No sea avaro. Jesús está allí.

3 Tomese tiempo para disfrutar la belleza de la temporada. Ponga algo de música navideña. Dé un paseo a pie o en auto para disfrutar las luces y las decoraciones. Viva el momento. Algunas personas odian la nieve, pero tómese el tiempo de ver un copo de nieve y aprecie su belleza intrincada y delicada. Dios lo creó para nosotros. Piense en el maravilloso regalo de Jesús. Dios hizo todo a través de él y para él. Jesús es el punto central de todo el universo. Él no es sólo la razón de la ocasión. Él es la razón de todo. ¿Realmente podremos destacar lo suficientemente la grandeza de Su nacimiento? “Porque amó Dios al mundo, que dio a su Hijo único, para que todo el que crea en él no perezca sino que tenga vida eterna.” (Juan 3:16)

¡Dios los bendiga y Feliz Navidad!

A festive arrangement of gingerbread cookies decorated with green icing and red berries, with four lit candles in gold holders. The scene is set against a dark background with a warm, glowing light source in the upper right corner.

How candles, cookies and
closeness can add up to
Christmas

The Advent wreath is rich with theological symbolism. The wreath, a circle, expresses God's unending eternity. Evergreens symbolize God's changelessness and our immortal soul. Three candles are purple, symbolizing that Advent is a season of waiting, expectation and preparation. The pink candle represents joy and hope in awaiting Jesus' birth. The light radiating from the four candles represents Christ, the light of the world.



▶▶ Gingerbread cookies

- 5–5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. ginger
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp. cloves
- 1 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/4 cups mild molasses
- 2 eggs, beaten

Preheat oven to 375°. Thoroughly mix flour, soda, salt and spices. Melt shortening in large saucepan; cool slightly. Add sugar, molasses and eggs; mix well. Add 4 cups of the dry ingredients and mix well. Turn mixture onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in remaining dry ingredients by hand, adding flour if needed to make a firm dough. Roll out on a lightly floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut out cookies using a 3- or 3 1/2-inch holly-leaf-shaped cookie cutter. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet or a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake small to medium cookies for 6–10 minutes, larger cookies for 10–15 minutes. One recipe of gingerbread dough will yield 40 average-size cookies or enough dough to make two Advent wreaths, one to keep and one to give away.

▶▶ Royal icing

- 3 level T meringue powder
 - 4 cups sifted confectioner's sugar
 - 6 T water
- Beat all ingredients at low speed for 7–10 minutes (10–12 minutes at high speed with portable mixer) until icing forms peaks. Tint icing with green food coloring or coloring purchased from cake and candy supply store. Pipe icing on cookies using a #3 decorating tip and a decorating bag.

▶▶ Assembling the wreath

- Holly-shaped gingerbread cookies
 - Dried cherries or red candy
 - Cardboard
 - 4-candle candleholder ring
- Using a 12-inch dinner plate as a template, cut a circle out of cardboard. Use an 8-inch plate to make the hole in the middle. Space cookies about 1/4 inch apart around the cardboard using a dab of icing to hold them in place. Dab icing on each side of leaves to hold second layer of cookies in place. Use a dab of icing to secure a dried cherry or piece of candy to each leaf. Place candleholder in center of completed wreath.

▶▶ Blessing the Advent Wreath

This can take place on the Saturday evening before the first Sunday of Advent when the family gathers for the main meal.

"Father, today we begin our time of preparation for the birthday of your Son.

We ask you to bless this wreath and help us who use this wreath to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ the Lord. Amen."

▶▶ The First Week of Advent

The head of the household says the following prayer and the youngest child then lights the candle opposite the rose candle; it remains lit during the meal. The same candle is burned each day of the first week.

"May this light remind us of Jesus who is the true light of the world. Let us call upon Him whose coming we await, for He is: God from God, light from light, true God from true God. Amen." Suggested reading: Luke 21:25–28, 34–36.

▶▶ The Second Week of Advent

The head of the household says the following prayer and the eldest child then lights the first candle and a candle next to it; they remain lit during the meal. The same candles are burned each day of the second week.

"Father, help us to prepare the way of Jesus, the Light

of the World. May we who believe He will come again always serve you. Let us proclaim this mystery of faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Amen."

Suggested reading: Luke 3:1–6.

▶▶ The Third Week of Advent

The head of the household says the following prayer and the mother (or grandmother) lights the previous candles and the rose candle; they remain lit during the meal.

The same candles are burned each day of the third week. "Lord, we ask you to penetrate the darkness of our minds so that, filled with your brightness, we may rejoice in your coming as we say: Blessed be God forever. Amen."

Suggested reading: Luke 3:10–18.

▶▶ The Fourth Week of Advent

The head of the household says the following prayer and then lights all four candles; they remain lit during the meal.

"Lord, hurry and come to us. May your light shine in our lives, so that we may be freed from sin. Protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for your coming as Our Savior: For the kingdom, the power and glory are yours now and forever. Amen."

Suggested reading: Luke 1:39–45.



Holy Sepulchre Investiture

Cardinal-designate Daniel N. DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston was the principal celebrant of the investiture Mass for the Equestrian Order of the Holy

Sepulchre of Jerusalem held on Oct. 14, 2007, in Oklahoma City. The Holy Sepulchres is a papal order whose members are appointed by the Vatican. Locally, Sir John Foster, Lady Elizabeth Foster, Lady Dody Foster, Lady Susan Foster, Sir JD Wendeborn, Lady Marie Wendeborn, Sir Ricardo Cigarroa and Lady Linda Cigarroa were invested into the order as new members.



All Souls Day Mass

▶▶ Hundreds of Catholics gathered at the Calvary Catholic Cemetery for a special All Souls Day Mass with Rev. Toribio Guerrero as the principal celebrant. Mrs. Rosa Aldape, director of Calvary Catholic Cemetery, organizes the annual outdoor Eucharistic celebration.

Blessed Sacrament civics lesson

▶▶ The student body at Blessed Sacrament Elementary in Laredo received a real life lesson on the importance of fulfilling the privilege of voting by participating in every aspect of a student campaign. Under the direction of Ms. Ana Castro, the students hosted Webb County Election Administrator, Oscar Villarreal, who instructed the children on how to fill out a voter's registration form. Every child received a personalized voter's registration card entitling them to participate in the school election.



Catholic education...A time for change and challenge

▶▶ In an effort to fulfill the requirements for continuing education as set forth by the state of Texas, the Department of Catholic Schools hosted the Professional Development Day on Oct. 8 at San Martin de Porres Parish. Sister Claire Fitzgerald, SSND, a nationally renowned motivational speaker, focused on the Catholic school environment in a presentation titled, "Catholic Education...A Time for Change and Challenge."



Agustinians celebrate 40 years at Holy Redeemer

▶▶ Bishop James A. Tamayo celebrated Mass on Oct. 7 honoring the 40th anniversary of the Order of St. Augustine Friars serving Holy Redeemer Parish in administrative and pastoral care. Rev. Jesus Guzman, OSA delivered the homily during the Mass, reflecting on the Gospel and on the role the Agustinian priests have played in the history of the west Laredo parish.



KC Silver Rose

▶▶ These fourth-degree Knights of Columbus pose for a group photo prior to the start of a Mass recently at St. Augustine Cathedral. The Knights of Columbus are winding down the trek of the Silver Rose. The annual Silver Rose Mass takes place at San Agustin Cathedral on Monday, Dec. 10, 2007, at 12:05 p.m. This Mass culminates the carrying of the Silver Rose from Canada through the United States. From Laredo, the Silver Rose travels to Mexico for its arrival date of Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe – the patroness of the Americas.





KHOY fundraiser

▶▶ KHOY 88.1 FM, Catholic radio for Laredo and South Texas, held its annual fundraiser Nov. 5-9, 2007. Operated by the nonprofit Laredo Catholic Communications, Inc., KHOY nearly reached its goal of \$50,000 in pledges. KHOY operates 24-hours daily and 365 days a year with only one full-time employee and three part-time employees. A tax-deductible contribution can be given any time of the year at the

studio located at 1901 Corpus Christi, or by calling 956.722.4167. You can also listen online by visiting www.khoy.org

Venezuelan Archbishop visits Laredo

▶▶ Archbishop Emeritus Ramon Oviedo Perez Morales of the Archdiocese of Maracaibo, Venezuela visited the Diocese of Laredo in September. The recently retired archbishop and Caracas native is currently active in the Latin American Bishop's Conference (CELAM). He is a former seminary rector and is now in residence at the seminary in Caracas. He was accompanied by Sister M. Michelle, Carmel, DCJ.



2007 Life chain

▶▶ An estimated 150 people of faith and goodwill showed their support for life from conception to natural end on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 7, by praying the rosary and by peacefully holding signs in support of life. The supporters gathered on the corner of McPherson Road and Hillside as they silently held their posters and prayed for the sanctity of life. For more information on how you can become involved, call the Office of Respect Life at 956.727.2140.

Santa Teresita Community Center

▶▶ The Santa Teresita Community Center, located 20 miles east of Laredo off Highway 59, opened its doors to area residents at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in late September. The multi-use center is available to residents, as well as for CCD classes for Santa Teresita Mission. For more information on how you can help this mission, contact the San Martin de Porres parish office at 956.723.5231.



7th Annual Red Mass

▶▶ Members of the federal and state judiciary, state and local officials, as well as the various bar associations of the counties comprising the Diocese of Laredo – including Webb, Maverick, Dimmit, Zavala, LaSalle, Zapata and Jim Hogg Counties – gathered at San Agustin Cathedral for the seventh annual Red Mass on Oct. 4, 2007, marking the beginning of the new judicial year.



South Texas Academic Rising Scholars

▶▶ Former Mexican president Vicente Fox spoke at the annual fundraiser for the South Texas Academic Rising Scholars (STARS) on Oct. 13 at the Laredo Country Club.

The event, organized by Steve and Linda LaMantia, raises money for academic scholarships available to collegiate students who are South Texas natives. Rev. Pastor Martinez, OSA, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in south Laredo, delivered the invocation for the STARS Extravaganza.

Retablos – The Art of Faith

▶▶ The Webb County Heritage Foundation, in partnership with the International Bank of Commerce, is pleased to announce a beautiful and unique historical exhibit entitled *Retablos – The Art of Faith*. It is on view to the public through the holiday season at the Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum located at 810 Zaragoza St. in downtown Laredo. On display from Nov. 9 until Jan. 3, this exhibit showcases a collection of religious paintings known as retablos and ex-votos. Brought to Laredo through the private collection of Ricardo and Debbie Backal and Half Spoon, LLC, the exhibit was originally prepared for the Instituto Manuel Tussaint in Mexico City, where it opened in August of last year.

Retablos are small oil paintings, usually on tin, most often done by primitive, untrained artists from the Mexican provinces. They were specially commissioned by individuals or purchased from artist/peddlers, who offered them door to door or sold them in stands set up around churches during holidays and feast days. Devout Mexicans placed them on their home altars, where they were appealed to for everything and could be depended upon to remedy both specific and general situations – ailments of every conceivable sort, social problems and meteorological phenomena.

A clear-cut stylistic distinctness, leaning heavily toward the baroque, accompanies a subject matter that modifies and mirrors both Christian and pagan beliefs, making the retablo a genuine manifestation of Mexican folk art. Icons and small religious paintings have existed from the earliest years of Christianity, but this type, painted for and mostly by the common people in a limited time and area in Mexico, has a quality all its own. These tin paintings reflect the intense, sincere beliefs



of the people and radiate the naive charm of the primitive.

The Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum is open Tuesdays – Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. and Sundays from 1 – 4 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is \$5 per person, with no charge for children 12 years of age and under. Tuesdays are free admission for all. For more information, contact the Webb County Heritage Foundation at 956.727.0977 or e-mail heritage@webbheritage.org.



Double Star Council award

▶▶ Knights of Columbus Council #11620 of Christ the King Parish in Laredo has earned the distinction of Double Star Council for the 2006-07 fraternal year. The award recognizes overall excellence in the areas of membership recruitment, retention, promotion of the fraternal insurance program and sponsorship of service-oriented activities. Diocesan Deputy Javier Medellin presented the award to the membership during a special ceremony at the parish on Oct. 7, 2007. "Receiving the Double Star Council Award is quite an honor for us. We're extremely proud of this accomplishment," said Tony Martinez, Grand Knight of Council #11620.



▶ Tony Martinez (right) poses with Diocesan Deputy Javier Medellin and the Double Star Award.

24th Annual Rice and Beans Hunger Luncheon

▶▶ The Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Foundation was recognized for its efforts to combat hunger throughout the Diocese of Laredo by the Laredo Regional Food Bank at the 24th Annual Rice and Beans Hunger Luncheon held on World Food Day, Oct. 16, 2007. Accepting the World Food Day Award on behalf of the foundation were board members Rev. Deacon Larry Sandlin and his wife, Maria Luisa Sandlin. The Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Foundation is also a strong supporter of the Diocese of Laredo.



Finding peace at Christmas

I've been really struggling with this word peace.

If you've seen me, you know that I enjoy eating.

So it shouldn't surprise you that I think of the other word that sounds the same, like an eight-piece box of chicken.

All kidding aside, I realized that I struggled with this theme because there's no inner peace within me at this time.

As I reflected on this column, I thought of world peace, the war in Iraq and the gang wars in our communities.

I thought about how we often pray for and ask for peace in our homes.

And we do the same by asking for peace at work.

But I think what we're really searching for is to be at peace with ourselves.

We need to be happy within ourselves first.

In order to accomplish this, we have to be in a right relation with God. It all begins with our Creator. It is only then that we'll have peace with ourselves and in our lives.

It is also then that we can begin to transmit that peace and eventually have world peace.

You know how they say that charity begins at home? I believe that world peace begins at home. But we need to find inner peace with our past and our present first.

How do we resolve our internal conflicts or the obstacles that lay in the path to inner peace? Where do we begin?

There's the rub. If there's chaos within us then there's chaos outside of us. But we need to identify what is causing the chaos.

Sometimes chaos can manifest itself as a form of violence. Perhaps it is not guns or knives but the chaos leads to other violent actions like in the way we treat each other. Sometimes a negative language can be more hurtful than being hit by a bullet.

The psychological, emotional and spiritual damage can take more time to heal than a flesh wound often does.

Address it and remove it because with the absence of chaos, like war, there is peace.

Peace is hard.

Very hard.

There will be days where we despair but we must never give up hope.

Instead, we need to ask God to make us instruments of his peace. –Father Toribio Guerrero is director of vocations for the Catholic Diocese of Laredo.



Realmente he estado batallando con esta palabra de Paz (peace).

Si usted me ha visto, sabe que me encanta comer.

Así que no debe ser una sorpresa para usted que yo piense de la otra palabra que suena igual en inglés, como una caja de 8 "piece" (piezas) de pollo.

Pero, haciendo un lado las bromas, me he dado cuenta de que he batallado con este tema porque no hay Paz interior dentro de mí en este tiempo.

Al ir reflexionando sobre esta columna, pensé de la Paz mundial, la guerra en Iraq y las guerras entre las cuadrillas de en nuestras comunidades.

Pensé sobre la frecuencia que oramos nosotros para solicitar la Paz en nuestros hogares. Y hacemos lo mismo al solicitar la Paz en el trabajo.

Pero creo que lo que realmente estamos buscando es la Paz con nosotros mismos.

Tenemos que estar felices con nosotros mismos primero.

Con el fin de lograr esto, tenemos que estar en la relación correcta con Dios. Todo comienza con Nuestro Creador.

Solamente entonces es que tendremos la Paz con nosotros mismos y en nuestras vidas.

Es también entonces, cuando podemos comenzar a transmitir la Paz y eventualmente tener Paz Mundial.

¿Ustedes saben como dicen que la caridad comienza en casa? Yo también creo que la Paz Mundial comienza en casa. Pero primero necesitamos encontrar Paz interior con nuestro pasado y con nuestro presente.

¿Cómo resolvemos nuestros conflictos internos o los obstáculos que yacen en la senda a la Paz interior? ¿Dónde comenzamos?

Allí está el detalle. Si existe el caos dentro de nosotros, entonces existe el caos fuera de nosotros. Pero necesitamos identificar lo que está causando el caos.

A veces el caos se manifiesta en forma de violencia. Quizá no sean pistolas y navajas pero el caos nos conduce a otras acciones violentas, como en la forma en que nos tratamos mutuamente.

A veces un lenguaje negativo puede causar más dolor que recibir un balazo.

El daño psicológico, emocional y espiritual puede tomar más tiempo en curarse que lo que toma una herida corporal.

Dirigete a él y remuévelo, porque con la ausencia del caos, como con la ausencia guerra, hay Paz

La Paz es difícil.

Muy difícil.

Habrá días cuando nos desesperamos, pero nunca debemos perder la esperanza.

En vez, necesitamos pedirle a Dios que nos haga instrumentos de su Paz.

If there's chaos within us then there's chaos outside of us. But we need to identify what is causing the chaos.

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