Thank you, Jesus!

His humble and poor beginnings as a Babe in a manger. At times we are poor: spiritually, physically, or emotionally. We take hope that, as Jesus taught, “Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God” (Lk 6:20). This Christmas, let us reflect on the joy of salvation.

Thank you, Jesus, for the abundant generosity and sacrifice of the people of the diocese. I just completed my Vibrant Ministries appeal “Thank You Celebrations.” I gave my gratitude at the weekend Masses of each of our 48 parishes. Such an outpouring of financial charity for works of mercy, Catholic faith formation, and priests and seminarians! “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 118:1). This Christmas, let us pray about the happiness of giving.

Thank you, Jesus, for the continued healing of my brain tumor. Many thanks to you for your prayers and support during my recovery. My last MRI test showed improvement, and I have been off the steroid drug for over five months, with no returning of the original symptoms. Jesus “received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured” (Luke 9:11). This Christmas, let us ponder the Christ Child’s healing touch in our lives.

Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones this Christmas season and beyond. Thank you, Baby Jesus, You love us more than we can ask or imagine. A joyous Christmas to you!

– Bishop John

“Thank you, Jesus, for salvation! ... We recall His humble and poor beginnings as a Babe in a manger. At times we are poor: spiritually, physically, or emotionally. We take hope that, as Jesus taught, ‘Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God!’”

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The Most Rev. John B. Brungardt, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City

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Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh and splendor of the Father: Lord have mercy.

We use that Invocation for the penitential rite from time to time, and especially in Advent. *Verbum Caro factum est*, we used to say. That is at the heart of the Christmas season, as it is at the heart of the Christian faith.

You understand the human frame, well enough, the articulation of its parts inside and outside, the working of its soul and mind and freedom: you understand flesh. But it is much broader than that. It includes our kinship with all created things. It also means success and failure, therefore, sickness and health too, accident and circumstance and blind fate. Family, work, relationships, the whole web of our lives: all that is there too. All that is flesh too.

The Final Prayer for Thursday of the first week of Advent has these words:

... even now, as we walk among passing things, you teach us by them To love the things that do not pass away, The things of heaven.

All the things of flesh are passing things. But note the stunning thing the Incarnation tells us: you teach us by them. The things that pass away are raised on high, and now have a priceless role to play. Because he became flesh, he can come to us in the things that pass away. He does ask us each day to Come to him, in this way.

So, love the passing things of your life, but love them in the Lord. They are the way we come to him. They are the privileged way he teaches us to love the things of Heaven. May the Christmas Feast and the Christmas Season teach you by them, the lasting by the passing.

**The lasting of passing things**

*Another Way* by Bishop Emeritus Ronald M. Gilmore

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Christmas Memories
Stringing popcorn and forming a tinfoil star

By LISA RIDDER
Lisa Ridder is the Director of Religious Education at St. Mary Parish, Marietta.

Christmas memories...ahh. I can’t help but smile thinking of all our Christmas memories. At the time, some didn’t seem that funny, but we did truly enjoy them all.

One of the most memorable would be Tom and my first Christmas as a married couple. He was a student at Colorado State University and I worked for the University; we were expecting our first child the middle of January.

With both of our families being in Kansas (and travel out of the question), we worked together to implement Christmas traditions that we would be missing out on back home.

That was the Christmas of 1990 and that winter was an extremely cold one. We lived in an old farmhouse southeast of Loveland, Colorado and spent most of the winter trying to keep our pipes from freezing.

We had been married for about a year and had little money to spend on Christmas and decorations. We strung popcorn and cranberries and used cow tags as Christmas ornaments. We also fashioned a star out of tinfoil and cardboard to adorn the top of our little tree.

Even though it was just the four of us—Tom and I, our unborn child and our Border Collie Abe—and we were away from both our families, it is one of our favorites because we were blessed to be able to spend our first Christmas together as a new family and start our own memories and traditions!

A few days after that first Christmas, our oldest child Calli was born, and we have been blessed with four more children: Sarah, Lane, Joseph, and Nevaeh, and we have had many wonderful Christmas’s since that very first one!

As I look back at our first Christmas, I realized that just as Advent is a time for preparing, I was preparing for Christmas—I was preparing to join the Catholic Church, and I was preparing to give birth to our first child.

A quiet time of gratitude

By TRISH KELLER
Trish Keller is a parishioner at St. Dominic Parish in Garden City. She has served as an instructor for the Pastoral Ministry Formation Program and is an RCIA catechist.

The plan was for a quiet Christmas. No more traveling to out-of-town grandparents in a van overstuffed with kids, luggage, and gifts.

As of the last few years, the last of those beloved grandparents, God willing, are at rest in the perpetual light. Now, the kids are near-adults who travel to us by train and plane. My husband and I have become the ones who wait for grown children to come home.

The same and different— that was Christmas 2017 for our family.

We still watched “It’s a Wonderful Life” and shouted, “atta boy, Clarence!” We still attended St. Dominic’s 10:30 Mass and belted out “Joy to the World.” We still opened socks, movies and ate cookies.

Different was being able to sleep in—no more small children awakening in the small hours, eager to check their stockings.

Most different, though, for this quiet Christmas, was gratitude for the living presence of our anointed one: the Christ—the anointed one fundamentally and most certainly—but also, my husband Doug, the three-anoanted one.

Urgent cardiac problems accompanied by the inevitable complications and long hospital stays dominated Doug’s life for many months. So, Christmas needed to be a quiet one. We had a convalescent in the house, one sustained—and to my mind, kept alive by God’s intervention through the Church.

In three different hospitals in three different states, ministers, both lay and ordained, anointed his hands and his head, united our prayers with those of others across space and time, and nourished his spirit with the Eucharistic bread.

Eventually, through converging circumstances that only God is privy to, a new heart became available via transplant from an unknown donor, whose death only God is privy to, a new heart became available via transplant from an unknown donor, whose death was always my choice. After this, the main dish consisted of bobalky, which is very small dough balls drenched in melted butter and mixed with sauerkraut or dried cottage cheese.

My mother would also make some plain bobalky in butter, which was for my youngest cousin. Bobalky was one of my favorite foods, although it was only served on Christmas Eve. Mom would also fry some fish and shrimp, which was served with the bobalky. We did not consume meat with the dinner, although even as a young child I was given a small amount of wine to drink. Dessert consisted of a huge variety of cookies.

After the meal, the family would gather in the living room for the opening of Christmas presents. Actually, we had to wait for the food to be put away and all the dishes washed, dried, and put away before we opened presents.

The creation of the meal, and the cleaning up afterwards, was, of course, done by the women of the family. The wait for the opening of gifts seemed interminable for a young child.

Gifts would be opened by age, from the youngest to the oldest. Since I was the youngest or second youngest after the birth of my cousin, I was the first or second to open my gifts. When all the gifts were opened, the family would visit for a short period of time before the other family members returned home.

After a period of rest, we would dress in our finest clothes for Christmas Midnight Mass. Actually, in my family it was the midnight Divine Liturgy in the Byzantine Catholic Church. Incense was always used for this liturgy, and the priest would walk up and down the aisles while waving the censer.

The entire church would be filled with incense, which always made me feel sick when I was a young child. After returning home, which was very late at night, we would gather in the kitchen for more cookies and a drink. When I was older, the drink was cream sherry. The family would visit for a period of time before retiring for the night. Even after many years, thinking of Christmas Eve brings back very pleasant memories of a wonderful childhood.

By REGIS LOPATA
Regis Lopata is the RCIA Director at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Larned. He is also an Associate with the Order of St. Benedict.

As a child, my fondest memories of Christmas were related to Christmas Eve, which was celebrated in our home with extended family members on my mother’s side. These family members included my grandparents, a bachelor uncle, and an aunt and uncle with their three children. The Christmas Eve dinner consisted of foods and traditions that did not occur at any other time of the year.

I am of Slovak descent, and the meal consisted primarily of Slovak foods. The dinner started with each family member receiving an oplatki, which is unleavened bread like the communion host (the spelling of Slovak items is approximate).

The oplatki were white or pink rectangular wafers with Christmas images on them (about 3” x 6”), and we ate them with honey. My grandmother would make a sign of the cross on each child’s forehead with honey just prior to eating.

After the oplatki, langosh was served. This was similar to a pastry with lekvor on it. Lekvor is a prune jelly, and was frequently consumed in our home, although langosh was only served on Christmas Eve. Lekvor is absolutely delicious.

The course consisted of soup, which was either kouzade or a fresh mushroom soup. Kouzade is a dried mushroom soup with sauerkraut juice. It is very dark brown in color, and tasted really bad to me, so the fresh mushroom soup was always my choice. After this, the main dish consisted of bobalky, which is very small dough balls drenched in melted butter and mixed with sauerkraut or dried cottage cheese.

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By FATHER JOHN FORKUOH
Father John Forkuoh is the pastor at the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Spearel, St. Lawrence, Jetmore, and St. Anthony, Hanston.

My best memory about Christmas was when I was 12 years and my older brother and friend refused to wear his new pair of shoes because I did not get a new pair for the Christmas.

Christmas was a joyful celebration and we always looked forward to it. Our parents would buy us new clothes, shoes, socks and even gave us new haircuts. One Christmas my parents bought a pair of shoes from the city for me and it didn’t fit (items bought from stores could not be returned even now).

I had to wait for the following Christmas to get a new pair of shoes. And my older brother would not wear his new pair of shoes until I got mine the following year.

I still remember the great and loving sacrifice my brother and friend made. God bless George, my brother.
The story of the Christmas Mole

I am one of the lucky ones who will never forget the joy and the magic of my childhood Christmas. I remember it like it was yesterday. Each Christmas Eve, me, my brother and sisters were told the story of the “Christmas Mole.” I’ll never forget my mom telling the story—her two youngest boys each sitting on a knee, my older sisters curled up by my dad...

“Along a time ago, in a desert far, far away, there lived a mole named Fernwood,” Mom said as an artificial fire crackled softly in a festive cardboard fireplace.

“A mole like the one growing on Davy’s nose?” my brother asked, innocently.

“No, this wasn’t a mole like the one growing on Davy’s nose,” Mom said as she pointed to the mole that I’d later have removed amid excruciating pain.

“It’s the kind of mole that lives in the ground!”

“Fernwood lived beneath the sands of Jerusalem, not far from the birthplace of Jesus. Even though he was just a mole, he’d heard about the upcoming birth of the savior!”

“How’d he hear about it?” my older sister asked. “I thought it was secret!”

“Well,” Mom told us, “it seems the mole had a mole who’d joined the shepherds, earning their trust and sharing the good news!”

“Didn’t the shepherds know he was a mole?”

“They knew he was a mole, but what they didn’t know was that he was a mole!”

“Mommy?” I asked. “Was the mole’s home?”

“Davy,” my dad answered. “I’m one of the lucky ones who will never forget the joy and the magic of my childhood Christmas. I remember it like it was yesterday. Each Christmas Eve, me, my brother and sisters were told the story of the “Christmas Mole.” I’ll never forget my mom telling the story—her two youngest boys each sitting on a knee, my older sisters curled up by my dad....

“A long time ago, in a desert far, far away, there lived a mole named Fernwood,” Mom said as an artificial fire crackled softly in a festive cardboard fireplace.

“A mole like the one growing on Davy’s nose?” my brother asked, innocently.

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“Mommy?” I asked. “Was the mole’s home?”

“No, Davy ....

“Did the shepherd have a mole?”

“Yes I mean, no! We’re talking about two kinds of moles, here, Davy. A little animal, and a long-term clandestine spy recruited to get access to secret intelligence.”

“But which is the one on my nose?”

“Neither one, Davy. Yours is an unsightly blemish which you will one day have removed amid excruciating pain.”

“Oh.”

“So, anyway, Fernwood decided that even though he was just a mole, he would follow the star to Bethlehem so that he could pay homage to the newborn King. He packed his little mole bag, careful not to forget a change of socks, and prepared to leave his little mole home.

“Meanwhile, above his little dwelling under the sands, a donkey carrying a weary pregnant woman and being led by a haggard, bearded man trundled along, a bright star lighting their way,” Mom said softly.

“My sisters tensed up, having heard the story before.

“Suddenly the donkey tilted deeply to the right, his front leg having fallen through some sort of hole, twisting his ankle. Oh, no!

“‘Owl!’ the donkey said. ‘What the heck, man?’

“Mary would have tumbled off of the donkey (whose name was Sven) if Joseph hadn’t quickly reached out to support her.

“‘It appears to be a mole hole!’ Joseph said to Sven.

“Well that’s just great!” Sven said, painfully.

“‘Uh, oh,’ Fernwood uttered after a giant hoof came crashing through his home, squashing his living room table. ‘This can’t be good.’

“Undeterred, Joseph, filled with the love of the unborn Savior, carried Mary on one shoulder the rest of their journey to Bethlehem, and Sven on the other. This is noted in the book of Matthew, which reads, ‘Joseph carried Mary and Sven the Donkey after Sven hurt his leg stepping into a mole hole.’ (Mt 1:26)

“As for Fernwood, well, he felt terrible. So terrible, in fact, that he unpacked his bag, put his socks back in his sock drawer, and cried.”

“Mom paused to let the moment sink in.

“What happened to Fernwood?” I asked.

“Did he die?”

“No, heh, heh. He didn’t die. But he did stop eating. And he never came out of his mole hole.

“That is, until several days later when he heard a familiar trundling across the desert sands above.

‘Could it be?’ he asked his stuffed mouse, Little Carl. Oh, no! What if they step into his mole hole again? Fernwood darted to his door and peeled his head out. There came the same couple, but this time with a tiny baby! Even Sven was okay, although he walked with a cane.

“Fernwood was so happy! Why had he wasted so much time feeling so bad about himself? He was so loved by God that God sent his son, the newborn King, so he could be forgiven!

Fernwood decided that from that day forward, he would share his story in hopes of delivering a message of hope to all those who felt badly on this, the most holy of days, the day of the birth of our savior!”

“Why would anyone feel bad at Christmas?” my sister asked.

“Well, it’s a time when we’re supposed to be happy! Everything around us is telling us to be happy, the music, the decorations .... And when we aren’t happy despite all that, it makes us even sadder! Sometimes we feel guilty about things that happened in the past. Sometimes we feel sad because we are alone, or because we or someone we love is sick.

“Fernwood caused the Holy Family to suffer even more those last miles to Bethlehem, yet the Savior’s mission was to take that guilt away, to make Fernwood feel joy .... to feel loved! That’s the gift of Jesus’s birth!

“C’mom, children!” Mom said after finishing the story. “Let’s sing!” And we’d all sing in celebration of the great gift of God: the birth of our Loving and Forgiving Lord, God’s Son, Jesus.

Inherit the Mirth

“C’mon, children!” Mom said after finishing the story. “Let’s sing!” And we’d all sing in celebration of the great gift of God: the birth of our Loving and Forgiving Lord, God’s Son, Jesus.

By Dave Myers

A day for everyone

My dad’s family were deeply devout Baptists. Dad converted to Catholicism when he married my mother, a conversion that began when he had that magical epiphany, that joyous realization that Christ was truly present in the Eucharist.

He dove head-first into the Catholic Church. Growing up, I remember celebrating a Mass in our basement. Mom and Dad became integral parts of our parish, participating in and hosting all sorts of programs and events.

As a family, we would sit down together on many nights singing songs from the church hymnal. Dad taught eighth grade catechism, and later volunteered with the Archdiocese’s Hospice program, and for several years would become friends with people who were in the later stages of a terminal illness, sitting with them, talking, sharing, helping.

Later still, this deeply devout Catholic began sponsoring refugees, not caring whether they were Catholic, Christian or, as was the case with many of them, Muslim.

While our Muslim friends don’t celebrate Christmas, Dad taught me that Christmas certainly celebrates them! He taught me that Christmas celebrates all those whom our Loving Lord came here to save. He taught me that God so loved the world, that he sent his son to die for us. He so loved all of us. Not just Catholics. Not just Americans. Not just people of one color. If Jesus loved each and every one of us enough to die for us, what does that tell us about how we should be treating one another? Dad knew the answer, and he lived it every day. — Dave Myers
**COMMENTARY**

Christmas giving will help those who are most in need

Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas launches annual appeal

As I sit down to appeal to you for funding for our agency this year, I am mindful of the weary push and pull of emotions and contentlessness that has consumed the news and airwaves for most of this past year. In spite of all of the noise, a few themes emerge:

Love for family and the desire for our children and grandchildren to be safe, happy, and free to pursue dreams and ambitions is the same driving force that moves some to build walls, and others to climb over walls.

Our desire for strong communities and self-sufficient individuals and families is the same driving force that moves some to call for tougher work requirements for those needing assistance, while others call for systemic change to remove barriers that keep people down.

Our desire for a just world is the same driving force that moves some to advocate for less government control while others advocate for more government safe-guards to protect the most vulnerable.

At Catholic Charities, we are so keenly aware of the struggle. The issues that keep people and communities from being their best are complex. We know that lasting change does not happen with band-aids and quick-fix approaches, but with the daily, committed, compassionate, in-the-trenches work with those in need.

Some of the people we work with are indeed challenged to make life-style changes and better choices. Others need instruction because they simply do not know what they do not know. And still others—perhaps our senior neighbor or the little girl next door—have been treated unfairly and they need a voice that is louder than their own.

Sometimes, we provide intensive case management so that a homeless mother achieves permanent housing and better income. Sometimes, we spend months providing one-on-one counseling so that an individual can cope a little better with the struggles and anxieties of life; or so that a teen mom can make the difficult decision about whether to parent her child or to create an adoption plan; or so that an addict can face his or her demons and make amends with family, friends and co-workers. Sometimes, we teach classes about financial literacy, managing a home, nurturing a child, or adopting a child.

This is the kind of work we do at Catholic Charities, day in and day out. Regardless of the struggles swirling around us, we strive to get to the heart of the matter: Honoring human potential through service, advocacy and invitation, in the spirit of the Gospel, so that every person experiences hope and fulfillment.

Today, as we do every year at this time, I write to ask you to support this work with a prayerfully generous financial gift.

Your gift helps us to stay focused on the persistent, hopeful, in-the-trenches work that makes a lasting impact in the lives of people and families who need help—the kind of impact that leads to strong communities, self-sufficient individuals and families, and a just world. May God bless you for your generosity.

-- Debbie Snapp

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Call (620) 227-1562
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**BY MAIL**
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Catholic Charities
906 Central Ave
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**ONLINE**
https://catholiccharitiesswks.org

The goods of society

I think often, these days, about the phrase “the goods of society.”

I like the word “goods.” And I like the word “society,” too. It means our life together, like family.

What are these goods of society? They are the good things, I sense, that make a life feel whole, that give shape and rootedness, possibility and meaning.

Jesus might refer to these goods as the goods of the kingdom, the goods of the Land of the Rightside Up, where everyone, everyone, lives to full measure their image of God.

They are the good things, I discover, that for many people are simply vanishing, good things I take for granted ...

... Like a place I call home, with a bed, a kitchen, a bathroom, clear running water, a place to store and refrigerate and prepare my meals. A place that keeps me cool in summer and cozy in winter.

More goods I take for granted: Access to healthcare and the means, thanks to Medicare, to pay for it. Goods like mobility, both physical and over distances, thanks to public transit. All goods of society.

And still more goods I take for granted: The lifelong benefits of a good education. Connections. The ability to speak up and to trust that, for the most part, my words will be heard, that I will be respected, and taken seriously.

But from where I stand, the “goods of society” which I gratefully enjoy look a lot like privilege. Instinctively, I know that this is not right. Privilege is a separator, not a creator, of community.

Living the fullness of life should not be a privilege available to some. Society includes more people than those who can always pay their way. Inclusion in the human community should not be a monetized commodity. But increasingly it is. And this, I declare, is morally wrong.

When I am housed and fed and protected, I have systems in place that keep me hopeful and encouraged and feeling positive each day.

I have breathing space to feel inspired. I have connections and voice and the means to show up and contribute to the larger conversation. I have systems in place that keep me hopeful and encouraged and feeling positive each day.

I have looked in the eyes of my peers on the street and listened to their stories and wept with them and prayed with them and held their leathery hands and seen the gaps where teeth used to be.

So I live in a morally uncomfortable space. It is the space between the beautiful gospel of Jesus whom I believe, and a pernicious spirit which chews at the edges of my soul, perhaps at the edges of your soul, as well. I live, and maybe you do, too, in the tension between the ideal of humanity fully alive and the reality of humanity gasping for air.

I live with the burden of these goods of society, which I have gained not on my own. I live with the sobering duty and irresistible invitation to share justly, generously, joyfully, of what has been given unbidden to me.

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**Southwest Kansas Catholic December 23, 2018    Page 5**

**Commentary**

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Living the fullness of life should not be a privilege available to some. Society includes more people than those who can always pay their way. Inclusion in the human community should not be a monetized commodity. But increasingly it is. And this, I declare, is morally wrong.

When I am housed and fed and protected, I have systems in place that keep me hopeful and encouraged and feeling positive each day.

I have breathing space to feel inspired. I have connections and voice and the means to show up and contribute to the larger conversation. I have systems in place that keep me hopeful and encouraged and feeling positive each day.

I have looked in the eyes of my peers on the street and listened to their stories and wept with them and prayed with them and held their leathery hands and seen the gaps where teeth used to be.

So I live in a morally uncomfortable space. It is the space between the beautiful gospel of Jesus whom I believe, and a pernicious spirit which chews at the edges of my soul, perhaps at the edges of your soul, as well. I live, and maybe you do, too, in the tension between the ideal of humanity fully alive and the reality of humanity gasping for air.

I live with the burden of these goods of society, which I have gained not on my own. I live with the sobering duty and irresistible invitation to share justly, generously, joyfully, of what has been given unbidden to me.

(c) Mary Sharon Moore, 2018. All Rights Reserved. Mary Sharon Moore writes and speaks nationwide on the nature of God’s calling in our times. Visit marysharono Moore.com
How to stay stress-free during the holidays — and all year long

By STEPHANIE RECK

It’s that time of year again when the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is upon us. This time of year, more people suffer from depressive episodes than at any other time of the year, usually brought on by stress, anxiety, and sadness.

For the last couple of years, I have had many challenges during this time of year. For one, my parents divorced and now they are remarried with separate families, my grandparents passed away and I was extremely close to them, my only child is now my prodigal waiting to come home, and I have been estranged from several family members because of addictions and mental health issues.

Needless to say, the holidays can be stressful. Maybe you can relate. Have you suffered the loss of a loved one, recently been divorced, are you taking care of elderly parents, or maybe even a sick child?

Tips on how to avoid stress

1. Take care of yourself physically by exercising and getting rest when needed, and spiritually by spending daily time with God. Pray! Enjoy the silence so that you may hear the voice of God! Take care of yourself mentally by not complaining and speaking negative things over yourself and others.

2. Don’t try and keep up with everyone else’s spending and busyness. Do what you can do, and ask God what you should be involved in.

3. Learn to say, “No.” Strike a balance with meeting needs of others and your needs. Set boundaries with difficult people. You don’t have to meet the demands of others. Do what is best for your family.

4. Be a blessing to someone else, or to several people.

5. Pray for others who may be going through a difficult time, it can take your mind off your situation.

6. Step away from all the craziness of the season and do something for yourself like, take a warm bubble bath or watch an old Christmas movie. Do something enjoyable.

7. Start a gratitude list, and every day write out (5) things that you are thankful for. CHOOSE to focus on what you do have.

8. Take it one day at a time. Do not project outcomes to situations before they happen.

9. Let go of ALL guilt. Don’t place unrealistic expectations on yourself. Let go of expectations that you might have for others. Having unrealistic expectations for yourself and others can lead to disappointment and depression.

10. Start a new tradition for your family, such as taking communion and reading the Christmas story from the Bible.

11. Focus on the reason for the season. Keeps things in perspective.

12. Try and not reminisce of how things were before, this can lead to discontentment; instead focus on what is good in your life now.

If you have suffered a loss or have gone through something tragic, be gentle on yourself. Don’t compare yourself to others and what they are doing or what they have. This may mean getting off of Facebook and looking at everyone’s seemingly perfect life. This also may mean that you are not up to going to every Christmas program, party, or family event.

What can you add to this list? Will you join me and share your ideas, it could help someone else, and please pass this on to others who need encouragement.

Stephanie R. Reck, LMSW, LBT, BCCC is the founder of Hope Ministry. She is the author of, “Disciplining Your Mind 30 Days to a Better You!”

Are you fighting depression? HELP is available!

Remember that you don’t have to cope with depression alone—there is always help available. Hotline staff are trained to handle calls like yours and offer you help.

U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255. If you are having thoughts of suicide, call this number immediately.

Kristin Brooks Hope Center Hopeline: 1-800-784-2433. This hotline can help you cope with a range of depressive feelings.

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 (press 1). Responders understand the unique experiences of veterans.

United Way Helpline: 1-800-233-4357. They can aid you in locating a therapist, healthcare or basic necessities such as housing and food by directing you to local services.

Check with your doctor: If it’s not an emergency, and you’re battle of depression isn’t necessarily associated with the holidays but is ongoing, check with your doctor. He or she can prescribe medication that may help.

Healing From The Pain

By TONY GRATER

Take the blade away from your wrist, Remove the noose from around your neck, Put the cap back on the pills, Take the barrel out of your mouth, Come in from the ledge...

No divorce is that awful, No addiction is that unbeatable, No amount of abuse is so unbearable, No amount of pain is so agonizing...

That you should leave it all behind, And shatter the lives of those who love you...

“Nobody sent me a Christmas card today. I know nobody likes me. Why do we have to have a holiday season to emphasize it?” — Charlie Brown

For a child is born to us... Upon his Shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Rejoice!

Our Lady was the most wonderful wire. She allowed God to fill her to the brim. By her surrender ‘Be it done to me according to thy word’, she became ‘full of grace.’ The moment she was filled by the current, by the grace of God, she went in haste to Elizabeth’s house to connect the wire, John, to the current, Jesus. As his mother said, ‘This child, John, leapt up with joy at your voice.’ Let us ask Our Lady to come into our lives also and make the current, Jesus, use us to go round the world, especially in our own communities so that we can continue connecting the wires of the hearts of men and women with the current, Jesus.”

— St. Mother Teresa
The story of two ‘white-knuckle’ journeys

By JERRY OUSLEY

Journeys can be very fun or very dangerous. I remember a journey my son, Jeremy and I took one winter. He was a senior in high school and had been accepted into Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. We live in southern Indiana about 35 miles due north of Louisville, Kentucky. Valparaiso is in northern Indiana about 50 miles from Chicago, Illinois.

Under normal circumstances (and by normal I mean warm weather suitable for traveling), the trip took about four to five hours. However, it was in the middle of the winter. The reason for the journey was that an orientation had been scheduled. It wasn’t mandatory, but he really wanted to attend.

He and I had planned to go, but frankly it began snowing that day. The more it snowed the more I didn’t want to go and tried to talk him out of it. But as I said, he really wanted to go. Deb, Megan and one of Deb’s sisters had been shopping that day, and we had to wait until they got home so we could drive the better car.

If I remember correctly, it was about four o’clock that afternoon before they arrived home, which meant (again under normal circumstances) that it would be eight or nine o’clock that evening before we arrived. We had reserved a motel, but I was more than willing to cancel. When they got home he still wanted to go even though it hadn’t stopped snowing, so we went.

The trip wasn’t too bad until we got north of Indianapolis. It was beginning to get dark, and then the snow increased. The road conditions grew worse and worse and consequently so did the highway. We slowed down, way down. Now I’ve got to tell you that I don’t take chances on slick roads.

The Interstate speed limit was 70 miles per hour, but folks, old grandpa Jerry here was only going about half that speed. The goal was to get there, not to get there quickly. I always figured that it was better to get there late than not to get there at all!

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For certain it was a “white knuckle” trip. The road would get nearly clear for a couple of miles, then we’d hit a stretch of nothing but pure ice. If it hadn’t have been so treacherous, it would have been nearly comical.

When we’d get to the stretches that weren’t so bad, the traffic would speed up to 70-plus. But not us; noooo, we stayed at grandpa speed because we never knew when we’d suddenly hit one of those bad stretches. When we did, many of those vehicles that had passed us were now off the road on either side.

We didn’t count, but I’d bet during the course of the trip we passed 100 vehicles or more that had spun off the road because they didn’t want to reduce their speed. It was nearly midnight but we arrived at our motel where my son had to pry my cold stiff fingers from the steering wheel. But we made it!

In the Christmas story, Mary and Joseph took one of those “white knuckle” trips. She was due to deliver the child Jesus at any time. Wouldn’t you know it, the Roman Emperor, Caesar, issued a mandatory tax that required everyone in the Roman Empire to travel to the city of their birth to be registered.

You can read the story in Luke 2:1-5. I call it a “white knuckle” trip because not only did they have to be careful in her delicate condition, but they had to watch out for bandits, snakes, wild animals and all kinds of treacherous dangers to travel from Nazareth, located in northern Israel, to Bethlehem, located in southern Israel. Joseph walked while Mary rode on the back of a donkey.

It wasn’t an easy journey. I’m certain that they were tempted to complain about the situation. Isn’t it just like the government to make such a requirement with no consideration for the people?

But behind the scenes, this trip was ordered by God Himself. He had moved the Roman Emperor to do this so as to navigate the couple to the place spoken of in prophecy as the city of birth of the Messiah. It all worked out for the good, but isn’t it wonderful that God orchestrated the moving of an entire empire for the sake of a poor, insignificant couple?

This Christmas realize that God has things under control for those who are called His people. It may seem as though everything is going wrong. It may seem as though the roof is caving in on you. But just as He took care of this poor couple, He is also taking care of us.

Finding cheer amid war

Telegraph Wardens do their best to keep up the Christmas cheer in a bunker beneath a central London cinema during the Bombing of Britain in the Second World War.
The night Charles Dickens was visited by the Spirit of... the Virgin Mary?

EWTN — In the famous novel *A Christmas Carol*, the main character Ebenezer Scrooge is visited one night by three spirits that eventually lead him to having a spiritual conversion of sorts.

What few people know is that the author of that book, Charles Dickens, claimed to have had a nighttime spiritual encounter of his own.

And who was the supernatural visitor? It just might have been the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Dickens was not a fan of Catholicism (or evangelical Protestantism, for that matter).

But that didn't mean he wasn't religious himself. It’s not clear whether he adhered more closely to Unitarianism or Anglicanism, but there’s a story that when his son was getting ready to leave on a trip to Australia, he gifted him a copy of the New Testament, getting ready to leave on a trip to Australia, he gifted him a copy of the New Testament...

In the midst of his sleep, he says he was visited by some sort of spirit. The spirit had the form of a woman and was draped in blue, “as the Madonna might in a picture by Raphael,” Dickens later wrote. He didn’t recognize the person, and the figure said nothing, but simply looked at him with deep compassion.

It was so full of compassion and sorrow for me... that I felt as if my heart would break; ‘for God’s sake, do good?’. Finally the woman answered: “For you it is the best!” Suddenly, she vanished, and he awoke with tears streaming down his face.

The spirit had the form of a woman and was draped in blue, “as the Madonna might in a picture by Raphael,” Dickens later wrote. He didn’t recognize the person, and the figure said nothing, but simply looked at him with deep compassion.

The fact the woman didn’t identify herself makes it harder to determine her identity with certainty. But several details of the vision, the woman “bore no resemblance to any one I have known except in stature.” So that doesn’t seem to make much sense.

So who was the woman? At least publicly, Dickens speculated that the woman was the aunt of a John Hogarth, who had died seven years earlier and to whom he had been close. But in his own recounting of the vision, the woman “bore no resemblance to any one I have known except in stature.” That doesn’t seem to make much sense.

The figure remained silent still, so he started to offer possible answers. First he asked if one’s religion really mattered as long as one lived a good life. Still no answer. Then, despite his disdain for all things Catholic, he asked, “perhaps the Roman Catholic is the best?” Perhaps it makes one think of God oftener, and believe in him more steadily?

Finally the woman answered: “For you it is the best!” Suddenly, she vanished, and he awoke with tears streaming down his face.

The preceding article was provided by Churchpop.com, a subsidiary of EWTN.
Can you believe it? We are about to enter into a New Year. It seems like just yesterday that we started this year. Wow! Time flies!

What are your thoughts as this year draws to an end? What are your expectations? The truth of the matter is that a large percentage of people have not given a serious thought to the New Year. While some are still wallowing in the losses, setbacks and disappointments of this year, some others are busy gloating over their achievements this year.

Irrespective of how this year has turned out, I am sure we all want a better year ahead, and now is the time to start anticipating, planning and preparing for a better and more glorious year.

It is time for quiet and sober reflection. It is time to take inventory of your life this year and start putting down plans for how to grow and flourish in the New Year.

And it all begins with Jesus. He is the reason for our existence, the Author of our lives, the One who sees the beginning and end of every year all at the same time. He is the One who knows what each year has in store for us, our families, church and nation. We can plan from now till tomorrow, we can have all the grandeur ideas for the New Year, but if God is not in those plans; if He is not solidly backing us up, nothing much can come out of our plans."

--- Tesh Njokanma

Counting down to a new year

Donating to the ministries of the Church through Charitable IRA rollovers

By MARK ROTH
Director of Development

If you are age 70.5 or older, you can make direct contributions—up to $100,000 annually—from your IRA to qualified charitable organizations without owing any income tax on the distributions. This break may be especially beneficial now because of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) changes that affect who can benefit from the itemized deduction for charitable donations.

COUNTS TOWARD YOUR RMD
A charitable IRA rollover can be used to satisfy required minimum distributions (RMDs). You must begin to take annual RMDs from your traditional IRAs in the year you reach age 70.5. If you don’t comply, you can owe a penalty equal to 50 percent of the amount you should have withdrawn but didn’t. (Deferral is allowed for the initial year, but you’ll have to take two RMDs the next year.)

So, if you don’t need the RMD for your living expenses, a charitable IRA rollover can be a great way to comply with the RMD requirement without triggering the tax liability that would occur if the RMD were paid to you.

DOESN’T REQUIRE ITEMIZING
You might be able to achieve a similar tax result from taking the RMD and then contributing that amount to charity. But it’s more complex because you must report the RMD as income and then take an itemized deduction for the donation.

And, with the TCJA’s near doubling of the standard deduction, fewer taxpayers will benefit from itemizing. Itemizing saves tax only when itemized deductions exceed the standard deduction. For 2018, the standard deduction is $12,000 for singles, $24,000 for heads of households, and $24,000 for married couples filing jointly.

DOESN’T HAVE OTHER DEDUCTION DOWNSIDES
Even if you have enough other itemized deductions to exceed your standard deduction, taking your RMD and contributing that amount to charity has two more possible downsides.

First, the reported RMD income might increase your income to the point that you’re pushed into a higher tax bracket, certain additional taxes are triggered and/or the benefits of certain tax breaks are reduced or eliminated. It could even cause Social Security payments to become taxable or increase income-based Medicare premiums and prescription drug charges.

Second, if your donation would equal a large portion of your income for the year, your deduction might be reduced due to the percentage-of-income limit. You generally can’t deduct cash donations that exceed 60 percent of your adjusted gross income for the year. (The TCJA raised this limit from 50 percent, but if the cash donation is to a private non-operating foundation, the limit is only 30 percent.) You can carry forward the excess up to five years, but if you make large donations every year, that won’t help you.

A charitable IRA rollover avoids these potential negative tax consequences.

For more information contact: Mark Roth, Development Director, at 620-227-1535 or email at mroth@dcdioce.se.org.
Celebrating Christmas during the Great Depression

The Christmases of the Depression were nothing like the over-commercialized, buy-till-you-drop Christmases of today where kids drowned in toys. But you have to wonder, which were really the better Christmases?

Dinner consisted of potatoes, cabbage and pie.”

Taken in 1936, the caption accompanying this photo reads: “Christmas dinner in the home of Earl Pauley, Near Smithfield, Iowa. Dinner consisted of potatoes, cabbage and pie.”

Let us pray for all those who lack the basic necessities of life this Christmas season, as well as for those whose material wealth has diverted them from a deeper love for God and God’s people.

Local priest, DRE to lead trip to Holy Land


For more information, go to Proximotravel.com, or call (855) 842-8001. See the PSA at the top of the next page.
D ominican Sister of Peace Elaine Osborne, OP, (Frances Jeanette), 79, died Oct. 28, 2018 at the Great Bend Motherhouse.

Sister Elaine, one of two children, was born in 1938 in Shattuck, OK, to Helen Tilliemans and Edward McClain Osborne. Elaine entered consecrated life in 1954 as a high school student, and faithfully lived her vows for more than 60 years.

Sister Elaine earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Marymount College and a Master of Arts in English from Oklahoma State University. She spent 25 years teaching elementary and junior high students in Kansas and Oklahoma. She took a great deal of joy in sharing her love of writing with them, making sure her that first graders had a solid foundation and a love of learning.

A poet and writer, Elaine was a consistent and creative participant in the development of the Dominican Cluster, which ultimately led to the founding of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. She was also the Great Bend representative to the Dominican Communication Network, and among the first communicators to form the OPCOMNET in 1995.

Sister Elaine might be best remembered for her own writing. She spent many years at the Pilgrim House of Praise writing and in the Communications Office in the Great Bend Motherhouse, where she served the founding and present Congregation as its communicator for more than 30 years. Her work can be found throughout the writings of the Congregation, including its Constitution and several annual reports.

From her childhood, Sister Elaine was connected and passionate about Earth and nature. It was a constant theme in her writing, and her personal journals featured not only writings, but lovely pencil drawings. She delighted in any opportunity to commune quietly in God’s creation, and to record it in her poems and writings.

A Vigil service for Sister Elaine was held on Oct. 30, 2018 at the Great Bend Motherhouse. The Funeral Mass was held Oct. 31. Sister Elaine Osborne was laid to rest at the Sisters’ Resurrection Cemetery in Great Bend.

Memorial gifts in Sister Elaine Osborne’s memory may be sent to the Dominican Sisters of Peace, Office of Mission Advancement, 2320 Airport Dr., Columbus, OH, 43219 or submitted securely at oppeace.org.
Honoring Our Lady

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe reverberated with the boom! boom! boom! of several large drums as dance troupes from across the diocese converged Dec. 11-12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, both to entertain several hundred onlookers, and (most of all) to honor the patroness of the diocese.

The evening began with a recreation of the story of St. Juan Diego, the Indian peasant who was entreated by the Virgin Mary to construct a church on Tepeyac Hill. When Juan told his bishop of his visit with Our Lady, the bishop was understandably doubtful, and asked for a sign from the Virgin. Juan opened his tilma (cloak) and flowers spilt out onto the floor, revealing a depiction of the Blessed Mother.

Festivities, which included a 10:30 p.m. Mass, went on into the night, with dancers honoring Our Lady in the Holy Family Social Hall until the early hours of the morning, Dec. 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and then again throughout the Feast Day in the main reception area.
La Catedral de nuestra Señora de Guadalupe estuvo viva con música, alabanza y tambores el 11 y 12 de diciembre mientras comparsas de bailarines trajeron al escenario varios cientos de espectadores en honor a la patrona de la diócesis.

La velada comenzó con una re-creación de la historia de San Juan Diego, el campesino indio que fue mandado por la Virgen María para construir una iglesia en la colina de Tepeyac.

Cuando Juan le dijo a su obispo de la visitación de la Virgen, el obispo fue comprensiblemente dudoso y pidió una señal de la Virgen.

María instó a Juan Diego a recoger flores para presentar al obispo en su tilma o poncho. Cuando lo hacía, una imagen de Nuestra Señora se apareció en su tilma, convenciendo al obispo que había ocurrido un milagro.

La Festividad, que incluyó una Misa a las 10:30 p.m., entró en la noche, con bailarines en honor a Nuestra Señora en el Salón Social de la Sagrada Familia hasta las primeras horas de la mañana del 12 de diciembre, la Fiesta de nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y luego otra vez durante todo el resto de su Día Santo.

Photos by Norma Alvarez and Dave Myers
¡Gracias, Jesús!

Por Rev. JOHN B. BRUNGAARDT, Obispo de la Diócesis Católica de Dodge City

Gracias, Jesús, por la salvación! Nos preparamos para la celebración del cumpleaños de nuestro Salvador Jesucristo. Recordamos sus humildes y pobres comienzos como un bebé en un pesebre. A veces somos pobres: espiritual, físico o emocionalmente. Tenemos la esperanza de que, como Jesús enseñó, “Felices los pobres, porque el reino de Dios les pertenece” (Lc 6,20). Esta Navidad, reflexionemos sobre la alegría de la salvación.

Gracias, Jesús, por la abundante generosidad y sacrificio de la gente de la diócesis. Acabo de completar mis “Celebraciones de Agradecimiento” de la Petición Ministerios Vibrantes. Expresé mi gratitud en las Misas de fin de semana de cada una de nuestras 48 parroquias. ¡Tal efusión de caridad económica para las obras de misericordia, la formación en la fe católica, y los sacerdotes y seminaristas! “Den gracias al Señor, porque es bueno, porque es eterno su amor” (Salmo 118,1). Esta Navidad, oremos por la felicidad de dar.

Gracias, Jesús, por la curación continua de mi tumor cerebral. Muchas gracias por sus oraciones y apoyo durante mi recuperación. Mis últimas pruebas de RMN mostraron una mejora, y he dejado de tomar el medicamento esteroide durante más de cinco meses, sin que volvieran a aparecer los síntomas originales. Jesús “los recibió y les hablaba del reino de Dios y sanaba a los que lo necesitaban” (Lucas 9,11). Esta Navidad, reflexionemos sobre el toque sanador del Niño Jesús en nuestras vidas.

La comunidad de habla hispana de la iglesia San Antonio de Padua de Leoti, honró a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe con los tradicionales danzantes matachines el domingo, 9 de diciembre, después de la misa en español semanal. Los danzantes fueron bendecidos por el Padre Tim S. Hickey, pastor, antes de empezar a bailar. Después, más de 150 personas incluyendo miembros de la comunidad en general de Leoti, se reunieron en el salón parroquial para comer y compartir.

Parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Leoti honored Our Lady of Guadalupe with the traditional matachines dancers on Sunday, Dec. 9, following the weekly Spanish Mass. The dancers were blessed by Father Tim S. Hickey, pastor, prior to the dance. Afterwards, more than 150 people, including members of the Leoti community at large, gathered in the parish hall for food and fellowship.

¡Félix Navidad!
‘Así que, ama las cosas pasajeras de tu vida, pero ámalselas al Señor’

Señor Jesús, tú eres el Verbo hecho carne y el esplendor del Padre: Señor ten piedad. Usamos esa invocación para el rito penitencial de vez en cuando, y especialmente en Adviento. *Verbum Caro factum est*, solíamos decir. Éste es el corazón del tiempo de Navidad, y también es el corazón de la fe cristiana.

Tú entiendes el marco humano, lo suficientemente bien, la articulación de sus partes dentro y fuera, el funcionamiento de su alma y mente y la libertad: tú entiendes la carne. Pero es mucho más amplio que eso. Incluye nuestro parentesco con todas las cosas creadas. También significa el éxito y el fracaso, por lo tanto, la enfermedad y la salud también, el accidente y la circunstancia y el destino ciego. Familia, trabajo, relaciones, toda la red de nuestras vidas: todo lo que hay allí también. Todo eso también es la carne.

La oración final del jueves de la primera semana de Adviento tiene estas palabras: ...incluso ahora, mientras caminamos entre las cosas que pasan, tú nos enseñas a través de ellas a amar las cosas que no mueren, las cosas del cielo.

Todas las cosas de la carne son cosas pasajeras. Pero noten la cosa asombrosa que nos enseña la Encarnación: nos enseñas a través de ellas. Las cosas que mueren son elevadas a lo alto, y ahora tienen un papel invaluable que desempeñar. Porque él se hizo carne, puede venir a nosotros en las cosas que pasan. Él nos pide cada día que vengamos a él, de esta manera.

Así que, amo las cosas pasajeras de tu vida, pero ámalselas al Señor. Ellas son el camino por las que llegamos a él. Son la manera privilegiada en que Él nos enseña a amar las cosas del Cielo. Que la fiesta de Navidad y el tiempo de Navidad te enseñen a través de ellas, lo que perdura con el paso del tiempo.

El Papa Francisco pide a la Virgen de Guadalupe por los hijos en peligro de no nacer

C NA -- El Papa Francisco pidió a la Virgen de Guadalupe, cuya fiesta litúrgica se celebra este miércoles 12 de diciembre, su intercesión por las familias sin hijos y la protección de los niños que aún no han nacido o que se encuentran en peligro de no nacer.

Durante el saludo a los peregrinos polacos, al finalizar su catequesis durante la Audiencia General celebrada en el Aula Pablo VI del Vaticano, el Santo Padre hizo una referencia especial a las familias sin hijos y la protección de los niños que aún no han nacido.

“Confío a la Santísima Virgen de Guadalupe, cuya memoria celebramos hoy, a vosotros aquí presentes, a vuestras familias y, de modo particular, a aquellos que están esperando el nacimiento de sus hijos”.  

Por favor tomen un momento para escribir una carta de apoyo a nuestros seminaristas. Ellos han expresado lo grande que es para ellos saber que hay alguien pensando en ellos y orando por ellos.

Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su hijo unigénito, para que todo aquel que en él cree, no se pierda, mas tenga vida eterna.

— John 3:16

Protégendo a los Niños de Dios

La Diócesis requiere a todos los empleados y voluntarios que trabajen con menores a asistir a las sesiones de concientización de Proteger a los Niños de Dios. Estas sesiones de concientización están disponibles en ambos inglés y español. Son conducidos por gente de nuestra Diócesis especialmente entrenadas y voluntarios que trabajan con menores a asistir a las sesiones de concientización de Proteger a los Niños de Dios. Estas sesiones de concientización están disponibles en ambos idiomas y en español.

**Reportando Abuso**

Si usted sospecha abuso o descuido de un menor en Kansas y el menor esté en un pueblo inmediato hable al 911 o al departamento de policía local. Si usted tiene alguna sospecha de que un menor está siendo abusado o descuidado haga un reporte confidencial al Departamento de Kansas Centro de Reportes Para Protección de Niños y Familias, 800-922-5330.

Si usted sospecha abuso por parte de personal de la Iglesia, aparte de hacer un reporte a sus autoridades civiles, por favor comunique con el Señor Charles Befort, cbefort@cox.net, 620-285-3219. Si usted o alguien que conoce pudo haber sido abusado o descuidado haga un reporte confidencial al Departamento de Kansas Centro de Reportes Para Protección de Niños y Familias, 800-922-5330.

Si usted sospecha abuso por parte de personal de la Iglesia, aparte de hacer un reporte a sus autoridades civiles, por favor comunique con el Señor Charles Befort, cbefort@cox.net, 620-285-3219. Si usted o alguien que conoce pudo haber sido abusado/a por parte de personal de la Iglesia, comuníquese con el Señor Befort. Puede hacer un reporte a la Diócesis en nuestro sitio web. El formulario para hacer su reporte lo puede encontrar en la siguiente dirección: www.dcdiocese.org/protectingchildren.

Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su hijo unigénito, para que todo aquel que en él cree, no se pierda, mas tenga vida eterna.

— John 3:16

Taller **LLAMADOS y DOTADOS**

Diócesis de Dodge City & Salina

**Sábado, 12 de enero, 2019**

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<th>Evento</th>
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<td>Taller</td>
<td>Heartland Center for Spirituality</td>
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www.dcdiocese.org/calltée-and-gifted

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**DISEÑÓ: DISCERNIMUS - DESARROLLÓN**

Ver sus direcciones en la página 8.
Mark your calendars for 2019 March for Life in Topeka, Washington, D.C.

March for Life invite you to prepare for the Jan. 16-20 March for Life in Washington, D.C., and/or the Kansans for Life march in Topeka, Jan. 22. See below for more information, including who to contact to reserve your space.

**January 16-20, 2019 — Washington, D.C.**

**Trip includes:**
- Bus transportation — Hotel for two nights — “Life is VERY Good Rally” — Holy Mass — March for Life — Sightseeing

**Seating is limited, so reserve your space now!**

For more information and registration, contact Tom or Lisa Ridder, (620) 375-2100 or email lridder68@gmail.com

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019 — Topeka**

**On the 46th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade**

For High School and College Age to Stand-up for the Value of Human Life

**Pro-Life Pilgrimage with Holy Mass, Other Prayer, Public Witness**

For more information and to register, contact Gayla Kirmer, (620) 227-1525

Or email: gkirmer@dcdiocese.org

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### An expression of total self-giving

The Bible is very clear about the virtue of chastity and the evil of being unchaste. The sixth commandment states clearly: “thou shalt not commit adultery.”

Adultery is understood as a person who is married being unfaithful to their marital vows by becoming sexually intimate with a person other than their spouse, or a single person having sexual relations with a married person.

Persons who are civilly divorced are still morally bound to their spouse and commit adultery if they become sexually intimate with someone who is not their spouse. There are several references in the New Testament to the evil of fornication, which is understood as someone who is not married engaging in sexual relations with another unmarried person.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians (5:19-20), lists a series evils, which he calls “the works of the flesh”. Among them are fornication, impurity, and licentiousness. He then adds: “I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 6:18-20, speaks of fornication as a sin against our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Revelation (also called Apocalypse) there is a reference to “...the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators ... their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

If one accepts the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, one must acknowledge the importance of living chaste lives, and the evil that one commits when one fails to live chastely.

(Scripture quotes are from the Revised Standard Bible translation, which regarded as the most faithful to the original languages.)

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**LIFE ISSUES FORUM**

By FATHER TED SKALSKY
The Clergy Abuse Crisis: Didn’t We Fix This?

A look at the progress the Church has made — and where we go from here

Editor’s Note: Bishop John Brungardt has asked that the SKC continue to bring articles and commentary about the ongoing priest abuse crisis to the fore in the ultimate hope that never again is a child or adult a victim of abuse, and that those who have been abused can seek healing in the Loving Lord.

BY MSGR. STEPHEN J. ROSSETTI

Msgr. Rossetti is an author, educator, licensed psychologist and expert on psychological and spiritual wellness issues for Catholic priests.

I was a 2002 U.S. Diocesan Awareness Coordinator. In most parishes, the bishop asked, “Was the patient a person of the same sex?” “Yes,” and the bishop nodded. I asked, “Were you fingerprinted?” Again, they both nodded. “I ask assembled priests if they have received the safe-environment training, every hand will go up.”

Clergy abuse shatters the identity of seminarians. It is right because it is right, and let the chips fall where they may.” It seems those words were inspired by the Spirit. They certainly are applicable today as well.

In the child-protection program of the Dallas Charter, the bishops did what was right. They crafted a program second to none. Whether they are given public approval or not, it was, and still is, the right thing. We pray that the Lord “who began this good work … will continue to complete it” (Phil 1:6).

McCARRICK AND THE SEMINARIANS

The situation surrounding Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, the former cardinal-archbishop of Washington, D.C., has added a new public dimension to the crisis. He was accused of sexually exploiting seminarians, even as a bishop. These events were reported to have been known to some in the hierarchy years ago. Recently, he was accused of abusing a minor as well. When the latter surfaced, Pope Francis removed him from ministry. He directed him to live a life of prayer and penance, and to cooperate with the remainder of the canonical process.

I have found that priests are particularly angry about this. They are more upset than I have ever seen them. Priests are particularly angry at least for two reasons.

First, many of us have our own stories to tell of troubles in seminaries, particularly in the 1960s through the 1980s.

Second, priests find it particularly appalling that a bishop would abuse a seminarian. The seminarians are our colleagues, and this are the future of the priesthood.

They are the ones who will take our places when we are too old to continue. Priests find it equally appalling that such a person would have been appointed a cardinal. This is very upsetting to priests.

Perhaps this experience is a good reality dose for us priests. Parents are enraged when their children are abused. It is hard for chaste and celibate men, who do not have children of our own, to understand fully the primal wound caused when parents’ children are harmed.

For parents, child abuse shatters their basic identity as parents. Perhaps it is similar to us in the McCarrick case. The abuse of seminarians shatters our identity as priests. Part of what it means to be a priest is to protect our own young — our seminarians. In this case, we failed. The focus of the Church’s protection program has been on protecting minors. As we enter this new phase, we will need to expand our protection efforts to include seminarians and other adults who place their trust in us.

Moreover, it is clear that some in the hierarchy failed to respond adequately when information about McCarrick’s problem began to surface. The bishops of the United States have no authority to discipline each other, but they do have the ability and, at times, the obligation to communicate with those who do (the Holy See, for example).

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Protecting God’s Children

The Catholic Diocese of Dodge City requires all employees and volunteers who work with children to participate in a Protecting God’s Children awareness session.

Masses, Education Sessions and other educational efforts of the diocese, all people of the diocese can learn how to discuss different aspects of abuse — including sexual abuse — with children and how to teach them to protect themselves.

Next Awareness Session: Marienthal

Saturday, Jan. 5, 2018; 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
St. Mary Church, 208 N 2nd St., Marienthal
Contact Person: Lisa Ridder 620-379-4427
Facilitator: Sharon Stuart 620-225-5164

Abuse Hotline
If you suspect abuse or neglect of a child in Kansas, and the child is in immediate danger, call 911 or local law enforcement.

If you have suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected, make a confidential report to the Kansas Department for Children and Families Protection Report Center, 800-285-3219.

If you suspect abuse by church personnel, in addition to making a report to those civil authorities, contact Charles Befort, cbefort@diocdodge.org.

You may submit a report to the diocese. Report forms are available at www.dcdioocese.org/safe-environment.

Steps to create a safe environment
1. Know the Warning Signs
2. Control Access
3. Monitor All Programs
4. Be Aware (Behavioral and Physical Signs)
5. Communicate Your Concerns
Site of Baptism of the Lord nears reopening as landmines cleared

ERUSALEM (CNA) — Churches at the site along the banks of the Jordan river where Jesus is believed to have been baptized could reopen within a year, following progress on a project to clear thousands of landmines and other ordnance from the location.

In a statement released Dec. 9, the Israeli government and international anti-landmine workers praised the progress of efforts to clear explosives from the holy site.

Located about 10 km east of the city of Jericho, the site is held to be the location of Christ’s baptism by St. John the Baptist, as recorded in the New Testament, and is considered one of the holiest places for Christians in the Holy Land. It is also widely held to be the location where the Israelites crossed the river Jordan following the 40 years in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. It is also believed to be the place where the prophet Elijah was taken bodily up into Heaven.

While pilgrims have been able to visit a small area along the river bank, a wider zone of 250 acres, which includes churches of several different Christian denominations, has been off-limits for nearly 50 years.

Around 3,000 anti-tank landmines were laid by the Israeli military during its conflict with Jordanian forces during the Six Day War in 1967. The area, officially evacuated by the Israeli government in 1970, includes a Catholic chapel belonging to the Franciscans, Greek and Ethiopian Orthodox monasteries, and Greek, Romanian, Syrian, Russian, and Coptic Orthodox churches.

Work to clear the site began in March, 2018, and is being conducted by the HALO Trust, an international anti-landmine charity, the Israeli defense ministry, a lifetime Olmitz area resident, he worked for Thies Company of Great Bend, the Helium Plant, Barton County Highway and MAC Truck. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus; he also coached the Olmitz Little League for 10 years. On Aug. 31, 1955, he married Marietta A. Ohnmacht; she preceded him in death on June 29, 2016. Survivors include: three children, Terry L. Lichter, Brenda A. Dreiling, and Lynn A. Lichter; sisters, Rosemary Linn and Mary Evelyn Linenberg; sister-in-law, Loretta Southard; six grandchildren; and several nephews and nieces. Father Wesley Schawe presided.

OBITUARY POLICY

Obituary listings are printed free of charge. Due to the limited space available, they must be edited for space. If you notice that a listing has not been included, call 620-227-1519 or email skregister@ddioce.se.org.

The Southwest Kansas Catholic
Pastoral Ministry Formation charts new course(s)

For more information on these courses, or to register, go to www.dcdiocese.org/pastoral-ministry-formation, or call Father Coleen, (620) 227-1538, or email cstein@dcdiocese.org.

THEO 1003 Introduction to New Testament (3 hour course)

Instructor: Father Reggie Urban

This course focuses on the literature, theology and history of the New Testament. Students will explore questions of authorship and critical methods of biblical interpretation from within the perspective of faith. Jesus’ question, addressed to his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” provides the theological center of the New Testament studies.

*This course is one of the 3-hour courses needed to obtain the Diocesan Certification in Youth Ministry. Dec. 30, 2018; Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

John 1:23-26/In John 1:3-2:21

Dodge City and Salina Dioceses

Cost - 3 hr. course for college credit - $150.00; 3 hr. course for enrichment - $75.00*

*Price quotes do not include books.

THEO 4881 The Why and How of Youth Ministry (1 hour course)

Instructor: Genny Heimerman

From Joseph, to Timothy, to Esther (who won a beauty contest, then saved a nation), God engaged young people in big ways to do even bigger things. Approaching Youth Ministry as a missionary disciple leads one to both the “why” and the “hows” of youth ministry.

*This course is one of the 1-hour courses needed to obtain the Diocesan Certification in Youth Ministry.

Class Times: Jan. 23, Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 10; Wednesday evenings - 6 to 9 p.m.

Location - Interactive Television Sites throughout Dodge City and Salina Dioceses

Cost - 1 hr. course for college credit - $50; 1 hr. course for enrichment - $25.00*

*Price quotes do not include books.

THEO 4881 Navigating Charisms (1 hour)

Coordinating Instructor: Father Robert Schremmer

To take this class for credit, one needs to have participated in a Called and Gifted Workshop. The Workshop would be beneficial for those not taking it for credit. The Workshop guides one to recognize gifts given by the Holy Spirit through baptism and confirmation. These gifts enable one to accomplish things for God above and beyond your natural abilities.

Topics include steps needed for discernment of spiritual gifts; clues one needs to follow God cal; the way charisms can work together uniquely in one’s life; release of control to welcome charisms.

Class Time - Wednesday evening: Jan. 30 to 6 p.m.

Location - Interactive Television Sites. To enroll in this class for credit, you will need to have participated in a Called and Gifted Workshop (see article above).

Cost: 1 hr. course for college credit - $65.00; 1 hr. course for enrichment - $25.00*

*Price quotes do not include books.
ACROSS

2  Version of the Bible
5  Wealthy biblical land
8  ___ of Songs
9  Benedictine title
11  Recent pope, affectionately
13  The feast of St. Alphonsus Ligouri is the first of this month
14  Paul preaching in___
15  The false prophet Zedekiah made two horns out of this (Kings 22:11)
16  There was no room here
17  Prayer of supplication
18  Occupation of Luke, the Evangelist
19  “Bring Flowers of the___”
20  Bread of the Passover
21  Peter cut this off the soldier of the high priest
22  “Homo!”
23  “Though the just ___ seven times, they rise again” (Prov 24:16)
24  Script conclusion?
25  Commander of the army
26  Satan
27  Bread of the Passover
28  Call letters for the Vatican radio station
29  “So the king ordered Daniel to be brought and cast into the___ den.” (Dan 6:17)
30  The Feast of the Annunciation is the 25th of this month
31  Brother of Cain
32  “___ to us a child is born”
33  Savior
34 OT historical book
35  Mother of Mary
36  Wise Men
37  John wore clothes made from this animal (Mt 3:4)
38  Act of Contrition word

DOWN

1  Moved by God
2  Church musician, at times
3  Jesus’ motto (abbr.)
4  Commander of the army who was made king over Israel (1 Kings 16:16)
5  Call letters for the Vatican radio station
6  Seven
7  “So the king ordered Daniel to be brought and cast into the___ den.” (Dan 6:17)
8  The Feast of the Annunciation is the 25th of this month
9  Catholic actor named after his or her grandmother
10  Though the just ___ seven times, they rise again” (Prov 24:16)
11  Chapter and ___
12  “___ to us a child is born”
13  The feast of St. Alphonsus Ligouri is the first of this month
14  The last word of the penitent’s prayer
15  The elephant’s trunk is the 25th of this month
16  “Homo!”
17  Though the just ___ seven times, they rise again” (Prov 24:16)
18  Chapter and ___
19  “Bring Flowers of the___”
20  Bread of the Passover
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38  Act of Contrition word

ST. MICHAEL’S MIND TEASER

Five recipes were printed in last year’s January/February issue of “Ingestion Weekly” magazine. Each recipe was submitted by a different person, invented by a different female relative of that person, and each person has a different occupation. The five people are two women named Audrey and Brenda and three men named Carl, Dan, and Edgar. Here are some facts:

1. Edgar is the police officer. Brenda isn’t the firefighter.
2. Dan (whose recipe was invented by his cousin) is neither the electrician nor the surgeon
3. Carl isn’t the man whose recipe was invented by his sister. The sister isn’t the one who invented the turkey scallopine recipe.
4. Audrey, who isn’t the one whose recipe was invented by his or her grandmother, submitted the sausage casserole recipe.
5. The one who submitted his or her mother’s quiche recipe, who isn’t Carl, isn’t the electrician.

The question is: Who submitted the calzones recipe, whose recipe was invented by his or her aunt, and who is the plumber?

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid containing areas surrounded by gray or dotted lines. The object is to fill all empty squares so that the numbers in each area is equal to the clue in the area’s top-left corner.

Reglas De Sudoku:
Cada fila debe contener los números a partir de 1 a 9. Cada columna debe contener los números a partir de 1 a 9, y cada cuadradito 3x3 debe contener los números a partir de 1 a 9.

Reprinted with permission from www.sudokuoftheday.com/
Father Francis Joseph Hartmann was born in Bavaria, Germany, on Jan. 4, 1858. He attended St. Francis De Sales Seminary in Milwaukee, Wis. He was ordained for the Diocese of Leavenworth by Bishop Louis Mary Fink, OSB, on April 21, 1882.

He was appointed as the first resident pastor at St. Teresa, Hutchinson in 1882. He erected St. Agnes Church at Castleton the following year. In 1885, he built Holy Trinity Church at Little River.

Father Hartmann was appointed first resident pastor at St. Joseph, Liebenthal, in 1889. His missions and stations included: St. Anthony at St. Theresa in Wichita County; Dighton in Lane County; McCracken in Rush County; Scott City and Modoc in Scott County; and Holbrook, Ness City, Ransom, all in Ness County. During this pastorate, his only assignment in the Dodge City territory, he built a frame parish house (1889) and started the parochial school (1890) at Liebenthal.

In 1892 Father Hartmann transferred to the Archdiocese of Chicago. His assignments in Illinois were served at St. James, Richton; Holy Cross, Stockton; St. Mary, Maple Park, with the mission at St. Peter, Virgil Centre.

Father Hartman died Dec. 23, 1918. He is buried in St. John the Baptist Cemetery, Joliet, Ill.

Father Francis Joseph Hartmann

During this pastorate, his only assignment in the Dodge City territory, he built a frame parish house (1889) and started the parochial school (1890) at Liebenthal.

Francois Xavier Aubry was born on Dec. 3, 1824, near Maskinonge, Quebec Province, Canada. When he was 21, he was freighting goods to Santa Fe from Independence, Mo. The return trip from Santa Fe usually took 24 days, but Aubry established speed records in 1847 of 14 days, and eight days and 10 hours in 1848, earning him the nicknames of “The Telegraph” and “Skimmer of the Plains.” In 1851, Aubry discovered an alternate route to a portion of the Cimarron branch of the Santa Fe Trail cutting 52 miles off the journey. In addition to shortening travel, the shortcut had two additional benefits: it was more accessible to water and was safer from Indian trouble than the regular Cimarron Cutoff. Writers have credited Aubry’s speed riding and his system of allocating fresh mounts along a route as the inspiration and model for delivering mail by the Pony Express, albeit six years after his death.

In 1853 Aubry made a California to New Mexico trip mapping a route along the 35 parallel for the feasibility of building a railroad connection to the Pacific. This too became a reality, also after his death.

On Aug. 18, 1854, Aubry died at the age of 29, mortally wounded with a Bowie knife in a saloon in Santa Fe, N.M. The New York Daily Times article about Aubry’s death included these words: He lived ten lives in half of one. His adventurous life lasted nine years; and in this short space of time he became known as a hero throughout North America.

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For information about opioid addiction or to seek help, visit https://ckfaddictiontreatment.org/, or call (785) 825-6224.

For information about suicide prevention, visit SpeakingOfSuicide.com, or, if you are having thoughts of suicide, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.
Pope Francis: Never forget to smile, even when life is hard

By ELISE HARRIS

Vatican City (CNA) - For Pope Francis, one of most needed virtues of modern time is hope, which is something he said must never be abandoned no matter how hard life gets, and which is often expressed in the simple act of a smile.

Referring to the “dramatic moment” of Israel’s exile in the desert, Pope Francis said Dec. 7 that this time was especially hard for the people because they had lost everything, and felt “abandoned and without hope.”

The desert is a difficult place to live, he said, but noted that it is precisely inside the desert that the people of Israel are able to walk in order to return “not only to their homeland, but to return to God, and to hope and smile again.”

“When we are in darkness and difficulty the smile doesn’t come, but there is the hope that teaches us to smile on that path to find God,” Francis said, noting that one of the trademarks of those who break away from God is “the absence of the smile, the smile of the hope of finding God.”

Perhaps these people know how to “have a good laugh” or make jokes, but they are missing the smile that only God knows how to give, the Pope continued.

Life, he said, “is often a desert, it’s hard to walk in it, but if we entrust ourselves to God, it can become beautiful and wide like a highway.

“It’s enough to never lose hope, it’s enough to continue to believe, always, despite everything,” he said, noting that often when we find ourselves in front of a child, “there is a spontaneous smile because a child is hope.”

“Let us also smile even if it was a difficult day, because we see the hope.”

Pope Francis spoke to the thousands of pilgrims present for his Wednesday general audience in the Vatican’s Paul VI Hall.

Hope, he said, is needed “so much in these times that appear so dark, in which at times we feel lost in front of the evil and violence that surrounds us, in front of the pain of our brothers and sisters.”

Noting how many can feel lost, discouraged and even “powerless” in front of a darkness that seems like it will never end, the Pope stressed that “we mustn’t let hope abandon us, because God with His love walks with us, He doesn’t leave us alone,” but has instead “conquered evil and opened to us the path of life.

“Let us therefore teach hope, let us look forward faithfully to the coming of the Lord, and whatever the desert of our lives, it will become a flowery garden.”

The History of ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’

The song, “The Twelve Days of Christmas” is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church.

Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number nine, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined six to make three, taking the six fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

The “True Love” one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, “Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals”,
The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.
The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe humankind’s fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior.
The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].
The 10 lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
The eleven pipers piping stood for the 11 faithful Apostles.
The twelve drummers drumming in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend, but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day.

The “True Love” one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend, but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day.
The following are excerpts from articles by Archbishop Charles Chaput of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Mary of Nazareth has always had a special place in the heart of the Church. She is theotokos, the “God-bearer”; Scripture’s greatest human witness of courage, humility and grace. This is why Catholic life has honored her through the centuries in so many different ways: Our Lady of Consolation; Mother of Sorrows; Mother of Mercy; Our Lady of the New Advent; Queen of Heaven; Virgin Most Pure — and in a special way, Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of America, one continent north and south.

All of these titles are true and richly deserved. But they can sometimes obscure the human reality of Mary’s life: a young woman of the rough Galilean hills, pregnant, with a seemingly implausible story before her marriage to Joseph, who gave birth to her child in the cold in a stable far from home and then, hunted by Herod, was forced to flee to Egypt. Mary — our mother; the mother of the Church — had an intimate understanding of suffering, flight, homelessness and uncertainty.

At Guadalupe, Mary appeared not to the rich or powerful, or even to the local bishop, but to the poor peasant Juan Diego. Her tenderness to the poor is something we need to remember this Advent, because our Christian faith is more than a set of ideas or beautiful words. It’s meant to be lived. It’s meant to transform our thinking and our actions.

[The recent] separating [of] children from their parents caught illegally entering the country — was both stupid and destructive, and the storm of anger it sparked, warranted.

The worst part of this story, however, is that it’s simply the latest chapter in an endless and often hypocritical struggle by both political parties over the details of immigration reform. The wrangling has been going on for many years. And the result is always the same: gridlock and mutual recrimination.

For more than a decade the U.S. Catholic bishops have pressed repeatedly for just and sensible immigration policy reform. Each of our major political parties has faulted the other for inaction, and each — despite its posturing and alibis — bears a generous portion of the blame. ... We need to remember that the Holy Family too was once a family of immigrants and refugees. And we need to treat the undocumented among us with the mercy and justice we expect for ourselves.

National Migration Week, Jan. 6-12

For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week, which is an opportunity for the Church to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including immigrants, refugees, children, and victims and survivors of human trafficking.

The theme for National Migration Week 2019, “Building Communities of Welcome” draws attention to the fact that each of our families have a migration story, some recent and others in the distant past. Regardless of where we are and where we came from, we remain part of the human family and are called to live in solidarity with one another.

Unfortunately, in our contemporary culture we often fail to encounter migrants as persons, and instead look at them as unknown others, if we even notice them at all. We do not take the time to engage migrants in a meaningful way, as fellow children of God, but remain aloof to their presence and suspicious or fearful of them.

During this National Migration Week, let us all take the opportunity to engage migrants as community members, neighbors, and friends.

To do so, we will look at the important role that foster care plays in the lives of unaccompanied immigrants and refugees, highlight MRS’ Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees, and examine local initiatives that are making important contributions in this regard.