

THE CATHOLIC MISCELLANY

themiscellany.org
FEBRUARY 2022



The greatest
OF THESE
IS LOVE

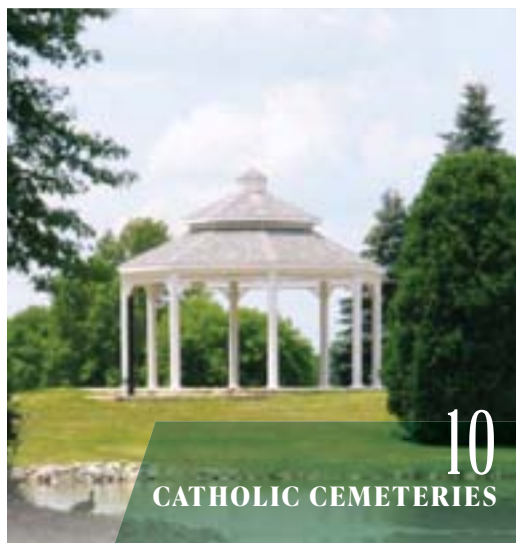
THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON



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THE CATHOLIC MISCELLANY

The Magazine of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston

charlestdiocese.org

FEBRUARY 2022
VOLUME 2: ISSUE 2

PUBLISHER
Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo

The Catholic Miscellany magazine is the successor to the United States Catholic Miscellany, the first national Catholic weekly newspaper. It was founded in 1822 by Most Rev. John England, the first bishop of Charleston. "Miscellany" means a mix of different items, and the original included local, national, and international Catholic news, essays and notices.

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Award-winning member of the Catholic Press Association and the South Carolina Press Association.

The Catholic Miscellany is published monthly by the Diocese of Charleston, 901 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC 29407. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is Pending at Charleston SC and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Catholic Miscellany, 901 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC 29407. ©2022 The Catholic Miscellany, Diocese of Charleston.



FAITHCATHOLIC.COM

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FROM THE BISHOP

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month, we celebrate the feast of St. Valentine, often praised as the patron of courtly love. However, the Church dedicates the month of February to the Holy Family, the greatest example of love through a family unified.

We are given a special opportunity this month to examine the meaning of love, as love is a theme repeatedly emphasized by the Church, and its implications in our own lives. We can also learn to improve our willingness to answer the call we each have been given, to love God and love our neighbor.

We draw from Christ's life to discover how to love, as we are meant to imitate him. From the washing of the disciples' feet to Christ's heroic death on the cross, we know that true love involves sacrifice. Whether married or single, lay or ordained, it is necessary to offer all that we are as a sacrifice of love, and for this reason we were born.

This edition features pieces centered on charity and love: the celebration of the vocation of marriage, the choice of young women to commit their lives to Christ — source of all love — in religious orders and also how we properly let go of our loved ones. Because, while love is often accompanied by warm feelings, it transcends our emotions or physical reactions. It is a daily choice that we are given to accept or reject. Through cooperation in God's grace, and by fulfilling the vocation that our Lord has given each of us, we express our love to God.

Love should not be offered only to those whose company we enjoy. Christ taught us that even those who wrong us, persecute us and hate us are deserving of our love. Forgiveness is essential for our spiritual well-being, and it is a testament to the love that God has for each one of us as the most merciful judge.

This month and every February, may we be encouraged in our pursuit of love through the contemplation of Christ, his earthly family and those family members and saints who have gone before us as witnesses. Let us dedicate our entire month, and life, to God and treat all our neighbors in a manner befitting Christ's appointed ministers of love and the Church's mission of charity. In doing so, we send a message to a broken world, so permeated by division, that the love of Christ has and will conquer all things. †

In the Lord's peace,

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo, DD
Bishop of Charleston



YOU ARE INVITED to join Catholic couples from around the state for the annual Marriage Anniversary Celebration on Feb. 20 at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Seneca. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Robert E. Guglielmo. To register, contact the Family Life Office at familylife@charlestdiocese.org or 803-547-5063.

The bride without shoes



BY JOHN BOSIO

John Bosio is a former marriage and family therapist, director of religious education and diocesan family life coordinator. He and his wife Teri are authors of several books on family ministry and marriage. Visit www.happy-together.net.

Nov. 18, 1972. It was the day after our wedding. I remember driving on Interstate 70 East, away from Kansas City toward the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. It was a snowy and windy day, but inside our little car, a 1970 orange-colored Maverick, it was warm and cozy. It was the place where we wanted to be. It was our car. It represented our new world. It was just the two of us, starting our life together.

We had dreamed of spending our honeymoon strolling the Ozarks hills and visiting many quaint places. The snow that was coming down, wet and heavy, was redesigning our plans. That did not bother us. What was important to us was that we were together. It snowed for two days. On the third day, although there were 10 inches of snow on the ground, we decided to get out to explore the area.

As we were leaving our hotel, I realized that my wife Teri did not bring shoes that I thought were appropriate for walking in the snow. She was wearing dress shoes. Wanting to exert my newly acquired role and responsibility of “provider,” I said to her, “Let’s go buy you a pair of boots.” So, off we went in the orange Maverick looking for a place to buy boots.

After a few miles on winding country roads, we came upon a small town where the streets were barely passable. There we found a shoe store. I got out of the car and stood in the street, ankle deep in snow. I wondered how Teri would get to the store through piles of slush and mud without getting wet and dirty. Then I had an idea.

I walked to the passenger side of the car, opened the door and picked Teri up in my arms. There I was, at the center of town, carrying my beautiful bride to buy her boots. I carried her all the way inside the store while bystanders who had noticed what was happening started clapping.

It was a gallant gesture that impressed my young bride, and it has remained a vivid memory in Teri’s mind. In fact, it has become the source of teasing between us. From time to time she reminds me of what I did and asks when I am going to carry her again with so much enthusiasm.

Carrying each other. The fact is that I have, and she has carried me many times. Spouses that want to succeed need to learn to carry each other’s burdens. Teri carried me when I was sick; she looked after my needs and helped me recuperate after surgery. She carried me when I lost my job and supported me for six months while I was looking for another one. I have done the same for her. When she went back

to school, I accepted the sacrifice of evenings and weekends scheduled around her schoolwork.

One critical lesson to be learned about helping each other is the importance of a positive attitude. Just imagine how Teri and I would remember that day had I picked up my new bride and complained that she was too heavy, and that my feet were getting wet and muddy, or that it was not worth the trouble. Instead, I wanted to take care of Teri, which is what I had promised in my wedding vows just a few days before. Taking care of one’s spouse’s needs demands sacrifice.

A recent study on *Sacrifice as a Predictor of Marital Outcomes* found that couples’ attitudes about sacrificing for each other affect their happiness and satisfaction.

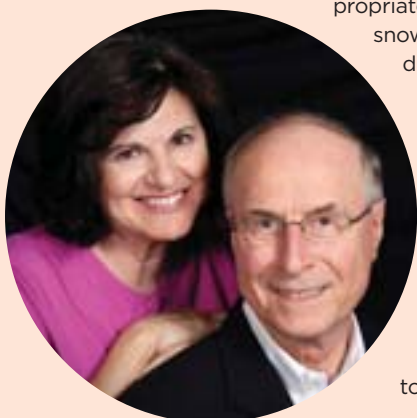
“Sacrifice may be one of the more tangible ways that partners can demonstrate genuine commitment to the relationship in the day-to-day of life together,” according to the study.

Self-giving and sacrifice are essential elements of Christian love. Pope emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his encyclical “God Is Love” (*Deus Caritas Est*) that married love is not self-seeking, but seeks the good of the beloved, and mature love is ready and willing for sacrifice.

Christian spouses have the benefit of their faith to understand how to embrace the necessary sacrifices required in marriage. They know that God stands by them with his graces, ready to help them carry one another’s burdens.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that “Christ dwells with them [the spouses], gives them the strength to take up their crosses and to follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, and to bear one another’s burdens” (CCC #1642).

Questions for reflection: When is a time your spouse sacrificed for you? How often do you pray for God’s help in the face of sacrifices you are asked to make for the sake of your relationship? †



The Holy Family is the model for every home

Traditionally, February is the month dedicated to the Holy Family. Pope Leo XIII, who officialized the feast in 1893, said of the Holy Family that nothing “can be more salutary or efficacious for Christian families to meditate upon than the example of this Holy Family, which embraces the perfection and completeness of all domestic virtues.”

BY DANNY JOST

Daniel Jost is a public relations specialist for the Office of Multimedia. Email him at djost@charlestondiocese.org.

As sons and daughters of God, we are all called to imitate the Holy Family in every role that we hold in our own families, communities and even our nation. This month provides an opportunity to reevaluate our vocations and make a conscious effort to imitate each member of the Holy Family.

St. Joseph

While St. Joseph’s words are not recounted in Scripture, he served as the loving protector of his young family. Throughout the travels they undertook — the journey to Bethlehem and later the flight to Egypt — Joseph cooperated with the will of God to safeguard the Word made flesh and the Holy Mother. It is also clear that St. Joseph was an exceptional teacher, as he shared the trade of carpentry with his son.

In the imitation of St. Joseph, we can all strive to take responsibility for the wellbeing of those for whom we are caretakers, whether that’s our own children, elderly or sick relatives or work colleagues. In addition, we share our personal talents for the good of our fellow man.

Our Lady

Our Lady is the model of all beauty, humility and trust in the Lord. When God revealed Mary’s role in his eternal plan, Our Lady accepted her vocation readily with joy. Throughout her earthly life, she denied herself for the good of her son, and for all her spiritual children. For example, when Mary informed Jesus during the wedding at Cana that “they have no wine” (Jn 2:3), she did this so others might see the miracle and be drawn closer to him.

Mary holds a special role of guiding God’s children to her son. May we, in imitation of Mary, accept the challenges and graces that we experience in our own vocations.



Christ Jesus

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, submitted with respect to his earthly parents. He sacrificed his entire life in love for our redemption, giving us the model for a truly fulfilled life in God’s law. Unscathed by sin, and perfect in his majesty, he suffered mockery, temptation and death itself for humanity’s sake.

Even in his childhood Jesus took on the role of teacher as he spoke to the elders in the temple. He constantly reminded his followers that, ultimately, we are children of God, and we must foster communication with our Father in heaven.

While reflecting on the individual members of the Holy Family, we acknowledge the beautiful example they set for our world — the importance of the traditional family unit, the very building block of society. We use the month of February to recenter our families on unity and prayer and counter a broken world.

May our prayers and the Holy Family renew and strengthen our own families. †

How do I know if I'm *in love*?

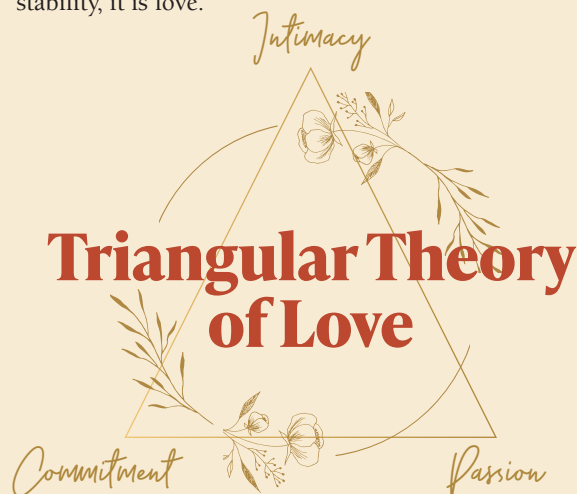
Ah, Valentine's Day! The annual celebration of flowery cards, crowded restaurants, overpriced flowers and, of course, love. By the way, you realize that you never give your wife a dozen roses. Instead, you give her 11 and tell her that she is the 12th! Or being the frugal fellow that I am, I give my wife one rose and tell her that she is the other 11!



But back to love: I once heard a golf pro say, "I just wish I could find a woman that I loved as much as golf!" This young man's lament might also give a bride pause were she ever to consider scheduling a wedding during football season or March Madness.

So, what exactly is love, and how do you know if you are in love? Now, I'm no expert on it, but Robert Sternberg apparently is. Robert Sternberg? Bob is a Cornell University psychologist who likes triangles. While probably best known for his *Triarchic Theory of Intelligence*, he also proposed a *Triangular Theory of Love*.

And, why not? Triangles are the strongest and most stable geometric structures out there, used in building everything from bridges, towers and rooftops to playground equipment. Triangles are important for us Catholics, too, with our religion built on the foundation of the Holy Trinity, also a good foundation for Catholic love. And, above all, if anything requires strength and stability, it is love.



Sternberg proposed that love has three components: intimacy, passion and commitment, which he placed at the points of a triangle, so you could look at each component individually or as three distinct pairs:

Intimacy: By itself it's friendship — you like somebody, enjoy being with them, have the same interests, lots to talk about.

Passion: By itself it's just infatuation — intense, but possibly short-lived. "Puppy love" and love-at-first-sight might be good examples, or falling head over heels for a movie star.

Commitment: By itself it's simply a decision — a rather empty state of being, without feelings or friendship. Such a relationship would be merely a formality, perhaps to reach some mutual goal, like making money or achieving high political office. Arranged marriages that occur in certain cultures might be another example of relationships based on commitment alone.

Photo: Getty Images/Stockphoto/PeopleImages | Illustration: Getty Images/Stockphoto/Avatarart

Romance, friendship & whirlwind courtships

Now, if you start pairing up intimacy, passion and commitment, you get some interesting interactions:

Intimacy & Passion make for a wonderful state of affairs called *romance*. This is where love usually begins, but it doesn't end here. In romance, you are physically and emotionally attracted to each other, enjoy each others' company, but there is no commitment.

Intimacy & Commitment are the components of a long-term friendship. It could be just good old friends, or perhaps an older married couple where the passion has faded a bit, but they still enjoy each other's companionship. This is not to say that passion has to fade with age, but if it does, you can still fall back on intimacy and commitment.

Passion & Commitment are an interesting pair. An example of this might be a whirlwind courtship, where you hardly know the person, but you want to marry them on the spot. Another example might be a person who passionately wants to marry someone they barely know other than from news reports or television.

Passion, Intimacy & Commitment are the ultimate combination, bringing us finally to what Sternberg calls consummate or complete love. It would seem that such a relationship would start with passion and intimacy, and gradually grow into commitment. It would also seem that this is the Catholic ideal.



Of course, commitment is where the challenge begins. “Taking the leap” into the rest of your life with children, marital duties and obligations, restricted freedoms, financial and health issues, “till death do us part” — put that all together and it is enough to give pause to the most passionate and intimate among us.

But commitment does have its benefits, too. For starters, you will now have a lot more time for more important things in life than preoccupation with finding someone to marry. You can also start making long-term plans with your spouse regarding having children, buying a house, building careers, making investments, etc. When you join romance with commitment, life really begins anew, with all new choices and opportunities ahead for the two of you for years to come.



You know the components now: *Intimacy, passion and commitment*. However, don't expect these components to be in perfectly equal measures. Comedians George Burns and Gracie Allen exemplified this point when George said, “With Gracie, for me the laughs (*intimacy*) came first. We had a marvelous marriage, and not because I was a great lover (*passion*).”

Commitment, though, is tough. You can't possibly know all that lies ahead. About the best you may be able to do at the beginning of a marriage is to strongly predict that your love will adapt and grow until the end. Then, you take it one day, one year, one decade at a time, nurturing your intimacy and passion, while committing and recommitting yourself at each point along the way. As one expert said, you should get remarried every 10 years — to the same person! †

P.S.

In the spirit of full disclosure, my wife and I met on Valentine's Day, 53 years ago, and she approves this message — with her usual reservations.

BY DR. TOM DORSEL

Thomas Dorsel, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of psychology at Francis Marion University, currently living on Hilton Head Island with his wife, Sue. He can be found on dorsel.com or cantoring at Holy Family Church.

Cross Catholic Outreach Arranges Major Food Shipments to Combat Global Hunger

In much of the developing world, a food crisis is underway, and Catholic missions have had to step forward to serve those in greatest need. [See story on opposite page.]

The missions' programs supply bulk food packages to hungry families, offer hot school lunches to children, and supplement the daily meals of the vulnerable elderly, but in each case, these missions can only succeed if the rice, beans and other resources used in the outreach are resupplied on a regular basis.

Organizing this ongoing support in the U.S. is a priority for the charity Cross Catholic Outreach.

"Our goal is to empower the priests, nuns and Catholic lay leaders who are fighting the war against malnutrition, and we are involving thousands of Catholic donors in the United States to provide that support," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, the Vatican-recognized charity serving missionaries in the developing world. "In this case, American Catholics are helping by funding the shipping and distribution of Vitafood."

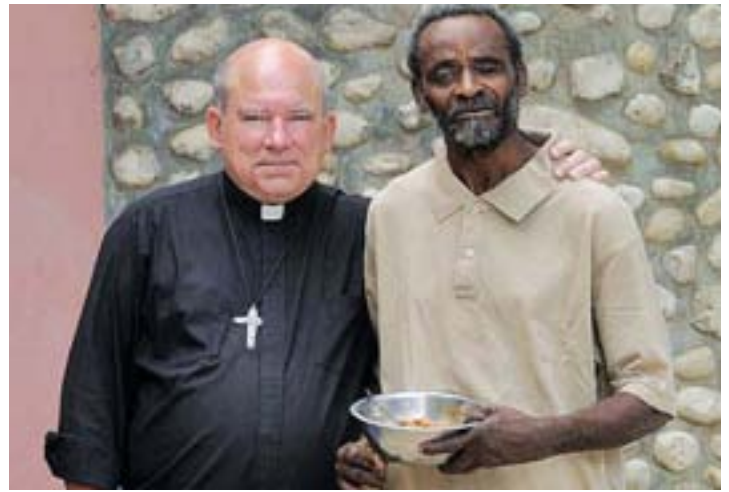
Vitafood is a fortified rice product, specifically designed to reverse the effects of child malnutrition, and it can be easily packed in large shipping containers and cost-effectively sent to Catholic schools, orphanages and other local partners serving the poorest of the poor. A single container can make a big impact, keeping crucial feeding programs running

or providing immediate relief when disasters strike.

"Vitafood is a godsend to the Catholic schools and feeding programs that receive it because it's highly nutritious and incredibly flexible. It can be cooked for school lunches or added to food baskets and provided directly to families. While we have done a lot to get Vitafood into the hands of the priests and religious sisters running feeding programs, I'm confident we could do even more with additional support from donors in the U.S.," Cavnar said. "Catholic leaders in these countries are eager to help the poor in their communities, but they need this resource to succeed. Our steady supplies of food are critical to them, and in some cases, these meals save lives."

According to Cavnar, Vitafood comes in several different varieties and can be prepared with additional spices or ingredients to suit local tastes. Each serving provides the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child's growing body needs. Not only is this tried-and-tested formula suitable for reversing malnutrition in children, but it also helps maintain good nutrition in people of all ages. A daily dose of Vitafood is beneficial for both children and adults.

What's more, because Vitafood meals are donated to Cross Catholic Outreach, the ministry only needs



Father Glenn Meaux's Kobonal Haiti Mission is a major partner with Cross Catholic Outreach, and its feeding programs for children and the elderly benefit significantly from food shipments made possible through donations of concerned Catholics in the U.S. Without those gifts, outreaches like Fr. Meaux's would lose their impact.

to cover the cost for shipping the meals overseas. This means that for every dollar donated, about six nutritious meals can be sent to a community in need!

"There are very few donations a person can make that achieve this much bang for the buck," Cavnar pointed out. "Some of our donors are so impressed with the impact of this program that they want to sponsor major shipments of food, supplying the poor with thousands of meals."

In recent months, the COVID-19 pandemic has made this outreach even more important to the poor, according to Cavnar.

"Problems related to the COVID-19 crisis have made malnutrition even more deadly. Our goal is to support Church leaders as they work to save those lives and restore the health of the people," he said. "As

I see it, this is our opportunity to be a blessed instrument of mercy. It is our chance to further the work of the dedicated priests, nuns and Catholic lay missionaries who are doing everything they can to respond to this threat."

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach food programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01796, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Cross Mission Partner or write "Monthly Mission Partner" on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Cross Catholic Outreach Endorsed by More Than 100 Bishops, Archbishops

Cross Catholic Outreach's range of relief work to help the poor overseas continues to be recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S. and abroad.

"We've received more than 100 endorsements from bishops and archbishops," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. "They're moved by the fact that we've launched outreaches in almost 40 countries and have undertaken a variety of projects — everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless to

supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. The bishops have also been impressed by Cross Catholic Outreach's direct and meaningful responses to emergency situations, most recently by providing food, medicines and other resources to partners in Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala impacted by natural disasters."

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, supports this mission. He writes, "What a

joy it is to be part of the Lord's redemptive work and to manifest his mercy on Earth by caring for our neighbors in need."

In addition to praising the ministry's accomplishments, many of the bishops and archbishops are encouraged that pontifical canonical status was conferred on the charity in September 2015, granting it approval as an official Catholic organization. This allows Cross Catholic Outreach to participate in the mission of the Church and to give a concrete witness to Gospel

charity, in collaboration with the Holy Father.

"Your work with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a strong endorsement of your partnership with the work of the Universal Church," Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said. "By providing hope to the faithful overseas by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, delivering medical relief to the sick and shelter to the homeless, and through self-help projects, you are embodying the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*."

US Catholics Helping Kobonal Haiti Mission and Other Catholic Outreaches Address Extreme Hunger in Haiti

When the time comes for Regis Elmaise to prepare a meal for her family, she has few choices. When the weather has been good and local crops have been fruitful, they can eat some of the corn, potatoes and rice they grow on a small plot outside their humble home — but when the weather has been bad, her choices become much starker.

“If it doesn’t rain, we have no food,” the mother of six children said. “We are at the mercy of the weather.”

Her husband, Aneus, confirmed this painful truth. He sees hunger as a nearly constant threat, explaining that “a lack of rain makes us hungry.”

Imagine living at the whim of the weather, never knowing whether your family will be able to depend on your care because so much hangs on conditions beyond your control.



Not far from where Regis and Aneus live, there is another group of people also battling hunger, and their situation is even more heartbreaking. These elderly men and women in Haiti find themselves alone in the final years of their lives, and they endure daily hunger as a result. Most are too frail to grow crops or find work.

“These two groups — very poor rural families and the isolated elderly — face incredible daily challenges. They have none of the opportunities or social safety nets we Americans enjoy, so when the cupboard is bare, there’s nothing to do but go hungry,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the leading Catholic charities serving Haiti’s poor. “It’s tragic. In the case of children, malnutrition can lead to serious, long-term mental and physical disabilities; and for the elderly, poor nutrition weakens

the body and makes them more susceptible to illnesses.”

Fortunately, according to Cavnar, Catholic leaders in Haiti are aware of these threats and have developed plans to address hunger in both groups. Supplying hot school lunches to at-risk children is often a priority for Catholic schools, and several in-country missions are working to help the elderly poor. One of these missions is located in Kobonal, Haiti.

“Kobonal is in the Central Plateau, a very poor region of Haiti, and many of its rural population are at risk of malnutrition, especially during droughts and other seasons when crop yields are low,” Cavnar said. “The Kobonal Haiti Mission has become a godsend to these people. It was founded by Father Glenn Meaux and has programs to serve both poor

children and the isolated elderly. If it wasn’t for that Catholic mission, I’m not sure how some of those people would survive.”

According to Cavnar, American Catholics have played an important role in making the feeding programs at the Kobonal Haiti Mission successful. Their donations provide most of the meals the ministry is distributing, and funding has also helped pay for the food’s preparation and distribution. [See related story on the opposite page.]

“We have thousands of concerned Catholics involved in our international feeding programs, and a number of them are helping the Kobonal Haiti Mission. Their gifts provide Cross Catholic Outreach with the funding we need to send large shipments of food into the area. Some is used to provide lunches at the Catholic school Fr. Glenn runs. Other shipments are broken down to create the food



The feeding programs run by Catholic missions in developing countries rely on support from American Catholics to obtain the food they distribute to the poor. Fr. Glenn Meaux’s Kobonal Haiti Mission is one of these. It distributes bread to students in the morning — because most come to school with an empty stomach — and also offers a hot lunch later in the day. These programs are vital to young children who might easily become malnourished without this support.

packages his team distributes to the elderly in the area. Both are excellent outreaches, but neither would be this successful without the help of the American Catholics who donate to obtain and ship the food.”

It is Cavnar’s hope that the number of Catholics supporting food outreaches will grow even larger this year.

“Food is a basic human need,” Cavnar said, “and one we can easily address if people will contribute to the cause. Even a small donation for food

can have a big impact. For example, a gift of \$30 can provide about 200 meals to the poor, and with a gift of \$150, we can ship about 1,000 meals to families in need.”

That is an incredible bang for the buck — and one every Catholic should consider as a way to cost-effectively help the world’s poor.

“Poor families around the globe are depending on us for help,” Cavnar concluded. “So we’re doing everything we can to address the urgent need for food.”

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach’s effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper, or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01796, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.



If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



FOR THE LIVING & THE DEAD

Loving our resting places back to life

Imagine a cemetery so overgrown that a movie company asked to use it for a horror film. Now imagine being the person hired to rehabilitate and beautify that chaos. Meet Karmin Meade, professional cemeterian for the Diocese of Charleston.

BY HOLLY GATLING

Holly Gatling is executive director of South Carolina Citizens for Life, and former writer for newspapers The State and Florence Morning News. Email her at hollygatling@gmail.com.

PHOTOS BY DOUG DEAS

When she arrived in April of 2017, Karmin found the five active and three inactive diocesan cemeteries she was hired to restore in rough shape. There was beauty waiting to be awakened, and the diocese was thoughtful in their search for someone who could see this beauty and bring it to life — not just as a resting place for the deceased, but also a place of solace for the living. Cemeteries should not be frightening places, she said.

Karmin described the condition of St. Patrick Cemetery in Columbia as “very scary” when she first visited. The grounds were overgrown and contained evidence of illegal activity. A pothole in the street winding through the property was “big enough to swallow a golf cart,” she said, and she was advised never to go there by herself.

Similarly, Holy Cross Cemetery on James Island was in such a state of disrepair, one visitor from California

wrote a nine-page letter, front and back, saying “it looked worse than the fiery depths of hell.” Karmin accepted his complaint as an outpouring of grief, and used it as an opportunity to show loving kindness as she assured the man that improvements were already underway. Clearly, she had her work cut out for her, and the diocese was invested in upgrading cemetery properties with the full support of Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, Rev. Msgr. Richard D. Harris, vicar general and John L. Barker, chief financial officer.

The success of these restorations was based on a five-year plan that began with the basics: make the cemeteries clean and tidy. The next steps were landscaping to beautify the grounds: adding grass, butterfly bushes, roses, crepe myrtles and other native, low-maintenance foliage, plus the essential trimming of trees and removal of others. Working with Boy Scouts and Knights of Columbus groups has kept Karmin and the cemetery teams ahead of schedule and within budget. Instead of paying the City of Columbia \$2,000 a month for water, Karmin found someone to dig a well at St. Patrick so the grounds could be watered with its own irrigation system at no additional cost.

The transformations have been so complete that the movie company had to find a different cemetery location to film.



“Transformations have been so complete that the movie company had to find a different cemetery location to film.”

Now, Karmin travels around the state giving presentations in parishes to promote the active cemeteries and to encourage Catholics to choose these sacred grounds as final resting places. Diocesan cemeteries include Holy Cross on James Island; St. Lawrence, just off peninsular Charleston; St. Peter in North Charleston; St. Peter next to Elmwood Cemetery in Columbia; and St. Patrick off North Main Street in Columbia.

In October 2021, she visited Transfiguration Church in Blythewood as the featured speaker at the Knights of Columbus Oktoberfest celebration and presented before and after photographs of the burial grounds. Msgr. James L. LeBlanc, pastor, was so impressed with her presentation that he said he is considering St. Patrick Cemetery, which is close to the church, for his place of burial.

“There is plenty of room,” he said with a chuckle. He noted that three priests are buried there, including Father Frederik Masad, retired pastor of St. John Neumann in Columbia, who died in 2014. Msgr. LeBlanc said the presentation was wonderful and recommended that every parish invite Karmin to speak.

Her love of cemeteries goes back to her childhood. Karmin was 12 when her grandfather died. He’d taught her to cook and to dance despite his severe disabilities, and taking care of his grave gave her peace of mind and a connection to the family member she considered to be her best friend.

Prior to joining the diocese in 2017, she was the coordinator for the University of Notre Dame’s Cedar Grove Cemetery. During her tenure, the university grew from 20 burials per year to over 100 thanks to the construction of four open-air, garden mausoleums.

For diocesan cemeteries, success has been credited

to the cemetery team’s diligent pre-planning, marketing and education efforts.

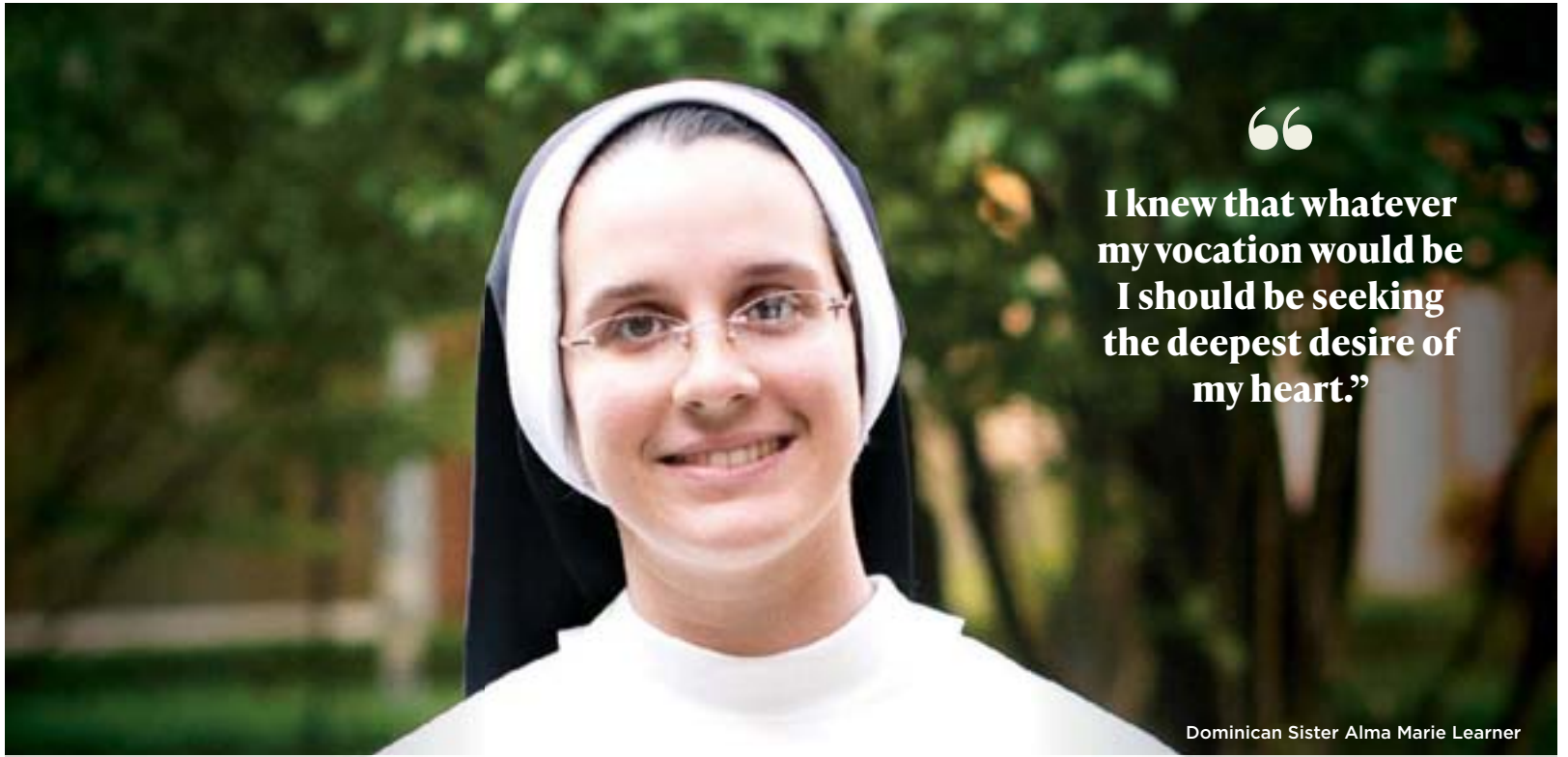
The number of people choosing Catholic cemeteries for burials, and burial spaces sold, have more than doubled since Karmin’s arrival. She said she thinks of the cemeteries as having been asleep and now they are alive as illustrated in the green grass, plentiful blooms and birds building nests.

Everything she’s doing, she said, is to make diocesan cemeteries inviting spaces for the people who visit, “a place for prayer; a place for peace and contemplation.”

Karmin said she could not do this without a hard-working team alongside her, including Lamar Wiggins, sexton; William Morris, equipment and material coordinator; Lisa Baggett, administrative assistant; and Kelly Bruce, the diocesan director of Planning and Operations.

At Holy Cross, parents bring their children to learn how to ride bikes, retirees walk there for exercise and joggers run through on their regular routes around the island. Those things never happened before. Karmin said that beautiful, natural surroundings connect us with God and with those we love who have gone before us. †





“

I knew that whatever my vocation would be I should be seeking the deepest desire of my heart.”

Dominican Sister Alma Marie Learner

Love, joy and commitment:

Accepting the call to religious life

Every time I meet a Catholic religious sister what strikes me is the joy they exude. They laugh and smile often, and seem to be free from worry and stress. I often think, what’s their secret?

BY THERESA STRATFORD

Theresa Stratford is a freelance writer for The Miscellany. She lives in Charleston with her husband and three children and attends Blessed Sacrament Church. Email her at tmmart89@gmail.com.

Popularly called nuns, the religious sisters of today are a far cry from the religious sisters our grandparents would tell us about when they were young. Perhaps you were told a story about a nun who was strict at their Catholic school or maybe your grandparents warned you about the women religious that would watch you if you weren’t paying attention at Mass.

I’ve never come across a sister that fits that age-old stereotype, and I’m pretty sure I never will. The religious sisters who have been placed in my path are some of the most lovely people God has created.

There is something mystical

about women in religious life. It’s fascinating to hear their inspirational stories of the “calling” they received from God, and to learn about their rules of life, charisms and ministries. They live strict lives of prayer as they have given themselves to Jesus Christ and consecrated service to the Church. Chosen by God, these women accept the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Whether younger or older in age when taking vows does not matter: it’s a commitment for life, one that brings with it immense love.

These women are a part of the increasing number of young women who are discerning the call to religious life.

Sister Therese Marie

Although nationwide statistics would prove otherwise, the state of South Carolina was happy to report an uptick in younger religious sisters taking vows in 2021, one of which was Molly Rusciollelli of Indian Land. A parishioner of Our Lady of Grace Church on Waxhaw Highway, Molly took her vows Oct. 2, 2021, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption in Covington, Ky.

During the novitiate period, a time of prayer and training after the first vows are taken, religious sisters are given a name. Molly received the name of Sister Therese Marie.

Women who become religious sisters choose a specific order, or community, which are defined by their spirituality, rule of life, habit and ministry. Of the thousands of different religious communities worldwide, Sister Therese Marie chose the Franciscan Daughters of Mary out



Poor Clare Sister Susanna professes vows with Sister Nancy Shively, OSC, abess.



Sister Therese Marie, and the Rusciollelli family, the day she took vows as a Franciscan Daughter of Mary.



Sister Catherine Rose of the Immaculate Conception, of the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, stands with Father Christopher Smith, her former pastor.

of Kentucky, which serves mothers, children and families. She will be involved regularly in distributing food, operating a medical and dental clinic, facilitating a crisis pregnancy center and conducting other services and outreach to vulnerable and underserved populations.

In addition to the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Sister Therese Marie also took the vow of upholding the dignity of human life.

In a press release sent out by Our Lady of Grace, Sister Therese Marie's mother said, "It is very gratifying to see her living out her vocation and following God's will for her life. It has been a joy to watch this unfold and we are excited to see how God will continue to work in her life."

Sisters Catherine Rose & Susanna

From the Upstate at Prince of Peace Church in Taylors, Samantha Johanning was clothed as a cloistered nun and given the new religious name Sister Catherine Rose of the Immaculate Conception on May 1, 2021. She is now part of the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Fairfield, Pa.

And then there was Sister Susanna who joined the Order of St. Clare, or Poor Clares, on June 11, 2021, in Travelers Rest.

In the Poor Clare's summer newsletter, Sister Susanna said it was "a tremendous grace to make such a promise and vow to God, and to do so during Mass, kneeling next to the altar, and placing my hands in those of our abess, Sister Nancy."

Sister Alma Marie

Sister Alma Marie Learner, OP, from St. Peter Church in Beaufort, became one of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville, Tenn. She explained that her calling was not right away or exactly obvious at first.

"I began to consider religious life when I was in high school," Sister Alma Marie said. "I had always admired the life and example of Mother Teresa and knew she was a religious sister, but I thought that becoming a sister was something only really holy people did. When I was a junior in high school Sister Maris Stella, a Dominican Sister of St. Cecilia, came and gave a very brief talk about being a religious sister ... I was struck by her witness because she was young, wearing a habit, and she was incredibly joyful. I remember thinking, 'Whatever she has that causes her to be so joyful, I want that!'"

She said that after she went to college, she began going to daily Mass and spending time in silent prayer before the tabernacle.

"I didn't even know what prayer was supposed to be, but I remember Mother Teresa saying in prayer we should go and sit in the silence and allow the Lord to speak to us and just be with him. So that is what I did."

After about three months of sitting in silence, she read the scripture passage where Jesus asks Simon Peter, "Do you love me?" and like St. Peter she would answer "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

"One day it dawned on me," she said. "Oh you want me to love you! That is my mission!"

After that, she went to a vocations retreat with the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia and said she loved every moment.

"I felt at home and each of the sisters was just as joyful as Sister Maris Stella but each in their own way," she said. "I thought maybe this joy could be for me too."

However, it still took Sister Alma Marie some time before she fully answered the call.

"I had this idea of wanting to be a physical therapist, do research to help children who had muscle wasting diseases and have a large family of my own. When I was about to apply to physical therapy programs as a senior in college, I again began to feel the tug and think, 'What about becoming a sister? Why am I putting this off?'"

She stopped at that moment, left the computer and drove to the nearest church. Looking at the tabernacle, she said, "I knew that whatever my vocation would be I should be seeking the deepest desire of my heart. After that I began the process to enter the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, and I entered the Feast of the Assumption in 2014."

She added that her community is blessed by several new postulants each year.

"I think that authentically holy lives are very inspiring. Hopefully, it is the witness of the joyful religious striving for holiness that are inspiring youth to make their lives a gift to God because it is in doing so that ultimately will make them happy and free," Sister Alma Marie said. †



“
There is a definitive line between knowledge of how money works in action and in seeking money for its own sake.”

PERSONAL FINANCE: *a call to responsibility with God’s gifts*

As Catholics, we recognize that everything that we own, and all positions of power that we may hold on earth, are God-given. We are called to be in this world, but not of it. Regardless of what we think, each of us has a relationship to the means of exchange of worldly goods. Assets, both liquid and otherwise, can be used as tools to better human life, and educating ourselves on personal finance is not only beneficial, but also a part of our responsibility as Christians.

We are given a comprehensive explanation of our vocation to serve by sacred Scripture and Tradition. The Lord revealed that an essential part of our mission is to take responsibility for the gifts that he has so graciously handed us. We work to be satisfied with our livelihoods, not constantly seeking more goods or financial status rather than seeking God.

As we strive to progress in our careers, we are called to differing levels of responsibility to care for others — like our own families and communities. Just as with any material good that gives us pleasure, we should deny ourselves some part of it in sacrifice to foster the cardinal virtues of prudence and temperance. We give so that others may increase; we love by wanting the betterment of others. Each sacrifice, however small, should be offered for the salvation of the people in our lives and those who have gone before us.

We are charged to recognize the relationship between money and our vocation to love as God’s appointed governors of the gifts he bestows on the earth. In our pursuit of financial stability, we are also given a greater responsibility to serve our neighbor.

Ask God for the grace to fulfill his will in our lives so that we joyfully cooperate in our ordained mission of faith, hope and charity. †

BY DANNY JOST

Daniel Jost is a publications specialist for the Office of Multimedia. Email him at djost@charlestondiocese.org.

We are called to love the Lord with all our hearts and love our neighbor as ourselves. Part of that obligation to love others is in giving in charity — the donation of our time, talents and money are all vital to our spiritual well-being. God calls us to give the very best of our gifts in the service of others. We are putting ourselves in a better position to love our neighbor by fostering continued awareness of our own financial status, and in

doing so, we are equipped to better fulfill our commission.

Part of the problem we experience is the narrative that people who are zealous about their finances are “greedy.” This is not necessarily true. There is a definitive line between knowledge of how money works in action and in seeking money for its own sake. It is our burden and call to stay between these lines, to act justly with our gifts yet not be ruled by them.



Finding a way **TO SERVE THE LORD**

A couple of years ago, Susan Wallick was struggling, wanting to offer herself to the Lord. “How can I be His hands and feet?” she thought. “How can I share Christ’s love for the world? I am only one person.”

**BY JOEY
REISTROFFER**

Joseph Reistroffer is a long-time writer who teaches religious education classes at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Spartanburg. Email him at jrjoeyr@gmail.com.

And there was so much to do. The tasks were too daunting, too overwhelming.

The answer finally dawned on her during Lent while she was in line for Communion: contribute to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.

“I do not have the time, talent and treasure required to run a powerful ministry like Clean of Heart in downtown Columbia, but through the BAA, I can support those with the gifts of how to care best for our neighbors looking for necessities of daily living,” she said.

Teamwork gets the job done. Pitching in and letting each person do their part can yield amazing results.

That is how supporting the BAA brought Susan and her husband Dan a sense of peace and gave them a mission, she said.

“It still fuels and orients my life,” she added.

Their response to the BAA has allowed the Wallicks to do much more than they could do on their own. They realize this and revel in it.

“The BAA helps us support prison ministry, shelter others and even bury the dead,” Susan said.

The diocese holds dear these corporal works of mercy and so many others. Another biggie the BAA supports is Catholic education.

Susan said their stewardship is worth it if it helps “just one young soul attending Catholic school realize the love of God for them.”

That mission is bearing wonderful fruit.

Jake Nadeau and Colin Doering received Catholic educations in the Diocese of Charleston. They also were part of the Christian Leadership Institute (CLI), a five-day

summer camp program for high schoolers to develop and build Catholic leadership.

Then they worked on the diocesan Evangelization Team that organizes conferences for middle schoolers and high schoolers.

Now, both men are studying at Holy Trinity Catholic Seminary in Irving, Texas, to become priests for the Diocese of Charleston.

Jake and Colin came from very different backgrounds, but activities funded by the BAA brought them together and encouraged them to pursue a deeper life with God.

Jake said he grew up with a very supportive family, who planted the seed of faith and nurtured it. He attended Catholic schools from first through eighth grade, and his older brother paved the way for him in youth ministries and the Evangelization Team.

He called the summer camps “the most fun week of the whole year.” While there, Jake witnessed youths living out their faith.

“That made all the difference for me. I remembered how happy they were,” he added.

He also spent three years on the E-Team and saw how “very committed” the members were.

Jake said that Colin joined his senior year, and they became buddies.



Bishop's Annual Appeal Funding \$5,000,000 Goal

“

Family life wasn't very steady ... through it all, we received a lot of support from the Church.”

“Me and Jake met at CLI,” Colin said. “The friendship wasn't that strong until we got on the E-Team. Then we grew a lot more and were able to be a lot more personal with each other.”

In fact, Colin said Jake was the first one he told about discerning the priesthood and applying to seminary.

“I was on fire for my faith,” he said.

The road leading to that decision was not an easy one. Colin said his family went to church on Sundays and said grace before their meals, but that was about it.

They did, however, believe in Catholic education and sent both Colin and his older sister to Catholic schools.

Colin attended St. Francis by the Sea on Hilton Head Island for pre-kindergarten, then St. Gregory the Great in Bluffton from kindergarten through sixth grade, and finally John Paul II High School in Ridgeland.

That educational foundation led Colin toward youth ministries, where he “learned a lot more about the

church and its teachings,” he said.

He attended every summer camp from sixth grade through his senior year in high school, and the Christian Leadership Institute had a huge impact on him.

“I was impressed by their testimonies and how they came to the faith,” he said. “These people are happy, and I desire that happiness.”

At home, however, things were not so happy.

“Family life wasn't very steady,” he said, as his parents divorced when he was young, and then his father died. “But through it all, we received a lot of support from the Church, and I felt called to offer my services to the Church. I'm really blessed.”

Jake said his calling grew stronger after COVID-19 hit and he began to focus on reading. He said he read Bishop Robert Barron's *Letter to a Suffering Church* and realized that “God is looking for better leaders.”

Then he read *Diary of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul* in less than two months, and it changed his life.

Now Jake and Colin are in a Texas seminary together, supported by the Bishop's Annual Appeal, and discerning the priesthood. Jake can't wait to get back to South Carolina.

“I plan to be a priest in the Diocese of Charleston,” he said.

Like Susan Wallick, with the help of the bishop's appeal, he has found a way to serve the Lord. †

29%

Ministry & Outreach | \$1,500,000

- Catechetical and evangelization programs
- Child Protection Services
- Ethnic Ministry programs
- Family Life programs
- Hispanic Ministry programs
- And many more services

20%

Vocations, Seminarians & Priest Retirement | \$975,000

- Seminarian education
- Permanent diaconate
- Priest retirement pensions and healthcare
- Women religious vocations

17%

Catholic Charities | \$850,000

- Clean of Heart laundry & shower facilities
- Food pantries
- Pregnancy case management
- Response preparedness
- Senior care management
- And many more services

APPEAL SPOTLIGHT —

Clean of Heart

BY JOEY REISTROFFER

The new Clean of Heart facility in the old Good Shepherd Church in Columbia is not quite a spa, but it sure can seem that way to those experiencing homelessness or anyone else who goes a long time between showers and fresh clothing.

“If I had to give up my hot shower, that would be hard,” Darryl Williams said. Perhaps that is why he volunteers for Clean of Heart, a program of Catholic Charities of South Carolina that offers the homeless a relaxing shower and laundry service.

“It’s a pretty rare thing,” he said, but it’s a perfect opportunity to evangelize. “I think it is essential that the Catholic Church have highly visible ministries in the community, outside the walls of the church, and Clean of Heart is an excellent example of that. It creates many important educational and ministry volunteer opportunities for parishioners, and that also is important,” he said.

That is why some of the funds from the Bishop’s Annual Appeal flow to Catholic Charities, which then filter to Clean of Heart.

Darryl washed and folded laundry and cleaned showers for about a year or two. Now he pitches in any

way he can: picking up litter, changing light bulbs, doing minor repairs or even keeping up with supplies.

He just wants to serve.

And Teresa Maybay sure is glad. She is the site coordinator for Catholic Charities of the Midlands. She said Clean of Heart had about 50 volunteers before COVID-19 hit. Since then, she said the program relies on “a good, solid 20 to 30 people.”

They like their new digs in the old church. Teresa said they started renovating the old church three years ago, and Clean of Heart moved in April of 2021.

“We have three showers, three washers, three dryers and two bathrooms,” Teresa said.

Clean of Heart also gives clients food bags before they leave. Teresa said the bags are filled with protein snacks, fresh fruits and crackers. She also said Knights of Columbus members have pitched in to make sandwiches, and each bag now gets three sandwiches.

Many of those in need come in drained and careworn, but leave clean, fresh and filled. Before they leave, Teresa said, they must make an appointment to return.

“People were just hanging out” at the old facility, Teresa said. “With appointments, there is not so much loitering,” she added. “It keeps everything cleaner. And now we know how many to expect, so we can plan our volunteers.”

Teresa wants to do more to help those who come in for a shower. She wants to give them hope. She wants an area in the old church that offers a chance to sit down, talk to clients about their situations and try to bring people out of homelessness.

She senses hope for some, for those clawing and striving for a better life. Hopefully, they won’t need Clean of Heart services for long, but Teresa is realistic about homelessness.

“Some people, that’s where they want to be,” she said.

And for them, Clean of Heart goes all out, offering a quiet place to sit, relax and lay their heads back. †



Getty Images/Stockphoto/Romi Georgiadis

15%

Catholic Schools | \$750,000

- Tuition assistance
- Catholic school grants
- Support of educational initiatives

13%

**College Campus Ministry
\$650,000**

- Conferences and statewide retreats
- Minister and student training
- Catholic student center spaces
- And many more services

6%

**Youth & Young Adult Ministries
\$275,000**

- Education and training
- Youth retreats, camps and conferences
- Regional young adult communities

GROWING UP BLACK & CATHOLIC

Being raised in the South molds a young adult's perspective on Black history and Black History Month uniquely. I cannot express any individual experience other than the one I have, and that which I believe many Black children and young adults encounter if attending predominantly white, public schools.

BY MICHAEL
GOURDIN

Michael Gourdin is a musician from St. Anthony of Padua Church in Greenville. Email him at 864gourdin@gmail.com.

Beginning in elementary school, Black history is taught from the perspective of what enslaved Africans did once they were brought to the Americas, which was being forced to work as slaves. Being educated in the South celebrates this with field trips to famous plantations and Confederate soldier reenactors performing at school assemblies. These activities lead other students to bombard the Black child with questions to which he or she may or may not know the answers.

By middle school, the Black history that was learned is mocked by students, who tell jokes about lynching

“

We celebrate each unique experience and the common connection of being universally Catholic.”

Black people or associate a dark skin complexion with evil. Black History Month at most might include a historical fun fact over the morning announcements or a brief lesson on influential Black figures. However, by this age, a Black child has learned about his or her own leaders, celebrities and athletes, even if they are not taught about in schools.

When this child is in high school, he or she begins to see the importance of celebrating Black history every day. For this person, ironically, Black History Month is met with a little dread, since bringing up the subject seemed to be so unpopular among the majority of the student body, leading to the same mockery experienced in middle school.

During all this schooling, however, the child has important outlets and ways to be around other Black children in celebration and solidarity, whether that be through sports, the arts or church.

I have been fortunate to help celebrate the rich blackness of the Catholic Church by coordinating a Black young adults Christmas reunion at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Greenville. We celebrate each unique experience and the common connection of being universally Catholic.

“Black history is more than a reminder of the struggles, hurt and pain experienced by our people. It also celebrates the gifts God bestowed upon us,” said Kathleen Merritt, diocesan associate director of Black Catholic Ministry.

The Black Catholic Ministry Office, with whom I work, organizes ways for the Church to celebrate its ethnic diversity and to recognize it as a strength of the Catholic faith. The focus is on bridging the gap between mainstream culture and those who feel marginalized from the Church because of ethnic or cultural background.

Father Michael Okere, pastor of St. Martin de Porres Church in Columbia, said that Black history is a unique history.

“[It] considers the events, which include culture, history and values of the Black people who came to this country through slavery,” he said. “Over time, this celebration has evolved into a celebration of diversity and inclusion, achievement and challenges the black person encounters in everyday American society.”

Merritt agrees. “Our gifts of creativity, intelligence, forgiveness, resilience, Black spirituality and love is the reason why everyone should celebrate Black History Month.” †



Getty Images/RTL Images

BLACK HISTORY MONTH — BEYOND OUR BORDERS

As we move into the month of February, the phrase “standing in the breach” and the concept of “breach-menders” keep coming to me. Perhaps it is because we are leading up to this year’s Lent (which begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2). Perhaps too it is because this is Black History Month, and this year I have some new insights into the month’s observances.

BY SISTER PAM SMITH

Sister Pamela Smith, SSCM, Ph.D., is diocesan director of the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Email her at psmith@charlestondiocese.org.

Salvation history sees Jesus as one who came to stand in the breach for us. In military terms, standing in the breach means keeping watch and bearing the brunt of being in an almost defenseless situation. Being a breach-mender is an image we find in Isaiah 58:12. It comes after a passage in which the prophet, speaking for God, insists that the fasting and sacrifice which God most desires is focused on feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, easing the misery of the afflicted and letting one’s light shine for the good of others. These, assuredly, are descriptions of much of Jesus’ behavior and his teaching about the integral link between love of God and love of neighbor.

Standing in the breach and being breach-mending also have much to do with an experience I had in early November. From Nov. 8-12 I was privileged to participate in a number of sessions of the Conference on Theology in the Caribbean Today (CTCT). The scholarly papers, the prayerful interludes and the artistic moments during the conference were ecumenical, honest and inspiring. I adjusted to Trinidad-Tobago time as sessions focused on how the pandemic affected ministry,

how people celebrated liturgy and used social media during lockdowns and the ways in which people of faith dealt with the mystery of suffering. There was much discussion of how love of neighbor concretely plays out in a time of crisis.

Aside from the obvious COVID-19-driven reflections on the interrelations of God and humanity in a broken world, there was always standing in the background another lived reality: the scholars, researchers, leaders of prayer, bishops and the prime minister of Barbados were speaking from a post-colonial context, a much more recent one than that of the North Americans attending. And most of them were wholly, or in part, of African descent. So the history of slavery and the history of colonization, along with salvation and ecclesial history, were embedded in their bones.

Alison McLetchie, Ph.D., assistant professor of social sciences at South Carolina State University and frequent contributor to our diocesan Ethnic Ministries productions, invited me to join this conference and offered online gracious hospitality as we broke into conversation after presentations. I cannot help but think of her as one who stands in the breach — because she is so forthright in her analysis of racism in terms of both the impetus and legacy of slavery and in its grim persistence in this very moment. She is also a breach-mender in the way in which she engages multi-racial groups and people of all manner of faiths — Catholics, Anglicans, Evangelicals, Rastafarians.

As we celebrate Black History Month, we also must ask ourselves how we are called to stand in the breach and also be breach-menders. Perhaps it will take us, as the CTCT events did, beyond the usual borders of our minds and hearts. †

Small things LEAD TO BIG REWARDS IN MARRIAGE



"Today, your discernment ends and your perseverance begins."

This remains one of my favorite nuggets of marriage advice from a homily I heard at a nuptial Mass a few years ago. As much as living the vocation of marriage is about love – willing the good of the beloved and striving to imitate how Christ loves the Church – I believe many can attest that the virtues of love and perseverance go hand in hand.

BY ALISON BLANCHET

Alison Blanchet lives in Panama City with her husband and children. Email her at alisondblanchet@gmail.com.

Secular marriage therapists John and Julie Gottman spent decades studying relationships and determined that there are certain habits and traits shared by those in happy and healthy marriages that can be learned and practiced. One of these is “positive sentiment override.” The Gottmans explain that when a couple has worked to cultivate friendship and respect, they will naturally assume the best about the other — even when their partner might be doing something that could be perceived as hurtful or annoying. For example, when positive sentiment override exists, leaving dishes on the coffee table is more likely to be seen by the partner picking them up as, “Whoops, they must’ve forgotten!” not “Who do they think I am, their housekeeper?”

This isn’t a Pollyanna approach that avoids discussing important conflicts. Rather, it’s a mindset that, when faced with minor annoyances,

chooses to believe the best about the person one has chosen as their lifelong companion on their journey to heaven.

This mindset to persevere in seeing the good in one’s spouse isn’t automatic, but the Gottmans’ research suggests simple actions that couples can take. The great news is that their list does not include a bow-wrapped Lexus in the driveway at Christmas or yearly trips to Hawaii.

On the contrary, the Gottmans discovered that couples who do “small things often” grow in friendship, show appreciation for each other and have happier marriages. This includes things like saying “please” and “thank you,” giving compliments and knowing what’s important to the other. Conflict is unavoidable, but when appreciation for one’s spouse has been cultivated, conflict can be less traumatic and even become an opportunity for connection.

Persevering in one’s vocation takes action; those called to religious life can attest to the importance of a daily structure of prayer and discipline. Those living the vocation of marriage don’t have the structure of a monastery or convent, but committing to “small things often” is a concrete way to persevere.

If you are planning to gift a luxury car or vacation this month, by all means go for it. But if even a night out is too much to pull off these days, take heart that a lot of evidence exists that your marriage can be strengthened by regularly giving your spouse compliments, asking him or her how the day went — and really listening to the answers without attempting to solve any problems — and saying “please” and “thank you.”

This month, as we celebrate love, and World Marriage Day on Feb. 13, decide what small things you can do often to show appreciation for your spouse. Then, as that wise homilist said — persevere! †

LIVING THE GOSPEL
JOURNEY

The Sacrament of Marriage and the Gospel



Oftentimes, we think of marriage and family life as a private thing. Yet, if one was to look it up in Catechism, marriage is described as a “sacrament at the service of communion.” This is rooted in what we call the marriage bond that unites a husband and wife, the grace to live a united life together.

**BY DR. MIKE
MARTOCCHIO**

Michael Martocchio, Ph.D., is diocesan secretary of evangelization and director of the Office of Evangelization. Email him at mmartocchio@charlestondiocese.org.

But, marriage also serves the Church as a whole. The sacrament of marriage brings with it a calling and a vocation to share the Gospel in a special way. The responsibility for being “missionary disciples,” those charged with sharing the good news of salvation in Christ, comes to us in baptism and is deepened in confirmation. But, this calling takes on a specific character in the “sacraments at the service of communion” (holy orders and matrimony).

In marriage, the call to “make disciples” (Mt 28:19) takes on a literal meaning in the procreative (reproductive) function of marriage. But, marriage as a sacrament is not just focused on bringing forth new persons, it is about building up new Christians. It is for this reason that the Second Vatican Council uses the expression “domestic Church” to describe the family (*Lumen gentium* 11). The family is the building block of secular society, but it is also the building block of the Church. When the Christian family gathers in Christ’s name, an ecclesial (Church) event is happening. Practically speaking, the family is the place where children have their first exposure to the faith and learn by watching the faith of their parents’ take action and expression.

Our Christian understanding of the sacrament of marriage itself is centered on Christ’s love for us. Ephesians tells us how the relationship between a husband and wife reflects that between Christ and the Church (5:21-33). As husband and wife, a married couple reflects Christ’s self-sacrificing love. In this way, the sacrament of marriage is a great example of what all sacraments are. Each sacrament starts with a “natural” thing, something that God has created and that humans have developed (e.g., bread and wine; water and washing, etc.). In this case, we are talking about the mutual love between a man and a woman that often begets new life. In the sacrament, that natural element is transformed and elevated to become a conduit of God’s supernatural saving grace (e.g., bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ; by washing in water we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, etc.). The married couple becomes a living image of the love between Christ and the Church.

A married couple is, and in their actions should strive to be, a visible sign to each other and the world of Christ’s saving love. This seems like a tall order, and we often don’t think of our life as a family in this way, but the grace to do so is given to us in this sacrament. We simply need to allow ourselves to lean into that grace and to realize that we cannot be the reflection of Christ’s love on our own, nor are we asked to do so. Married people are called to be living witnesses to the Gospel by relying on God’s grace in their relationship, then with their children and others. The family itself is called to be a place of evangelization. †



THE END OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING BEGINS WITH CATHOLIC ACTION

TO TAKE ACTION ON THIS ISSUE
visit [charlestdiocese.org/
take-action](http://charlestdiocese.org/take-action) to contact your local
lawmakers and demand support for
Senate Bill 230 in 2022.

BY CAROLINE FUNK

Caroline Funk is a legislative affairs specialist for the South Carolina Catholic Conference. Email her at cfunk@charlestondiocese.org.

The Catholic Church has long spoken out against the evil that is the human trafficking industry. Catholic social teaching proclaims the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of all human life. Modern-day slavery — where men, women and children are bought and sold like merchandise and used against their will — inherently rejects this principle, showing contempt for human beings. As such, eliminating human trafficking and empowering survivors has become a cornerstone of Church activism.

According to the U.S. State Department, there are an estimated 24+ million individuals trapped in the human trafficking industry. This is not a problem that solely belongs to the underdeveloped world. Sex-trafficking is real. It is present. And it is a \$150 billion industry located in our backyard.

Bon Secours St. Francis Catholic hospital, located in Greenville, is committed to fighting this humanitarian crisis by providing a holy space for victims of sex-trafficking to heal.

“Our mission as Catholics is to respond to God’s call,” said Deacon Alex Garvey, a medical doctor and vice president of mission at Bon Secours. “We are God’s people responding to the urgent call to take care of God’s people.”

It is important to remember that traffickers are most commonly family members, peers or romantic partners who methodically exploit the needs, past trauma and vulnerabilities of their victims. Men and women rarely disclose that

they have been sexually exploited — they may not see themselves as exploited or abused because of the hyper-sexualization of our culture or they do not report to law enforcement out of fear or looming threats and coercion. And if they do report it, their experiences of abuse make it difficult to trust that anyone is concerned about their wellbeing.

The needs of these victims are beyond normal expectations.

“When girls develop Stockholm Syndrome or become trauma-bonded to their abusers, it takes on average two years (or more) of extensive therapy for their hearts, bodies and minds to be healed,” said Jessica Weingartner, director of mission at the hospital. To provide this healing, St. Francis Bon Secours uses a “housing first” model known as Jasmine Road — a comprehensive medical and psychological healthcare housing program centered on spiritual intervention. It opened in 2018.

Through partnering with independent organizations and government agencies, the goal is three-pronged: first to rescue, then recover and finally restore victims of trafficking. By meeting the hierarchical needs of victims — including detox from opioids, food, housing, intervention, therapy, reintegration into community and job preparation — the team at Bon Secours helps transform the lives of trafficking survivors.

“You know, it starts with seeing an OB/GYN and ends with credit recovery care,” Weingartner said.

Women come to know that there

is a safe way out of the abuse cycle.

A beautiful testament to this process lives in the experience of Jasmine Road’s second “graduate” in Greenville. Deacon Garvey related the story that a few years after the woman completed the program and entered the workforce, she got engaged to the love of her life and is set to marry her fiancé this May. Through her time in the program, she was taught the value of her inherent dignity, and she learned to love and trust again.

Even with this transformational success, the work of Catholic hospitals, and the international adoption of norms to prevent the spread of this humanitarian crisis, we continue to witness trafficking in the margins of society.

Our voices in the public square are important, because one of the most effective ways to prosecute traffickers and end sex-trafficking networks is by creating environments where victims feel comfortable to seek a way out. It begins with enacting new laws: Many states have adopted “safe harbor” legislation to remove penalties for young victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Our state must follow suit, and S.C. Senate Bill 230 aims to protect victims with legal defense so they can safely report to authorities without fear of repercussions.

We must never ignore this crisis or the cries of survivors. At times, it may feel too brutal or unreal to think about the horrors of human trafficking, but we have a call as Catholics to protect the vulnerable, and these are souls worth saving.

“When we turn a blind eye to sin, we actively reject our obligation to defend the defenseless and we separate ourselves from God,” Deacon Garvey said. “The people of God must understand this ongoing crisis — we cannot turn a blind eye. Because if Catholics won’t step in to help, who will?” †

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Victim Assistance

The Catholic Church is committed to respect for the dignity of each human person. Acts of sexual exploitation or abuse, particularly against children or the vulnerable, will not be tolerated by the Diocese of Charleston. If you have been abused by a member of the clergy or any other representative of the church, we encourage you to call the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Louisa Stover, at 800-921-8122 or 843-856-0748. Additionally, if you are reporting abuse by a sitting bishop, you can make a report online at reportbishops.org or at 800-276-1542 after contacting law enforcement.

Child & Youth Protection
charlestondiocese.org/child-and-youth-protection

Asistencia a las víctimas

La Iglesia Católica está comprometida con el respeto a la dignidad de cada persona humana. La Diócesis de Charleston no tolerará los actos de explotación o abuso sexual, en particular contra los niños o las personas vulnerables. Si usted ha sido abusado por un miembro del clero o cualquier otro representante de la Iglesia, lo animamos a llamar a la Coordinadora de Asistencia a las Víctimas, Louisa Stover, al 800-921-8122 o 843-856-0748. Además, si está denunciando un abuso por parte de un obispo en funciones, puede hacer una denuncia en línea en reportbishops.org o en el 800-276-1542 después de ponerse en contacto con las fuerzas del orden.

Protección de la Infancia y la Juventud
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VIVIR EL CAMINO
DEL EVANGELIO

El sacramento del matrimonio y el Evangelio



Muchas veces, pensamos que el matrimonio y la vida familiar son algo privado. Sin embargo, si se busca en *el Catecismo*, el matrimonio se describe como un “sacramento al servicio de la comunión”. Esto tiene sus raíces en lo que llamamos el vínculo matrimonial que une al marido y a la mujer, la gracia de vivir una vida unida.

**POR EL DR. MIKE
MARTOCCHIO**

El doctor Michael Martocchio es secretario diocesano de evangelización y director de la Oficina de Evangelización. Escríbele un correo electrónico a mmartocchio@charlestondiocese.org.

Pero, el matrimonio también sirve a la Iglesia en su conjunto. El sacramento del matrimonio trae consigo una llamada y una vocación a compartir el Evangelio de una manera especial. La responsabilidad de ser “discípulos misioneros”, encargados de compartir las buenas nuevas de la salvación en Cristo, nos llega con el bautismo y se profundiza con la confirmación. Pero, esta llamada adquiere un carácter específico en los “sacramentos al servicio de la comunión” (el orden sagrado y el matrimonio).

La llamada a “hacer discípulos” (Mt 28,19) adquiere un significado literal en la función procreadora (reproductora) del matrimonio. Pero el Matrimonio, como sacramento, no se enfoca sólo en el nacimiento de personas nuevas, sino en el desarrollo de nuevos cristianos. Por esta razón, el Concilio Vaticano II utiliza la expresión “Iglesia doméstica” para describir a la familia (*Lumen Gentium* 11). La familia es la piedra angular de la sociedad secular, pero también es la piedra angular de la Iglesia. Cuando la familia cristiana se reúne en el nombre de Cristo, se produce un acontecimiento eclesial (Iglesia). Asimismo, desde el punto de vista práctico, la familia es el lugar donde los niños tienen su primer contacto con la fe y aprenden viendo cómo la fe de sus padres se pone en acción y se expresa.

Nuestra comprensión cristiana del propio sacramento del matrimonio se centra en el amor de Cristo por nosotros. La Carta a los Efesios nos dice cómo la relación entre el marido y la mujer refleja la de Cristo y la Iglesia (Ef 5, 21-33). Así, como marido y mujer, una pareja casada refleja el amor desinteresado de Cristo por su Iglesia. El sacramento del matrimonio es un gran ejemplo de lo que son todos los sacramentos. Cada sacramento comienza con una cosa “natural”, algo que Dios ha creado y que los humanos han desarrollado (por ejemplo, el pan y el vino; el agua y el lavado, etc.). Se trata del amor mutuo entre un hombre y una mujer que a menudo engendra una vida nueva. En el sacramento, ese elemento natural se transforma y se eleva para convertirse en un conducto de la gracia salvadora sobrenatural de Dios (por ejemplo, el pan y el vino se convierten en el cuerpo, sangre, alma y divinidad de Cristo; al lavarnos con el agua nos unimos a Cristo en su muerte y resurrección, etc.). La pareja casada se convierte en la viva imagen del amor entre Cristo y la Iglesia.

La pareja casada es, y debe esforzarse en sus acciones por serlo, un signo visible para el otro y para los demás del amor salvador de Cristo. Esto parece una tarea difícil, y a menudo no pensamos en nuestra vida como familia de esta manera, pero la verdad es que la gracia para hacerlo se nos da mediante este sacramento. Tenemos que permitirnos apoyarnos en esta gracia y darnos cuenta de que no podemos ser ese reflejo del amor de Cristo por nuestra cuenta, ni se nos pide que lo hagamos. Los matrimonios, confiando en la gracia de Dios, en su mismísima relación entre ellos, con sus hijos y con los demás, están llamados a ser testigos vivos del Evangelio. La propia familia está llamada a ser un lugar de evangelización. †



LA CAMPAÑA ANUAL DEL OBISPO

Encontrar una manera DE SERVIR AL SEÑOR

Hace un par de años, Susan Wallick estaba luchando, queriendo ofrecerse al Señor.

“¿Cómo puedo ser sus manos y sus pies?”, se preguntaba. “¿Cómo puedo compartir el amor de Cristo por el mundo? Soy sólo una persona”.

Y había tanto por hacer. Las tareas eran demasiado gigantescas,

demasiado abrumadoras.

La respuesta se le ocurrió finalmente durante la Cuaresma, mientras estaba en la fila para la Comunión: contribuir a la Campaña Anual del Obispo.

“No tengo el tiempo, el talento ni el tesoro necesarios para dirigir un ministerio poderoso como lo es Clean of Heart (puros de corazón) en el centro de Columbia, pero mediante la Campaña Anual del Obispo, puedo apoyar a quienes tienen el don de cuidar mejor de

nuestro prójimo buscando las necesidades de la vida diaria”, dijo.

El trabajo en equipo hace el trabajo. Colaborar y dejar que cada persona haga su parte puede dar resultados increíbles.

Así es como el apoyo a la Campaña Anual del Obispo les aportó a Susan y a su marido Dan una sensación de paz y les dio una misión, dijo.

“Aún continúa alimentando y orientando mi vida”, añadió.

Su respuesta a la Campaña Anual del Obispo les ha permitido a los Wallick hacer mucho más de lo que podrían hacer por sí solos. Se dan cuenta de ello y lo disfrutan.

“La Campaña Anual del Obispo nos ayuda a apoyar el ministerio de prisiones, a albergar a otros e incluso a enterrar a los muertos”, dijo Susan.

La diócesis tiene en gran estima estas obras de misericordia corporales y tantas otras. Otro tema importante que apoya la Campaña Anual del Obispo es la educación católica.

Susan dijo que su gestión vale la pena si ayuda “a una sola alma joven que asista a la escuela católica a darse cuenta del amor de Dios por ellos”.

Esa misión está dando frutos maravillosos.

Jake Nadeau y Colin Doering recibieron educación católica en la Diócesis de Charleston. También formaron parte del Instituto de

Financiamiento de la Campaña Anual del Obispo

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29%

Ministerio y Ayuda a la Comunidad | \$1,500,000

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- Servicios de inmigración
- Ministerio en las prisiones
- Y muchos más servicios

Liderazgo Cristiano, que organiza campamentos de verano de cinco días de duración para estudiantes de secundaria con el fin de identificar y formar líderes católicos.

Luego trabajaron en el equipo diocesano de evangelización que organiza conferencias para estudiantes de escuela media y secundaria.

Actualmente, ambos están estudiando para ser sacerdotes en el Seminario Católico de la Santísima Trinidad en Irving, Texas.

Jake y Colin procedían de entornos muy diferentes, pero las actividades financiadas por la Campaña Anual del Obispo los unieron y animaron a buscar una vida más profunda con Dios.

Jake dijo que creció con una familia que lo apoyó mucho, que plantó la semilla de la fe y la alimentó. Asistió a escuelas católicas desde el primer hasta el octavo grado, y su hermano mayor le allanó el camino en los ministerios juveniles y en el Equipo de Evangelización.

Describió los campamentos de verano como “la semana más divertida de todo el año”. Mientras estuvo allí, Jake fue testigo de cómo los jóvenes vivían su fe.

“Eso marcó la diferencia para mí. Recordaba lo felices que eran”, añadió.

También pasó tres años en el Equipo de Evangelización y vio “cuán comprometidos” estaban los integrantes.

Jake dijo que Colin se unió en su último año, y se hicieron grandes amigos.

“Jake y yo nos conocimos en el Instituto de Liderazgo Cristiano”, dijo Colin. “La amistad no era tan fuerte hasta que entramos en el Equipo de Evangelización. Luego crecimos mucho más y pudimos ser mucho más personales entre nosotros”.

De hecho, Colin dijo que Jake fue el primero al que le habló de discernir el sacerdocio y solicitar el ingreso en el seminario.

“Estaba ardiendo por mi fe”, dijo.

El camino que llevó a esa decisión no fue uno fácil. Colin dijo que su familia iba a la iglesia los domingos y daba las gracias antes de las comidas, pero que eso era todo.

Sin embargo, creían en la educación católica y enviaron a Colin y a su hermana mayor a escuelas católicas.

Colin asistió a St. Francis by the Sea, en Hilton Head Island, para el preescolar, luego a St. Gregory the Great, en Bluffton, desde preescolar hasta sexto grado, y finalmente a John Paul II, en Ridgeland, para la secundaria.

Esa base educativa llevó a Colin hacia los ministerios juveniles, donde “aprendió mucho más sobre la Iglesia y sus enseñanzas”, dijo.

Asistió a todos los campamentos de verano desde sexto grado hasta su último año de secundaria, y el Instituto de Liderazgo Cristiano

tuvo un impacto enorme en él.

“Me impresionaron sus testimonios y cómo llegaron a la fe”, dijo. “Estas personas son felices, y yo deseo esa felicidad”.

En casa, sin embargo, las cosas no eran tan alegres.

“La vida familiar no era muy estable”, dijo, ya que sus padres se divorciaron cuando él era pequeño, y luego su padre murió. “Pero a pesar de todo, recibimos mucho apoyo de parte de la Iglesia, y me sentí llamado a ofrecer mis servicios a la Iglesia. Me siento realmente bendecido”.

Jake dijo que su vocación se hizo más fuerte después del impacto del COVID-19 y empezó a enfocarse en la lectura. Dijo que leyó *Carta a una Iglesia que sufre* del obispo Robert Barron y se dio cuenta de que “Dios está buscando mejores líderes”.

Luego leyó el *Diario de Santa María Faustina Kowalska: La Divina Misericordia en mi Alma* en menos de dos meses, y le cambió la vida.

Ahora Jake y Colin están juntos en un seminario de Texas, con el apoyo de la Campaña Anual del Obispo, y discerniendo el sacerdocio. Jake no ve la hora de regresar a Carolina del Sur.

“Tengo la intención de ser sacerdote en la Diócesis de Charleston”, dijo.

Al igual que Susan Wallick, con la ayuda de la campaña del obispo, ha encontrado una manera de servir al Señor. †

POR JOEY REISTROFFER

Joseph Reistroffer es un escritor de larga trayectoria que imparte clases de educación religiosa en la parroquia San Pablo Apóstol, en Spartanburg. Envíele un correo electrónico a jrjoeyr@gmail.com.

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NUESTROS HIJOS Y SU IDENTIDAD



Católica



Hay libros enteros escritos sobre el tema de “la identidad”. El ser humano no descansa hasta solucionar la cuestión de su identidad. Para nuestros hijos inmigrantes, la pregunta sobre identidad es aún más compleja, ya que deben navegar la realidad de ser de dos pueblos, de dos culturas distintas. Muchos sentirán en algún momento que no son ni de aquí ni de allá, una experiencia comúnmente reportada por inmigrantes jóvenes de primera y segunda generación.

POR JORGE GOMEZ

Jorge Gomez es profesor de Ciencias Sociales e Inglés para 6 al 8 grado en Divine Redeemer School, en Hanahan. Envíele un correo electrónico a jgomez@dracs.co.

Al emigrar debemos sobrepasar mil desafíos. Uno de los más importantes es ayudar a nuestros hijos a fortalecerse dentro de su nueva cultura. Dentro del catolicismo, encontraremos respuestas sobre quiénes somos, respuestas que sobrepasan cualquier nacionalidad. Al sembrar en nuestros hijos esta identidad católica, su identidad en Dios, los ayudamos a trascender el desafío de pertenecer a dos culturas.

La identidad son esas afirmaciones sobre “quién soy yo”. Por ejemplo, “yo soy latino”, “yo soy atleta”, y hasta “yo seré doctor”. En conjunto con otros procesos psicológicos, la identidad es el centro de la toma de decisiones. Un ser humano toma miles de decisiones cada día, y la identidad trabaja silenciosamente en el subconsciente para que la mayoría de estas decisiones sean automáticas, las hagamos sin pensar. ¿Debo hacer mis tareas o no?, ¿Saludo al entrar a un espacio compartido?, ¿Qué hago cuando un amigo mío está triste y necesita ayuda? Más allá de los hábitos, más allá de la decisión consciente, es la identidad de nuestros jóvenes la que da respuesta automática a estas

preguntas. La identidad afirma y les da cohesión y fuerza a sus decisiones.

Como padres, una de nuestras misiones fundamentales, que hacemos de forma consciente e inconsciente, es ayudar a nuestros hijos a formar su identidad. Al trabajar a este nivel psicológico con nuestros hijos, garantizamos llegar hasta la raíz de sus comportamientos, dándoles una base firme y estable para la toma de decisiones. Por ejemplo, hay que decirles que son hijos de Dios. No nos podemos cansar de repetirlo. Hay que decirles que son buenos: buenos estudiantes, buenos atletas, buenas personas, buenos hijos. Que son caballeros, damas, valientes, generosos, capaces. Más que todo hay que decirles que son amados, por sus padres y por Dios.

En la educación, usamos mucho lo que la ciencia llama el Efecto Pygmalion. El Efecto Pygmalion, comprobado a través de experimentos, demuestra que las expectativas que un docente tiene para sus estudiantes afectan el rendimiento de los estudiantes. Altas expectativas, mejor rendimiento. Bajas expectativas, bajo rendimiento ¿Por qué? Porque el estudiante internaliza las etiquetas que le pone un docente. Un docente que no tiene altas expectativas para un estudiante le transmite una identidad negativa, y tan profundo es el tema de identidad que inconscientemente todo el cerebro del estudiante reacciona a esta identidad negativa.

Ahí hay una gran lección para nosotros como padres. El proceso de crear una identidad se hace en conjunto con los que nos rodean. Necesitamos escuchar verdades sobre nosotros de boca de nuestros familiares. Esto es, decirles las verdades sobre su imagen y semejanza con Dios y su identidad como hijos de Dios. †



Getty Images/istockphoto/Rampixel

MENSAJE DEL OBISPO

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo,

Este mes celebramos la fiesta de San Valentín, a menudo alabado como patrón del amor cortés. Sin embargo, la Iglesia dedica el mes de febrero a la Sagrada Familia, el mayor ejemplo de amor en el marco de una familia unificada.

Este mes tenemos una oportunidad especial para examinar el significado del amor, ya que el amor es un tema que la Iglesia enfatiza repetidamente, y sus implicaciones en nuestras propias vidas. También podemos aprender a mejorar nuestra voluntad de responder a la llamada que cada uno ha recibido, de amar a Dios y al prójimo.

Podemos inspirarnos en la vida de Cristo para descubrir cómo amar, ya que estamos destinados a imitarlo. Desde el lavado de los pies de los discípulos hasta la muerte heroica de Cristo en la cruz, sabemos que el amor verdadero implica sacrificio. Ya sea casado o soltero, laico u ordenado, es necesario ofrecer todo lo que somos como sacrificio de amor, y por esta razón hemos nacido.

Esta edición presenta piezas enfocadas en la caridad y el amor: la celebración de la vocación del matrimonio, la elección de las jóvenes de comprometer su vida con Cristo, fuente de todo amor, en las órdenes religiosas, y también cómo nos desprendemos adecuadamente de nuestros seres queridos. Porque a pesar de que el amor suele ir acompañado de sentimientos cálidos, trasciende nuestras emociones o reacciones físicas. Es una elección diaria que podemos aceptar o rechazar. Mediante la cooperación en la gracia de Dios, y cumpliendo la vocación que el Señor nos ha dado a cada uno de nosotros, expresamos nuestro amor a Dios.

No debe ofrecerse amor sólo a aquellos de cuya compañía disfrutamos. Cristo nos enseñó que incluso los que nos ofenden, nos persiguen y nos odian merecen nuestro amor. El perdón es esencial para nuestro bienestar espiritual, y es una prueba del amor que Dios tiene por cada uno de nosotros como el misericordiosísimo juez.

Que este mes y cada febrero nos aliente en nuestra búsqueda del amor mediante la contemplación de Cristo, de su familia terrenal y de aquellos familiares y santos que nos han precedido. Dedicuemos todo nuestro mes, y nuestra vida, a Dios y tratemos a todos nuestros prójimos de una manera acorde a los ministros de amor designados por Cristo y como testigos de la misión de caridad de la Iglesia. Al hacerlo, enviamos un mensaje a un mundo quebrantado, tan permeado por la división, de que el amor de Cristo ha conquistado y conquistará todo. †

En la paz del Señor,

Excmo. Mons. Robert E. Guglielmo, DD
Obispo de Charleston



Parejas católicas de todo el estado están invitadas a asistir a la celebración anual del aniversario del matrimonio el 20 de febrero en la iglesia St. Paul the Apostle, en Séneca. La Misa será celebrada por el obispo Robert E. Guglielmo. Para registrarse, comuníquese con la Oficina de Vida Familiar en familylife@charlestdiocese.org o al 803-547-5063.

CAMINANDO JUNTOS EN LA FE

recupera la gracia; la reconciliación con la Iglesia; la remisión de la pena eterna contraída por los pecados mortales; la remisión, al menos en parte, de las penas temporales, consecuencia del pecado; la paz y la serenidad de la conciencia, y el consuelo espiritual; el acrecentamiento de las fuerzas espirituales para el combate cristiano” (CIC 1496).

La unción de los enfermos da consuelo al enfermo en su enfermedad y le da vida. El efecto de este sacramento es que une al enfermo en la Pasión de Cristo, y da consuelo, paz, y ánimo para vencer la dificultad. Por ejemplo, cuando Jesús unge al ciego de nacimiento, éste queda sano (Mc 8, 22-38).

El matrimonio es el que legitima la unión de un hombre y una mujer. Durante el sacramento, el amor de la pareja es bendecida y fortalecida por la gracia del sacramento para poder vivir como esposos y educar a sus hijos en la fe. “El sacramento se funda en el consentimiento de los contrayentes, es decir, en la voluntad de darse mutua y definitivamente con el fin de vivir una alianza de amor fiel y fecundo” (CIC 1662).

El orden sacerdotal es donde los hombres bautizados son ordenados para servir a la Iglesia como obispos, sacerdotes y diáconos. Al ser ordenados, reciben la gracia para llevar a cabo su ministerio con los fieles y quedan impresos con un carácter sacramental indeleble. *El Catecismo* dice: “El sacramento del orden, cuya tarea es servir en nombre y en representación de Cristo - Cabeza en medio de la comunidad” (CIC 1591).

Transformados en la imagen de Dios, podemos decir que la vida de Cristo se nos transmite a través de los sacramentos, y que en ellos Jesús sigue siendo eficaz. Los sacramentos de Jesucristo están realizados a través de la Iglesia, es decir, son sacramentos de Jesucristo y la Iglesia. Al mismo tiempo estos sacramentos nos acompañan durante toda nuestra vida. †

Transformados por medio de los sacramentos en la imagen de Dios

A lo largo de nuestra vida cristiana, Dios siempre camina con nosotros, iluminándonos y guiándonos, para que nuestro compromiso en la fe sea sólido, o esté fundamentado en los valores cristianos. Por lo tanto, nuestra Iglesia nos invita a vivir los signos sensibles y eficaces de la presencia de Dios instituidos por Cristo en nuestras vidas. Cada uno de los sacramentos del bautismo, confirmación, Eucaristía, reconciliación, unción de los enfermos, matrimonio y orden sacerdotal nos acercan más a la presencia de Dios.

**POR HNA.
GUADALUPE
FLORES**

La hermana Guadalupe Flores, OLVM, es la coordinadora de Formación de Fe de Adultos para la oficina del Ministerio Hispano. Envíele un correo electrónico a gflores@charlestondiocese.org.

El bautismo es uno de los primeros sacramentos por el cual nacemos a una nueva vida en Cristo. Los frutos de este sacramento son que somos redimidos del pecado original. Nacemos en una nueva vida por la cual somos hijos e hijas de Dios. Participamos del sacerdocio de Cristo. Tenemos el signo indeleble de Cristo por el cual este sacramento no se puede repetir. “El bautismo es el sacramento del nuevo nacimiento por el agua y la palabra” (CIC 1213).

La confirmación nos fortalece a todos los bautizados con los dones del Espíritu Santo para poder dar testimonio de Cristo en obra y palabra. Los frutos de este sacramento son el aumento de la gracia bautismal y una profundización en la filiación divina que nos hace decir “Abba Padre”. Este sacramento sólo se puede recibir una sola vez. *El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* nos dice: “La confirmación nos

perfecciona la gracia bautismal; es él es el sacramento que da el Espíritu Santo para enraizarnos más profundamente en la filiación divina para incorporarnos más firmemente a Cristo y sea más sólida nuestro vínculo con la Iglesia” (CIC 1316).

La Eucaristía tiene su origen en la Última Cena de Jesús con sus discípulos (Lc 22, 19-20). Al mismo tiempo, Cristo asocia a su Iglesia con su sacrificio en la cruz a todos sus miembros. Los frutos de este sacramento son que se une al comulgante más a Cristo, se perdonan los pecados veniales, se fortalece el aumento de la caridad entre el comulgante y Cristo, y se fortalece también a la Iglesia como cuerpo místico de Cristo.

La reconciliación por medio de este sacramento nos reconciliamos con Dios y con toda la comunidad eclesial. Los frutos de este sacramento: “La reconciliación con Dios por la que el penitente

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