Summer camps help lead youth to Christ

Jesse Heine leads an afternoon session of Catholic Kids Camp at the National Shrine of St. Therese in Juneau. This year’s theme was “Stories Under the Stars”
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The Cathedral helps visitors attend Mass by offering free bus rides

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See the answers to challenging questions asked at this year’s Alaska Catholic Youth Conference

Bishop’s Juneau and Anchorage Schedule Highlights

Jul 13: Sitka: Diaconal Ordination of Mr. James Wallace at noon at St. Gregory Nazianzen Church

July 21: Juneau: Sunday Mass at 11:00 a.m., the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

July 28: Juneau: Sunday Spanish Mass at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday Mass at 5:30 p.m., Saint Paul the Apostle Church.

Jul 29-30: Juneau: Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops (ACCB)

Aug 1: Juneau: Bishop’s Holy Hour at the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 6:00 p.m. followed by Benediction at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome!

August 4: Juneau: Blue Mass to honor our service men and women at 10:30 a.m., Saint Paul the Apostle Church.

August 7: Anchorage, Seminarian Night Dinner and Fundraiser at Lumen Christi High School

Adoration and Benediction at the National Shrine of St. Therese
Every Friday from 2-3 PM through August 30th
www.shrineofsttherese.org
Reflections on ministry to those who serve

BY FATHER PAT TRAVERS
CHAPLAIN, COLONEL, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, RETIRED

A few days ago, I ended a chapter of my priestly ministry when I met the mandatory retirement date for my service as a chaplain in the United States Air Force Reserve. As some are aware, this was not an event that I looked forward to, but was required because of my advanced age after two special extensions of my service. Now that it has occurred, however, I have welcomed the opportunity to reflect on my 28 years of military ministry with joy and gratitude for the tremendous gift that it has been for me and, I hope, for others.

My association with the Air Force began with my birth at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, where my dad was stationed and he and my mom had met. As I grew up in the military environment, I encountered Air Force Catholic chaplains whose examples would eventually inspire me to become a priest: Father Eugene Tremblay, O.M.I., from whom I received my first Reconciliation and Communion at a base in England; Father Frank Gilchrist, who ministered to my family when we were challenged by serious illness in Mississippi; and Father William Benson, for whom my brother Bill and I served Mass at the base chapel almost every Sunday for a year, and who shared with us the experiences of his travels in Rome and the Holy Land. These holy men lived out their priesthood in pastoral ministry that directly benefited my family and me with a joy that communicated their close relationship with our Lord. As happens in the military, my contact with them was limited in time, due to the frequency of their transfers and those of my dad, but their impact on my heart has lasted a lifetime.

After my dad retired from the Air Force, and as I completed college and law school and spent more than a decade as a government attorney, I had practically no contact with the Air Force for twenty years. Like so many “military brats” I sometimes missed those aspects of the military environment that had shaped my growing-up years and felt a little out of place in the “civilian” world, but this was overshadowed by many rich experiences of young adulthood, including those which led me to Alaska.

It was after I began preparation for the priesthood in my late thirties that I came to appreciate that some of the spiritual challenges I was working on in the process of formation—especially a certain hesitation in forming close friendships—might be related to the frequent moves and transitions I had experienced as a member of a military family. After all, I had gone to three different high schools as a result of my Dad’s service. It was about this time that I met a lay minister for an Army chapel at an RCIA workshop, and talked with her about this. She enthusiastically confirmed that my experience was very common, and something that was specifically addressed in her ministry to military members and their families. I got the idea that this might be an area of ministry that I should explore.

I was at a Norbertine religious community in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the time, and contacted the priest at Kirtland Air Force Base to see if I might somehow become involved in their ministry. He assured me that I would be welcome, but that I couldn’t just show up to help out in an unstructured way. He then introduced me to the “chaplain candidate” program that the Air Force and the other services run for seminarians who might be interested in being chaplains, and seemed all ready to sign me up and ship me out! This was a bit more than either I or my religious superiors were able to process at the time, but the idea continued to attract me.

Two years later, on May 23, 1991, I was sworn into the Air Force Reserve as a Second Lieutenant chaplain candidate at the United States Air Force in Rome, where I was studying theology. At 39 years old, I just barely met the maximum age limit. For the rest of my years in the seminary in Rome, I was able to minister at air bases in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey, becoming more and more convinced that I had found a true calling. When I was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Juneau, Bishop Kenney authorized me to continue this ministry as an Air Force Reserve chaplain. Those who remember Bishop Kenney’s views on military matters might be surprised by this, but he made it very clear that his opinions on policy did not affect his awareness of the spiritual needs of those in the armed forces and their families.

Over the last quarter century, my primary assignments have been assigned to active duty and reserve units in Alaska, Washington State, and Florida. Most of my time as a chaplain has been spent ministering to military members and their families at bases in those States under normal—for the military—circumstances, which might be regarded as quite tumultuous by other people. The special pressures of mission requirements, military discipline, training, and long periods away from home and family at work and on travel have constantly raised issues on which the help of a chaplain has been needed. Especially in the years since September 11, 2001, the “operations tempo” necessary to fight two or three wars has been a pervasive source of almost constant stress for many military and family members. This is heightened, of course, during times when military members are deployed overseas, especially in dangerous combat zones, and chaplains are needed to serve both the troops on deployment and their families at home.

I have been deployed to Iraq during the summer of 2004; to the Persian Gulf in the summer of 2007; and to Afghanistan in the fall, winter, and spring of 2009-2010. During each of those deployments I have experienced peak moments of my priesthood: ministering to the dead, dying, and wounded; celebrating Mass and the Sacraments for Catholics living in a country where such things are not normally allowed; and offering Mass while our base was under a rocket attack. Most important has been the opportunity to make Christ present to those experiencing situations of suffering and evil, offering his light in the midst of pervasive darkness. Baptizing and confirming airmen and soldiers who have come to a new awareness of their faith while meeting the challenges of deployment is a memory that I especially treasure. Celebrating a traditional Christmas with faith-filled Polish troops—young men and women—at their base in the middle of Afghanistan was one of many joyful experiences in that challenging but beautiful land.

One special feature of military chaplaincy is its ecumenical, interfaith character.

Continued on page 13
US Conference of Catholic Bishops – June Meeting Accomplishments

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us always!

The meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops took place in Baltimore on June 11-14, 2019. It was a very productive meeting. Archbishop Paul Etienne, the former Archbishop of Anchorage and the current Coadjutor Archbishop of Seattle wrote an article on June 15 which is posted on his blog that summarizes well the actions of the bishops. I have asked Archbishop Etienne for permission to share his article with the people of the Diocese of Juneau and he has graciously given his consent. His article is below. You can follow Archbishop Etienne’s blog at: http://archbishopetienne.com/.

Sincerely in Christ,
Bishop Andrew Bellisario, C.M.

Many of you already know that the US Catholic bishops gathered in Baltimore this week for three days of meetings. Upper most in our prayer and hearts, as well as our agenda – taking concrete actions to hold bishops accountable for sexual misconduct and irresponsible governance.

Before getting to those actions, I wish to draw attention to other matters of business which were addressed:

• approved a revised passage on the death penalty for the US Catholic Catechism
• expressed support to continue to advance on local level the cause for canonization of Servant of God Irving (Francis) C. House from the Diocese of Marquette
• approved a new translation of the Rite for the Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons
• approved a 2nd edition of the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States
• updated / approved development of videos and letters to accompany the document: Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship
• approved the proposed new priorities for USCCB Strategic Plan 2021-2024
• discussed desire to reach and attract those individuals / young adults disaffiliating from the faith

There is a balance at work in the motu proprio because it applies to the universal church, which is composed of many different cultures, and legal structures. Church law respects the theological and ecclesial understanding of the role of bishops, and thus must work within that framework.

However, the motu proprio also requires every episcopal conference of bishops to implement the new norms in a manner that is best suited to their local circumstances. This is what we did during this week’s USCCB meeting in Baltimore.

Church teaching also spells out and calls for the laity to take up their rightful role in the life of the church. I believe most of our bishops truly appreciate the many gifts of our lay people, and we are particularly grateful for their expertise and we already work closely with various experts who serve on our Review Boards. We will most certainly continue to look to qualified lay experts in many different fields to assist us as we now move forward with this latest and needed church law to hold bishops accountable.

The measures now in place also addresses the concerns that we are somehow going to avoid reporting accusations of criminal behavior of bishops to local law enforcement – this is no longer a serious possibility. We are already across the country acting as mandated reporters any and every time we are made aware of accusations of criminal misconduct with minors and vulnerable adults.

What we did this week now includes and holds bishops accountable for bad actions and for inaction in the face of this urgent need.

First, it is important to note that this meeting would have had a much different atmosphere and few accomplishments if Pope Francis had not taken the considerable actions he has since the USCCB last met in November. I continue to be most grateful for Pope Francis, and the true gift of his motu proprio, Vos estis lux mundi. (You are the light of the world.)

A motu proprio is an apostolic letter of a legislative nature which modifies or adds to church law (canon law). The term translates “of his own initiative” – referring in this case to Pope Francis’ initiative. Such a document applies to the universal law of the church.

Herein lies an important concept which many people have been slow to understand. While there has been much heart burn in this past year about the bishops’ seeming lack of resolve or ability to address the sinful and criminal behavior and poor governance of some bishops, the reality remains that by church law, only the Holy Father can investigate or discipline a bishop. With Vos estis, Pope Francis gave the universal church a document clearly enhancing church law for the present and urgent need.

Many people have also, and rightly called for more involvement of the laity in this process. Some claim that Vos estis falls short on several accounts, namely that:

• it is merely another way to deal with the issue of clergy abuse with an ‘internal church document’ (bishops policing bishops)
• it falls short of requiring the use of lay experts
• it falls short of mandating all reports of abuse be reported to law enforcement

While I am pleased with the results of our deliberations and actions this week, there is still much work ahead. Most importantly, we will need to be diligent in our efforts. We must continue to root out any and all attitudes of clerical privilege – beginning with our seminary formation programs.

Similarly, we will need in time to put in place measures for assessing how well we are following these new norms – all with the assistance of qualified and independent lay professionals.

You will note the photo for this entry is one of prayer. As Pope Francis understood early on, prayer is required to make sure that our response in moments of crisis is coming from true and genuine discernment, and not just a knee-jerk and immediate reaction.

Thank you for your prayers during this past year, and please, let us all continue to call upon the Lord for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to rid this church of the scourge of sexual abuse. May we continue to walk together, prayerfully as we work to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ and renew this church we all love.

Peace.

(I hope in the coming days to add links to the final drafts of the key documents that were approved in Baltimore this week.). In the meantime, there is much good news to report with regards to the fine work of the Catholic Church in the United States – and universally – to address the crime of clergy abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. You are invited to visit a new website of the USCCB (preventionusccb.org) which provides much encouraging data in this regard.
Cathedral ministry brings travelers from port to pew

BY DOMINIQUE JOHNSON

On a typical Sunday during the summer five cruise ships will make stops in downtown Juneau. The ports are filled with visitors ready to make their way to the Mendenhall Glacier and on various excursions to experience Alaska’s capital city.

On a Saturday evening and Sunday among the large tour busses, you will find a smaller bus with the image of the Blessed Mother, Mary making rounds to the different ports taking cruise ship passengers to Mass at the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Cathedral parishioner Patty Morgan leads the port ministry and has been involved since the ministry began five years ago. Visitors call Morgan to schedule their pick-up locations and let her know which Mass they plan on attending. She says, “I enjoy meeting people from around the world who share our Catholic faith.”

The cruise ship Island Princess arrives in Juneau at 6:30 AM on Sunday and Morgan makes her way down to the ships dock at 7:45 AM to pick-up passengers who wish to attend the Mass at the Cathedral at 8:30 AM.

As the bus with the words “free rides to Mass” pulls in with the other tour busses a couple from Utah climbs on board and shares how they travel to Mass at the Cathedral parish. Morgan said that each concierge shares how when they travel they always research local parishes and were happy to find the parish in Juneau offered rides to Mass. Other passengers from Ohio and Australia fill the bus on this Sunday morning.

Before the bus leaves the dock, a lady asks Morgan about Mass times later in the day and she shared the Cathedral’s Mass schedule and gave her a business card to call for pick-up. Morgan said that each concierge for the different cruise lines has a copy of the Mass schedule, but sometimes seeing the bus and knowing they can get a ride up the hill helps visitors make the decision to attend Mass.

Upon arrival at the Cathedral, Tom Buti from Columbus, Ohio shares how important for him to be at Mass, “I can’t live with myself if I don’t make it to Mass on Sunday. I need to have that communication with God.”

Buti found out about the port ministry by reading the parish bulletin posted online. He said in his internet search Google maps said the Cathedral was about a mile from the cruise ship dock and he thought about walking. “Now after looking at the hill, I’m glad I called for a ride.”

Australian Peter Mulligan didn’t know about the port ministry until the bus pulled up to the dock. He noticed the bold lettering and decided that instead of shopping, he would attend Mass, while others in his group went on their helicopter tour. He joked, “God must have wanted me to make Mass this morning, because when traveling, it’s hard to find a church.”

The port ministry at the Cathedral will continue to bring visitors from around the world to Mass in Juneau through the summer months and Patty Morgan looks forward to meeting new travelers who are a reminder that, “We are truly part of the Eucharistic Body of Christ throughout the world and that we are all part of the family of God.” She is impressed that many people plan their vacations around attending Mass adding that “It is a witness to our faith to others, and it is a great honor and joy to be part of the port ministry.”

St. Vincent de Paul Juneau Home Visit Team

BY BILL DIEBELS, JR.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) is an international organization with over 800,000 members who typically belong to a group in their parish. The parish group forms a conference and members are known as Vincentians. Several conferences in an area form Councils which help the conferences serve their common goals and may operate thrift stores as one source of funds to aid the poor.

A primary activity and charism of Vincentians is to visit people in their homes to understand their needs, and provide assistance when possible. This assistance may be in the form of service and often includes financial or in-kind aid. Nationally, there are over 4,400 conferences with nearly 100,000 Vincentians.

In the Diocese of Juneau, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Juneau (SVdP-Juneau) is a non-profit originally founded in 1984 by members of St. Paul the Apostle Parish and currently provides monetary assistance, food, clothing, housing, and services to people in need. Last year, the board of directors of SVdP-Juneau, recognizing that home visits are a core component of the Vincentian identity, decided to establish a home visit team which would operate much like a parish-based conference.

After informational meetings during the summer, the first Home Visit Team (HVT) meeting was held in November. The HVT has nine Vincentians and meets twice per month. The meetings have a spiritual component where we pray and reflect on our ministry. They also have a “business” component where we discuss operations of the conference, including the people we have served. This helps us understand what we did well and where we can improve. Examples of our cases include:

- Working with a Seattle conference to help a Juneau family whose mother was medevaced
- Providing food to individuals
- Visiting a patient in the hospital

Home visits currently occur based on referrals from SVdP-Juneau. Upon receiving a referral, the client is contacted to arrange a visit by a pair of Vincentians. Based on what is learned during the visit, some direct aid may be provided, and future visits may be scheduled. The primary source of funds which allow the HVT to provide direct aid toward items such as food, rent, and utility bills come from a portion of the S.O.M.E collections from each Juneau parish and the generous donations from you, our community of faith.

We plan to expand sources of referrals to include the two Juneau parishes, Catholic Community Service, and Capital City Fire/Rescue. Anyone who is in need or aware of someone in need is encouraged to make a referral by either calling the SVdP-Juneau aid line at 907-789-5399 x4 or emailing hvt.juneau.svdp@gmail.com.

If you have questions about the HVT or are interested in potentially joining the HVT, please contact Bill Diebels, Jr. at bdiebels@gmail.com. If you are interested in financially supporting the work of St. Vincent de Paul in our community, please consider donating through our website svdpjuneau.org/donate-now or mailing a donation to: St. Vincent de Paul-Juneau, 8617 Teal Street, Juneau, AK 99801.
St. Vincent de Paul hosting City and Borough of Juneau’s Sleep Off Program

BY BRADLEY PERKINS
SVdP GENERAL MANAGER

City and Borough of Juneau’s (CBJ) Capital City Fire/Rescue (CCFR) took over management of Juneau’s sleep off program on July 1. The service, which provides field evaluation and transportation of inebriated individuals to a safe space where they can sober up, was housed at Bartlett Regional Hospital and operated by Rainforest Recovery. CCFR will operate the new service out of a new facility housed at St. Vincent de Paul Juneau (SVdP).

With the change of management comes a new model and a new name — CCFR CARES, or Community Assistance Response and Emergency Services. “The new identity is to better reflect our vision of how the program will serve the community. Managing the sleep off center will be one facet. The core purpose of CARES is to connect people with needed services, start whistling away at their challenges and barriers, and hopefully reduce their reliance on emergency services,” Fire Chief Rich Etheridge said.

The CCFR supervised sleep off center will operate out of a new facility being constructed by SVdP in the space formerly occupied by the SVdP thrift store. The space is available, as SVdP moved the store operations to a new location last summer on Glacier Hwy. The new location placed the St. Vincent Store in the heart of the valley’s retail corridor, leaving the old space available for other uses. Bradley Perkins, SVdP General Manager, explained, “the old thrift store contributed toward the operational expenses of our Teal Street facility, which also contains our Transitional Housing Facility and Paul’s Place low-income apartments. I was tasked by the board with finding other uses for the vacated space.”

The main sales floor of the old thrift store was repurposed into the Dan Austin Transitional Support Services Center (TSSC). Last fall, the CBJ selected the TSSC and SVdP as its project to apply for a HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which would have paid for the renovation of this space and the adjacent donations area. Unfortunately, the State of Alaska did not select this project in the spring, although SVdP is considering applying to the CBJ again this fall with a scaled-down remodeling project for the TSSC.

Even without the CDBG, the TSSC is functioning in the space with offices for SVdP’s five Community Navigators (case managers) who serve Juneau’s homeless population. Also located in the space is SVdP’s free clothing outlet and food pantry for the homeless and those in need. The clothing and other items in the TSSC are from excess donations to the St. Vincent Store. The food in the TSSC food pantry comes primarily from collections at St. Paul the Apostle and Cathedral parishes.

The prior sleep-off center hosted at Bartlett Regional Hospital was in temporary buildings that were scheduled for demolition to make space for a new addiction center. When the CBJ and CCFR decided the takeover of the program and staff it out of the airport fire station, they contacted SVdP, which is only down the street.

“Not only were we already close to their location, we had space, and the clients for the sleep off facility are generally, already clients of our Community Navigators – it was a natural fit,” according to Mr. Perkins. Clients will have immediate access to the navigators as well as access to the other TSSC resources such as clothing and the food pantry.

SVdP will construct the new sleep off facility in the prior donations area, which had already been planned to be day-use showers, laundry and locker facilities for the clients of the TSSC. Since the sleep off center also needed these services and operates primarily at night, this allows for a dual-use facility serving both the CBJ CCFR sleep off facility and the TSSC.

During the estimated three-month construction of the new sleep-off facility, SVdP is hosting the sleep off operations in a back corner of the TSSC, in a temporary sleep off facility constructed by SVdP board members, including Home Visit Team Leader Bill Diebels. Bill noted, “while fortunate that this temporary facility is only needed for three months, installing a temporary shower with no below-floor drainage was a bit of challenge.”

Mr. Perkins concluded, “SVdP already had a good working relationship with CCFR and the CBJ, having managed the city’s Cold Weather Emergency Shelter last winter. We see this as an opportunity to expand and strengthen that relationship in reaching our clients and those in need throughout Juneau, as the city and these first responders are often the first to reach these individuals, and can be one of our best connections to them.”
Bishops welcome challenging questions from Alaska teens

BY: NAOMI KLOUDA - CATHOLICANCHOR.ORG

Teens from across Alaska took full advantage of their chance to question Alaska’s three bishops. Ranging from what led the bishops to the priesthood, to how should they respond to issues of abortion and same-sex attraction, the June 5 question and session answer at the Alaska Catholic Youth Conference (ACYC) was lively.

The event at St. Benedict Church in Anchorage featured roughly 165 youth and adults, who were participating in the weeklong conference.

Anchorage Archbishop Emeritus Roger Schwietz, Fairbanks Bishop Chad Zielinski and Juneau Bishop Andrew Bellisario took the teens’ questions, which were presented by emcees Katherine Angulo of the University of Notre Dame’s McGrath Institute for Church Life, a project dedicated to forming faithful Catholic leaders, and Lisa Gomes, director of youth and young adult ministry from the Diocese of Honolulu.

HOw DID YOU BECOME A PRIEST?

As for “how” he became a priest, Archbishop Schwietz recounted an age not unlike their own when he bid goodbye to a girlfriend and left St. Paul, Minn., to give seminary a shot.

“I said ‘see you next year’ — I thought by then I would be done with that,” he said of his priestly discernment. Instead, the future archbishop joined the priesthood at a key moment in history, during the Second Vatican Council in 1964. He was ordained Dec. 20, 1967. Later he was named bishop of Duluth, Minn., in 1989 at age 49. About a decade later, he was named archbishop of Anchorage, succeeding Archbishop Francis Hurley and preceding Archbishop Paul Etienne.

“Now back full-circle,” Archbishop Schwietz serves as a priest again, at St. Andrew Church in Eagle River.

“I like Alaska’s recycling program,” he said as the audience clapped. “It’s been a wonderful experience.”

At age 79, he encouraged the young Catholics to seek their own calling to lead them on a life that will surprise them.

The question provided a chance to get to know Alaska’s newer bishops. Juneau Bishop Bellisario, on June 7, was named the apostolic administrator of the Anchorage Archdiocese by Pope Francis until a replacement can be found for Archbishop Etienne.

For Bishop Bellisario, the calling came at a young age. By seventh grade we was considering the priesthood. He was born in the California town of Alhambra in 1956 to a large Italian family.

“My parents volunteered in the church and were involved in ministry,” he told the youth. “I attended Catholic schools.”

As a child he learned about the Congregation of the Mission (or Vincentians), founded by Saint Vincent de Paul in 1625.

“I fell in love with the community and over the next 35 years, I never fell out of love,” he told the audience.

Bishop Bellisario entered the congregation in 1975 and was ordained a priest on June 16, 1984. He has ministered as a parish priest in parishes across California and served as dean of students at St. Vincent’s Minor Seminary at Montebello. In 2017 Pope Francis appointed him to lead the Juneau Diocese.

Bishop Zielinski recounted his youth growing up on a 120-acre farm in Alpena, Mich., the eldest of five children. He was ordained to the priesthood June 8, 1996, at St. Mary Cathedral in Gaylord, Mich. Since 2014, he has led the Diocese of Fairbanks.

After the Twin Towers terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, in New York, Zielinski felt called to minister to soldiers. In the course of his military career, he served three tours of duty in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan. He has received numerous military awards for his service, and was promoted to the rank of major in July of 2013.

“I love travel to villages,” he added. “You want to talk about 100 percent organic — salmon, fish, muskox, caribou, moose, whale and seal, walrus. It’s such a bounty.”

Archbishop Schwietz, while acknowledging he cannot get out as much as he used to, remembered growing up hunting and fishing in Minnesota.

“I like just getting out in nature, hiking,” he said.

“I grew up in a city,” Bishop Bellisario said. “I love movies and spent years as a movie buff. That’s probably the most satisfying thing. Not just watching but talking about movies, analyzing movie direction, watching their ratings.”

ONLINE CONFESSIONS

On other topics, Archbishop Schwietz answered a question on whether it is okay for a priest to take confession on Facebook or during video-graphed FaceTime?

“No. That wouldn’t be a valid absolution,” he said.

SAME-SEX AtTRACTION

The bishops were asked how youth might respond to peers in same-sex attraction or struggling in that direction.

Archbishop Schwietz said the way men and women were created was “God’s idea.”

“When you sit back and look at how he created them … the very nature of the body is ordered for the opposite sex as a gift to one another,” he observed.

Each of the bishops has “walked and talked with” people struggling in same-sex attractions. Bishop Zielinski advised them not to “unfriend” anyone based on that struggle. He suggested that those with same-sex attraction seek out a priest or religious sister because nowadays they are experienced in such guidance. He added that every human carries the dignity of God, which means the young people should focus on respecting that dignity because all human beings are created “in God’s image.”

Bishop Bellisario suggested they respond from “a place of love,” not force.

Another way to look at the struggles, he added, is to remember that all are called to chastity outside of marriage. The challenge is to be chaste.

HOW TO BE PRO-LIFE

Advice for responding to peers and friends who support abortion was also high on the question list. What strategy should be used?

One of the biggest contributions, Archbishop Schwietz said, is the ultrasound machine, which shows images of an unborn baby as it grows.

Continued on page 10
During the first week of June, Dominican sisters, Sr. Irenaeus and Sr. Alyssa led a weeklong Catechism Camp at the National Shrine of St. Therese in Juneau. The first day was group catechesis for local Catholic moms and their children, the next four days was camp for local high school teens. The sisters focused on meditating on the mysteries of the rosary through lectio divina and having a personal relationship with Jesus by spending time in adoration daily.

Photos: (Right) Sr. Alyssa leads the high school group praying the Luminous mysteries of the rosary.
Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist

(Above) The sisters and teens during adoration. (Bottom left) The sister and moms during the first day of camp. (Bottom right) Children praying during adoration with the sisters.
New playset helps foster community at Juneau parish

BY ANJANETTE BARR

Until recently, children at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Juneau enjoyed gathering in front of the church at a small outdoor castle structure to play after Mass. My children especially appreciated the opportunity to jump and climb after an hour of being more-or-less successfully focused and engaged indoors.

Earlier this year when Greg and Annie Albrecht noticed that the castle had been damaged and removed, the two St. Paul’s parishioners (who have three young children) decided to investigate the possibility of creating an even bigger and better play area for the church. They envisioned it as a tool for fostering community and wanted a space that families could utilize together while participating in ministries like the monthly Marriage Enrichment nights that they lead.

This would not have been the first large play structure at St. Paul’s. Director of Religious Education, Kimber Watt, remembers there being a playset with a tire swing where the parking lot now sits when she arrived in Juneau as a child in 1998.

However, nothing that large has been constructed since the new church was built, and it took some time to determine if the new playset they proposed required any special considerations. Upon approval, the St. Paul’s community responded generously and donated enough to cover much of the expense in just two weekends. The Albrechts were able to purchase the playset and assemble it with the generous help of a group of men from St. Paul’s on May 25th, and the children who once so loved the little castle have a new favorite place to play.

One St. Paul’s parishioner, Louise Miller, told me in conversation that she has supported the idea of a new playset for years. Her reaction to this one blessed me as a mother of four when she said, “I’m so happy that it is there. It sends the message that we are a church that cares about our littles.”

ACYC: Continued from page 6

“I think that has changed the discussion quite a bit,” he said.

Bishop Bellisario suggested “putting God into the discussion. A lot of times, we leave him out, and I think that’s detrimental to all of us.”

Bishop Zielinski noted that this is another area, like same-sex struggles, where priests have gained a lot of experience. He recalled a young woman considering abortion. He spoke with her, spent time with her and celebrated when she announced later “she had given birth to a beautiful baby.”

“We’ve all walked and talked with women who have had abortions,” he said. “The pain they carry is very real.”

The youth then asked how they could help end abortion.

“Talk to, write to, email legislators and representatives,” Bishop Zielinski said. “Especially right now the voices of young people are more important than those of us 50 or over.”

HOW NEW BISHOPS ARE CHOSEN

The bishops also talked about how a new bishop is appointed.

Archbishop Schwietz outlined the process that begins with the United States nuncio – or pope’s ambassador — by which an investigation is launched on the needs of the particular diocese in need of a bishop.

The nuncio talks with “local people about who they believe will be the right kind of person for the position,” he said. Then he narrows it to three possibilities and forwards the names to Rome. A cardinal in Rome eventually takes the nominations to the pope, Schwietz said.

SEX ABUSE CRISIS

What is being done to end sexual abuse by priests was also a matter the teens raised.

“There is a role for every one of us to play,” Archbishop Schwietz responded. “I think if we all keep that in prayer, all together, that can help us as a church grow in holiness.”

New policies and procedures are in place now, Bishop Zielinski noted. “We are doing everything in our power to make sure the church is a safe environment.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR BISHOPS

Then inquiry changed direction and the bishops had a chance to query the youth on how they might be of better service.

More events allowing young people and bishops to interact, one person said. Another suggested low cost or free events that young people can afford.

Shrine of St. Therese accepting applications for CARETAKER POSITION

The Shrine of St. Therese is looking for an energetic, self-motivated Married Caretaker Couple to live-on-site at our magnificent 46-acre campus in Southeast Alaska.

Duties and Responsibilities include but are not limited to: Stewardship of the two most important aspects of a Catholic shrine – creating an environment for prayer and hospitality (Pope Francis 11/29/2018), Housekeeping and Domestic Services, Maintenance and Repair, Clerical and Office Work

For a complete job description or to submit a cover letter and application, please contact Joe Sehnert at juneaushrine@dioceseofjuneau.org

Greg Albrecht, Mike Fox, Andrew Klausner, Matt Zeeck, Robert Barr, and Micah Smith donated their time to assemble the new playset at St. Paul’s Church in Juneau.
Remembering Jean Vanier

Jean Vanier, the founder of the L’Arche community, died on May 7th. What a blessing he was, not only to men and women living with intellectual and other disabilities and those living in community with them, but to all who seek to know, love and follow Jesus.

The L’Arche community grew out of Vanier’s desire to share life with two developmentally disabled men in Trosley, France in 1964. At the time of his death, there were 147 L’Arche communities in 35 countries around the world. Vanier’s father, Georges, was a career military officer in the Canadian Army, who with his wife Pauline served in his nation’s diplomatic service and later as the Governor General of Canada. In 1940 the young Jean Vanier began a successful career in the Canadian Navy, serving during and after World War II.

Despite the promising military career that lay in front of him, he was more and more drawn into prayer and reflection on what might be God’s call for him and in 1950 left the navy to study philosophy and theology at the Institut Catholique de Paris. He returned to Canada to teach philosophy at the University of Toronto.

In 1964, he visited a small institution for men with developmental disabilities in the village of Trosly outside of Paris where his spiritual director, Fr. Thomas Philippe, a Dominican priest, was the chaplain. There he encountered those living with intellectual and physical disabilities, men whose physical needs were provided for but who experienced the profound pain and suffering of being unloved and unwanted.

His response to what he witnessed led him decide once more against the security of a career. He resigned his teaching post and settled in Trosly in order to share life with two adult men living with intellectual disability. He bought a small house and named it “L’Arche,” the French word for Noah’s Ark.

Their life together attracted others, and within five years L’Arche communities had been established in Europe, North America, Africa and Asia. On Easter 1971, at the conclusion of a groundbreaking pilgrimage of 12,000 people with developmental disabilities to Lourdes, Vanier and Marie Hélène Mathieu, launched the movement Faith and Light. The movement seeks to unite people with intellectual disabilities and their family members and friends for regular gatherings devoted to friendship, prayer and celebration. Some 1500 Faith and Light are present in 80 countries.

Until his death, Vanier lived in the first L’Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France.

Learn more about L’Arche at www.larche.org

Jean Vanier Quotes

“The most important thing is not to do things for people who are poor and in distress, but to enter into relationship with them, to be with them and help them find confidence in themselves and discover their own gifts.”

“I strongly believe that God is hidden in the heart of the smallest of all, in the weakest of all, and if we commit ourselves to him, we open a new world.”

“We may not all be called to do great things that hit the headlines, but we are all called to love and be loved, wherever we may be. We are called to be open and to grow in love and thus to communicate life to others, especially to those in need.”

“Whatever their gifts, or their limitations, people are all bound together in a common humanity. Everyone is of unique and sacred value and everyone has the same dignity and the same rights.”

L’Arche Prayer

Father, through Jesus our Lord and our brother, we ask you to bless us.

Grant that L’Arche be a true home, where everyone may find life, where those of us who suffer may find hope.

Keep in your loving care all those who come.

Spirit of God, give us greatness of heart that we may welcome all those you send.

Make us compassionate that we may heal and bring peace.

Help us to see, to serve and to love.

O Lord, through the hands of each other, bless us; through the eyes of each other, smile on us.

O Lord, grant freedom, fellowship and unity to all your people and welcome everyone into your kingdom.
USCCB leaders decry policies they say led to child deaths at border

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Leadership of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in an op-ed cast blame on government policies for recent child deaths near the U.S.-Mexico border.

In a June 30 op-ed published by The Hill newspaper in Washington, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB president and vice president, respectively, and Bishop Joe S. Vasquez of Austin, Texas, chairman the Committee on Migration, called attention to the recent deaths of a Salvadoran father and daughter who drowned while trying to cross the Rio Grande River near McAllen, Texas, in late June, as well as the deaths of other children who died while in immigration authorities’ custody in 2019 and 2018.

“We mourn the deaths of 23-month-old Angie Valeria and her father, Oscar Martinez, who died on Monday while fleeing El Salvador in search of safety in the United States,” the bishops wrote. “This young family embarked on a journey of over 1,400 miles, through some of the most dangerous parts of the world, which ended with a father paying the ultimate price -- his life -- to keep his daughter from harm’s way. Angie was still scared after she was left safely on the river bank and she jumped back in the water to be with her dad, her security.

“Unfortunately, the deaths of Angie and her father are not the first we have seen during this ongoing humanitarian crisis.”

They named 7-year-old Jakelin Caal Maquin, of Guatemala, who died from sepsis while in the custody of U.S. immigration officials in December and said that “countless others, all precious children of God, do not make it to the border, finding their final resting place somewhere along a journey that began with hope but quickly turned into despair.”

The last week of June proved to be a deadly one near the U.S.-Mexico border. In addition to the drowning of the Salvadoran father and daughter, authorities also found the bodies of four migrants -- a woman in her 20s believed to be the mother of three children, whose bodies were found near her on federal U.S. land, also near McAllen. Authorities don’t yet know their identities or how they died.

“These deaths are occurring because the United States is closing off access to asylum protection through policies and enforcement that send the clear and strong signal that you are not welcome,” the op-ed said.

Earlier in the year, some U.S. bishops had warned that policies put in place as a deterrent would have deadly consequences, either by forcing immigrants to stay in dangerous border cities in Mexico such as Ciudad Juarez and Matamoros or forcing them out of ports-of-entry and toward the unrelenting desert to try to gain entry. Closing doors to those seeking refuge in the past led to a shameful chapter in U.S. history, the bishops said.

“We recognize the right of nations to control their borders and provide safety for citizens. We also believe that, in the best of our nation’s traditions, it is within our capability as a nation to honor the humanity and basic needs of migrants in a way that does not compromise our nation’s security,” they said.

As a nation, we must learn the harsh lessons from our past about closing doors to U.S. asylum. One of the more unfortunate chapters of our great nation’s history was our experience during World War II, when we turned away the S.S. St. Louis, a ship carrying nearly 1,000 Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Nazi Germany,” the op-ed said. “In the aftermath of that experience and that war, the United States helped lead the world in establishing international protocols to ensure that refugees fleeing persecution in their country of nationality or habitual residence would receive protection when they present themselves at another country’s borders.”

Those protocols became part of U.S. refugee and asylum law and created laws long embraced by a wide political array of presidents and lawmakers, the op-ed said. However, the country is taking a different turn.

“Sadly, the current administration recently announced that over the next week, it will conduct a series of broad enforcement actions to round up thousands of Angie’s and her father’s countrymen, as well as other Central American families, who managed to make it to safety inside the United States,” the bishops said.

“The announced goal is to detain and then deport them, consigning them to a frightening and uncertain fate in the country from which they fled. The president has suggested that his administration will refrain from engaging in this unfortunate enforcement action only if Congress repeals the asylum protections that it helped lead the world to establish.”

But immigrants from the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador take on the journey fleeing gang violence, corrupt governments and poverty because there is no other recourse, the bishops said, and the result of actions that try to keep them from entering what they believe is a safe place have turned traumatic and deadly, particularly for children.

“For the second straight summer, asylum-seekers, most of them children and families, are caught in the middle of a stalemated political battle as they endure the brunt of life-altering scenarios and poor conditions,” they wrote.

“Last year, as part of the zero-tolerance policy implemented to slow the migration of people to our country and deny them the right to seek the protection of asylum, we saw heartbreaking scenes of children being ripped away from their parents,” they continued.

“This year, many are forced to remain in Mexico as they risk dangers on the border to await their uncertain future. Those who are able to cross the border are put in facilities with reported conditions that are substandard for a facility run by the United States government.”

Congress and the administration must find a solution that encompasses comprehensive immigration that includes immediate humanitarian relief, they said.

“We recognize the right of nations to control their borders and provide safety for citizens. We also believe that, in the best of our nation’s traditions, it is within our capability as a nation to honor the humanity and basic needs of migrants in a way that does not compromise our nation’s security,” they said.
Fr. Pat Travers:
Continued from page 1

We Catholic chaplains are part of a ministry that includes chaplains of almost every conceivable Christian denomination, as well as Jewish rabbis and Muslim imams. The enlisted troops who assist us come from a wide variety of spiritual backgrounds. (The Army chaplain assistant who accompanied me in Afghanistan identified himself as a Neo-pagan!) We each, of course, are faithful to the teachings and practices of our own faith and, contrary to occasional rumors, are never required to do anything inconsistent with that faith. For Catholic chaplains, the Archdiocese of the Military Services, USA, under the leadership of Archbishop Timothy Broglio, ensures that only qualified priests are recruited for this ministry and governs the ways in which we conduct it. At the same time, military chaplains are at the service of troops and family members of all faiths and even of no defined faith, helping to secure the free exercise of their religion or spiritual practice, whatever that might be, under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I thank God every day for the gift of having served as an Air Force chaplain and know that it will enrich all the other aspects of my priestly ministry into the future. I’m especially grateful for the many men, women, young people, and children whom the Lord has given me the opportunity to serve. Like the dedicated priests whom I encountered during my childhood, I have usually spent very little time with them, but they have affected me, and I hope that I have affected them, in wonderful ways that will last through our lifetimes and into eternal life.

Pope to celebrate Mass with migrants, refugees

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis will celebrate Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with migrants, refugees and volunteer rescue teams, the Vatican said. According to the Vatican, the Mass July 8 will mark the sixth anniversary of the pope’s visit to the southern Italian island of Lampedusa. “Around 250 people will participate in the celebration,” which will take place at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica, the Vatican said July 1. While the Mass will be broadcasted live, it will not be open to the press or the public. “The Holy Father desires that the moment be as recollected as possible in the remembrance of how many have lost their lives fleeing war and misery, and so as to encourage those who strive day after day to sustain, accompany and welcome migrants and refugees,” the Vatican said. In 2013, the pope decided to visit Lampedusa, a small island with a population of 6,000 and just 70 miles from Tunisia, after seeing newspaper headlines describing the drowning of immigrants at sea. While celebrating Mass there, Pope Francis said the purpose of his visit was not only to pray for those who lost their lives at sea, but also “to try to awaken people’s consciences.”

Pope gives relics of St. Peter to Orthodox patriarch

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In what Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople described as a “brave and bold” gesture, Pope Francis gave the patriarch a famous reliquary containing bone fragments believed to belong to St. Peter. The only time the bronze reliquary has been displayed publicly was in November 2013, when Pope Francis had it present for public veneration as he celebrated the closing Mass for the Year of Faith, opened by Pope Benedict XVI. The bronze case contains nine of the bone fragments discovered during excavations of the necropolis under St. Peter’s Basilica that began in the 1940s. In the 1960s, archaeologist Margherita Guarducci published a paper asserting that she had found St. Peter’s bones near the site identified as his tomb. While no pope has ever declared the bones to be authentic, St. Paul VI announced in 1968 that the “relics” of St. Peter had been “identified in a way which we can hold to be convincing.” Pope Paul took nine of the bone fragments, commissioned the bronze reliquary, and kept the relics in his private chapel in the papal apartments.

Chicago woman’s healing is miracle in Cardinal Newman's sainthood cause

CHICAGO (CNS) -- A few prayers to Blessed John Henry Newman became a “constant dialogue” and then a desperate response to an emergency for Melissa Villalobos of Chicago. Her healing, which saved her life and the life of her unborn child, was accepted as the miracle needed for the 19th-century British cardinal’s canonization. Pope Francis announced July 1 that he will declare Blessed John Henry Newman a saint Oct. 13. Coincidentally, the miracle accepted for his beatification in 2010 also involved someone from the United States: Deacon Jack Sullivan, 71, of Marshfield, Massachusetts, was healed of a several spinal condition in 2001. Recounting her own story, Villalobos, 42, told Chicago Catholic that in 2011, “my husband brought home a couple of holy cards with Cardinal Newman’s picture on them. I put one in the family room and one in our master bedroom. I would pass his picture in the house and I would say little prayers to him for whatever our family’s needs were at the time -- the children, my husband, myself. I really started to develop a very constant dialogue with him,” said Villalobos, a mother of seven. Her prayers had a miraculous result in 2013 when she started bleeding during the first trimester of a pregnancy. At the time she had four children -- ages 6, 5, 3 and 1 -- and a previous pregnancy that had ended in miscarriage.

Migrants are persons like us: Border bishops offer prayers after deaths

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Catholic bishops from both sides of the border near McAllen, Texas, issued a joint statement expressing condolences to the families of migrant children and parents who recently drowned trying to cross the river into the United States. Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, and Bishop Eugenio Lira Rugarcia, of the neighboring Diocese of Matamoros, Mexico, issued the statement in English and Spanish June 28, saying their respective border dioceses “express with much pain the sorrow of the whole community upon hearing of the parents and children that have recently lost their lives upon crossing the Rio Grande River, seeking a better life.” They mentioned, in particular, the deaths of 25-year-old Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez and 23-month-old daughter Angie Valeria, a Salvadoran father and daughter whose bodies were photographed after they drowned in the river that flows across Texas and Mexico and forms part of the U.S.-Mexico border. “We offer our condolences to the families and loves ones of those who have died, and we recall that over the course of years countless persons have lost their lives in a similar manner, many whose names are known to God alone,” the statement said.

Pope applauds Trump, Kim meeting in North Korea

ROME (CNS) -- After U.S. President Donald Trump became the first sitting president to set foot in North Korea, Pope Francis called his meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a positive step toward world peace. After praying the Angelus with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square June 30, the pope called the historic meeting a “good example of a culture of encounter.” He also sent greetings to Trump and Kim and prayed “that this significant gesture constitutes a further step in the path of peace, not only in that peninsula but for the whole world.” After Trump tweeted June 29 that he would like to meet with Kim at the border between North and South Korea, the North Korean leader agreed to meet him the next day in the demilitarized zone that has separated the North and South since the Korean War ended in 1953. After meeting for nearly an hour, both leaders agreed to set up teams to resume talks that broke down in February over North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.
Attention in an age of distraction

BY LAURA KELLY FANUCCI
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

“Behold” is my favorite word in Scripture. Every time it shows up, we’re summoned to snap to attention and take notice. God is about to do something new. Let’s not miss it.

But how can we behold what God is doing when we’re caught in a culture of constant distraction at our fingertips?

I could cite statistics for you; we’ve all read them. If you’re like me, your stomach sinks whenever you hear how much time we now spend on screens.

I could draw from neuroscience or psychology, the latest findings on how our closest relationships and basic interactions are being reshaped by our technology habits.

But instead I will tell you a story.

While I was trying to finish this column on a steamy summer afternoon with a house full of children, I was interrupted every three-to-five minutes to witness their latest elaborate domino race.

“You have to see this!” a messenger would insist at my office door. “It’s so much better than the last one.”

So I’d smile, leave my work, follow them and witness what they wanted me to see.

The first few rounds were delightful. But after an hour of interruption after interruption, I started to get annoyed. Agitation crept into my voice: “Guys, I have to leave my computer. Go play!”

Blank stares, as if I were speaking a foreign language.

All they wanted was my attention in the present moment. If I couldn’t give it them, did it matter?

So I sighed and left my computer to watch the same line of dominos knock down neatly one by one as kids cheered. Right then it clicked in my mind, too: Why not ask the ones who wanted my attention what it meant to them?

“Use an example from a baseball game,” suggested my oldest son. “You have to pay attention or you might hit it in the face by a foul ball.”

Fair enough.

But then his younger brother knocked it out of the park: “You just have to look at someone and stay focused on them.”

Beholding is holy looking, the spiritual practice of paying attention. Trying to glimpse with God’s eyes. Seeking the goodness in each other and the sacredness of the present moment.

You can start small. Simply stop once a day and notice those around you as they are. Not as you hope they will be in the future or as you wish they were in the past. But beholding them fully in the present and noticing God alive in them today.

Beholding is one of the most profound gifts we can offer to each other -- in our marriages, families and friendships. The simple act of seeing with love softens our gaze, smoothing the rough edges of our imperfections.

We notice something new about our spouse or we see how our children are changing and growing. We discover the difference it makes when we offer uninterrupted attention to a friend.

Our screens are slick and clear. No wonder they are dangerously alluring, when humans are difficult and sinful, muddled and messy in words and actions. We have to pay attention to understand people, not just scroll by with the flick of a finger.

But if we try to behold, if we look up and set down our screens, if we let ourselves gaze upon those we love even for a few meaningful moments each day, our eyes can start to adjust to God’s light -- a new way of seeing.

Our attention is a holy gift. Where do we let it land?

Fanucci is a mother, writer and director of a project on vocation at the Collegeville Institute in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Existence of purgatory

I am a cradle Catholic and have always believed in purgatory. Now I am hearing from some people (including from some priests) who deny its existence. Can you clarify this for me? (City and state of origin withheld)

The Catholic Church does indeed believe in the existence of purgatory. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says this:

“All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The church gives the name purgatory to this final purification of the elect” (No. 1030-31).

This belief is reflected even in the Old Testament, where we read in the Second Book of Maccabees (12:46) that Judas Maccabees “made atonement for the dead” that they might be freed from sin, which suggests a Jewish practice of offering prayers and sacrifice to cleanse the souls of the departed.

Then, in the Gospel of Matthew (12:32), Jesus says that certain sins “will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come,” an indication that some purging of the soul may occur after death.

Personally, I find comfort in the church’s teaching on purgatory. It is not a final destination; everyone there will wind up in heaven eventually. Nor do we know how our concept of time relates to eternity -- the purification that takes place in purgatory could even be instantaneous.

I think that the confusion you speak of regarding the Catholic belief in purgatory may stem in part from the conflation in some people’s minds of purgatory and limbo -- and on limbo, the church no longer holds fast to its existence.

In years past, it was the common belief of Catholics (although never defined dogmatically) that children who died without being baptized went, not to be with God in heaven, but to a state of natural happiness called limbo.

But that was theological speculation, not doctrine; and in 2007, the church’s International Theological Commission, with the authorization of Pope Benedict XVI, published a document that concluded that “there are theological and liturgical reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved ... even if there is not an explicit teaching on this question found in revelation.”

When are we judged?

In the Nicene Creed, we recite that Christ “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.” But many of us assume that we are judged individually (and hopefully off to heaven) at the moment of our death. So which is it -- are we judged by God as soon as we die or is it later, at Christ’s return? (Herndon, Virginia)

Both are true. The Catholic Church has always believed in a twofold judgment by God: a particular judgment at the moment of death and a general judgment at the end of time.

So immediately when we die, each individual is judged as either worthy of eternal life in heaven (there may be a temporary stop in purgatory for purification from the remnants of sin) or deserving of eternal punishment in hell.

In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to eternity” (No. 1022). That particular judgment will be private.

But then at the end of the world, when Jesus returns in glory, there will be a public “general” judgment at which each one’s particular judgment will be confirmed and revealed to all. Again, in the words of the catechism: “The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life” (No. 1039).
The shortcomings of a digital immigrant

Information technology and social media aren’t my mother tongue. I’m a digital immigrant. I wasn’t born into the world of information technology but migrated into it, piece-meal. I first lived in some foreign territories.

I was nine years old before I lived with electricity. I had seen it before; but neither our home, our school, nor our neighbors had electricity. Electricity, when I first saw it, was a huge revelation. And while I grew up with radio, I was fourteen before our family got its first television set. Again, this was a revelation – and manna for my adolescent hunger for connection to the larger world. Electricity and television quickly became a mother tongue, one lit our home and other brought the big world into it. But the phone was still foreign. I was seventeen when I left home and our family had never had a phone.

The phone wasn’t much to master, but it would be a goodly number of years before I mastered much in the brave new world of information technology: Computers, the internet, websites, mobile phones, smart phones, television and movie access through the internet, cloud storage, social media, virtual assistants, and the world of myriad apps. It’s been a journey! I was thirty-eight when I first used a VCR, forty-two before I first owned a computer, fifty before I first accessed the web and used email, fifty-eight when I owned my first mobile phone, the same age when I first set up a website, sixty-two before I first texted, and sixty-five before I joined Facebook. With email, texting, and Facebook being all I can handle, I still do not have either an Instagram or Twitter account. I’m the only person in my immediate religious community who still prays the office of the church out of a book rather than off a mobile device.

I protest that paper has soul while digital devices do not. The responses I get are not particularly sympathetic. But it’s for reasons of soul that I much prefer to have a book in my hand than a kindle device. I’m not against information technology; mainly it’s just that I’m not very good at it. I struggle with the language. It’s hard to master a new language as an adult and I envy the young who can speak this language well.

What’s to be said about the revolution in information technology? Is it good or bad?

Obviously, it has many positives: It’s making us the most informed people ever in the history of this world. Information is power and the internet and social media have leveled the playing field in terms of access to information and this is serving well the developing nations in the world. Moreover it’s creating one global village out of the whole world. We now know all of our neighbors, not just those who live nearby. We’re the best-informed and best-connected people ever.

But all of this also has a pejorative underbelly: We talk to each other less than we text each other. We have many virtual friends but not always many real friends. We watch nature on a screen more than we ever physically touch it. We spend more time looking at device in our hands than actually engaging others face to face. I walk through an airport or basically any other public space and I see the majority of people staring at their phones. Is this a good thing? Does it foster for friendship and community or is it their substitute? It’s too early to tell. The initial generations who lived through the industrial revolution did not have any way of knowing what the effects of this would be long-range. The technological revolution, I believe, is just as radical as the industrial revolution and we are its initial generation. At this time we have no way of knowing where this will ultimately take us, for good or bad.

But one negative that seems already evident is that the revolution within information technology we are living through is destroying the few remaining remnants we still retain in terms of keeping “Sabbath” in our lives. The 13th century mystic, Rumi, once lamented: “I have lived too long where I can be reached.” That’s infinitely truer of us today than it was for those living in the 13th century. Thanks to the electronic devices we carry around with us we can be reached all the time – and, too often, let ourselves be reached all time. The result is that now we no longer have any time apart from what we regularly do. Our family times, our recreational times, our vacation periods, and even our prayer times are constantly rendered regular time by our “being reached”. My fear is that while we are going to be the most informed people ever we may well end up the least contemplative people ever.

But I’m an outsider on this, a digital immigrant. I need to bow to the judgments of those who speak this language as their mother tongue.

“My fear is that while we are going to be the most informed people ever we may well end up the least contemplative people ever.”

-Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser
Corpus Christi Procession: Sharing Christ’s presence

BY DOMINIQUE JOHNSON

Being a witness to Christ’s presence in the Eucharist many Catholic parishes around the world process through the streets to show their veneration of the Blessed Sacrament.

At the end of a week-long catechism camp at the National Shrine of St. Therese in Juneau, the campers and members of the local parishes in Juneau gathered for Mass at the Shrine Chapel for a Mass celebrated by Father Ken Hannon, OMI.

After Mass, they took part in a Eucharistic procession from the chapel to the columbarium, making stops at three altars, made by the campers, to venerate the Eucharist. At each altar, Deacon Steve Olmstead proclaimed three Gospel readings, that show the importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

By giving this witness of faith, the youth attending the camp learned that we are called to bring the news of Christ to the world and to be unashamed of their faith. As the procession went down the causeway, some visitors to the Shrine joined in the procession. The procession concluded with benediction back in the Shrine chapel.

In his homily on the Feast of Corpus Christi, Pope Francis said the Eucharist, “inspires us to give ourselves to others. It is the antidote to the mindset that says, ‘Sorry, that is not my problem.’ Let us remember that we believe that Christ is present to us in the Eucharist and we are called to inspire others to see Christ.

Photos: (Right) Deacon Steve carries the monstrance following adoration, leading the Eucharistic procession from the Shrine Chapel; (Below) The Eucharistic procession goes down the causeway back to the Shrine Chapel. Catechism camp attendees carry the canopy that protects the Blessed Sacrament from the elements.