

NORTHWEST CATHOLIC

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2025 | VOL. 13 NO. 5

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President with purpose

Faith is 'greatest love, first obligation' for Saint Martin's new leader

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Archdiocese
of Seattle



Kate DeWeese

One thing I've learned as editor of Northwest Catholic: This is God's magazine, and he has a plan.

What our team had prepared a month ago is not what's in your hands today — and that's OK. God's plan is always better.

I love what he did with this issue.

What began as a short story about how local Catholics are helping immigrants turned into something bigger. God shed light on several ministries, and he led us to undocumented immigrants willing to tell their stories of faith and why they came to America.

Then, God opened up pages to introduce you to Bill Brownsberger, the president of Saint Martin's University in Lacey. I met Bill right after he started at Saint Martin's and was struck by how he listened and the sincere questions he asked. Since then, I've seen him as a servant leader, unassumingly putting away chairs after a theater performance, and as a faithful Catholic, promising at his inauguration to uphold church teaching.

God showed us the path. I can't wait to see where he leads us next. [Ω](#)

Kate DeWeese is editor of Northwest Catholic. You can reach her at editor@seattlearch.org.

NORTHWEST CATHOLIC

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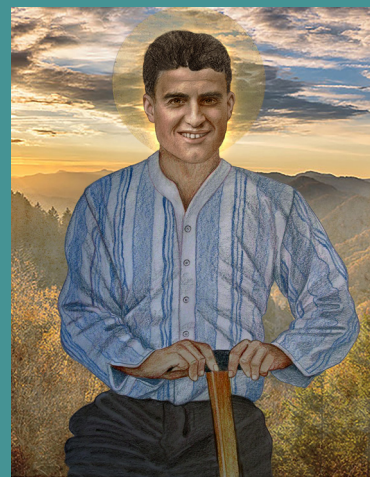
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Ensuring our future: Our role in vocations



Archbishop Paul D. Etienne

Have you ever asked someone to consider priesthood or religious life? If you are a teenager or young adult, have you thought about priesthood or religious life? I ask these questions in hopes they may become part of our culture here in Seattle — a culture that involves each of us praying for and inviting young people to consider a vocation of service to the Church. This is part of what it means to be co-responsible for the mission of Jesus Christ.

So how do we invite? It begins with a simple question and ideally a reason for it: “I see in you the qualities that would make a good priest. Have you

“I urge you to consider whom the Lord may be calling among the young men and women in your life — and to pray!”

ever thought about it?” Or perhaps, “Have you ever considered religious life? You have a thoughtful, even prayerful, spirit and other gifts that would make you a good religious sister.”

These seemingly small invitations make a big impact on priestly and religious vocations in the Church. For decades, studies of the newly ordained have revealed the most consistent factor leading a new priest to consider the priesthood is that a priest, friend or parishioner invited them. Here in the archdiocese, we’re asking all the baptized to take that to heart and to invite more men and women to consider religious vocations.

This renewed commitment to foster a culture of vocations in our archdiocese began in June. Our priests heard from Rhonda Gruenewald, the founder of Vocation Ministry, during the Priest Days gathering. Vocation Ministry then returned to the archdiocese to offer a workshop in September, equipping parishioners to lead teams with the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of building a parish culture of vocations. These teams can engage countless other parishioners in the crucial work of identifying and nurturing potential vocations. It’s

a testament to the power of the “hundredfold” approach, where a single seed of invitation can yield abundant fruit.

As your archbishop, I am committed to ensuring that this vital work of establishing a culture of vocations takes root here. Therefore, I encourage you to support the vocation team at your parish family or consider starting one.

The coming months will also bring an intentional effort to invite young people to consider their vocation prayerfully. In January, we will launch our first “Called by Name” weekend. This will be a special time for parishioners to prayerfully submit the names of young men and women they believe may be called to be excellent priests, religious brothers or sisters. Following this, these individuals will be invited to “Andrew and Miriam dinners,” where they can learn more about these sacred vocations and, most importantly, discern God’s will for their lives.

Between now and January, I urge you to consider whom the Lord may be calling among the young men and women in your life — and to pray!

We are all called to pray for vocations. Rhonda reminded us that “without prayer, it doesn’t have a prayer!” Alongside cultivating a culture of invitation, a deep and abiding culture of prayer is essential. As we continue renewing our personal relationships with the Lord Jesus, we do so mindful of his words to “ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for the harvest” (Luke 10:2).

Seeing young men and women enter the seminary or religious life inspires hope for the future and reflects a faith-filled, nurturing culture. Through prayer and invitation, we look forward with hope that the Lord will bless us with an abundance of vocations to not only serve our parishes and schools but also further Christ’s saving work throughout our entire archdiocese. **Ω**

Archbishop Etienne has led the Archdiocese of Seattle since September 2019. Read more of his writings at archbishopetienne.com.

Asegurando nuestro futuro: Nuestro papel en las vocaciones

Arzobispo Paul D. Etienne

¿Alguna vez le has pedido a alguien que considere el sacerdocio o la vida religiosa? Si eres un adolescente o un adulto joven, ¿has pensado en el sacerdocio o la vida religiosa? Hago estas preguntas con la esperanza de que puedan convertirse en parte de nuestra cultura aquí, una cultura que involucra a cada uno de nosotros orando e invitando a los jóvenes a considerar una vocación de servicio a la Iglesia. Esto es parte de lo que significa ser corresponsable de la misión de Jesucristo.

Entonces, ¿cómo hacemos la invitación? Comienza con una pregunta simple e, idealmente, una razón para ello: "Veo en ti las cualidades que tendría un buen sacerdote. ¿Alguna vez lo has pensado?" O tal vez, "¿Alguna vez has considerado la vida religiosa? Tienes muchos dones que te harían una buena religiosa".


Estas invitaciones, aparentemente insignificantes, tienen un gran impacto. Las encuestas revelan que el factor más consistente que lleva a un nuevo sacerdote a considerar el sacerdocio es que un sacerdote, amigo o feligrés los invitó. Aquí en la arquidiócesis, estamos pidiendo a todos los bautizados que se lo tomen en serio e inviten a más hombres y mujeres a considerar vocaciones religiosas.

Este compromiso renovado de fomentar una cultura de vocaciones en nuestra arquidiócesis comenzó en junio. Nuestros sacerdotes escucharon a Rhonda Gruenewald, la fundadora del Ministerio Vocacional, durante una reunión en los Días del Sacerdocio. El Ministerio Vocacional volvió a la arquidiócesis para ofrecer un taller vital en septiembre, equipando a los feligreses para encabezar equipos con el "¿quién?, ¿qué?, ¿cuándo?, ¿dónde?, ¿por qué? y ¿cómo?" para construir una cultura vocacional parroquial. Estos equipos pueden involucrar a otros feligreses en la labor crucial de identificar y nutrir posibles vocaciones. Es un testimonio del poder del enfoque del "ciento por uno", en que una sola semilla de invitación puede producir frutos abundantes.

Me comprometo a garantizar que esta vital labor de establecer una cultura de vocaciones eche raíces. Los animo a apoyar al equipo vocacional en su familia parroquial o a considerar comenzar uno propio.

Los próximos meses también significarán un esfuerzo intencional para invitar a los jóvenes a considerar su vocación en oración. En enero, lanzaremos nuestro primer fin de semana "Llamados por su Nombre". Este será un momento especial para que los feligreses presenten en oración los nombres de jóvenes, varones y mujeres, que crean que pueden estar llamados a ser excelentes sacerdotes, religiosos o religiosas. Ellos serán invitados a las Cenas de San Andrés y de Miriam, donde podrán aprender más sobre las vocaciones sagradas y, lo más importante, a discernir la voluntad de Dios en sus vidas.

Los animo a que consideren quién puede estar llamando al Señor entre los y las jóvenes que conocen, ¡y a rezar! Rhonda nos recordó que "¡sin oración, no hay oración!" A la vez, resulta esencial cultivar una cultura de invitación, una cultura de oración profunda y duradera. A medida que continuamos renovando nuestras relaciones personales con Cristo, nuestro Señor, somos conscientes de sus palabras para "pedir al dueño de la mies que envíe trabajadores a su mies" (Lucas 10,2).

Ver a jóvenes y jovencitas ingresar al seminario o a la vida religiosa inspira esperanza para el futuro y refleja una cultura llena de fe y alimento. A través de la oración y la invitación, esperamos que el Señor nos bendiga con una abundancia de vocaciones no solo para servir a nuestras parroquias y escuelas, sino también para promover la obra de salvación de Cristo en nuestra arquidiócesis. 

MEET A SAINT



St. Pier Giorgio Frassati

1901-1925

Feast: July 4

The son of an artist and agnostic newspaper founder, Pier Giorgio was an avid mountaineer with a deep spiritual life. He was active in the Italian Catholic University Federation and anti-fascist movement. Saying "Charity is not enough; we need social reform," he helped establish a newspaper whose principles were based on Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*.

He joined the Confraternity of the Rosary and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and became a lay Dominican in 1922. After his sudden death from polio, the young Pier Giorgio became an inspiration to university students.

He was beatified in 1990 and canonized on Sept. 7, 2025.

OSV News and Catholic News Agency

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE SAINT AND WHY?

St. Gregory of Narek. He was an Armenian poet, monk, theologian and wrote the beautiful book "Speaking to God from the Depths of the Heart." I'm a poet and spiritual director, and his work inspires me and others.

Jessika Satori
St. Patrick, Tacoma

Mary. In my grief after the death of my son, I turned to our Blessed Mother. I knew that she understood my pain at losing a son. I thank God for the help and support God gave me through Mary.

Sharon Redd
St. Philip, Woodland

St. Francis of Assisi because of his devotion to our planet.

Amy Schneller
St. Vincent de Paul,
Federal Way

St. Teresa of Calcutta. I so admire her determination and persistence in accomplishing her goals to help the poor.

Elaine LaParle
Immaculate Conception, Mount Vernon

St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower. Her simple way of living by doing the little things extraordinarily well for the honor and glory of God calls me to do the same.

Pat Lass
Our Lady of the Lake, Seattle

St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. She teaches me how to pray and love God, here and now.

Anne Sweeney
Blessed Sacrament, Seattle

St. Paul the Apostle because of his academic approach to Christianity.

Charles Larson
St. James Cathedral, Seattle

Talk to us!
Our question: **How do you keep Christ in Christmas?**
Send your response and name, parish and city to editor@seattlearch.org.





ALL SOULS' DAY: AN ACT OF LOVE AND HOPE



The Church teaches us that remembering the dead is an act of love rooted in faith and hope. Each year on All Souls' Day, Catholics gather to pray for those who have gone before us, entrusting them to God's mercy and taking comfort in Christ's promise of eternal life.

At *Associated Catholic Cemeteries*, we are honored to serve as sacred places of remembrance and prayer. On this holy day, we invite you to join us as we come together in faith to remember our loved ones and to place our hope in the Resurrection.

***We invite you to join us on Saturday,
November 1st at our All Souls' Day Masses.***

mycatholiccemetery.org

MASS SCHEDULE

CALVARY

✝ 10:30AM ENGLISH

HOLYROOD

✝ 10:30AM ENGLISH
1:00PM KOREAN
2:30PM VIETNAMESE

GETHSEMANE

✝ 8:30AM KOREAN
10:30AM ENGLISH
12:30PM VIETNAMESE
5:00PM SPANISH

William Brownsberger stands in his office at Saint Martin's University in Lacey. In July 2024, he became the school's 12th president.



'Conscious choice to be Catholic'

Faith is 'greatest love, first obligation' for new Saint Martin's University president

By Andrew Foster

Benedictine Abbot Marion Nguyen of Saint Martin's Abbey characterized the search for a new president of Saint Martin's University in Lacey as a search for a person of deep faith.

"This is a Catholic and Benedictine university, and they need to be rooted back again — that kind of stability was the only way moving forward," said Abbot Marion, who also serves as chancellor of the university. "That's really difficult to find in higher education because most are formed and are more influenced by a secular approach, and fewer and fewer are formed within a Catholic faith that is neither too extreme nor watered down."

According to Abbot Marion, William "Bill" Brownsberger was exactly the person the university was looking for.

"He is really a man of faith who has lived that out in his life," Abbot Marion said. "You can see with his wife, Francesca, with the kids that are grown and growing — he's got seven kids, and they live the faith authentically because it's not a façade."

Brownsberger does not deny that passion for the Catholic faith and says it drives him in his new role.

"That's my greatest love, my first obligation," Brownsberger said of his faith. "If everything else in my life, what I do at Saint Martin's, is not in alignment with that, then I'm doing something wrong."

William Brownsberger, seated left, Seattle Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, center, and Abbot Marion Nguyen of Saint Martin's Abbey signed a memorandum of understanding on Sept. 15 for the Archdiocese of Seattle and Saint Martin's University to partner for a new Master of Theological Studies degree as part of the Christifideles program, which helps form lay ecclesial ministers to serve in the archdiocese. The degree program will start in 2026.



Sharna Paxton/Saint Martin's University

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Brownsberger, 53, grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, and lived most of his life in the South, Midwest and East Coast before moving to Washington to become the 12th president of Saint Martin's University on July 1, 2024. He attended public schools as a child and wasn't exposed to Catholic education until he enrolled at the University of Dallas.

"We were a Catholic family growing up. We went to Mass on the weekend," Brownsberger said. "But my Catholic world got a whole lot bigger when I went to college."

Originally intending to study business, Brownsberger left the

university with a bachelor's degree in philosophy before attending The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he earned a master's in theology.

In college, Brownsberger became enamored with reading the texts of Catholic theologians and philosophers — his favorite being Thomas Aquinas.

"[I realized] that there's this body of literature of people raising and trying to answer the great questions in life," he said. "There's this way to try to understand myself as a human person, and having these classic texts of Western civilization, people from within the church who had deeply investigated what it means to be human, what it means to live

Saint Martin's University President William Brownsberger congratulates a graduate receiving her diploma at graduation in May 2025.



in society, what it means to have a relationship with God — those were all sort of game-changer things for me.”

Later, he attended the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, earning a doctorate in sacred theology and picking up some Italian on the way.

Abbot Marion said he may have crossed paths with Brownsberger at the Pontifical Gregorian, as he was also studying at the university. But his first time truly meeting Brownsberger was when he came to the university to interview for the role of president.

“He really impressed us by his presence,” Abbot Marion said. “There was an authenticity about him, and his capacity to both listen, think and then respond with something that comes from the heart.”

Abbot Marion said that since working together, the two have often communicated with each other in Italian.

“His Italian is quite good,” Abbot Marion said. “It’s great to be able to have a conversation with him in Italian, and so that’s a personal thing I really appreciate because, as you can imagine, it’s hard to find someone who’s fluent in Italian in the Pacific Northwest.”

‘THAT PRESENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES’

Having now worked with Brownsberger for more than a year, Abbot Marion praises the gifts Brownsberger has brought to the university.

“There is an authentic humility in the ways in which he does things, and in particular, he’s a man who listens,” Abbot Marion said. “Both of those two things are very Benedictine.”

“I think those qualities really shine through, because when you’re humble, people are not defensive, and when you listen, people feel that they’re respected and heard,” he continued. “Those particular qualities that come from his way of living his faith has brought a great sense of calm.”

Student Lauren DeLaGarza, an accounting major who serves as president of the university’s student government, echoes Abbot Marion’s observations.

She met Brownsberger during the presidential search process and said she immediately recognized his commanding presence yet warm and approachable demeanor.

“When Dr. Brownsberger stepped into his role, we saw a renewed

“There was an authenticity about him, and his capacity to both listen, think and then respond with something that comes from the heart.”

Abbot Marion Nguyen

sense of hope among faculty and staff — and that hope extended to us students,” DeLaGarza said in a speech at Brownsberger’s Sept. 6 inauguration. “It allowed us to refocus on our purpose here: to learn, to grow and lead.”

“Our transformation as student leaders is deeply shaped by Saint Martin’s Benedictine values — community, hospitality, respect and service. Dr. Brownsberger has embraced these values wholeheartedly,” she continued. “He has shown up to student events, engaged in meaningful conversations and demonstrated genuine interest in our experiences. That presence speaks volumes.”

FAITH AND FAMILY

Brownsberger began his work as an associate professor of theology at his alma mater, the University of Dallas. He spent time as the director of intellectual formation at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, Texas, before becoming an academic dean and professor of theology at Conception Seminary College in Conception, Missouri.

More recently, Brownsberger served as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a professor of theology at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, and became the vice president of Academic Affairs and

Workforce Solutions at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, before being selected as president of Saint Martin's by a committee of 15 representatives from the university and the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Brownsberger had never been to Washington prior to his interview at Saint Martin's, but he was excited to be near the ocean, see the mountains and smell the pine trees.

While his children weren't immediately on board with the move, they quickly fell in love with their new home. His seven kids range from age 9 to 27. He gained two daughters-in-law last spring when his two oldest sons married in April and May, respectively.

His wife, Francesca, is a theology teacher and campus minister at Pope John Paul II High School in Lacey.

The couple met while they were each working to earn a master's in theology at The Catholic University of America in the mid-1990s.

"It turned out that I was one of the only guys there not wearing black," Brownsberger said. "So many of our classmates in the theology program were priests and seminarians, so that definitely helped my odds with Francesca."

Brownsberger said that some of his younger children enjoy being able to interact with other kids after Mass, with the family splitting time between St. Michael Parish in Olympia and Saint Martin's Abbey.

"I found the Catholics in this area have had to make a really conscious choice to be Catholic because it's against the mainstream," Brownsberger said. "I'm always really happy to go to Mass and see people who are really committed and have made that decision against maybe some of the winds of popular culture here."

EYES ON THE FUTURE

Strengthening the Catholic identity of the school is something Brownsberger has already begun to work toward.

"This is something that every Catholic institution struggles with," he said. "We have to have that integrity as an institution where we can say unapologetically, 'Yeah, we are a Catholic, Benedictine liberal arts institution.'"

Since Brownsberger's arrival, the 130-year-old school rolled out its four-year graduation guarantee, which provides accommodations or covers the costs to complete a course in an additional semester if the student

follows certain obligations but isn't on track to graduate in eight semesters.

Brownsberger also made progress with the university's previous financial struggles.

"We are really making a positive difference now," he said. "This next year, we've got a strong incoming class. Our retention looks really good. ... We've had to make some difficult but smart decisions about the way that we're allocating money around the university. All those things are really putting us in a good position."

He noted that the school's first- to second-year retention rates have already increased by around 10%, and that the school is positioned to be revenue positive.

"He really desires to lead and contribute as the president," Abbot Marion said. "This is his first time that he's the president, but he's able to articulate the Catholic faith in higher education, which is almost miraculous in our time."

And while Brownsberger is happy to see the progress that's being made, one of his favorite parts of the job is getting to interact with the 1,500 students he serves.

"I try to talk to the students every chance I get," he said. "Almost without exception, they're just delightful people. Of all the students I've ever worked with in my whole life, these are the least entitled, the most grateful, happy, great spirit — [they] really want to be here and engage the educational process. I always get this sort of lift of joy when I talk to our students." Ω



Brownsberger is joined by six of his seven children at the university's campus in Lacey.



Bishop Frank Schuster

A pilgrimage to Lourdes

Many go to Lourdes seeking a miracle. For me, it was a pilgrimage of thanksgiving.

Years ago, my dad was sponsored by the Order of Malta as a *malade*. A *malade* is a person with a severe malady, often incurable, who makes a pilgrimage to Lourdes to bathe in the waters that flow there. As the story goes, our Blessed Mother appeared to St. Bernadette at the site of a spring and desired a church to be built there. More than 7,000 healings have been reported from those who have bathed in the waters of this spring. To date, 72 of these healings are officially recognized by the Church as miracles.

There is a saying: “We don’t choose the miracle. The miracle chooses us.” When it comes to seeking healing from the Lord, the Lord will heal us in the way he knows we need it most. And, sometimes, the Lord answers our prayers in a way we do not expect.

My dad struggled with diabetes for years. He had open sores on his legs that wouldn’t heal and, at times, would become infected. The baths didn’t cure my dad’s diabetes, but it did heal the sores! In fact, after the pilgrimage, whenever the sores came back, my mom would anoint his legs with Lourdes water. Every time she did this, the sores would heal in a day or two. This went on for years. This ritual carried them through COVID,

and he even lived to see me ordained a bishop and share many other happy family occasions.

The Lord works in mysterious ways because, even though the complications of his diabetes did eventually claim his life, he passed away in peace on the first anniversary of my ordination. Coincidence? Grace? The way he died gave me consolation during my time of grief. However, I also had a lot to pray about.

You see, I remember my mother kneeling on the floor in front of my dad to wash his legs with Lourdes water during his final years and listening to them pray for his healing with docility to God’s will. Because of this memory, I know now what the miracle he received was for. Our Lady of Lourdes had blessed and strengthened my parents’ marriage in their golden years in such a remarkable way that it brings tears to my eyes every time I think about it.

What happened won’t be recorded as a miracle. However, I know what I saw. St. Bernadette said, “Why must we suffer? Because here below pure Love cannot exist without suffering. O Jesus, Jesus, I no longer feel my cross when I think of yours.” And so, I made my own pilgrimage to Lourdes. I went not as a *malade*, but as a son. I went to simply say thank you to Our Lady. I feel that she has heard my prayer! [🕊](#)



Escanear para
español

Bishop Frank Schuster is an auxiliary bishop of Seattle, also appointed regional bishop serving the southern region of the archdiocese.

CONCERTS AT BLESSED SACRAMENT

Creative Commute

Clarinet, Cello, Fortepiano

22 NOVEMBER 2025 - 7:30PM

23 NOVEMBER 2025 - 3:00PM

MESSIAH

Selections from Handel's
Masterwork

5 DECEMBER 2025 - 7:30PM

6 DECEMBER 2025 - 2:00PM

Kyle Canaday

Holiday Music for Pipe Organ

13 DECEMBER 2025 - 7:30PM

DETAILS AND TICKETS AT
Blessed-sacrament.org/concerts
All Concerts at 5050 8th Ave NE, Seattle

HOLIDAY GUIDE

NOVEMBER

HOLIDAY FAIR

Nov. 22 | 9am–4pm

Nov. 23 | 9:30am–1:30pm

Crafts, Christmas decorations, baked goods and more

Edmonds | Holy Rosary

630 7th Ave. N. | holyroaryedmonds.org

HOLIDAY FAIR

Nov. 22 | 9am–4pm

Burien | St. Francis of Assisi

15226 21st Ave SW | stfrancisofassisissea.org

DECEMBER

ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR

Dec. 6 | 9am–4pm

Burien | Kennedy Catholic High School

140 S. 140th St.

kennedyhs.org/support-us/parent-groups/parent-club

C.S. LEWIS THE ScrewTape LETTERS

DIRECTED BY MAX McLEAN
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KEN DENISON
WITH BRENT HARRIS AS SCREWTAPE

"PURE GENIUS!"
NATIONAL REVIEW

"A PROFOUND
EXPERIENCE!"
CHRISTIANITY TODAY

"CLEVER &
SATIRICAL!"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

SAT, NOV 1
4PM & 8PM

MOORE THEATRE
SEATTLE, WA

ScrewTapeOnStage.com



2025 Black Catholic Advisory Circle Annual Conference

THE EUCHARIST FOR INCLUSION & HEALING

Join us for a day of reflection, prayer, learning, and community as we explore how the Eucharist – the source and summit of our faith – calls us to deeper unity, radical inclusion, and profound healing in the Body of Christ.

"For we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

– 1 Corinthians 10:17

November 15
8am–3:30pm
Mass–4pm

Conference Speakers

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers (Keynote)

Sr. Genevieve Osayame, EHJ

Mrs. Christina (Mohini) Srinivasan, OP

\$40 before 11/14

\$50 at the door

\$10 students w/ID



St. Paul Catholic Church
10001 57th Ave. S,
Seattle, WA



archseattle.org/events/black-catholic-advisory-board-conference

Resting right

The Catholic Church teaches that “the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; it honors the children of God who are temples of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 2300).

What does that mean for your final resting place?



❖ Burial

The Catholic Church has traditionally encouraged full-body burial. This practice respects the human body and reflects the belief in resurrection following death. This can be a traditional burial, entombment or a natural burial, in which remains are placed in a biodegradable casket, shroud or urn and buried without burial vaults or concrete outer boxes.

❖ Is cremation an acceptable practice for Catholics?

Yes. The catechism says: “The Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body.” Remains should be conserved in a sacred place and not scattered or divided.

❖ Can Catholics be buried at sea?

Catholics may be buried at sea. An appropriate container must be used for cremated or non-cremated remains. Cremated remains should not be scattered.

❖ Is alkaline hydrolysis acceptable?

No. Alkaline hydrolysis is a process in which chemicals and heat are used to accelerate decomposition. The resulting liquid solution is disposed of through the sewer system or used as fertilizer. This process does not show due reverence and respect for the deceased.

❖ What about human composting?

No. In human composting, a body is placed in a reusable vessel, covered with wood chips and aerated so that it becomes usable soil in about 30 days. Treating the body in a utilitarian manner and failing to conserve remains in a sacred place are contrary to Church teaching.

❖ Can I donate my body to science?

Yes. The Church views body donation for medical research and education as an act that benefits humanity. The donation must be made for ethically sound purposes, and the body must be treated with respect. Once the research is complete, remains should be interred in accordance with Church teaching.

Sources: “Catholic Guide to Making Good Decisions for End of Life” by the Washington State Catholic Conference; Catholic Answers

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Protect your powers in the time of AI



Deacon Eric Paige

Between riding my bike to my friends' houses and my summer job, I built a mental map of Bellevue in my youth. Same thing for places I visited, until around 2010 when I got an iPhone. As soon as I started taking directions from Google Maps, I stopped constructing mental maps of where I was going.

There's a cost to the convenience of Google Maps. It's a trade I am willing to make, but there is a trade-off nonetheless.

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers similar trade-offs. We're still learning what this technology will offer. But we know we need to be cautious about it weakening the powers of our soul.

God gave us powers of the soul — among them, intellect, will and memory. We're meant to develop these powers. The Holy Spirit helps with faith to strengthen our intellect, conscience to strengthen our will and the sacraments to sanctify our memory.

But our actions matter too. When we learn about and interact with the created world, we learn about God. Researching, writing and making sense of things all exercise the powers of the soul. If we let AI do all that for us, we miss opportunities to develop those powers.

If we're thoughtful, we have a better chance of preserving those opportunities when using this new tool.

• **Don't let it use you.** The famous Silicon Valley adage "If you're not paying for the product, you are the product"

still applies. The companies that make AI have many motivations, not all of them altruistic. We need to be active and critical users, always checking sources and treating what AI offers as an opinion rather than fact.

• **Embrace the blank page.** One of the most creative parts of the writing process is thinking through the outline of what you will write. Sometimes writers have a tough time with this initial process, as if the blank page intimidates them. But working through this stage develops our intellect as our imagination pulls together the things we know, developing a mental map of the subject. Resist the temptation to short circuit this process by asking AI to generate a first draft. Try to let the first draft be your own.

• **Talk to a person.** Going online provides quick answers when troubleshooting a home improvement project, but I get more out of calling my friend Mike for advice. We need to be careful that our use of AI doesn't displace the opportunities for building relationships that come from going to a friend for help with a problem.

Psalms 135 warns: "The idols of the nations ... the work of human hands... have mouths but do not speak ... have ears but do not hear. ... Their makers will come to be like them, and anyone who trusts in them." If we use this new tool, let's remember this warning and remain judicious, lest we become the ones being used. Ω

Deacon Eric Paige is director for Deacon Services for the Archdiocese of Seattle and a member of St. Andrew Parish in Sumner. Contact him at eric.paige@seattlearch.org.



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Church Ministries Offer Critical Help to Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries

We all strive to protect our children so they can grow in health, intelligence and virtue. Parents in developing countries love their children in the same ways, but these boys and girls face very different challenges. They regularly go to bed hungry, don't attend school because their parents can't afford it, and are often put to work at an early age or left to fend for themselves while their parents work long hours in agricultural settings. The sad fact is that poor children in developing countries must struggle to get what they need — even the most basic necessities.

“As a parent, I never had to send my kids out before dawn to collect pond water for our family to drink, cook and bathe — but that's a common chore for kids living in remote areas of developing countries,” explained Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the leading Catholic ministries involved in relief and development missions worldwide. “School is another example. Parents in the U.S. don't generally have to worry about their children being able to access schooling. But in impoverished regions of countries like Haiti, Malawi and Guatemala, a child can grow up without ever seeing the inside of a classroom. Even those who attend school often have to walk miles to get there and arrive so weakened by hunger that they can't focus on their studies. My heart breaks for them — and I believe that, as Catholics, we should do everything we can to improve their lives.”

Fortunately, Cross Catholic Outreach makes helping these young ones possible by partnering with dedicated priests, religious sisters and Catholic lay leaders in developing countries.

“Local and in-country Catholic missions are the best way to positively impact the lives of vulnerable children because they focus on the whole child and the Catholic social teaching of integral human development,” Sagarino said. “When a child is hungry, there are often many other factors at play, and spiritual need is one of them. Catholic ministries can best meet these needs.”

Sagarino noted that Cross Catholic Outreach supports some of the most vulnerable children in developing countries, such as those living with the stigma of



Naomi holds hands with her younger sister during her first visit home in five years. She fled when she found out her father was planning to sell her into child marriage, and was taken in by the Marie Adelaide Girls Rescue Center.

HIV, abused children and abandoned boys and girls without anywhere to turn but the Catholic ministries that have taken them in. These projects — in over 30 countries like Kenya, Guatemala and Ethiopia — are literally saving lives and providing hope in extreme darkness.

“For example, a partner of ours in Kenya, the Marie Adelaide Girls Rescue Center, takes in girls who are fleeing child marriage and female genital mutilation,” Sagarino illustrated. “At the rescue center, these terrified girls find a safe home, counseling, medical care, schooling and daily spiritual formation. It's an incredible act of mercy that lifts up these young, at-risk girls.”

Cross Catholic Outreach is able to serve vulnerable children around the world thanks to generous donations from Catholics in the U.S. In 2024, the organization provided more than \$397 million in aid, including projects for orphans and vulnerable children as well as feeding programs, community water projects, new housing for the poor and

much more.

“We are so grateful for Catholics in this country who partner with us to ensure vulnerable children are cared for. I know that — like me — Catholics want these children to enjoy the same opportunities and advantages their own sons and daughters have,” Sagarino said. “That's why I'm confident they will continue to give generously to the projects we are undertaking in developing countries. They understand their support is critical to the Church's mission to improve the lives of the world's neediest boys and girls.”

Readers interested in supporting the ongoing and transformational work of Cross Catholic Outreach can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC06029, 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 Mission Partner.

Impoverished Families Rely on Cross Catholic Outreach and Rosary Devotions To Meet Urgent Needs

Anderson, a high school student, wakes up in his rural Guatemalan home at 4:30 each morning, gathers his school things, then walks in the dark with his grandmother to a larger town 30 minutes away so she can take the bus to her job in Guatemala City. He then takes a bus to school, works hard all day, and travels by bus and foot down the dirt roads back home for chores and homework. Sometimes in the afternoon, he leads his youth faith group or practices with the choir in the local church. But his day isn't over — after dinner, he walks back to the larger town to chaperone his grandmother home at night.

"Each day sounds exhausting, but Anderson is full of enthusiasm and positivity because he knows that without God and the work of the Church in his life, it would be much worse," said Michele Sagarino, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, the relief and development ministry that has supported Anderson and other families in his community for years.

"Most adults in Anderson's rural community are day laborers in the fields, making around \$8 a day when they can find work. This means that families barely earn enough to put food on the table. Their poverty is significant and heartbreaking — they have so many needs, and many are quite urgent," Sagarino explained.

These needs include nutrition, clean water sources, secure and humane housing, and education beyond primary school.

Anderson's family has received several types of aid through the Diocese of Santa Rosa de Lima, funded by Cross Catholic Outreach. Notably, he received a scholarship to attend Sacred Heart of Jesus School, a new Catholic school also built with funds from the organization. This scholarship has been crucial for Anderson, who was on his way to dropping out after sixth grade because he couldn't afford the tuition, uniform and supplies that high schools in Guatemala require.

Since these blessings entered his life through the diocese, Anderson has benefited in ways far beyond the material help he received.

"What impressed me most when I spoke with Anderson was his faith," said Sagarino, who met Anderson on a trip with three U.S. bishops who serve on the Board of Directors for Cross Catholic Outreach. "He is thoughtful and loving, and fosters a true

devotion to the Mass and the Rosary. The bishops even told him he'd make a great priest!"

Anderson praises God for the blessings he's received by being active in the Catholic Church. In addition to leading his youth group weekly, he sings in two choirs and carries out several works of charity in his rural village. He and his youth group maintain a schedule of homes they visit to pray the Rosary with the family for their particular needs.

"Meeting the urgent needs of the poor is about so much more than providing physical aid, and Anderson is a great example," Sagarino said. "When we come together as one Church to help the less fortunate, the Holy Spirit is active in a very real way. The Spirit draws those who benefit from this aid closer to God and moves them to help others in turn."

Cross Catholic Outreach encourages spiritual growth in those they serve by partnering with Catholic priests, sisters and laypeople who incorporate faith formation in their outreach efforts. The organization also evangelizes directly by providing Bibles and rosaries to poor communities. This past year, they provided 135,567 rosaries to poor children around the world, alongside other blessings, and they know the rosaries are particularly fruitful.

"For centuries, the Rosary has taught common people and scholars alike about our Lord and our Holy Mother. There is no greater spiritual tool," Sagarino said. "A devotion to the Rosary teaches us how to place our faith in God and the intercession of Mary. It provides incredible spiritual and psychological benefits for those who endure so much suffering."

"There are heartbreaking needs in the world — from starvation to a lack of



A child in Kenya holds a rosary as she joyfully drinks from a new water system in her community, made possible by Catholic donors in the U.S.

medical care to complete devastation from natural disasters. In every case, we are presented with an opportunity to carry out Christ's command to love our neighbor and encourage those in need to find their strength in God."

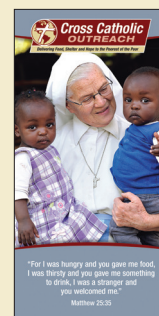
Sagarino noted that most American Catholics are eager to address the serious needs of the poor in developing countries but it can be difficult for them to know how to get involved or decide which specific ministries to support. "After all, every donor wants his or her gift to have an impact and to bless as many people as possible," she said. "That's why we set up our Most Urgent Needs Fund so that Catholics in the U.S. can support ministries abroad in areas that need it most. This fund provides us with a flexible way to shift support to our partners who are facing urgent needs."

"My hope is that as more Catholics in the U.S. learn about these dire needs and how they can enact incredible works of mercy, more will join us. We believe that we can drastically reduce unnecessary suffering in the world and, in the process, bring those we serve closer to Christ."

How To Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this magazine or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC06029, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions for 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.





THE STRUGGLE OF IMMIGRANTS AND WHAT LOCAL CATHOLICS ARE DOING TO HELP

By Andrew Foster

Names of undocumented immigrants who spoke to Northwest Catholic have been changed to protect the privacy and safety of these individuals and their families.

Sofia left her home in Oaxaca, Mexico, at a young age. She said her family never told her that they love her. "Since I was a little girl, I suffered violence and sexual abuse," she said through a translator. "I was sold to my partner. When I was 15, I had my son, and I didn't want him to suffer through the same situations. That's why we came to the United States."

Sofia is an undocumented immigrant living in Western Washington. She said she's happy to be in the state after the struggles she faced as a child and young adult.

After arriving in the U.S., the domestic violence and abuse continued while she lived in California. Sofia was pushed to the brink, and she attempted to take her own life multiple times.

"I didn't know what God was. My parents never taught me about God," she said. "I didn't know that God would help, and I never got to go to church."

Then one day, someone invited her to church. She started attending Mass and went on a three-day retreat. During that retreat, she began to realize that everything that had happened to her up to that point was not her fault.

Shortly after that experience, she brought her family north again, this time coming to Washington.

Immediately after arriving, she started attending Mass at a local parish, joined the choir and began volunteering at the parish food bank.

Throughout the years in Washington, Sofia, now a mother of four, has befriended other parishioners and their families, grateful for how welcoming they've been.

Three years ago, she opened a small farm with the goal of helping others. She sells fruits, vegetables and flowers at a local farmers market and has a contract with the food bank. Though she isn't rich, she routinely gives her produce to people who can't afford it and donates what she doesn't sell to the food bank.

In July, Sofia was granted a work permit because of her circumstances and having shown good conduct volunteering at local community health centers. She recently applied for a U visa and has appointments scheduled to move forward in the application process.

A U visa is occasionally granted to immigrants who are "victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity." However, individuals have been detained while attending their scheduled U visa appointments.



Sofia, an undocumented immigrant living in Western Washington, prays with a friend in front of a Marian statue.

"I personally leave everything to God," Sofia said. "If that's God's plan, then that's the opportunity that I should take. It is scary, but if that's God's will ... I put all my faith in God."

LIVING IN FEAR

Maria, a mother of two teenagers, not only fears for her own situation, but also worries about the mental health of her children who live in constant fear of losing their parent.

"When we leave home, they're all tracking us," said Maria, whose daughter called her one day when she noticed Maria was stopped on the freeway. "If they see that we're stopped for a long time, they start calling to make sure that we're safe."

Through a translator, Maria, an undocumented immigrant, explained she originally left her home country of Mexico after her father became sick, and the family couldn't afford to pay his medical care. Maria came to the U.S. to work, intending to save enough money to cover her father's medical treatments.

Unfortunately, Maria said, she would never see her father again as he died one month and 25 days after she had left.

But while her family and younger siblings still live in Mexico, Maria is grateful to be in the U.S.

"Thanks to God, I'm here and I'm married," Maria said. "Thanks to God, my husband has a job and I stay home. I hope to stay home for a little longer until the kids grow up."

Her 15-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son, both born in the U.S., are fearful every time one of their parents leaves the house.

Her daughter "prefers that Mom and Dad don't go out so that they're not deported," a translator relayed, "in fear that they would have to make the choice of staying — and she not being able to take care of her brother — or going to Mexico, where they don't want to go."

"Some people are scared to go to church. They're scared to go grocery shopping," said Chris Koehler, the Archdiocese of Seattle's director of missions and immigrant affairs. "There are some people who really are sequestering at home, or, if they're really scared, then they don't even go home — they're couch surfing with friends and family."

Isabel, another undocumented immigrant, said there are nights when she doesn't sleep.

Isabel is a single mother with several adult children. One of her daughters has a mental disability, and because of this, she stays home to care for her.

To support herself, Isabel sells homemade tortillas and bread and babysits her grandchildren. That, in combination with the small amount of assistance she receives from food banks and other services, Isabel is barely able to cover expenses for herself and her daughter.

“Even though they’re made to sound like they’re a bunch of criminals and lowlives — they’re just people who are looking for a better life for themselves and for their families,” said Deacon Juan Lezcano of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Federal Way. They’re “trying to escape sometimes war, sometimes lack of food, lack of opportunity, the unrest in their own countries, the economy, the ecology, you name it.”

DETENTION IN TACOMA

Deacon Lezcano has visited the Northwest ICE Processing Center in Tacoma every Tuesday, and sometimes more frequently, for nearly two years. He brings Communion and Catholic services to those detained in the facility. He said Catholic volunteers go to the detention center every Sunday, and that Father J. Patrick McDermott celebrates Mass with them on the third Sunday of every month.

The detainees are “sad,” Deacon Lezcano said. “A lot of times they have left children, spouses or significant people in their lives. They left the world that they knew — for better or for worse, that was their world — thinking that coming to this country, they would be able to provide for themselves and for their families.”

In an address to Congress March 4, President Donald Trump spoke on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol’s (CBP) efforts to “take out the criminals, killers, traffickers and child predators.”

According to data released by ICE, of the 168,841 people who’ve been deported from ICE detention centers since January, approximately 40.9% are convicted criminals.

According to the same dataset, of the 1,168 people detained at the Northwest ICE Processing Center as of Sept. 7, approximately 38.9% are convicted criminals.

“Are there some who have committed crimes? Yes. Should they be deported? Yes. Should they pay for their crimes? Yes. I have no problem with that,” Deacon Lezcano said. “But that’s [the minority] of the people.”

Sofia said she wishes people learned the stories of immigrants before judging them so quickly.

“You never know what people have suffered,” she said. [🔗](#)



The Vatican designated Oct. 4-5 as the **Jubilee of Migrants**, and the month of October is the **Month of the Holy Rosary**.

At 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays in the month of October, Catholics across the archdiocese are invited to pray the rosary — wherever they are — for migrants and for those detained at the Northwest ICE Processing Center in Tacoma. Deacon Juan Lezcano has arranged for the detainees to pray the rosary at that time, too.



Left top: Alvaro, a Nicaraguan man seeking asylum in the United States, is reunited with his family at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport through assistance from the Welcome Circle program at St. Joseph Parish in Seattle.

Left bottom: Two Welcome Circle members from St. Joseph Parish in Issaquah embrace.

Right: Parishioners from St. Luke Parish in Shoreline wait for the arrival of a Ukrainian family at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport as part of the Archdiocese of Seattle's Welcome Circle program.



HOW CAN LOCAL CATHOLICS HELP?

"We knew from the very beginning that St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and her legacy in the Archdiocese of Seattle was nudging us to do something more," said Amy Nash, the archdiocese's immigrant and refugee ministry coordinator.

Shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops created the Welcome Circles program, which was quickly adopted by the archdiocese.

Since then, 20 families from Ukraine, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Afghanistan have been sponsored by local Catholics and welcomed into parish communities who set them up with housing and helped them navigate job searches, public transportation, health care, schools and more.

But, as Nash noted, the plan was always to do more. And now, it seems more important.

Expanding its ministry, the archdiocese has created Cabrini Companions, an umbrella for several services provided to immigrants, including Welcome Circles.

"A Welcome Circle is a heavy lift, but then what?" Nash said. "After they've resettled and that family has integrated, or they've moved geographically to another area — those Welcome Circle participants are trained up, and we know it wasn't just for that one time. It's to now help others navigate, or it's maybe to provide companionship to that family that knocks on the parish door."

Known as Cabrinians, volunteers can serve as Cabrini Companions and Cabrini Navigators.

- Cabrini Companions provide accompaniment, friendship and community to migrant families and help them make the connections they need to establish safe and secure lives.
- Cabrini Navigators are expected to have expertise and knowledge to support migrants and refugees in navigating health care, education, employment, housing, language learning, banking or other systems.

Cabrinians are not just limited to that, however, as volunteers can host Cabrini Coffee Chats or retreats for refugee and immigrant mothers.

Nash mentioned that they're looking to find Catholics with Airbnb or Vrbo homes they'd be willing to donate for one weekend of the year for pastoral care retreats for refugees.

"We can't just stop with the caring for their temporal needs," Nash said. "We are called to activate not just the corporal but the spiritual works of mercy — so the pastoral care piece comes into play. That's the role that the church is really needing to step into right now."

To learn about Cabrinians and other ministries, go to archseattle.org/immigrant-refugee.

All in God's timing

Dear Kianna,

I am struggling to trust God's plan and timing for my life. How can I stay hopeful while waiting for an answer to prayer? — Patiently Waiting



Kianna Romo

Dear Waiting,

Trusting in God's plan for our lives feels impossible at times. As humans, we seek answers, so it may feel like God is not listening or is making us wait too long. If you are anything like me, you may get impatient and slightly irritated if you are placed on hold. I imagine the Lord smiling at us, his beloved children, as our minds attempt to understand the grand immensity of his plans.

Like you, I have waited and wondered. What kept me steady was continued prayer and knowing that God doesn't abandon us.

When I graduated high school, I had no idea what I wanted to study or pursue as a career when others around me had their plans sorted out. All I knew was that I wanted to serve the Lord in some form of ministry, but I was totally unaware of what this would look like. In college, I kept praying for guidance but felt like my calls were being sent to voicemail.

Toward the end of my senior year, the youth and young adult ministry position opened at my hometown parish, and everything aligned so perfectly for me to take this job. I prayed for years, but I had to wait for the precise moment in which the Lord would open the right path for me.

Not only did I love working in parish ministry, but it was there that I met my husband, Jesús. I had been praying for guidance about my vocation — marriage, religious life, singlehood — but often felt discouraged. I discerned with seriousness, but I felt so lost as I was unsure of where God was calling me.

When Jesús and I met, the Lord awakened a growing love in our hearts and revealed our true vocational calling. The immense joy and peace in my heart confirmed God's answer to my prayer.

After serving in parish ministry for a couple of years, I knew that the Lord was preparing me to explore a new form of ministry but had to trust that he would lead the way. Sure enough, in God's great timing, he opened the door to teaching, and I accepted a job as a high school theology teacher.

The way that all of these events aligned was truly miraculous. Now, as I am in my fourth year of teaching, I can say with full confidence that this calling has brought me more joy than I ever imagined.

All along, God had these plans in store, plans that would bring me more joy, peace and life than I could have ever planned for myself.

Waiting for the Lord to answer our prayers is not easy. As we wait, let us be assured that God always blesses in abundance. In fact, he often has surprises in store that we cannot even imagine. God is so good, and he is intimately connected with each one of us. He always hears, always blesses and always responds — but on his timing.

May God bless you all! **Ω**

Kianna Romo teaches theology at Archbishop Murphy High School and is the author of "The Cross that Set Me Free." Send your questions for her to editor@seattlearch.org.

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BEING CHURCH

Perennial movement



Bishop Eusebio Elizondo,
M.Sp.S.

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” – Mark 16:15

From the moment Jesus gave this command to his disciples, the preaching of the Kingdom of God added new members to his Church – the universal assembly of believers.

Each person, in their encounter with Jesus, translates the joy of that experience into their life according to their culture and circumstances. Men and women from Africa, Europe, Asia, America and Oceania welcomed the Gospel into their hearts and applied it to their lives in their specific context 2,000 years ago as well as in the present.

The Church as the Body of Christ is alive and continues to move with the energy given to it by the Risen Christ. St. John Paul II, when exhorting us to be evangelizers, said that we must show a new fervor, that is, dust off the first experience, the original encounter that made us fall in love with Jesus.

A clear sign that we are on the move is our archdiocese, which has implemented new methods of evangelization through Partners in the Gospel, seeking to raise awareness

among all Catholics of the need for more priestly vocations and a greater desire for holiness in all the baptized who demonstrate their presence in the ecclesial assembly and, of course, new expressions of faith in the daily life of the contemporary world.

Undoubtedly, from this assembly of believers, authentic forms of peace, not just disarmament, new expressions of brotherhood, not just cautious respect at a distance, new manifestations of forgiveness, not just silent resentment, new acts of charity, not just humanitarian solidarity, new mystical horizons, not just pietistic religiosity, will emerge.

At the angel Gabriel's announcement, Mary immediately rose and set out to announce with her joyful life the new movement that would shake to the deepest foundations everything discovered until that moment: that the Almighty dwells among us in the person of Jesus.

Jesus came to bring fire to the earth, but only to burn away all that is dry

and to bring forth from the ashes new shoots that grow from the cracks thirsting for dew. Jesus continues to stir the minds and hearts of thousands in all latitudes and all cultures so that his loving fire does not cease and keeps us awake with its warmth.

The saints are those who were moved by the fire of the Spirit and set others ablaze with the embers of their hearts. Perhaps, as happened to many of the saints, our embers are almost extinguished and without heat, but the Breath of God, his Holy Spirit, continually blows upon our personal embers to illuminate those around us. Even if its light seems very dim, that will be enough for another to find their path as a human.

“I pray that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe” (John 17:21). [Ω](#)

Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., is an auxiliary bishop of Seattle, also appointed regional bishop serving the northern region of the archdiocese.

SER IGLESIA

Movimiento perenne

| Obispo Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S.

“Vayan por todo el mundo y prediquen el evangelio a toda criatura”. – Marcos 16,15

A partir del momento en que Jesús da este orden a sus discípulos, la predicación del Reino de Dios ha añadido nuevos miembros a su Iglesia: la asamblea universal de los creyentes.

Cada persona, en su encuentro con Jesús, traduce en su vida la alegría de esa experiencia, con su cultura y circunstancias. Hombres y mujeres de África, Europa, Asia, América y Oceanía, acogieron en sus corazones el Evangelio y lo aplicaron a sus vidas en su medio concreto, hace dos mil años al igual que en el presente.

La Iglesia, como Cuerpo de Cristo, está viva y continúa moviéndose con la energía que le da Cristo Resucitado. San Juan Pablo II, al exhortarnos a ser evangelizadores, decía que teníamos que mostrar un nuevo ardor, es decir, desempolvar la experiencia primera, el encuentro original que nos hizo enamorarnos de Jesús.

Un signo claro de que estamos en movimiento es nuestra arquidiócesis que, en los últimos años ha implementado nuevos métodos para evangelizar a través de “Compañeros en el Evangelio”, buscando hacer conciencia en todos los católicos de la necesidad de más vocaciones sacerdotales y un mayor anhelo de santidad en todos los bautizados que muestren su presencia en la asamblea eclesial, y, por supuesto nuevas expresiones de fe en la cotidianidad del mundo contemporáneo.

Sin duda surgirán de esta asamblea de creyentes auténticas formas de paz y no solo de desarmamentismo; nuevas expresiones de hermandad y no solo de cauteloso respeto a la distancia; nuevas manifestaciones de perdón y no solo silencioso resentimiento; nuevas acciones de caridad y no solo solidaridad humanitaria; nuevos horizontes místicos y no solo religiosidad pietista.

Al anuncio del arcángel Gabriel, María se levantó inmediatamente y se puso en camino para anunciar con su alegre vida el nuevo movimiento que sacudiría hasta los cimientos más profundos todo lo descubierto hasta ese momento: que el Todopoderoso habita entre nosotros en la persona de Jesús.

Jesús vino a traer fuego a la tierra, pero solo para quemar todo lo que está seco y hacer renacer de las cenizas nuevos brotes que crezcan de entre las grietas sedientas de rocío. Jesús sigue sacudiendo mentes y corazones de miles en todas las latitudes y todas las culturas para que su fuego amoroso no se detenga y nos mantenga despiertos con su calor.

Los santos son aquellos que se movieron al fuego del Espíritu e incendiaron a otros con las brasas de su corazón. Quizá, como sucedió a muchos de los santos, nuestras brasas estén casi extinguidas y sin calor, pero el Aliento de Dios, su Santo Espíritu, sopla continuamente sobre las brasas personales, para iluminar a nuestro alrededor, aunque su luz parezca muy tenue. Eso bastará para que otro encuentre su camino como humano.

“Te pido que todos estén unidos, como tú Padre en mí y yo en ti, para que el mundo crea” (Juan 17,21). Ω

Mons. Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., es obispo auxiliar de Seattle, también nombrado obispo regional para la región norte de la arquidiócesis.

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Hope: Simple longing or firm certainty?



Mauricio I. Pérez

This jubilee, we all need to continue reflecting on hope.

In our culture, the word “hope” is usually associated with an uncertain desire or an optimistic expectation, like when we say: “I hope tomorrow will be a sunny day.” This way of thinking isn’t close to the sense of biblical hope, which is much more than a simple longing.

In the Scriptures, the Hebrew word *tikvah* represents the firm certainty of a promised outcome. It comes from the verb *qavah*, which implies waiting, gathering or intertwining, and is visually related to a woven rope, which is strengthened by intertwining multiple fibers.

We find a meaningful example in the “scarlet cord” that Rahab hangs from her window as a guarantee that Joshua and his men will not take her life or that of her parents when they take over Jericho. (See Joshua 2.) In this context, hope is not passive or weak, but active, resilient and intertwined with God’s faithfulness.

Feeling hope in God is not, therefore, placing a longing in him, but a trust that is strong because it is attached to him as if the threads of God and our threads were intertwined in a rope.

In the dramatic book of Job, we find a passage in which Job’s friend Zophar reprimands him for his lack of understanding and for questioning God’s justice. Zophar ends his reproach with these firm and categorical words, yet beautiful and inspiring:

“If you set your heart aright
and stretch out your hands toward him,
if iniquity is in your hand, remove it,
and do not let injustice dwell in your tent,

Surely then you may lift up your face
in innocence;

you may stand firm and unafraid.

And you shall be secure, because there is hope;
you shall look round you and lie down in safety;
you shall lie down and no one will disturb you.
Many shall entreat your favor.” — Job 11:13-15,18-19

The guarantee of a safe life in which we can sleep with serenity even after a moment of confusion depends, according to Zophar, on setting our heart aright and stretching our hands to God. By turning to God with a contrite heart and extending our hands to him, he will extend his hands back to us. Then, the loving hands of our Father will be intertwined with ours, fragile but determined, and so, like threads that are braided into a rope, we will feel that certain hope that God will fulfill in us all the promises he has reserved for his children who love him.

In this Jubilee of Hope, do stop and look inside yourself. How firm is your hope in God? Do you desire his promises — to you and to those you love — as a simple longing and nothing else, or with the bulletproof, unequivocal certainty that he will always fulfill his Word?

Set your heart aright, stretch your hands toward him and braid a scarlet cord that fills you with hope.

Be passionate about our faith! 



Mauricio I. Pérez, a member of St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Woodinville, is a Catholic writer and speaker. He holds a degree in sacred liturgy from the Pontifical University of Mexico. His website is www.seminans.org.

Esperanza, ¿simple anhelo o certeza firme?

Mauricio I. Pérez

Es menester continuar reflexionando acerca de la esperanza a lo largo de este Jubileo. En nuestra cultura, la palabra “esperanza” suele asociarse con un deseo incierto o una expectativa optimista, como cuando decimos: “Espero que mañana haga calor.” Esta forma de pensar se aleja del sentido de la esperanza bíblica, que es mucho más que un simple anhelo. En las Escrituras, la palabra hebrea *tikvah* representa la certeza firme de un resultado prometido. Proviene del verbo *qavah*, que implica esperar, reunir o entrelazar, y se relaciona visualmente con una cuerda tejida, que se fortalece al entrelazar múltiples fibras.

Encontramos un bonito ejemplo en el “cordón escarlata”. Un ejemplo significativo es el “cordón escarlata”, llamado en hebreo *tikvah*, que Rajab cuelga a su ventana como garantía de que Josué y sus hombres no tomarán su vida ni la de sus padres cuando se apoderen de Jericó (Cf. Josué 2). En este contexto, la esperanza no es pasiva ni débil, sino activa, resistente y entrelazada con la fidelidad de Dios.

Sentir esperanza en Dios no es, pues, depositar en Él un anhelo, sino una confianza que es fuerte porque se sujeta a Él como si los hilos de Dios y los hilos nuestros se entrelazaran en una cuerda.

En el dramático libro de Job encontramos un pasaje en que su amigo Zofar lo reprende por su falta de comprensión y por cuestionar la justicia de Dios. Zofar termina con estas palabras firmes y categóricas, a la vez que hermosas e inspiradoras:

“Si tu corazón arreglas y tiendes tus palmas hacia Él,

si alejas la iniquidad que hay en tu mano y no deja que more en tus tiendas la injusticia, entonces alzarás tu frente limpia, te sentirás firme y sin temor.

Vivirás seguro porque habrá esperanza, aun después de confundido te acostarás tranquilo. Cuando descanses, nadie te turbará, y adularán muchos tu rostro” (Job 11,13-15;18-19).

La garantía de una vida segura en la que se puede dormir con serenidad aun después de un momento de confusión dependen, según Zofar, de arreglar nuestro corazón y tender nuestras manos hacia Dios. Al voltear a Dios con el corazón contrito y extenderle nuestras manos, Él extenderá las suyas hacia las nuestras en respuesta. Se entrelazarán entonces las manos amorosas de nuestro Padre con las nuestras, frágiles pero decididas. Y así, como hilos que se van trenzando en una cuerda, sentiremos esa esperanza cierta de que Dios cumplirá en nosotros todas las promesas que tiene reservadas para sus hijos que lo aman.

Este Jubileo de la Esperanza, haz un alto y mira hacia lo profundo de tu interior. ¿Qué tan firme es tu esperanza en Dios? ¿Deseas sus promesas —hechas a ti y a aquellos que amas— como un simple anhelo y nada más? ¿O con la certeza inequívoca y a toda prueba de que cumplirá siempre su Palabra?

Arregla tu corazón, tiende hacia Él tus palmas y trenza un cordón escarlata que te llene de esperanza.

¡Apasíonate por nuestra fe! Ω



Mauricio I. Pérez, miembro de la Parroquia de Sta. Teresa de Calcuta en Woodinville, es escritor y periodista católico. Diplomado en sagrada liturgia por la Universidad Pontificia de México. Su sitio web es www.semillasparalavida.org.

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