Father Edward R. Frank dies

As the country awaits the U.S. Senate’s plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act in the coming weeks, the U.S. bishops made it clear June 15 during their annual spring assembly in Indianapolis that their efforts are focused on “ensuring the fundamental right of medical care” for all people.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also reinforced its stance that the American Health Care Act passed by the U.S. House May 4 needs major reform – to provide quality health care for the “voiceless,” especially children, the elderly, the poor, immigrants and the seriously ill.

“We find ourselves in a time marked by a deep sense of urgency and gravity,” said Bishop George L. Thomas of Helena, Montana, in his remarks to his fellow bishops. “Within two weeks, we may see a federal budgetary action with potentially catastrophic effects on the lives of our people, most especially children and the elderly, the seriously ill, the immigrant and our nation’s working poor.”

Referring to the House bill, known as AHCA, and its plan to “eliminate $880 billion from Medicaid over the next decade,” Bishop Thomas continued, “If left unchallenged or unmodified, this budget will destabilize our own Catholic health care apostolates, take food from the mouths of school-aged children and the homebound, and deny already scarce medical resources to the nation’s neediest in every state across the land.”

His passion growing as he spoke, Bishop Thomas concluded, “These are our people, our communities, our parishioners and members of our own beloved families. As a conference of bishops, we have the responsibility to read the signs of the times, to shine the light of the Gospel and Catholic social doctrine on this proposed budget.”

Bishop Thomas’ remarks drew appreciative applause from the U.S. bishops on the second day of their June 14-15 meeting.

He was the first bishop to speak following a report on health care reform by Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the USCCB’s Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

In his report, Bishop Dewane also focused on how the U.S. Senate will soon turn its attention to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

“The Catholic Church remains committed to ensuring the fundamental right to medical care, a right which is in keeping with the God-given dignity of every person,” Bishop Dewane said. “Both the lives of the unborn and adequate concern for those most in need anchor the USCCB’s messages to Congress at this critical time.”

He told his fellow bishops that the USCCB has been in constant contact with members of Congress since the House passed its version of a health care plan. Noting that the USCCB sent a letter to U.S. senators June 1, Bishop Dewane said, “It called on the Senate to strip away harmful promises of the AHCA or start anew with a better bill.”

The letter also provided recommendations and guiding principles for the senators as they craft their health care plan, starting with respect for life.

“No health care reform plan should compel us or others to pay for the destruction of human life, whether through government funding or mandatory coverage of abortion,” Bishop Dewane said about that priority in his remarks.

He also stressed that all people should have access to comprehensive quality health care – and that the cost of health care be affordable, keeping low-income families in consideration. Any health care plan should also respect the conscience rights of people, from patients to providers.

“Those without a strong voice in the process must not bear the brunt of the attempts to cut costs,” Bishop Dewane said. “The bishops stand ready to work with Congress to address problems with the Affordable Care Act in ways that protect the most vulnerable among us.”

“This is an important moment for the country and for the church. The teaching we bring to bear on questions of health and health care do not fit neatly – or really, in many cases, not at all – into the single party platforms,” he continued. “Because of this, the church has a unique voice. The committee’s work on this issue will remain active and diligent for the sake of those most in need at all stages of life.”

Following Bishop Dewane’s report, other bishops joined Bishop Thomas in sharing their reactions with their fellow bishops.

Sean Gallagher, The Criterion
BISHOPS' VOICES CALLED 'VITAL' TO FIGHT CHALLENGES TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) The U.S. bishops voted June 15 to make the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty a permanent standing committee. The 132-53 vote came on the second day of the bishops' spring assembly in Indianapolis. There were five abstentions. A simple majority was required for approval. The bishops' action came less than a week before the start of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' fifth annual Fortnight for Freedom June 21-July 4. It is a two-week period of prayer, advocacy and education on religious freedom. Before the vote, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the committee since its creation in 2011, spoke in favor of making it permanent, arguing the need for the body stretches beyond the specific legal and public policy issues challenging religious freedom that continue to emerge.

GREGORY: BISHOPS 'CAN NEVER SAY WE ARE SORRY ENOUGH' FOR TRAGEDY OF ABUSE

ATLANTA (CNS) Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory said June 14 the U.S. Catholic bishops "can never say that we are sorry enough" for the tragedy of abuse. Gregory was one of 18 bishops who voted for the synod on "Young people, faith and vocational discernment" and to link to an online, anonymous survey asking young people about their lives and expectations. The answers to the questionnaire, along with contributions from bishops, conferences and other church bodies, "will provide the basis for the drafting of the "instrumentum laboris," or working document for the assembly, synod officials said in January.

LETTER TO THE BISHOP

GIFT OF THE PARACLETE

May 8, 2017

Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer,

I just had to write to you to give you an example of the Holy Spirit working in the life of my recently confirmed daughter. On May 2, 2017, you conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on my daughter; Her saint was Saint Joan of Arc. During your homily, you impressed upon the newly confirmed that they had received all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but the one that they would have to use the most, in this day and age, is courage. This past Sunday, I witnessed my daughter stand up in courage and defy someone who is in authority over her to make it to Mass. A little background and without going through all of the grisly details: Her father and I have joint custody of her; her birth mother only has visitation every other weekend. So, legally, I am a stepmother, but in actuality, I am the only full-time mother she has ever known, and she addresses me as momma. This past weekend was a visitation weekend. It has become a pattern that her birth mother does not take them to Sunday Mass, for various reasons. Well, this past Sunday was proceeding as usual.

Our daughter set her alarm and woke her mother up to tell her to get ready for Mass. Her mother said she was too tired and wouldn’t be able to go to Mass. Our daughter told her she would call her dad to come pick her up and take her to Mass and she wouldn’t be back for the rest of this visit. Her mother told her that she had to stay there. Well, she called, my husband picked her up and she went to Mass with us and did not go back for the last four hours of her visitation.

Our courageous daughter felt so empowered to be able to stand up to her birth mother and let her know what was important in her life. We prayed with our saint in the making and asked intercessions that this example would bring a renewed spirit in her mother. That by her example, her birth mother would return to the Church and, in doing so, become a righteous example to her child.

Because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and your instruction that they had to use the gifts, our child was a witness to others, including her birth mother. This past Sunday was a visitation weekend. It has become a pattern that her birth mother does not take them to Sunday Mass, for various reasons. Well, this past Sunday was proceeding as usual.

Our daughter set her alarm and woke her mother up to tell her to get ready for Mass. Her mother said she was too tired and wouldn’t be able to go to Mass. Our daughter told her she would call her dad to come pick her up and take her to Mass and she wouldn’t be back for the rest of this visit. Her mother told her that she had to stay there. Well, she called, my husband picked her up and she went to Mass with us and did not go back for the last four hours of her visitation.

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Because of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and your instruction that they had to use the gifts, our child was a witness to all of us. She now knows, tangibly, that Confirmation was not just something that she did because it was expected since she was in 8th grade or because we told her to do it. It is an actual sacrament that is, in fact, an indwelling of the Holy Spirit giving her graces; she did receive gifts that she can use.

I again thank you for answering God’s call to the priesthood and accepting the appointment as bishop of the Savannah Diocese.

*Names have been withheld to protect privacy of individuals

VATICAN RELEASES ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUTH

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

To involve young people in preparations for the Synod of Bishops on youth in 2018, the Vatican has released an online questionnaire to better understand the lives, attitudes and concerns of 16- to 29-year-olds around the world. The questionnaire — available in English, Spanish, French and Italian — can be found on the synod’s official site: youth.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/it.html and is open to any young person, regardless of faith or religious belief. The general secretariat of the synod launched the website June 14 to share information about an October 2018 synod on "Young people, faith and vocational discernment" and to link to an online, anonymous survey asking young people about their lives and expectations. The answers to the questionnaire, along with contributions from bishops, conferences and other church bodies, “will provide the basis for the drafting of the ‘instrumentum laboris,’ or working document for the assembly, synod officials said in January.

POPE TELLS NIGERIAN PRIESTS: ACCEPT BISHOP OR BE SUSPENDED

VATICAN CITY (CNS)

Pope Francis is giving priests belonging to the Diocese of Ahiana, Nigeria, 30 days to write a letter promising obedience to him and accepting the bishop appointed for their diocese or they will be suspended. The papal text in English was posted June 9 on the blog of Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, president of the Nigerian bishops’ conference. Cardinal John Onolunem Onayekan of Abuja told Catholic News Service the same day that the text was what Pope Francis said. The Vatican press office released the text June 10. Nigerian church leaders had met Pope Francis June 8 to discuss the situation of Bishop Peter Ebere Okpalke, who has been unable to take control of the diocese because of protests, apparently by the majority of priests. Initially the Vatican issued only a short communiqué on the meeting with the pope, describing the situation in the diocese as “unacceptable” and saying the pope “reserved the right to take appropriate measures.” The protests were motivated by the fact that Bishop Okpalke is not a local priest.

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Thursday, June 22, 2017
Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv. and Father Pablo Migone, chancellor of the diocese, join Savannah Bananas attendees, including Father Michael Kavanaugh, pastor of Saint Peter the Apostle Church in Savannah, in the wave during Catholic Night at the Ballpark June 8 at Grayson Stadium in Savannah. Before the start of the fourth annual event, which raised nearly $2000 for the Social Apostolate, Bishop Hartmayer threw out the first pitch. Photograph by Michael J. Johnson. See more photos from the night at http://bit.ly/SCbaseball17

Left: Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv. presents an altar cloth from the Sister Clara Vincent Chapel at Trinity Hospital, Augusta, to its namesake, June 8 during the chapel's deconsecration. The chapel had hosted 65 years of Masses. Sister Clara worked at the hospital for 44 years and returned to Augusta to administer the final disposition of religious articles within the hospital and chapel. Photograph provided by Holly Holman.

“Days of Prayer in honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Public is invited to join the Nuns during the evenings (6 p.m.) of July 14th, 15th, 16th

Celebrants/homilists:
July 14: Father Michael Kavanaugh
July 15: Father Paul Cabrita, S.M.
July 16: Father Gerard Schreck

Those who cannot be present are encouraged to send their petitions to: Carmelite Monastery
11 West Back Street, Savannah, GA 31419-3219

These petitions will be remembered during the services and in the prayer life of the Nuns.
For global solidarity. He recounted the events of the two hundred and forty-four million migrants in the world, the highest number ever recorded. Of these 244 million, 65 million are refugees. Father Groody proposed that all Christians should recall that Jesus himself migrated to a distant territory to bring us back as migrants to God the Father. A migrant is not a person to fear or to consider foreign. We are all migrants: simple travelers on the road called Earth.

Immigration and the global migrant crisis are at the heart of the work of the Bishop’s Conference. As an immigrant myself, and remembering my classmate, Father Michel Kayal, who was kidnapped on his way to Damascus from Aleppo about five years ago, I am grateful that our bishops are not silent on this issue, but rather are challenging us to be Good Samaritans.

FATHER PABLO MIGONE IS CHANCELLOR OF THE DIocese OF SAVANNAH AND RESIDES IN THE CATHEDRAL OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SAVANNAH.

DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The Diocese of Savannah, GA is seeking an experienced professional to fill the position of Director of Stewardship and Development. Under the direction of the Bishop of Savannah and reporting to the Chief Financial Officer, this position is responsible for the direction, management, leadership and coordination of all activities related to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal: identifying and writing grants to assist the diocese and its institutions; providing strategic planning leadership to the diocese for current and future ministries, and assisting parishes and schools in Stewardship Development and Capital Campaign needs.

Candidates must be practicing Catholics with a sound working knowledge of the Catholic faith and of the Church hierarchy, especially related to stewardship and charitable giving.

Specifically the position requires a person with the minimum of a BA in Marketing, Business Administration or Non-Profit Management, MBA is preferred; a minimum of 5 years of progressive experience overseeing successful fundraising programs; a proven track record of leadership; strong analytical and communication skills, and excellent management/ supervisory skills with the ability to work well in both vertical and horizontal structures. Experience in Raiser’s Edge software is required. Some facility in the Spanish language is preferred.

To apply send a resume with references and salary history to: jagreen@diosav.org or Human Resources, Diocese of Savannah, 2170 E. Victory Dr., Savannah, GA 31404.

Southern Cross, Page 4

Thursday, June 22, 2017
Helen Keller dijo algo en un contexto diferente que inspiró el tema para mi columna este mes. Keller, quien era ciega y sorda, fue autora, activista política y profesora en el siglo veinte, y escribió: “Las mejores y más bellas cosas en el mundo no se pueden ver o siquiera tocar – tienen que ser sentidas en el corazón”.

Un reciente desborde de compasión en Connecticut que recibió un refugiado guatemalteco y su familia, ciertamente pertenece a esa categoría. Luis Barrios, de 51 años que trabaja en Derby en la limpieza, enfrentaba inminente deportación después de haber vivido 24 años sin documentos en Estados Unidos. Llegó en 1992 cuando tenía 27 años, obligado a abandonar su patria debido a amenazas de muerte. Su padre fue asesinado poco después y su hermano sufrió la misma desdicha en 2004, según reportajes en el diario Hartford Courant. En 1998, inmigración rechazó su petición de asilo cuando no se presentó para una visita.

En el entremedio, Barrios se casó y él y su esposa, Dora, tuvieron cuatro hijos: Jessica, ahora 19 y en la universidad; Lester, de 16 años; y dos hijas gemelás de 11 años, Gabriela y Sindy. Todos son ciudadanos de Estados Unidos. En 2011, una policía estatal paró a Barrios por conducir con un farol de marcha roto. El periódico The New York Times reportó que a nivel nacional durante 2012 hubo más de 150.000 deportaciones. Barrios enfrentaba “riesgo serio de muerte, tortura o lesión” si volvía a Guatemala.

“Quiero llorar de alegría. Me siento tan contenta con todos ustedes, y damos gracias a Dios. Además de todo, demos gracias a Dios que las autoridades decidieron hacer esto”, dijo DeLauro el día que Barrios recibió una suspensión de deportación.

Barrios evitó deportación a Guatemala y ahora está trabajando con el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional y el 13 de mayo Barrios recibió una suspensión de deportación por dos años. Blumenthal declaró que Barrios enfrentaba “riesgo serio de muerte, tortura o lesión” si volvía a Guatemala. Blumenthal señaló que el caso de Barrios es excepcional, añadiendo que hay otros inmigrantes indocumentados en Connecticut enfrentando deportación, que, como Barrios, no tienen record criminal. De hecho, el periódico The New York Times reportó que a nivel nacional del 22 de enero al 29 de abril de este año, el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas de Estados Unidos, arrestó a 41.318 inmigrantes, de quienes más de la mitad no habían cometido ningún delito, salvo el hecho de haber entrado a los Estados Unidos sin documentos, que históricamente no ha sido crimen, sino una violación civil.

Afortunadamente, a nivel nacional la compasión está retoñando. El programa “60 Minutes” de la estación de televisión CBS reportó que muchas iglesias y ciudades se han declarado en estado de santuario. En West Hartford, veo más y más pancartas en las casas que dicen, en inglés, español y árabe: “No importa de dónde eres, estamos contentos que seas nuestro vecino”. En 1916, Helen Keller dijo que nuestra única razón para estar en este mundo es para ayudar a nuestros compañeros y que sólo llevando a cabo este propósito podemos encontrar el secreto de una felicidad que durará por mucho tiempo.

Por Moses Sandoval (CNS)

La compasión hacia inmigrantes florece

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A beautiful example of compassion

A quote from Helen Keller, cited in different contexts, forms the perfect backdrop for my column’s theme this month. Keller, who was blind and deaf, was an author, political activist and lecturer in the 20th century, and wrote: “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.”

An outpouring of compassion in Connecticut recently on behalf of a Guatemalan refugee and his family certainly belongs in that category.

Luís Barrios, a 51-year-old man who is a sanitation worker in the town of Derby, was facing imminent deportation for having entered the United States without documents 24 years ago, in 1992, when he was 27, seeking admission of a refugee. Fearing for his life, he had fled because of death threats.

His father was killed shortly afterward and his brother was murdered in 2004, according to reports in the Hartford Courant. His application for political asylum was denied in 1998 when he missed attending a hearing.

In the meantime, Barrios had married, and he and his wife, Dora, were rearing their four children: Jessica, now 19 and in college, 16-year-old Lester, and 11-year-old twin daughters, Gabriela and Sindy. All are U.S. citizens.

In 2011, a state trooper stopped him for driving with a broken taillight, the only time he came to the attention of the police, who turned him over to federal authorities. That year, his wife’s 16-year-old niece in Guatemala was kidnapped and murdered, and two of her nephews were shot, one fatally.

Facing deportation since then, Barrios won a stay, renewed annually until this year. Recently, he came within one day of being deported. But compassion on his behalf bloomed like spring flowers. Connecticut’s two U.S. senators, Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal, and U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro made a strong case, as did community, immigrant and Working Families organizations, and labor unions. One hundred people demonstrated at the federal building in Hartford, 19 of whom were arrested. Erin O’Neill-Baker, Barrios’ lawyer, worked hard to save him. The Hartford Courant and local TV stations reported regularly on Barrios’ plight.

After immigration authorities granted a 30-day reprieve, Courant reporters Kathleen Megan and Rebecca Lurye wrote that DeLauro told the tearful family: “I just want to cry with joy. I am so, so happy for all of you... and we thank God. Above all, thank God they decided to do this.”

DeLauro, Murphy and Blumenthal continued working with the Department of Homeland Security, and on May 13, Barrios received a two-year stay. Blumenthal said Barrios faced “serious risks of death, torture or serious injury” if he were sent back to Guatemala.

Blumenthal called the case of Barrios exceptional, adding that there are other undocumented immigrants in Connecticut facing deportation even though they have no criminal record. Indeed, The New York Times reports that nationwide from Jan. 22 to April 29, Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 41,318 immigrants, over half of whom committed no crime other than being in the country without permission. Historically, that has been a civil violation, not a crime.

Fortunately, throughout the nation, compasion has been spraying as well. Recently, CBS’ “60 Minutes” program highlighted churches, mayors and cities that have declared themselves sanctuaries. In West Hartford, I see more and more placards on lawns saying, in English, Spanish and Arabic: “It does not matter where you are from. We are happy you are our neighbor.”

At a lecture in 1916, Helen Keller said that helping our fellow men is one’s only reason for being in this world and that in doing things to help one’s fellows lies the secret of lasting happiness.
“Where’s Noah’s long flashlight?” Jesse hollered as he turned the corner in the hall one afternoon. Before I could offer a “I put it up in his bed,” Jesse continued, “The baby birds flew up AnnaMarie’s dress and then fell in the bushes.” “Huh?” Sure enough, two baby birds had leaped out of their nest when Magan brought down the hanging basket housing the nest to offer AnnaMarie and Jesse a glance. In their distress, the birds had flown into the crinoline of AnnaMarie’s ballerina tutu – like something straight out of Cinderella – and then into the boxwoods by the deck. Now for a little perspective. Magan has always claimed to be void of any green thumb. And, to her point, there are many brown and yellow ferns, daffodil and petunia plants in our woods, and even one dead corner of a boxwood that add validity to her claim. That has never deterred her, however, from filling up the shopping cart at Home Depot every spring with plants of all varieties. Recent successes such as a pair of rose bushes and a Moses in the bullrush had her hopes high that a thriving strawberry plant and petunia might claim semi-permanent posts on the back porch and counter her claim that, “everything I touch dies.” Unfortunately, only a week or two after planting the strawberries in a hanging basket they were withering like grass in the Sahara. “This time it’s not my fault,” she said. “Some birds are trying to build a nest in it.” With this in mind, Magan cleaned out the nest, and chose to move the strawberries down from their perch and onto the deck with a dianthus and a hen and biddies plant. In its place, she decided to hang the petunias – thinking that she had stirred up the last nest and scared the birds away for good. A few weeks and a dead petunia plant later, though, Magan stood up on a five-gallon bucket to find that mama bird had, in fact, reestablished her nest full with four or five eggs. “Jason, we can’t move it,” she said pleading, as if I had intended on having any opinion on the matter in the first place. “That’s fine, but the kids need to leave it alone,” I said, unaware that my words of caution would ring true in the very near future. A couple more weeks went by and, lo and behold, we were finally proud landlords to a nestful of Carolina Wrens. “The Common Birds of Atlanta book said they were some of the loudest and they weren’t playing,” Magan said almost every evening as the mama bird and papa bird flew back and forth from the chirping nest with worms and bugs. Of course everyone in our family, save yours truly, was henpecked and wanted to view the handful of yellow beaks and fur (nothing resembling feathers had set in, yet) squawking in fear every time the bucket shook in the breeze. “You need to leave it alone,” I kept cautioning, until the great reckoning that was AnnaMarie screaming like Jaws had hit her, as the two baby Wrens swooped into and out of the crinoline of her dress and into the bushes. “Google says the mama bird will keep feeding them until they’re big enough to fly off on their own,” Magan said self-reassuringly as she put down her phone. “Let’s hope the cats don’t spot them,” I said with a twinkle in my eye. “Oh Jason, come on. It’s not like we meant for the birds to fall out or fly out.” She was right. My family had unintentionally taken Deuteronomy 22:6-7 literally, (“If you happen to come upon a bird’s nest along the way…”). God’s creations are amazing. Whether a planter full of flowers or birds, it is truly awe-inspiring to consider that every living thing on this planet sprung from his imagination over the course of the first week of creation. The lesson Magan and the kids taught me wasn’t that I was right for telling them to leave the birds alone (although they probably won’t be playing with any more nests for a while), but to never lose that awe for God’s hand in creation... especially his most prized creation: us. “I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are your works,” Psalm 139:14. Maybe next year we’ll have some better petunias and strawberries, or a Carolina Wren condominium complex under construction. Either way, I’ll be in awe.

**JASON HALCOBRE HAS FIVE SONS AND A DAUGHTER. HE AND HIS WIFE, MAGAN, ARE MEMBERS OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH, DUBLIN.**
The struggle is real

But here’s something beautiful that God is showing me in the midst of these life changes: Life is messy and life here on Earth is not perfect. It can’t be, or we wouldn’t need heaven to look toward.

But I also need to realize that in some seasons, emotions are a part of the deal. Emotions are not weakness, and God is with us in the valleys. He understands our sadness; he is not afraid of our messiness.

I had a beautiful discussion with a friend the other day and this sort of thing came up – the reality of struggle and hard times and working through hard things but realizing it isn’t all about us and our ability to “get it right.”

“I have learned two critical things on this journey,” my friend texted after our chat. “1. God wants us to be in a position of humble trust in him at all times. 2. That he makes all things work together for the good of those who love him.”

It’s about the perfect balance between letting God be strong when we are weak, and remembering that our hope is in him. When we are weak, he is strong. If we were always strong, we wouldn’t need a savior.

Rachel Swenson Balducci is a freelance writer and member of Most Holy Trinity Church, Augusta. She can be reached at rbsbalducci@diostga.org.
Father Thomas Healy

Priestly Ordination:
June 18, 1967: All Hallows College
Dublin, Ireland

Parish Assignments:
• Asst. Pastor, Saint James,
  Savannah (9/20/67 – 1/30/68)
• Asst. Pastor, Saint Joseph’s,
  Macon (7/24/68 – 5/28/74)
• Co-Admin., Saint Joseph’s,
  Macon (5/29/74 – 9/14/74)
• Asst. Pastor, Saint Joseph’s,
  Macon; 9/15/74 – 9/1/77
• Assoc. Pastor, Saint Joseph’s,
  Macon; Campus Minister Mercer
  University (9/1/78 – 1982)
• Pastor, Sacred Heart,
  Savannah (9/1/82 – 8/25/88)
• Pastor, Saint Joseph Church,
  Waycross (9/1/06 - 6/24/14)

Retirement:
June 2014

Monsignor William Oliver O'Neill

Priestly Ordination:
June 4, 1967: Saint Peter's
College, Wexford, Ireland

Parish Assignments:
• Asst. Pastor, Saint Mary’s
  on the Hill, Augusta (2/6/68
  – 9/2/68)
• Asst. Pastor, Immaculate
  Conception, Augusta (9/3/68
  – 6/14/71)
• Assoc. Pastor, Saint Patrick/
  Sacred Heart/Immaculate
  Conception, Augusta (6/15/71
  – 5/31/75)
• Pastor, Holy Family,
  Columbus (6/1/75 – 8/25/88)
• Pastor, Blessed Sacrament,
  Savannah (8/25/88 – 8/27/96)
• Rector: Cathedral of Saint
  John the Baptist, Savannah
  (8/28/96 – 6/11/13)

Retirement:
June 2013

Father Thomas Healy (center) looks up to the heavens while celebrating the Eucharist June 7 at Saint Joseph Church in Augusta, where the parish hosted the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Deacon Gregory Bernard (left) said in his homily that Father Healy "has the gift of seeing Jesus in everyone." He added that Father Healy's "calling cards" are zeal and enthusiasm. Of Father Healy's wit and humor, Rita Jones Bikus, a former parishioner of Saint Joseph Church in Macon, said "He was always delightful to be around." Photograph by Jessica L. Marsala.

Monsignor William Oliver O'Neill (left), Bishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv. and Deacon Dewain E. Smith react during the homily of Bishop Emeritus J. Kevin Boland June 4 at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Savannah, where Monsignor O'Neill celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination. In his homily, Bishop Boland said that Monsignor O'Neill has "a salt of the earth personality." He also said that he could be described as a "ringmaster," making sure that projects like the restoration of the cathedral, one of Monsignor O'Neill's self-described "greatest challenges," always get done. "I have a motto," Monsignor O'Neill said at the conclusion of Mass, "Don't tell me it can't be done. It can be done." Photograph by Jessica L. Marsala.
Father Finbarr Stanton speaks with Mary Jane and Zephyrinus Okonkwo, parishioners of Saint Teresa Church in Albany, where he celebrated his 50th priestly ordination Mass June 18. Prior to his retirement in 2014, Father Stanton served as pastor of the Albany parish for 25 years. During the homily, Father Stanton spoke to the significance and necessity of relationships with parishioners within the church. "You are the nourishment for our priesthood," he said. "I've celebrated [the Eucharist] in all kinds of places when I reflect on these 50 years, but in celebrating the Eucharist, I think of my brothers in the priesthood . . . but most of all I think of the people. It is you, the people of God . . . praying, being faithful, loving, forgiving. It is that kind of presence that you bring to the Church and are faithful to and how you encourage priests. You are my family and you are my friends." Photograph by Sarah Dixon.

Father Frank Patterson smiles while delivering the homily to those gathered June 11 at Holy Family Church in Columbus on the occasion of his 50th priestly ordination anniversary. In his homily, Father Patterson said that each of the parishes at which he served had its own character. Looking back on his 50 years as a priest, he asked, "How do you summarize 50 years of ministry? It is a journey of untold joys, acceptance, friendships, love and happiness. But as well, since it was a human journey, a human story, it has moments of challenge, doubt, frustration, fear leading to questions of faith. This anniversary then is a time of remembering and a time of looking ahead." Photograph by Michael J. Johnson.

### Father Francis Patterson

**Priestly Ordination:**
June 10, 1967: Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow, Ireland

**Parish Assignments:**
- Asst. Pastor, Saint Teresa’s, Albany (7/24/68 – 9/2/71)
- Assoc. Pastor, Saint Joseph’s, Augusta (9/3/71 – 6/30/73)
- Pastor, Saint Mary’s, Savannah (7/1/73 – 7/15/77)
- Pastor, Sacred Heart, Vidalia (8/25/88 – 8/23/93)
- Pastor, Holy Family, Columbus (8/24/93 – 6/11/13)

**Retirement:**
June 2013

### Father Finbarr Stanton

**Priestly Ordination:**
June 18, 1967: All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland

**Parish Assignments:**
- Asst. Pastor, Saint Anne’s, Columbus (2/5/68 – July 1970)
- Faculty priest, Aquinas High School, Augusta (June 1972-9/28/75)
- Assoc. Pastor, Blessed Sacrament, Savannah (9/28/75 – 9/20/77)
- Pastor, Saint John the Evangelist, Valdosta (9/21/77 – 8/30/83)
- Pastor, Our Lady of Lourdes, Port Wentworth (8/31/83 – 1984)
- Assoc. Pastor, Sacred Heart, Savannah (7/10/85 – 8/26/86)
- Pastor, Holy Spirit, Macon (8/27/86 – 8/24/93)
- Pastor, Holy Family, Columbus (8/24/93 – 6/11/13)

**Retirement:**
June 2014
3 Benedictine monks to join priory at Benedictine Military School

SAVANNAH

Three Benedictine monks from Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, PA., will join the priory at Benedictine Military School this summer and become involved in the Benedictine ministry at the school in the fall. They are Father Jean-Luc Zadroga, O.S.B., who hails from the Pittsburgh area; Brother Matthew Hershey, O.S.B., a native of State College, PA., and Brother David Klecker, O.S.B., who is from Minnesota. All three will become involved with campus ministry. Zadroga and Hershey will teach theology, and Hershey also will become involved with the sports programs. Klecker, who also is a deacon, will become involved with information technology.

Zadroga earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy in 1997 from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, and master of divinity and master of arts degrees in theology from Saint Vincent Seminary in 2001. He was ordained a deacon in 2000 and a priest in May 2001 in the Diocese of Pittsburgh by Bishop Donald Wuerl. From 2001-02 he served as parochial vicar of Saint Margaret of Scotland, Green Tree. He served as secretary and master of ceremonies to Bishop Wuerl from 2002-03, then as parochial vicar of Saint Sebastian Parish, Ross Township from 2003-05. In December of 2005 he was named parochial vicar of Saint Vincent College Student Affairs Office and an assistant in the Alumni Affairs Office.

Hershey earned a degree in special education from Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2008. He has coached club soccer, served as the high school boys junior varsity soccer coach and varsity assistant as well as a teacher. He became a novice of Saint Vincent Archabbey in 2008 and made his solemn profession of monastic vows on July 11, 2012. At Saint Vincent he has served as assistant director of Campus Ministry and assistant in the Saint Vincent College Student Affairs Office and an assistant in the Alumni Affairs Office.

Klecker earned a bachelor of science degree in 1997 from Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. He has done graduate work at the Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, and at Holy Apostles College and Seminary, Cromwell, CT. He completed his master of divinity degree at Saint Vincent Seminary in 2016. He was ordained a deacon in the spring of 2011. At the Archabbey, his assignments have included work in the Archabbey Public Relations Office, assistant to the monastic community in computer technology and as a videographer.

The Knights of Columbus website features a photo of Father Conaty. The Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, CT, offers a First World War exhibit that contains, among other items, the very Mass case that Father Charles Conaty's later life was gravely affected by. It was probably no surprise when Charles followed his older brother, Francis, into the priesthood. One source states that the Conaty boys' cousin, Bishop Thomas J. Conaty, presided at Francis's ordination and it seems likely that the bishop may also have officiated at Charles Conaty's ordination later on. (The 1910 Federal Census lists Charles, obviously not yet ordained, as a resident in the Reverend Bernard S. Conaty's household along with two priests and a servant.)

By 1918, Charles Conaty, ordained a priest, was a First Lieutenant (chaplain), serving with the 28th Regiment of the 111th Division, A.E.F. near Crezancy, France after serving as chaplain at Fort Hancock in Augusta for a time. What he experienced on the battlefield once in France would later be graphically described in the little black book an Augusta friend had given him before Conaty's departure with his outfit for Europe. What the brave chaplain experienced afterward was destined to appear in print in his column, "My Little Black Book" in both The Catholic World and the Bulletin.

When he returned from war, Father Charles C. Conaty's courage was recognized. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross on July 9, 1918. Even now, almost a century later, his name appears on websites that enumerate the acts of courage and caring he displayed on the bloody battlefields of France. The Hall of Valor of the Military Times is one such site. Also, the May 2017 issue of the National Catholic Register featured him in an article, “Honoring Soldier and Chaplain: Snapshots of World War I.” The Knights of Columbus website describes a Mass case, used by Father Conaty while a WWI chaplain, that is now on display in the "Beyond the Front Lines" exhibit in their museum in New Haven, CT.

Like so many others who served bravely and unselfishly during war-time, it appears that Father Charles C. Conaty's later life was greatly affected by his military service. Although he was mentioned in a story about his parents' celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary that appeared in the Bulletin in 1929, there is little else known about Father Charles C. Conaty. When he died on December 1, 1956 at age 65 in Louisville, KY he was not listed as a priest, but as a "clerk." He is buried in a cemetery in Frankfort, KY with no family graves nearby and without his rightful title, "Father.”

Feature

Thursday, June 22, 2017

A hundred years after World War I: another look at Father Charles C. Conaty’s “My Little Black Book”
Perhaps you have read the article “Surprising Mercy” by Christopher West in the book “Beautiful Mercy,” which was given to all of our parishioners at Easter. Excerpts from the article:

“...the blessing of fertility is seen as under the banner of liberation; when and sexual addiction masquerades for understanding sexual behavior, stimulating; when the gross distortion valued only if they are accordingly cultural wallpaper and people are the human body have become our ized and hyper-eroticized images of a mother and a father; when ideal-...dren are growing up without both marriages are crumbling and chil...society glorifies those who mutilate their bodies so they can “become” the other sex and vilifies those who raise warning flags; and when our Christian parents, teachers and pas-...‘This is what the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds.’ Ministers of mercy are those willing to enter into the pain and misery of peo...sible lives, touch their wounds, and surprise them with tender, healing love.”

The pope continues that “many ministers (whether clergy, parents or lay ministers) are either too much of a rigorist, or too lax. Neither is mer-...sence of being cruel and judgmental. Since no one wants to be called that, many Christian ministers become lax or loose...they do not speak or teach the truth. The result of that silence is a deeply, deeply wounded people. This is an issue that is affect-...for fundraising and development functions.

Candidates should have a broad range of non-profit expe-...community and understand the needs and problems of low-income families with small children. A Master's degree and 3+ years of experience is required.

To apply send a resume with salary history and refer-...sion functions. He says ‘This is what the Church teaches and you must accept and obey.’ The loose minister washes his hands by simply saying, ‘This is not a sin’ or something like that. In pastoral ministry, we must accompany people and we must heal their wounds!” This requires generosity, and courage!

We all know that every child is created by God in the image and likeness of God, for his or her own sake, with an infinite value and dig-...ness is indelibly inscribed in their little bodies and in their souls. It is not fluid. It cannot change – psycho-sexual confusion notwithstanding. This is a teaching which comes from God’s Revelation, but...firmed in the image and likeness of God, for his or her own sake, with an infinite value and dignity. And he or she is created either male or female, and that one’s gen-...tions of hard-core pornography have become our main reference point for understanding sexual behavior, and sexual addiction masquerades under the banner of liberation; when the blessing of fertility is seen as a curse to be eliminated and the innocent human life that springs from sexual union a threat to be exterminated; when governments institutionalize gender confusion and insist that the sexual difference has no real meaning; when parents refuse to identify their children at birth so they can “choose their own gender identity” later in life; when society glorifies those who mutilate their bodies so they can “become” the other sex and vilifies those who raise warning flags; and when our Christian parents, teachers and pas-...“to jagreen@diosav.org. Resumes will be taken until the posi-...Family Advancement Ministries, FAM, a ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah, which is located in Macon, GA, has an opening for an Executive Director. This position reports to the Board of Directors and Catholic Charities, and is responsible for developing and managing the scope of work outlined in the ministry plan. Specifically this person will supervise both paid staff and volunteers, develop an annual budget, and be responsible for fundraising and develop-...Family Advancement Ministries, FAM, a ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah, which is located in Macon, GA, has an opening for an Executive Director. This position reports to the Board of Directors and Catholic Charities, and is responsible for developing and managing the scope of work outlined in the ministry plan. Specifically this person will supervise both paid staff and volunteers, develop an annual budget, and be responsible for fundraising and development functions.

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To apply send a resume with salary history and references to jagreen@diosav.org. Resumes will be taken until the position is filled.
Jacob dreams of a stairway to heaven

**CHILDREN’S STORY:**

By Jennifer Ficcaglia (CNS)

Jacob's son, Isaac, married a woman named Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. When Isaac was an old man with poor eyesight, he decided it was time to give his blessing to his older son, Esau. Isaac called Esau to his tent and asked for his favorite dish of game to eat. Isaac said he would bless Esau once he was done eating.

Rebekah overheard the conversation. After Esau left to go hunting, she decided to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob. She did this because God had told her that her younger child would serve the older one.

She told Jacob to dress in Esau’s clothes and wear goatskins on his arms and neck, because Esau was very hairy. Rebekah then prepared some goat meat in the way her husband liked.

Jacob brought the food to his father. Isaac felt Jacob’s hands and neck and thought it was Esau. So Isaac ate his meal then blessed Jacob.

When Esau returned from hunting and realized Isaac had been deceived into blessing Jacob, Esau was so mad that he wanted to kill his brother.

Rebekah told Jacob to flee from Esau and stay with her brother, Laban, in Haran.

During his trip to Haran, Jacob stayed the night near a shrine at a place called Luz. As he slept, Jacob dreamed about a stairway leading up to heaven, and he saw God’s angels going up and down it.

**BIBLE ACCENT:**

Before Jacob left for Haran, his father, Isaac, told him not to marry a Canaanite woman, but to marry a daughter of Laban, Jacob’s uncle.

When Jacob finally made it to Haran, he met Rachel, the younger of Laban’s two daughters. Jacob and Rachel fell in love, and Jacob promised to work for Laban for seven years if he could marry Rachel. Laban agreed – sort of!

When the seven years were up, Laban arranged for Jacob to marry Rachel. But in Haran, it was a custom for the older daughter to be married before the younger one. So Laban tricked Jacob into marrying Leah, Rachel’s older sister.

When Jacob realized that the woman he had just married was not Rachel, he was very upset. Laban said that Jacob could marry Rachel also – but in return he had to work for Laban for seven more years.

During the time Jacob spent in Haran, he had 11 children. After Jacob had worked for his father-in-law for 20 years, God spoke to Jacob.

“Return to the land of your ancestors, where you were born, and I will be with you,” God told him.
Spirituality of work is a phrase that sometimes elicits a bemused reaction. After all, putting together words with such divergent meanings might seem nonsensical, unless we take a closer look:

“Work” – an activity, mental or physical, paid or unpaid, and done in any number of locales, including a formal workplace or at home.

“Spirituality” – in a Christian sense refers to our relationship with God and the ways that we seek to deepen that connection.

Put the two meanings together for a definition of spirituality of work – an understanding that all human activity in one form or another presents us with an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God.

Saint John Paul II expressed it similarly in his encyclical “Laborem Exercens” (“On Human Work”): “It follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in (work).” An understanding of the spiritual aspects of work “will help all people to come closer, through work, to God” and “deepen their friendship with Christ in their lives.”

We find the entirety of Saint John Paul’s theology of work in this 1981 encyclical. It was written to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical “Rerum Novarum” (on capital and labor), considered to be the first of the Catholic Church’s social teaching documents.

Saint John Paul wrote “Laborem Exercens” at a time he expressed to us the eve of new developments in technological, economic and political conditions (that) will influence the world of work and production no less than the Industrial Revolution of the last century.” We can only stand in astonishment and awe at the truth of his prediction!

In this document, Saint John Paul addressed many issues that have come to the forefront in our present day: increasing technological advances; the rights and dignity of workers; issues of work, society and family; and conflict between labor and capital. To help us find the right path through this minefield of modern work, he offered us some wisdom from the church’s teaching.

Saint John Paul’s discourse on work begins at the beginning, in the Garden of Eden: “The church finds in the very first pages of the Book of Genesis the source of her conviction that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth.”

Created in God’s image and likeness, man receives a “mandate” to “subdue, to dominate, the earth” and shares by his work in the activity of the Creator. This “awareness that man’s work is a truth that implies a partnership with God. This partnership is not just a ‘Sunday thing.’” We are to live out our faith everywhere we find ourselves, and that includes the workplace.

The Second Vatican Council’s pastoral constitution “Gaudium et Spes” decreed the “split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives (that) deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.” This strong statement should make us pause to consider if we live with such a “split” in our own lives.

Saint John Paul’s theology elsewhere presented work as blessing, not a hardship: “Work corresponds to God’s design and will. Work is a primordial blessing from the Creator, an activity permitting people to realize themselves and to offer service to society.”

Again, in “Laborem Exercens,” he helped us realize that work has both an intrinsic and extrinsic value: “Through work man must earn his daily bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology and, above all, to elevating unceasingly the cultural and moral level of the society.”

Our work forms and shapes us. Through work, we become more who we were meant to be.

Saint Francis de Sales said it well: “Be who you are, and be that well.” At the same time, we give glory to the Creator who endowed us with the gifts and talents we employ to make our world a better place.

Work becomes a sacred endeavor when exercised with love, integrity and gratitude, benefiting self, family, co-workers and society.

To workers in Jasna Gorna, Poland, Saint John Paul said: “Work must help man to become better, more mature spiritually, more responsible, in order that he may realize his vocation on earth both as an unrepeatable person and in community with others, especially in the fundamental human community constituted by the family.”

It is no surprise that pronouncements on the sanctity of human work come from a pope who knew well the rigors of working. Young Karol Wojtyla was a restaurant delivery boy, a stonemason at a limestone quarry, a repairman for railroad tracks at a chemical plant.

It was these experiences that prompted him once to say, “Through (my) own experience of work, I (boldly) say that I learned the Gospel anew.” Are we able to say the same?

Burkey is adjunct professor of pastoral theology at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.
The power of the tongue

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” This refrain echoes from my childhood. But, as is often the case with popular “proverbs,” there’s no truth in the statement. The pain of a verbal attack can endure long after physical injury has healed.

While most people with compassion are quick to denounce physical attacks, some hesitate when they witness verbal abuse. We make excuses for the abuser: “He’s just joking.” “She’s speaking out of anger.” “He didn’t really mean it.” “She’s being misinterpreted.”

When words are used against us, in a demeaning or bullying way, we have a hard time forgetting them—even when we’ve long ago recovered from the event itself. Words have tremendous power. Words affect our psyche.

My 9-month-old grandson, while not yet talking, is attentive to words. When I speak with him, he watches my mouth and eyes for cues. He knows when I’m being silly or trying to soothe him. Even lacking verbal acuity, he is sensitive to language. When I speak with him, he watches my mouth and eyes for cues. He knows when I’m being silly or trying to soothe him. Even lacking verbal acuity, he is sensitive to language.

Clearly he understands words well ahead of his speech, and his awareness of them will in large part provide the foundation for speech. He will know that words have meaning, consequences, and represent bonds. The words “I love you” will represent love only in the context of loving behavior.

We all say words we regret. It’s the nature of human beings that, when under pressure or fatigued or when provoked, we lash out. Hopefully, on the occasions when our words have hurt another we quickly make amends with that person through an apology, words intended to heal a wound.

Some words, however, are used for shock effect and to deliberately hurt. These are not simply words spoken in anger or insensitivity. These are words spoken with the intention of scapegoating or demonizing a group of people. Most often, these words are directed at minorities, women, or marginalized groups. But they can also be directed at people of another social class or political affiliation. When these words are used, we dehumanize the groups they refer to.

Two examples: “alien” and “nut-case.” In the first case, a person who is illegally in this country is referred to by a term that connotes “otherness.” This person could not possibly share my humanity because she is the other. “Nutcase” suggests that a mentally ill person is hopelessly different.

That individual is not to be trusted and dwells in an alternate reality. In these examples, the words dehumanize the person and their experience. Yet in both cases, the words are used freely and often. People claim that “political correctness” has undermined our ability to speak truth. I suppose it’s true that in some corners people take offense too easily. But Christ has taught us to speak truth. I suppose it’s true that in some corners people take offense too easily. But Christ has taught us to speak truth.

It is not necessary to be fairer or fairer on earth than gentleness, kindness. He taught us in his Sermon on the Mount that when words are received as insulting and demeaning, we have an obligation to consider our choices, and to find common ground.

(Matthew 5:22-25)

Too often, under the guise of challenging political correctness, speakers say shocking words and make shocking comments to gain attention. And they do receive attention. But at what cost? Certainly at the cost of mutual understanding.

As Christians, we have an obligation to treat others with respect, even if we ourselves are not respected. The discourse of a Christian must recognize the inherent dignity of others, regardless of his or her status or behavior.

And we will certainly never be able to bridge the great gaps in understanding across our political divide as long as we resort to name-calling and ad hominem attacks.

Saint Francis de Sales wrote: “We will catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a hundred barrels of vinegar. Were there anything better or fairer on earth than gentleness, Jesus Christ would have taught it us…”

If we Christians are serious about revealing Christ’s love for all people, we have an obligation to choose our words carefully, and to defend people who are hurt by the words of others.

MARY HOOD HART is a freelance writer and educator living in Pittsboro, NC. She can be reached at maryhoodhart@gmail.com.

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Southern Cross, Page 14
Thursday, June 22, 2017

The Discourse of a Christian Must Recognize the Inherent Dignity of Others, Regardless of His or Her Status or Behavior.
As I write this message, I have tears in my eyes. I have just returned from the Ogeechee Area Hospice, where my friend, Father Mike Smith, has been staying since Tuesday morning, June 13. He had been so frail at Mass on Sunday, that his friend, Father Tom Nellis, the celebrant, had to bring Holy Communion to Father Mike in his pew. The next day, he had been able to appreciate visits and calls from many friends and enjoy the daily influx of cards and e-mails expressing people’s love and prayerful support. However, in the last few weeks this has all changed. The destructive power of Mike’s particular form of cancer is making itself known: Despite the placement of metal stents in the bile ducts, the liver’s production of bile, so necessary for proper digestion, is being diverted and getting into skin, urine, etc. Mike is jaundiced and finding it difficult to eat. So, he is losing more weight, has little energy, needs more and more sleep. He is under active hospice care now, and we were hoping that they could offer relief from some of these symptoms. The good thing is that, so far, he hasn’t had any sharp pain, just the frustration of frequent hiccoughs and occasional vomiting of bile. It is discouraging for him and for me, but we couldn’t expect this journey to be easy. As someone has put it, dying is the mirror image of being born—leaving one stage of existence and entering another—and pain is the usual part of both journeys.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mike was admitted into our in-patient hospice facility here in Statesboro. He is eager to “get on with it,” to finish [his] journey to God. However, we obviously don’t know just how quickly he will die. He is now too weak to enjoy visits, cards or calls. Just keep him and us in your prayers. May God surround all of us, especially our brother Mike, with his peace.”

As I reported in these pages, on Friday, January 27 of this year, Father John Johnson drove from Claxton to Statesboro to pick up Father Mike Smith and me to take us to Saint Joseph Church in Macon for the Funeral Mass of our mutual friend and brother priest, Monsignor John J. Cuddy. Little did we know that within five months, Father Smith would follow Monsignor Cuddy to an earthly grave—and soon to the glory of the Risen Christ in heaven.

On behalf of Father Mike and Father Tom, and as their pastor, I would like to express my thanks to all who have reached out to them during this time of trial. May God reward your generosity and kindness.

Father Douglas K. Clark is pastor of Saint Matthew Church in Statesboro.

A call for letters

Are you an American Catholic or are you a Catholic American? Is there a difference?

Our request is for readers to think about and answer these questions in 200 words or less and then email them, with FAITHFUL in the subject line, to editor@diosav.org by noon on June 29. We will select some of the best from each point of view and run them in the July 6 Southern Cross. Your name, address, parish, and contact information must be included for publication in the Southern Cross. All letters will appear on the Southern Cross webpage southerncross.diosav.org. Thank you in advance for participating. I look forward to reading them all. -Michael J. Johnson, Editor.
Father Gonzalo Meza discusses the V Encuentro

The V Encuentro, the national movement that began in the 1970s to explore a wide variety of topics in Hispanic ministry, is focused on Hispanics in the United States. Bishop Joseph Kitto Scarbrough of the Diocese of Savannah said the V Encuentro is an opportunity for the Hispanic/Latino presence in the U.S. church.

The Encuentro has different phases. The first phase, already started and then we’re already in the second phase. The Encuentro starts from the ground up meaning we start from the parishes then we go to the regions and then we go to the diocese and then we go to the national and through a Hispanic meeting, which will take place in 2018, meaning next year, in Grapevine, Texas.

The first part was the training of the team leaders from the parishes who were trained so that they could have their parish Encuentro. So right now in different parishes in the diocese they are having their own meetings so that they can have the parish Encuentro. I believe that the deadline for these parish meetings will be on August 31. After that then we will have the diocesan Encuentro, which will take place here in the Diocese of Savannah and then different people, different leaders from the different parishes – delegates – will come. So that we can have the diocesan Encuentro, leaders, delegates from different parishes will have already the responses from the parishes because each parish is supposed to have their own meeting, their own Encuentro.

So the leaders are supposed to get all the answers. They are supposed to absorb everything that they can so that they can bring those answers to the diocesan Encuentro. SC: Is there a specific outline for gathering information at the parish level?

GM: Yes there is. We were given a beautiful booklet, which is a step-by-step booklet to organize the parish Encuentro. And I like it because it has a little bit of everything. So of course it has a prayer, has a meditation. The biblical section that was chosen for the Encuentro was Luke 24: The road to Emmaus – you know when Jesus meets the two disciples who were sad and they were on the road to Emmaus. So all the biblical reflections are structured around that chapter 24 of Luke. So this [book] guides you, it guides the people so that they can have their own Encuentro. They really don’t have to worry about anything because there are many people who say ‘well I don’t either have enough biblical knowledge so that I couldn’t have the meditation;’ people will say ‘well I don’t have the organizational skills to organize.’ But this booklet has everything. You don’t have to follow it exactly as it is. And one section on pages page 50 and 51 has a series of questions for the people who participate in the parish Encuentro to answer. The leaders in their parishes present these questions and then everybody from their parishes submits their responses so the team leaders will have to review them and bring them to the Diocesan Encuentro.

SC: Is this solely for Hispanic Communities?

GM: In theory all the parishes in the nation should be involved, not only the diocese, but also all the parishes in the nation are supposed to have their own Encuentro, no matter if it’s only an Anglo parish or if it’s a Filipino or Vietnamese. Let me give you an example. At Saint Mary’s on the Hill: Do you know how many Hispanics we have? Eight.

The interesting thing is that even though we were all Hispanics, there were another four Anglos that came and took part in the Encuentro. They enjoyed it because even though this Encuentro is focused on Hispanics and the Hispanic culture – it is open to everybody. The goal is to have one faith. The goal is to show to the people that it is one faith, one community, and one church. It is not about having 25 different churches – you know the Vietnamese, the Polish...

And that’s one of the beautiful things of this Encuentro is that it can bring together very different communities, not only the Hispanic, the Polish but also different ministries. They come and take part in this beautiful Encuentro. And as I said, it needs to, in theory, happen in every parish in the nation.

SC: Do you know who from Savannah will be going to the national Encuentro?

GM: We don’t know exactly because it has to be decided of course by the bishops. But he [Bishop Hartmayer] is the one who will appoint the delegates to represent the diocese.

I know that they are expecting thousands of people, as you know, from the different parts of the nation. And that’s not the end of the process because after the National Encuentro participants will have to bring their responses back and they will have to bring proposals back for implementation because that is let’s say the third phase of the implementation. And then of course the proposals developed in Grapevine, Texas will be presented to that region, then to the diocese and then to the parishes. And of course the implementation will depend on the regions of the diocese and of course all the bishops of every place.

Diocese of Savannah – Tribunal Notary

The Diocese of Savannah, Georgia has an immediate opening for a full-time Notary in the diocesan marriage tribunal. Responsibilities include assisting the diocesan Judicial Vicar and Tribunal Director with the processing of marriage/penal cases and diocesan canonical documents. This position also provides extensive clerical support for the Tribunal.

Candidates must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church, possess excellent written and oral communication skills, have experience in data base management; Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and Access. Tribunal or church administration experience and some level of fluency in Spanish is preferred. The diocese offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit a letter of interest along with a resume and three references to: Diocesan Secretary for Human Resources Jo Ann Green at 2170 E Victory Drive, Savannah, GA 31404 or j agarren@diosav.org.

Bookkeeper

Saint Frances Cabrini Catholic Church and School is seeking a full-time bookkeeper for both locations. Duties include, but are not limited to, budget preparation, bank reconciliations, payroll, benefits and management of church and school financial practices, records and data bases. In addition, this position handles all general property management and oversees maintenance.

Candidates must possess a degree in accounting, be proficient in QuickBooks and have 5+ years bookkeeping/financial management experience.

The position offers a competitive salary along with a full complement of benefits including medical, dental and life insurance and a 401-K retirement plan. Preference will be given to a Catholic in good standing with the church.

To apply send a resume that includes salary history and references to jagreen@diosav.org.