



# *Monday Memo*

FROM BISHOP GERALD F. KICANAS

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## **Our Lenten Journey**

On Friday last I hosted the annual Catholic Foundation Mardi Gras at my residence. I enjoy this gathering, where I have a chance to meet and thank people who consistently and consciously give to the Foundation.

Margie Puerta Edson, Director of the Catholic Foundation for Stewardship and Charitable Giving, along with her staff members, Lori Callas, Robin Evans, Nancy Kirk, and Clara Moreno, reconfigured my home into New Orleans with streamers, masks, balloons and Mardi Gras feathers. Everyone was given Mardi Gras beads to wear and a Jazz musician entertained us. It was a delightful evening.

Mardi Gras, as we all know, is a sure sign that Lent is almost here. As we begin our Lenten journey this Ash Wednesday, I ask you to consider our Diocesan theme as a guide.

Our Lenten theme this year, “Change our Hearts,” reflects on the most basic trait of Lent: Conversion.

Conversion means leaving behind ways that prevent us from imitating Christ and embracing new ways and new attitudes to draw us closer to Christ.

During the weeks of Lent, we will ask you to ponder different types of conversion: to be more compassionate; to be more forgiving; to be more accepting; to be more welcoming; to be more generous; and to be more zealous.

Each parish last week received a letter introducing our Lenten theme, along with a logo to highlight Lent at their parish. Parishes also now have bulletin announcements that can be used for each of the weekends in Lent, as well as prayers of the faithful. The response to the prayer of the faithful during Lent will be "Change our Hearts, O Lord," so that all of our parishes will join in a common response.

***Change our hearts: Make us more compassionate.***

Compassion coupled with forgiveness can be a powerful means of conversion.

Some of you may have heard me tell the story of a man I once met. This man's daughter was killed in the horrible bombing at Oklahoma City in 1995. For some time, he was filled with anger at the man who set off that terrible bomb. Then, he had the chance to meet the bomber's father. He told me that he and the other man embraced, and during their conversation, an amazing thing happened: forgiveness.

The man telling me the story said he came to understand that the other father was suffering too. That the shame and pain of what the man's son had done was pain much like his own pain of losing his daughter. They both shared a pain that would never completely go away.

He said the anger began to melt away. The hate left, and he was filled with a compassion and peace that has been with him, guiding him ever since.

I encourage all of us to focus our hearts on compassion this week. Look around in your life and your relationships, and let compassion convert your heart and your life to peace.

Our Holy Father Benedict XVI, delivered his Lenten message earlier this month. It is a message that calls us to "be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works".

In his message, the Pope tells us that Lent provides a good opportunity to "reflect upon the very heart of Christian life: charity."

Charity and compassion work together. I hope all of us will look for ways to bring both of these into our lives during Lent, and always. To read more about the Papal message, visit <http://visnews-en.blogspot.com/2012/02/popes-lenten-message-charity-as-means.html>

Here is the bulletin announcement sent to all parishes for this first week of Lent:

*Change Our Hearts, our Lenten theme this year, calls us to be a people of compassion who see where love is needed, and when we see where love is needed to respond.*

*This week open your eyes and ears to see and hear the pain of others. Among your family and friends, among those you work with and study with there are people hurting, people in need. Open your heart to be available to those in need, to care for those struggling personally or spiritually, financially or emotionally. If our hearts are open in compassion, we imitate the God of compassion whom we serve. Make our hearts more compassionate this Lent.*

## **Annual Catholic Appeal**

On Sunday we invited all in our Diocese to commit their support to our Annual Catholic Appeal. The Appeal's goal is the same as last year and the year before, \$3.7 million.

Your generosity never ceases to amaze me. I have seen that in the early returns for the Appeal. The response has been very encouraging. I will be pledging my gift this year and I know many of our priests have already made their pledge. I hope you will join us.

Monies raised during the Appeal supports the work of 26 charities and ministries across the 9 counties of our Diocese. The goal is based on the bare minimum support for these ministries and organizations to continue the services they provide. With the economy still waning, we are certain that these services will be needed to help even more people than before.

## **The Sisters, a centennial exhibit**

Many of our women and men religious gathered at the Archives yesterday to view "The Sisters: Roman Catholic Women Religious in Arizona," our exhibit for Arizona's centennial of statehood. You should have heard all the stories they had to share as they walked among the pictures and displays that mark the contribution of our religious to the mission of Christ in our Diocese. They chuckled as they viewed the made up tiny bedroom that many of these sisters lived in their convents during the years depicted by the displays.

The sisters and brothers have worked in schools, hospitals, community services and many other ministries. They delighted in seeing many of those they knew who were part of their communities, and enjoyed seeing the display of habits worn by the various communities.

Great work by Sister Rina Cappellazzo, O.P., in planning the wine and cheese gathering for the religious to see this marvelous exhibit. You are welcome to view the exhibit at the Archives, 300 S. Tucson Blvd., weekdays except Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., as a way of celebrating the centennial of the State of Arizona.

## **Presbyteral Council**

Today we meet to discuss several key topics involving the Diocese, beginning with the Priests Retirement Plan. Sister Lois Paha, O.P., of our Pastoral Services Department, will be giving us an update on the current registration for the upcoming "Co-Workers in the Vineyard" Ministry Conference, and I look forward to hearing about how the vendor exhibition and the Diocesan offices exhibit areas are coming along. We also will be working on the details of our Lenten services, especially the Chrism Mass and hearing our Vicariate Reports.

This meeting will include discussions on assignment changes for priests. I am grateful for the wisdom and counsel of the Presbyteral Council in this most important work of assigning pastors and parochial vicars.

### **Visit to Death Row, Arizona State Prison in Florence**

Tomorrow, I will join Deacon Ed Sheffer, who works with death row inmates, and with Deacon Ken Moreland, Vicar for Deacons, to meet with Robert Moorman and Robert Towery, both of whom have been sentenced to death and who are awaiting their executions pending commutation of their sentences to an alternative such as life in prison.

The visit will be an opportunity to pray with these two men and provide them with the Sacraments as they await their executions.

There is no condoning the crimes of the violent and horrific taking of innocent life. This cries out for punishment. But Pope John Paul II emphasized in his teaching that there is no longer a need for society to protect itself by taking the life of another person. Today, a life sentence serves to protect society and to punish serious crime. Still, we continue to execute people in the State of Arizona.

Let us pray for enlightenment, not only in the cases of these two men whose executions are imminent, but also for solutions as to how we can punish crime and protect society without, as Pope John Paul II said, contributing to the culture of death.

Equally important, we remember that families of victims need comfort and care. In the fall, we are planning a Mass for victims of violence in our community as a way of standing with people whose lives have been shattered.

### **Knights of Columbus Priest Appreciation Dinner**

I am grateful to the Knights of Columbus in Tucson for hosting their annual priest appreciation dinner tomorrow evening at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Tucson. The event is always well attended, and the priests of the Diocese feel the support and affirmation of the Knights.

This year we will be honoring the Knights of Columbus in the State of Arizona for their constant and dedicated support of the work of our Diocese at our Cornerstone Gala sponsored by the Catholic Foundation for Stewardship and Charitable Giving to be held on April 20 at the Marriott Starr Pass. I encourage you to join us in recognizing the Knights who do so much to support our priests and our community.

### **Knights of the Holy Sepulchre**

On Saturday I will say Mass for members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre Retreat at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish here in Tucson.

After Mass it will be my privilege to conduct the Order's retreat. I will reflect with them on three themes: The teachings of Jesus, the mystery of the Liturgy and of the Eucharist, and prayer and the life of the Spirit.

Lent is a time when many of our parishes and groups hold missions and retreats. How important these times of stepping away are in the life of a disciple. I pray this retreat will enliven the faith of our Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre and their important mission of supporting the Church and Christians in the Holy Land.

I am grateful to Ernie and Kathy Nedder for their leadership in this area, and for all they do to enhance the work of the Order.

This week the Order will be giving a number of new members their orientation, including the mission of the Order.

### **Rite of Election**

It will be my great joy this Sunday to preside at first of three liturgies the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion for those joining our Catholic faith through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, or RCIA.

This year, about 600 new members are participating in the process to join the faith, which ends with initiation during the Easter Vigil, where those in preparation, who are called Catechumens, are baptized, and those who are Candidates will be confirmed and all receive Holy Eucharist.

Sunday's liturgy will take place at St. Augustine Cathedral, and there will be other Rites of Election held in Yuma at St. Francis de Assisi Parish on March 2, and back at St. Augustine's Cathedral on March 4.

I am deeply grateful to Sister Lois Paha, O.P., and her committee who organize these beautiful celebrations, as well as to all the RCIA directors and sponsors in our parishes that walk with the Catechumens and the Candidates in their journey this Lent. It is a marvelous program that brings new life and energy into the Church and into our Diocese.

### **Co-Workers in the Vineyard Ministry Conference**

Registrations are flowing in for our upcoming Ministry Conference to be held at the Tucson Convention Center March 15-17. Everyone is excited by the star-studded speakers and workshop presenters coming to this gathering of priests, religious, deacons, laywomen and laymen from all around our Diocese.

Bishop Blase Cupich, Bishop of the Diocese of Spokane and a strong advocate of lay ministry, along with Matthew Kelly, an internationally known author and speaker who

published the very popular book “Rediscovering Catholicism,” will be the keynote speakers.

Each person attending will find a workshop or presentation just right for them, since there are presentations covering each of the ministries in the Church.

How fitting it is that the event is taking place during Lent of 2012! It will be an occasion for everyone from around the Diocese to pray together, to laugh together, and to learn together. If you have not registered, do so today by visiting our diocesan website, [www.diocesetucson.org](http://www.diocesetucson.org), or get a registration form from your parish.

### **Reachout luncheon**

I was encouraged to see such a marvelous turnout at Saturday’s Reachout Pregnancy Center luncheon and fundraiser. Angela Schneider and her staff and volunteers had to be pleased with the presence of so many of our Catholic parishes and others church communities that are pro-life.

Dr. Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., spoke at the gathering and had us laughing and crying at the same time. She gave a powerful witness of her own life. She disclosed that she was almost aborted by her mother but thanks to her grandfather she was brought to term. She acknowledged several frustrated marriages and decisions that she said led her to abort some of her children. She greatly regrets those decisions and is now active in encouraging young people to find alternatives to abortion. Reachout Pregnancy Center gives women hope that there are alternatives. Thanks to their work women bring their children to term and know they are not alone.

### **Congratulations to St. Cyril Catholic School**

Congratulations to Christopher O'Connor of St. Cyril School in Tucson for finishing second in a classic spelling bee duel with Elliott Groce of Flowing Wells Junior High School. Both students will represent Tucson in the Arizona Spelling Bee next month. I am sure Principal Ann Zeches, Father Ron Oakham, pastor, and all the faculty, students and parents of St. Cyril are proud.

### **Welcome**

We welcome Father Jaya Bhaskar Gade, a member of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales community who joins his brothers, Father Matthew Thayil at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, and Father Alex Tigga serving at St. Thomas the Apostle. We look forward to welcoming a fourth member of the community, Father George Kunnel, in the near future.

### **Please remember in your prayers**

Please remember Father John Malley, O.Carm., who died Friday. He served as Superior General of the Carmelites and most recently lived at Salpointe Catholic High School where Kay Sullivan, President, says he was the heart of the school. Father John was

always at every sports game and every major event at Salpointe. He was loved by all. Father John was found in his room when he did not appear for a basketball game. He was sitting in his chair reading his breviary.

Father John's wake and vigil service will be held Thursday night at St. Cyril Parish. The Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Friday at 10 a.m., also at St. Cyril Church. Condolences to his brother, Father Vern Malley, O.Carm., and all the Carmelite and Salpointe communities.