



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES

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DIOCESE OF LAS CRUCES MONDAY MEMO

March 25, 2019

From: Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas *+ek/fg*
Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Las Cruces

1. The Third Sunday of Lent introduced us to a God who is ever faithful, who is infinitely patient. In the parable heard in Luke's Gospel yesterday, God is not the land owner upset that the fig tree bore no fruit. Rather, God is the gardener begging the owner to give the tree a little more time to produce its fruit. God is ever patient with us, giving us time to turn our lives around and to live in the light. In yesterday's passage from Exodus, God reveals His name. I am the God who is always with you, accompanying you, standing by you.

If you read Joshua 24 you hear Joshua relate how God has walked with His people even though they often abandoned Him. God is the one who brought them out of Egypt. God is the one who protected them from the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, Canaanites, Gergashites, Hivites, and Jebusites. Joshua and his family seeing all that God did for them pledged allegiance to this God who is ever faithful.

I pray this Lent will be an opportunity to turn our lives more fully to the Lord, the One who is ever trustworthy, the one on whom we can always count. He is indeed the God who is always by our side in times of joy and in times of sorrow.

2. As I mentioned last week, I am at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in West Hempstead, New York this week preaching their Lenten mission. Please pray for us during this week of mission. I am delighted to see that so many of our parishes in the Diocese of Las Cruces are holding parish missions during Lent. These missions are an opportunity to grow closer to the Lord and renew our lives in Christ Jesus. I will also celebrate the Confirmation Mass for the 100 students from their school and the Religious Education Program.
3. This coming Sunday I will have the joy of meeting with some of the students at St. Francis Newman Center in Silver City. I look forward to listening to them and learning their experience at the Newman Center and how we might be even more helpful to them as they pursue their studies in preparation for their future. I will also celebrate Sunday evening Mass for the St. Francis community at 7:00 pm. I am grateful to Fr. Bartholomew for his ministry to the parish and the student community.

"United in Ministry"

4. I have written to each of our pastors and pastoral administrators last week asking them to identify people ages 17 to 50 from their parish community whom God may be calling to serve as priests in our Diocese. The first step in fostering vocations is identifying those who have qualities that would recommend them to consider the priesthood. The second step is to invite. I hope over the next several months that our vocation directors, Fr. Alex Ureña and Fr. Juan Carlos Ramirez and I along with each one of us might invite those identified to learn more about the vocation of priesthood and whether God might be calling them to serve as priests. Among our first and most important priorities as a Diocese is the recruitment of possible candidates for priesthood. I am confident that there are many in our parishes whom God is calling. Our task is to identify and invite.
5. If you have not as yet made your pledge to UIM 2019, I invite you to join the many people throughout our Diocese who have given their gift to help further the mission of our Diocese. Funds from UIM benefit so many including our seminarians, deacon candidates, catechetical programs, youth ministry, our retired priests and many more. UIM also benefits each of our parishes since when the parish reaches its goal, every further dollar comes back to the parish to meet its needs.
6. Priests are reminded that we will gather for our Annual Assembly from April 8-10 at the Holy Cross Retreat Center. This required meeting is our opportunity as priests from around the Diocese to come together in prayer, to learn, and to enjoy fraternity with one another. This year Bishop Oscar Cantu arranged with the Spitzer Center for Visionary Leadership presentations by Mr. Tim Ryan to give a number of reflections on "The Four Levels of Happiness". At the Assembly we will hold the required annual meeting of the Corporate Board for each of our parishes that are separately incorporated. I look forward to being with our priests for these special days.
7. Currently there are ten men who have signed up for the year of discernment before entering the four-year program to become permanent deacons. I hope we will have about twenty men participating in this discernment year. If you know of someone who might make for a wonderful deacon candidate, encourage them to enroll for the discernment year on our Diocesan website.

8. Our four new international priests, Frs. Casimir, Kelvin, Martin and Raphael will continue their inculturation meetings this week. During the week they will travel for three days around our vast diocese, along with Juan Moreno and Eddie Gallegos from the Pastoral Center properties office. They will visit the different areas that make up the diocese. They will continue to celebrate Mass here at the Pastoral Center for the Pastoral Center Staff which has been a true blessing.