



The Oratorio



May 2021 • Volume 13, Issue 2

Special Youth Services (SYS) models the embrace of Christ through pastoral care, advocacy, and faith sharing in local juvenile justice centers, facilities, and programs including the promotion and coordination of restorative services to at-risk youth and their families. Our ministry encompasses all counties within our local Archdiocese, working with youth from ages 10-17.

The Oratorio is a quarterly newsletter published with the purpose of sharing the voices of our youth and volunteers, activities of SYS, and information that may be beneficial to the spiritual life of the reader.

Special Youth Services (SYS) modela el abrazo de Cristo por medio de cuidado pastoral, apoyo, y compartir la fe en centros locales de justicia juvenil, instalaciones, y programas incluyendo la promoción y coordinación de servicios restaurativos a jóvenes en situación de riesgo y sus familias. Nuestro ministerio abarca cada condado entre nuestra arquidiócesis local, trabajando con jóvenes de edades 10 a 17.

The Oratorio es un boletín informativo trimestral publicado con el propósito de compartir las voces de nuestros jóvenes y voluntarios, actividades de SYS, e información que pueda ser útil para la vida espiritual del lector.



Director's Corner

During this challenging time, I have not seen the face of one of our young people. Because of their suffering, my heart longs to be with them. I know that one of them is in pain and needs comfort. I know that one of them is scared and needs reassurance. I know that one of them is angry and needs to be reminded of God's peace.

In the parable of the Lost Sheep, we often think of how the parable pertains to us. For those serving in this ministry, we see our youth. We know that God searches for His lost children. Any parent who lost their child would go through extreme measures to find them. We know that when we are lost, our Heavenly Father would go through these same lengths to find us. For the youth we serve, God has called us to help Him with this mission. We are His body: sometimes called as a servant, a companion, or in our case, a seed-planter.

It may seem with the lack of visitation, you are not doing much but on the contrary, you do great things. Even though it has been a year, the youth still ask about you. The weekly newsletters you create provide the youth with hope, joy, and wisdom. When you participate in an event, they recognize your face. It brings them comfort to know that you are still there, just as God is. This time has truly been a struggle but I cannot thank you enough for your dedication, energy, time, and prayers. If you have not had a chance to contribute to the newsletters, please remember that at one point or another, are we not all lost sheep?

Franchella

Year of St. Joseph

(December 8, 2020-December 8, 2021)

This special "Year of St. Joseph" that Pope Francis has declared, gives us an opportunity to familiarize ourselves more with the man God entrusted with the lives of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. As a husband and foster-father, St. Joseph embodied the virtues and values of a care-taker, a role model, and a servant of the Lord. For resources for your journey with St. Joseph, visit the following websites:

www.archgh.org/resources/year-of-st-joseph

www.usccb.org/saint-joseph

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12/pope-francis-proclaims-year-of-st-joseph.html>

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A YOUTH'S PERSPECTIVE

A Conversation between Deacon Fernando and a young brother in Christ, 16-Year-Old J.A.

How long have you been in detention?

Two weeks plus some days.

What was your relationship with God before you came in here?

I wouldn't be that consistent. I would pray here and there. My mom was very religious and would tell me to pray and that God would help me and guide me and protect me. My stepdad's family was religious too and his mom, so I was always around people that were very religious since I was born. He never left my side.

What about now?

I feel like He opened up my eyes to realize what is really important in life and basically giving me time to reflect on my life to make me a better man. Whatever He is doing, He has a purpose for me.

The first time we talked you showed me a journal you were writing in. Can you tell me about it?

Basically, when reading the Bible, parts of it would touch me and I would try to memorize them and try to write down how to be a better person. To practice that righteousness.

Now, you actually have a section named for that specifically, correct? How many steps do you have so far and how did you come up with these steps?

Yes, "Steps to Being a Better Person." Twenty-six. From the Bible. It's scriptures that tell me how to be a better person.

I also see you have section called "How to Pray."

I got it straight from the Bible. It says that when you pray, pray like this: "Our father in heaven, hallowed be Your name..." (proceeded to recite the Lord's prayer). Then I got "Things I Pray For" like my mom to be protected and my mom's kidney. I have more than seventeen things on this list.

Do you read your journal daily?

I try to read when I wake up and when I go to bed to memorize.

How do you put these steps into practice?

If it says don't cuss, I try not to cuss. Give to your neighbor or your enemy if they're hungry. I try to do these things.

Anything else you would like to share?

I have a letter to the Lord. Basically I write, but I just feel I just talk to Him in a letter.

What would be some of the things in the letter that stand out to you the most?

To heal my mom and protect her. To forgive me for my sins. For me to forgive all those who lied, stole, or hurt me. Ask Him to give me peace for I already felt too much pain.

How do you feel this journaling has helped your relationship with God?

He touched my heart. I feel like He's giving me time to reflect and make me a better man little by little and I feel like I have a future.

What would you say about this to other youth?

I talk to a lot of kids already. I ask them what they believe in and they say, "God." I say, "If you really pray and really put your faith and heart in Him, He will lead you home. You gotta put your faith in Him," I tell them and then I pray for them. I try to pray not just for my family and friends. Everyone deserves chances. Chances make champions.

Although we only met recently, what do you think about our visits?

Feels like it's God working. God sends you and reminds me that He is working. To keep faith in Him, trusting Him, and praying to Him.

Anything else you would like to share?

Keep putting faith in Him. Feel like, "If I truly put faith truly to His word, He will have a place for me not here but in eternal life." Keep praying to Him and trusting in Him. He has a purpose for everyone. Even rich or poor He will help you. Whatever you ask in your faith, He will give it to you if you have faith.

A Volunteer's Perspective

Grady Dyke, HCLA

I have been a volunteer with Special Youth Services (SYS) since 2015. I volunteer at the Harris County Leadership Academy (HCLA) in Katy. I am a member of a motorcycle ministry called the Catholic Cross Bearers. It was founded by a man in Ohio that served eighteen years in an Ohio penitentiary for murder. After his release from prison, he wanted to continue to ride motorcycles but he knew he could no longer associate with the kind of friends he had before prison. He knew he had to find new friends, friends who wanted to follow Jesus. Because he could not find those kind of friends in the motorcycle clubs he was used to, he decided to start his own motorcycle ministry for Catholic Christians, and he did. The main mission of the Catholic Cross Bearers is to "Bring the Love of Jesus to those on the streets and in prison." Those in prison does not always mean those locked behind bars. Many people are in prisons they create for themselves, or are created by others. So many people are imprisoned by drug and alcohol addictions, pornography, gangs, crime, hatred, excessive desire for money and possessions, and many other prisons that enslave them. Jesus came to free all of us from these prisons. He wants to give us true freedom to love and be loved by God Our Father and to love others. He wants to free us from the guilt and fear that prevents us from experiencing the true happiness God intended for us. This is why I am a volunteer with SYS. They are dedicated to bringing this freedom and happiness to young people that are often times trapped in bad situations and can't find a way out. Some have lost hope. Some feel like they just don't care what happens to them anymore. Many just can't see a better way and that is where SYS comes in. We are sent by God Our Father to tell them there is a better way, a way out of sadness and pain. That way is a person: JESUS. He came that "We may have life and have it to the full." All we have to do is say YES. One of the young men we ministered to at HCLA named M. has said yes. After leaving HCLA, he started making the changes he needed to make in his life. He worked hard at finishing High School and has started taking college classes. He is going to church and reading his Bible. He wanted to deepen his understanding of the Bible and asked SYS staff for help. Now a deacon and I are working with M. once a week through a virtual Bible Study. So even though we cannot go to the facilities due to COVID regulations, we are still able to help others grow in their faith in Jesus. I always felt that if I can only help one person to know and love God that is enough for me, and right now M. is that person.

Deacon Tom Jeffers, HCLA

In the year before I became a deacon, I was given a choice of ministries that I'd be involved with and my first choice was the SYS ministry. This was an easy choice for me since I'd been involved with teaching high school age youth during their preparation for Confirmation for several years and I could see how important it was (is) to help our youth in finding their way to God and to live their lives as Christians.

Over the past several years I've been ministering to the youth at Leadership Academy, joining in the Bible study with the other awesome volunteers when I was able, but mostly meeting with young men who just wanted to talk or for me to pray with them. I've met quite a few exceptional young men who were searching for something good in their lives and some who just wanted to get out of the dayroom for a few minutes, and I pray every day that in those encounters God has used me to plant that seed of hope and love. Those one-to-one talks are so very powerful in that the youth can open up and say things without fear of being made fun of or condemned.

After the COVID pandemic shut everything down and only two deacon brothers were able to go in to talk with the youth, my heart ached for both my brothers and the youth knowing just how difficult it's been to talk with everyone who is in need. I also missed the grace that I'd receive during these encounters; so when I was asked if I'd be involved with a different type of Bible study, there was no question in my mind that the answer would be 'YES'! Along with another volunteer, we have a weekly online Bible study with a young man who we both used to visit in Leadership, only now he is living in the free, finished high school, and is in college. He was still searching once he was out and couldn't find a Bible study like we do in SYS, so he contacted us and asked if we could help. And so here we are today continuing to reach out and being Christ to someone who is wanting to know God more and more. He is an inspiration to me and gives me hope for the future.

I just want to share one thing from our last Bible study when he asked us how could he be able to listen to the Holy Spirit when he has to make an important choice, and what came to mind was "Be still and know I AM God". To take a breath, let God guide us and not be so quick to act. This is something that we all need to take to heart, regardless of our age.

God's blessings to all.

Clergy Corner

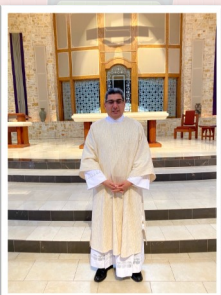


We had a successful Clergy Meeting on February 11, where we were joined by Deacon Phillip Jackson, Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. We met again on May 13 as we continue to organize the weekly newsletters and volunteer meetings, plan for upcoming events, and prayerfully await the day we can return to the facilities.



The candidates laying prostrate before the Lord

Twenty three men were ordained to the Permanent Diaconate by Daniel Cardinal DiNardo on February 20 at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Among these new deacons are four Special Youth Service volunteers who have been in the ministry for the past two years: Daniel Ruvalcaba (Leadership Academy), Alejandro Padilla (Gulf Coast Trades Center), Tom Spicer (Youth Village and Gulf Coast Trades Center), and Fritz Claydon (Harris County Juvenile Justice Center). They have been actively participating in the weekly newsletters and are awaiting the day they can return to meet with the youth again in the facilities. SYS is proud of the hard work and sacrifice these clergymen offer to serve the Lord and others through their vocation. Please keep them in your prayers.



Deacon Daniel Ruvalcaba
Christ the Redeemer, Spring



Deacon Alejandro Padilla
Sacred Heart, Conroe



Deacon Tom Spicer
St. Paul, Nassau Bay



Deacon Fritz Claydon (front left)
St. Mary, League City

Road to Emmaus

Throughout the Lenten season, SYS volunteers became Prayer Angels for each other. They signed up to pray anonymously for forty days for another volunteer. On March 11, they came together to reveal who they had been praying for and to meet the volunteer who was praying for them. Before the big reveal, volunteers participated in small and large group discussions, reflection, and prayer. The group broke bread together and revealed their identities, as Jesus did to the apostles on the Road to Emmaus.



Searching for the Word

We never know the impact we make on the kids that we serve. A couple years ago, we ministered to a young man who was placed at the Harris County Leadership Academy. The rare thing with this young man is that he was in the middle of his last year of Confirmation classes at his parish. Fortunately, we were able to work out with his parish to continue the classes while he was in custody.

While receiving individualized Confirmation instruction, he went beyond that and attended the weekly Bible Study group that was conducted by our SYS volunteers. He did this until he completed his program at the Leadership Academy.

Shortly after he got out, he was confirmed at his parish. About six months went by and he reached out to us. By then he had turned eighteen, completed high school, had a job, and started college. This was right in the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown. He had been trying to find an online Bible Study group, but said that he could not find one that broke things down as well as we did in the SYS groups. He desperately wanted to continue his Catholic education and understanding of the Scriptures.

After exhausting many options, we were able to form a weekly online Bible Study Group with two of the volunteers from the Leadership Academy so he is able to continue the same growth that he received while in custody. His situation highlights the value of our volunteers' gift of ministry and the importance of consistency in our program as he started the Bible Study while he was at JJC and continued the same format at the Leadership Academy and now in the community. He is very grateful for the effort from SYS that went to help him continue his journey.

Cinco de Mayo

The youth at Harris County Leadership Academy celebrated Cinco de Mayo with activities, music, and delicious food! Their celebration began with activities that included water balloons, an obstacle course, and a waterslide. Special Youth Services donated corn and toppings to make *elote en vaso*, or corn in a cup, a popular Hispanic snack. Toppings included mayonnaise, parmesan cheese, Tajín, Cholula salsa, and lime juice. SYS also donated kites that the youth learned to fly. We were happy to contribute to such a festive event that the kids enjoyed.



Mrs. Wells and Mr. Glover serving corn



Elote en vaso-Corn in a cup



Special Youth Services would like to thank a group of angels that have blessed our ministry and youth with generous donations and kind hearts: Oscar Luna from the Juvenile Justice Ministry in El Paso for his sharing of knowledge and wisdom in service to youth; Leadership Academy volunteers for their donations for movie night and field day for the youth; Fort Bend volunteers for their donations for the FBJPD G.E.D. graduation; and Jessica Barelas, Alison DiCamillo, and Tami Beal for always being there to assist us and for always being kind and courteous to our volunteers.

Would your group like to reach out to SYS youth? Please contact us at sys@archgh.org or (713) 741-8739.

Of one Heart and Mind



Donated items

It was in the 1st Reading of the 2nd Sunday of Easter that we heard described life within the Christian community. Acts 4:32 reads, "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own." It was a community willing to sell their possessions and come together to provide for the needs of the community. Being of "one heart and mind," it was community driven by the call to fulfill the mission of Christ and the will of the one who sent Him. Thanks to several members of the community in Fort Bend, a community of one mind and heart, the needs of someone in need were able to be met.

It began with an email from a concerned staff from Fort Bend Juvenile Probation Department (FBJPD). An expectant teen was due in four to five weeks and had very little, if anything, with regards to baby items as this was her first. Knowing Special Youth Services (SYS) has always been willing to help them, the staff sent over a list of items ranging from wipes to formula to even a crib. SYS reached out to our Fort Bend volunteers, Deacon Gilbert Rodríguez and his wife Betty. After reviewing the needs, they reached out to their home parish of St. Theresa's in Sugar Land and found help through their Gabriel Project ministry. What a blessing to see how these believers of "one mind and heart" came together to serve as living examples of Christ's love to this young lady. What a joy it was to be able to call the staff at FBJPD and let them know that not just one or two of the items on the list would be donated, but everything on the list.

SYS is grateful for FBJPD for thinking of SYS in these matters and even more so for the commitment to Christ's mission exhibited by Deacon Gilbert, his wife Betty, as well as St. Theresa's of Sugar Land and the Gabriel Project. Jesus said, "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35) Thank you all for loving one another so well.



The happy mother

WELCOME TO SYS!



Special Youth Services is happy to welcome Elizabeth Wade as our new Administrative Assistant. Elizabeth is a graduate of Texas A & M, an animal lover, and a parishioner at St. Laurence Catholic Church. Please give Elizabeth a warm welcome when you meet her.

Congratulations!

On May 18, Pope Francis named Father Italo Dell'Oro, C.R.S., as the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. SYS congratulates Fr. Italo and we ask all of you to keep him in your prayers. Read more about him and his new appointment by clicking on this [link](#) or by visiting the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston website.



LA PERSPECTIVA DE UN JOVEN

Una conversación entre el diácono Fernando y un hermanito en Cristo, J.A. de 16 años

¿Cuánto tiempo tienes en detención?

Dos semanas más unos días.

¿Cómo era tu relación con Dios antes de llegar aquí?

Yo no era tan constante. A veces rezaba, a veces no. Mi mamá era muy religiosa y me decía que rezara y que Dios me ayudaría y guiaría y protegería. La familia de mi padrastro era religiosa también y su mamá, entonces yo siempre estaba cerca de gente que era muy religiosa desde que nací. Él nunca dejó mi lado.

¿Y ahora?

Siento que Él abrió mis ojos para que me diera cuenta de lo qué verdaderamente es importante en la vida y básicamente dándome tiempo para reflexionar sobre mi vida para ser un hombre mejor. Lo que Él está haciendo, Él tiene un propósito para mí.

La primera vez que hablamos, me enseñaste un diario donde estabas escribiendo. ¿Me puedes contar sobre ello?

Básicamente, cuando leo la Biblia partes me tocan y trato de aprendérmelas de memoria y escribir cómo ser una persona mejor. Para practicar esa justicia.

Tienes una sección titulada para eso específicamente, ¿verdad? ¿Cuántos pasos tienes hasta ahora y cómo se te ocurrieron?

Sí, "Pasos para ser una persona mejor". De la Biblia. Son escrituras que me dicen cómo ser una persona mejor.

Veo que también tienes una sección titulada "Cómo orar".

Lo saqué directamente de la Biblia. Dice cuando ores, ora así: "Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo, santificado sea Tu nombre..." (continuó recitando el Padre Nuestro). Luego tengo "Cosas por cuales oro" como para que mi mamá esté protegida y por su riñón. Tengo más de diecisiete cosas en esta lista.

¿Lees tu diario diariamente?

Trato de leerlo cuando me despierto y cuando me acuesto para aprendérmelo de memoria.

¿Cómo pones en práctica estos pasos?

Si dice no decir malas palabras, trato de no decir malas palabras. Dale a tu prójimo o enemigo si tienen hambre. Yo trato de hacer estas cosas.

¿Algo más que quisieras compartir?

Tengo una carta al Señor. Básicamente escribo, pero siento que hablo con Él en una carta.

¿Cuáles son unas cosas en la carta que te resaltan más?

Que sane a mi mamá y la proteja. Que me perdone mis pecados. Que yo perdone a todos los que me han mentido, robado, o lastimado. Pedirle que me de paz pues ya siento demasiado dolor.

¿Cómo crees que llevar este diario te ha ayudado con tu relación con Dios?

Él me tocó el corazón. Siento que me está dando tiempo para reflexionar y hacerme un hombre mejor poco a poco y siento que tengo un futuro.

¿Qué les dirías sobre esto a otros jóvenes?

Ya hablo con muchos jóvenes. Les pregunto en qué creen y ellos dicen, "en Dios". Yo digo: "Si verdaderamente oras y verdaderamente pones tu fe y corazón en Él, Él te llevará a casa. Tienes que poner tu fe en Él". Les digo y luego rezo por ellos. Trato de rezar no sólo por mi familia y amigos. Todos merecen oportunidades. Oportunidades hacen campeones.

Aunque nos conocimos hace poco, ¿qué opinas sobre nuestras visitas?

Siento que Dios está trabajando. Dios te manda a ti y me recuerda que Él está trabajando. Mantener fe en Él, confiar en Él, y rezarle a Él.

¿Algo más que quisieras compartir?

Sigan poniendo su fe en Él. Siéntete como: "Si verdaderamente pongo fe verdaderamente en Su palabra, Él tendrá un lugar para mí no aquí pero en la vida eterna". Sigan rezándole a Él y teniéndole confianza. Él tiene un propósito para todos. Hasta los ricos o pobres, Él te ayudará. Lo que pidas en tu fe, Él te lo dará si tienes fe.

La perspectiva de un voluntario

Grady Dyke, HCLA

Yo he sido un voluntario con Special Youth Services (SYS) desde 2015. Soy voluntario en la instalación de Harris County Leadership Academy (HCLA) en Katy. Soy miembro de un ministerio de motociclismo que se llama Catholic Cross Bearers. Fue fundado por un hombre en Ohio que cumplió 18 años en una prisión de Ohio por asesinato. Después de su liberación de la prisión, quería continuar montar en motocicletas pero sabía que ya no podría asociarse con ese tipo de amigos que tenía antes de ir a la prisión. Sabía que necesitaba encontrar nuevos amigos, amigos que querían seguir a Jesús. A causa que no podía encontrar ese tipo de amigos en los clubes de motocicletas al que estaba acostumbrado, decidió empezar su propio ministerio de motociclismo para cristianos católicos, y lo cumplió. La misión principal de los Catholic Cross Bearers es “Llevar el amor de Jesús a los que están en la calle y en la prisión.” Los que están en la prisión no siempre significa a los que están tras las rejas. Mucha gente están encerrados en prisiones que ellos crearon para ellos mismos, o creado por otros. Tanta gente están encarcelados por adicciones a la droga o al alcohol, la pornografía, las pandillas, el odio, el deseo exceso del dinero y posesiones, y muchos otros tipos de cárceles que los esclavizan. Jesús vino a liberarnos a todos de estas prisiones. Él quiere darnos libertad verdadera para amar y ser amado por Dios nuestro Padre y amar a los demás. Quiere liberarnos del remordimiento y temor que nos previene experimentar la felicidad verdadera que Dios desea para nosotros. Por esta razón soy voluntario de SYS. Ellos están dedicados a traer esta libertad y felicidad a jóvenes que a veces están atrapados en situaciones malas y no pueden encontrar una salida. Algunos han perdido la esperanza. Algunos sienten que ya no les importa lo que les pasa. Muchos no pueden ver un camino mejor y eso es cuando entra SYS. Nos ha mandado Dios nuestro Padre para decirles que hay un camino mejor, una salida de la tristeza y dolor. Ese camino es una persona: JESÚS. Él vino para que “Tengamos vida y tenerla en abundancia.” Lo único que tenemos que hacer es decir SÍ. Uno de los jóvenes a quien dimos ministerio en HCLA, que se llama M., dijo SÍ. Después de haber salido de HCLA, él empezó a hacer los cambios necesarios en su vida. Trabajo para terminar la preparatoria y empezó a tomar clases en el colegio. Va a la iglesia y lee su Biblia. Él quería profundizar su entendimiento de la Biblia y le pidió ayuda al personal de SYS. Ahora, un diácono y yo estamos trabajando con M. una vez a la semana con un estudio bíblico virtual. Aunque no podamos entrar a las instalaciones a causa de regulaciones de COVID, todavía podemos ayudar a otros a crecer en Jesús. Siempre he sentido que si puedo ayudar a solamente una persona a conocer y a amar a Dios que eso sería suficiente para mí, y en este momento M. es esa persona.

Deacon Tom Jeffers, HCLA

En el año antes de ser ordenado de diácono, se me dio la opción de ministerios en cuales iba a estar involucrado y mi primera elección era el ministerio de SYS. Fue una elección fácil para mí ya que había estado involucrado con enseñar a jóvenes de edad de preparatoria durante su preparación para la Confirmación por varios años y podía ver qué tan importante era (es) ayudar a nuestros jóvenes a encontrar su camino hacia Dios y a vivir su vida como cristianos.

Durante los últimos años, he estado dándole ministerio a los jóvenes en Leadership Academy, acompañando al estudio bíblico con los otros voluntarios geniales cuando podía, pero generalmente visitando a jóvenes que sólo querían hablar o que yo orara con ellos. He conocido varios jóvenes excepcionales quienes estaban buscando algo bueno para su vida y algunos que querían salirse del salón por unos minutos, y yo oro todos los días que en esos encuentros Dios me ha usado para sembrar esa semilla de esperanza y amor. Esas pláticas uno a uno son tan poderosas en que los jóvenes pueden abrirse y decir cosas sin temor a que se le haga burla o sean condenados.

Después que la pandemia del COVID cerró todo y solamente dos hermanos diáconos podían entrar a hablar con los jóvenes, me compadecí por ambos de mi hermanos y por los jóvenes, sabiendo que tan difícil ha sido hablar con todos que están necesitados. También extrañé la gracia que recibía durante estos encuentros, entonces cuando me invitaron a formar parte de un estudio bíblico diferente, no había duda en mi mente que la respuesta sería ‘¡SÍ!’ Junto a otro voluntario, tenemos estudio bíblico semanal con un joven a quien nosotros dos antes visitábamos en Leadership, sólo que ahora está libre, terminó la preparatoria y está en el colegio. Todavía estaba buscando cuando salió y no podía encontrar un estudio bíblico como el que hacemos en SYS, entonces se puso en contacto con SYS y preguntó se le podían ayudar. Entonces aquí estamos hoy continuando a extendernos a y siendo Cristo para alguien quien quiere conocer más y más a Dios. Él es una inspiración para mí y me da esperanza para el futuro.

Sólo quiero compartir una cosa de nuestro estudio bíblico más reciente cuando nos preguntó cómo él podría escuchar al Espíritu Santo cuando iba a hacer una decisión importante, y lo que me vino a la mente era “Paren y reconozca que Soy Dios.” Respirar hondo, dejar que Dios nos guíe y no actuar tan rápido. Esto es algo que tenemos que llevar al corazón, no importe nuestra edad. Las bendiciones de Dios para todos.



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SCHEDULE:
6:00 pm: Mass
7:15 pm: Talk
8:15 pm: Confessions & Tailgate Gathering
9:15 pm: End
Open to all young adults ages 18-39

 In Person!  Online Option available

DATES:

 July 5 Mark & Katie Hartfiel	 July 12 Chika Anyanwu	 July 19 Colin Nykaza	 July 26 Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
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For more information go to www.archgh.org/cafecatholica
Location: Catholic Charismatic Center
1949 Cullen Blvd,
Houston, TX 77023
No registration needed to attend.
Donations Accepted.

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Due to the coronavirus, the Texas State Capitol is not allowing any major events for outside groups during the [87th Legislature](#). Sign up [here](#) or visit www.txcatholic.org/texas-catholic-voice/ for the Texas Catholic Voice, a weekly newsletter that gives advocates access to urgent action alerts as bills begin to gain traction.



Dying for the Faith

"Lorenzo Ruiz was born in Manila of a Chinese father and a Filipino mother, both Christians. Thus he learned Chinese and Tagalog from them, and Spanish from the Dominicans whom he served as altar boy and sacristan. He became a professional calligrapher, transcribing documents in beautiful penmanship. He was a full member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary under Dominican auspices. He married and had two sons and a daughter.

Lorenzo's life took an abrupt turn when he was accused of murder. Nothing further is known except the statement of two Dominicans that 'he was sought by the authorities on account of a homicide to which he was present or which was attributed to him.'

At that time, three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet, and Miguel de Aozaraza, were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. With them was a Japanese priest, Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz, and a layman named Lazaro, a leper. Lorenzo, having taken asylum with them, was allowed to accompany them. But only when they were at sea did he learn that they were going to Japan. They landed at Okinawa. Lorenzo could have gone on to Formosa, but, he reported, 'I decided to stay with the Fathers, because the Spaniards would hang me there.' In Japan they were soon found out, arrested, and taken to Nagasaki. The site of wholesale bloodshed when the atomic bomb was dropped had known tragedy before. The 50,000 Catholics who once lived there were dispersed or killed by persecution.

They were subjected to an unspeakable kind of torture: After huge quantities of water were forced down their throats, they were made to lie down. Long boards were placed on their stomachs and guards then stepped on the ends of the boards, forcing the water to spurt violently from mouth, nose and ears. The superior, Fr. Gonzalez, died after some days. Both Fr. Shiwozuka and Lazaro broke under torture, which included the insertion of bamboo needles under their fingernails. But both were brought back to courage by their companions. In Lorenzo's moment of crisis, he asked the interpreter, 'I would like to know if, by apostatizing, they will spare my life.' The interpreter was noncommittal, but in the ensuing hours Lorenzo felt his faith grow strong. He became bold, even audacious, with his interrogators.

The five were put to death by being hanged upside down in pits. Boards fitted with semi-circular holes were fitted around their waists and stones put on top to increase the pressure. They were tightly bound, to slow circulation and prevent a speedy death. They were allowed to hang for three days. By that time Lorenzo and Lazaro were dead. Still alive, the three priests were then beheaded.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II canonized these six and 10 others: Asians and Europeans, men and women, who spread the faith in the Philippines, Formosa, and Japan. Lorenzo Ruiz is the first canonized Filipino martyr. The liturgical feast of Saint Lorenzo Ruiz and Companions is celebrated on September 28."

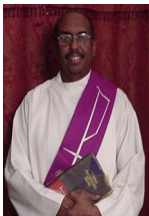
St. Lorenzo is the patron of the Philippines, Overseas Filipino workers and migrant workers, immigrants, the poor, separated families, and Filipino youth.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-lorenzo-ruiz-and-companions>; https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Lorenzo_Ruiz



Please pray for an end to violence; facility staff members who have passed away and their families; and for the health of Fr. Ryan Stawaisz.

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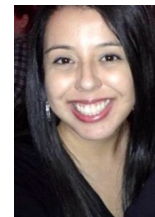
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"The harvest is plentiful, laborers are few" Luke 10:2

SYS would like to thank you all for your continued support to this ministry. We welcome all to share this newsletter with anyone who might have an interest and to share with us if you would like to see something in the Oratorio. If you know someone who may be interested in becoming a volunteer with SYS, please contact our office at: sys@archgh.org or (713) 741-8739.

