Pastor’s Corner

My brothers and sisters,

As most of you are well aware, Pope Francis issued his reflections on the gathering of the Synod of Bishops regarding family life. It is technically called a post-synodal exhortation. Ever since this organization was formed after the Second Vatican Council (1960’s), most popes have written reflections on whatever subject was covered by a gathering of this body. It is important to note that these reflections are just that – reflections. The content is not a declaration or intended to shift church teaching on any matter. Oftentimes, popes have indicated how we might approach matters of faith and morals more sensitively to the times in which we live.

Since his appointment as Bishop of Rome who is the first among equals in the College of Bishops, Pope Francis has made the matter of family his focus. His exhortation, titled On Love in the Family is a lengthy and comprehensive reflection on the reality of family life. I would like to draw attention to two topics from the exhortation. The first is what I will call a pastoral method and the second is a pastoral issue very much alive in Pleasanton and is a personal concern of mine.

Francis uses the expression “accompaniment” repeatedly in his writings and teachings. By that, he refers to the importance of the Church as a communion of believers, of persons, journeying together with gifts and challenges that enhance and challenge our oneness. Held together by Christ Jesus to announce Christ Jesus, we are to support one another in this journey that at times is filled with radiant lights and at other times weighed down in the cold shadows.

In order to dwell together in unity, we must be willing to support each other rather than judging too simplistically and listen to one another before speaking too quickly. Or, as I often say, if I have begun to formulate a response while someone is speaking to me about something meaningful, I am not listening. To accompany means to offer mercy. I can only be an agent of mercy if I have the ears to listen, eyes to see and a heart to understand. So often, mercy is viewed as “loosey goosey” or lacking “teeth.” Real mercy is when we actually walk with someone, verses judge from a safe distance. Real mercy is when we see the

(Continued on page 2)
cold shadow in which someone lives and desire to draw them to warm light. Real mercy is when someone has the courage to approach us needing accompaniment and we say YES! Such a pastoral approach is based upon where we find ourselves and not upon using church doctrine as the whip to those who seemingly need a flogging. Before I can model church teaching in my living, I need to know where others live. This is Pope Francis’ concern. The media bytes claim he on the one hand “He did not go far enough.” Others claim he’s trying to “Change Church teaching”. Both bytes miss the mark entirely. Francis is trying to genuinely name where families find themselves so that the Church can accompany them into a deeper encounter with the living Jesus Christ.

The second point of particular value to Pleasanton can be found in #33 of the exhortation. There, the pope addresses individualism. He writes:

*The tensions created by an overly individualistic culture, caught up with possessions and pleasures, leads to intolerance and hostility in families. Here I would also include today’s fast pace of life, stress and the organization of society and labor, since all these are cultural factors which militate against permanent decisions. We also encounter widespread uncertainty and ambiguity. For example, we rightly value a personalism that opts for authenticity as opposed to mere conformity. While this can favor spontaneity and a better use of people’s talents, if misdirected it can foster attitudes of constant suspicion, fear of commitment, self-centeredness and arrogance.*

The challenge I experience over and over again in the Tri-Valley is the crazy pace which so many of us live by. All too often, I want to make the “best” use of my time and yet the criteria for planning a good use of time is often based upon what is not healthy. One example, “Well, I have an open hour.” Or, with friends over dinner, the discussion comes up about Church as a “waste of time.” After all, it does not make a REAL difference. Hmmmm. By what standards do we measure a good use of time? Sometimes, my need to be really myself might be a call for some accompaniment. For Francis, accompaniment in the context of community is not an invitation to conform, but an invitation to be free and find what is meaningful. That is not an activity done in isolation and it is not an activity that is only measured by pleasure or rugged individualism. To slow down and walk together and worship together in Pleasanton might be a good thing. And going full circle…I am not sitting in a seat of judgment on this matter. I am in need of mercy and accompaniment here, too. Maybe this is something that we must do together.

Some first thoughts on Francis’ latest writing. Its Easter… It’s good to be alive.

Blessings,

FATHER PAUL
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<td>8:30 AM Wayne &amp; Catherine Wells</td>
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<td><strong>TUE Apr 19</strong></td>
<td>8:30 AM Rita Burns</td>
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<td><strong>WED Apr 20</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FRI Apr 22</strong></td>
<td>8:30 AM Sue Marshall Fallon</td>
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<td>8:30 AM Suzette Richoux Daniell Helen &amp; Joe Deiro</td>
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<td><strong>SUN Apr 24</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SUN Apr 17</strong></td>
<td>9:00 AM Rosalie Guerrini 11:00 AM Eddie Kwan (L) 4:00 PM Kay Glaves 6:30 PM Paz Posadas</td>
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<td>9:00 AM Manuel C. Pereira 11:00 AM Terry Williams 4:00 PM Nelson Galvez 6:30 PM For The People</td>
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**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**WWW.CATHOLICSOFPLEASANTON.ORG PAGE 3**
Reconciliation Service

The reconciliation service on Saturday, April 30 will be at 4:00 PM. The following week we resume our regular schedule.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you knit or crochet? Come meet our wonderful group of women who generously share their time and talent by creating and donating beautiful shawls to many parishioners who are in need. These shawls are distributed in times of sorrow, grief, and sadness but also in times of celebration and joy! We meet the second Thursday of every month at St. Elizabeth Seton, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. Please join us, we welcome all hands. Gwen Foster at (925) 398-8514 or Gwenfoster34@comcast.net or Cleo Foster at (925) 918-2986 or itzcleo@comcast.net.

Women In God’s Spirit (WINGS)

Monday, April 18, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Pope John Paul II Activity Center

Women of all ages are invited to join us for our New Evangelization: Invitation to Seek Christ in All. Our speaker, Rev. Chris Renz, will talk about “Jesus Is That Key that Will Unlock The Door Of Your Heart Letting Your Light Shine!” The remaining dates for the Spring Season are May 2 and May 16.

RCIA: Come and See

Are you feeling like you might want to experience full initiation into the Catholic Faith? The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process that adults complete to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Now is the time. Please contact Matt Gray at (925) 202-5425 or mgray@catholicsofpleasanton.org.
Stewardship of Treasure
March 2016
March Budget (Mo.)* $100,761
Sunday Plate Actual: $116,771
% via On-line Giving: 30%
Year to Date Budget: $400,976
Year to Date Actual: $393,713
March JPII Receipts $4,395
March A&B Receipts $82,383

Thank you for your Stewardship!

* Plate budget based on $33,587 per week

Giving Made Easy (GME)
Make your Arise & Build, Sunday and Special donations via your Credit Card or Bank Account
Go to the CCOP Website – select the “Giving” or “Capital Campaign” dropdown menu Click on the “Enroll and Update Account” box select donation type and choose One Time, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly or Annual frequency. If your credit card changes, please remember to update your account information. Thank you!

Altar Care Ministry Needs You!
The Altar Care Ministry at St. Elizabeth Seton needs additional team members. If you like to work from the comfort of your home and don’t like meetings, this is the ministry for you. Team members commit to two weeks/year. If you are interested in this very important ministry, please contact Mary Reding at jrmr3@comcast.net.

Faith Formation News

Sunday, May 1 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Monday, May 2 Noon - 7:00 PM
Join us at St. Augustine Hall, 3999 Bernal Avenue, to register your child for all Faith Formation programs.

At the time of registration you will need to:
1. be a registered parishioner of CCOP
2. provide a copy of your child’s baptismal certificate if we don’t have one on file
3. complete the Faith Formation registration form and visit the coordinator whose program you are interested in, and
4. give your registration paperwork along with a check for the fees to our Office Manager.

Registration forms as well as a comprehensive program description can be found on the CCOP website at: www.catholicsofpleasanton.org. Click on the Learning link at the top of the home page, then choose your child’s grade in school to learn about programming options.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter
Contact Ray and Roberta at (916) 806-4601 or Joe and Sue at (925) 680-7767 or go to oaklandwwme.org.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Conner Cruz Whitt
Marie Geoghegan
Kathy Harrison
Joe Moore
Robert Medina
Fe Alejandro Sarcia
Marlon Calso
Carol Wagner
Barbara Callaway
Norma Torrico
Andrew Holmes
Apollo Presley
Peggy Zanatta
Dyana Cardozo
Virginia DaCosta
Gonzaga DaCosta
Antonio Silva
Lillian Guesnon
Camille Chabot
Mary Tange
Torri Fritz
Cheryl Morgan

PRAYERS FOR THE DECEASED

Eugene Eccher
Gregory Orosco
Generoso Alcala
John Francis Dolan
Sister Ramona Bascom, OP
Raul Jose Moreyna
Diana Joan Bonanno
Zaida Aranda
Tom Kramer
Julie Gonzales
Marilyn Windsor
Adele Murphy
Francisco Perez
Paciencia Hermosura
Phyllis Veronica Staraci
Sue Fallon
Ron Rasmussen
Beverly Marie Anglin
Emily Patricia Rhodes
Barbara Joan Hansen

WWW.CATHOLICSOFPLEASANTON.ORG
A Thoughtful Presentation on Pope Francis’ Encyclical

*Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*

Thursday, April 21, 7:30 PM at St. Elizabeth Seton Church

On *Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si’)* is the appeal from Pope Francis addressed to “every person living on this planet" for an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility.

Join us at St. Elizabeth Seton on Thursday, April 21 for an evening discussion on *Laudato Si*, presented by Jill Buck, an international featured speaker at business, public policy, political, and environmental conventions. Jill is one of the nation’s leading advocates of free market solutions for environmental protection issues. In 2002, Jill founded the Go Green Initiative, a 501(c)3 that is the global leader in environmental education, operating in all 50 U.S. states, 73 countries, and on 5 continents. Jill is also an active parishioner at the Catholic Community of Pleasanton.

*Hosted by the Christian Living Committee*