

**For The Bulletin Of
July 21, 2019**



**THE 16TH SUNDAY IN
SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

The Martha and Mary story in Luke that we hear today is so familiar that many people refer to themselves as either a “Martha,” meaning they are good at or even prefer working in the kitchen, or a “Mary,” meaning they do not worry about such things. Indeed this gospel has been quoted so often and used to support so many various understandings of ministry, household chores, the role of women, and more, that it is good to simply step back and read the words, or listen carefully when they are proclaimed.

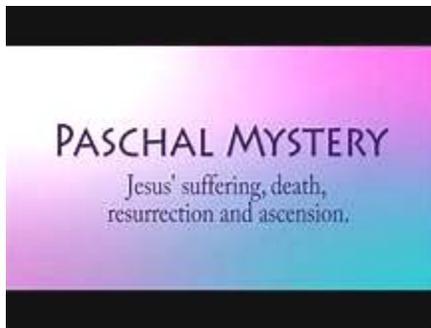
Ultimately, it is the last verse that causes many to perk up or question their own priorities. Is it really the better part to sit and visit, leaving others to do the serving? What if the Marthas of the world stopped working in the kitchen, leaving the Marys and even Jesus Himself without a meal?

At its worse, some use this passage to reinforce traditional domestic roles of women and men, with women doing the serving and men doing the reclining, visiting, and eating. Sometimes the reading is also used to claim that religious life (priesthood/sisterhood) is “better” than the lay state. But such easy readings do not do justice to the short story in Luke. In fact, they turn the moral of the story on its head.

Primarily, it is significant that Jesus is interacting with two women. One, Mary, is seated at His feet, listening to His instruction as a disciple, though she is not called that here. The other, Martha, is “burdened with much serving” in attempting to prepare a meal for Jesus. Jesus tells Martha in effect that the proper service for a disciple in this situation is to listen to Jesus. It is not to fret about serving meals.

Luke will make this point again in Acts of the Apostles, when the apostles are too busy serving at table to be attentive to God’s word and to prayer. To free themselves up for prayer and reading the word, the apostles appoint seven to serve at table, as “deacons.” The deacons then do just that. They see to the needs of the Hebrew-speaking and Greek-speaking Christians, so that the apostles can devote themselves entirely to their ministry.

The gospel reading today is not about the role of women, or the clerical/religious state versus the laity. Instead, the story demonstrates that the proper role of a disciple is attentiveness to Jesus and His word.



Living The Paschal Mystery

It is so easy for us to be consumed by activities, checking boxes, crossing items off lists. There can be a great satisfaction in acting this way and a tremendous sense of accomplishment. But we hear a different message with other priorities today. Rather than busy ourselves or stir ourselves into a frenzy, it is the proper role of a disciple to listen to Jesus' instruction. And this does not mean become a priest or sister. Instead, it can mean to spend time in prayer, or with Scripture, coming to know the person of Jesus in a better way. This activity is critical for any disciple. And the example we have today is that of a woman. Luke is clear at presenting Jesus as giving pride of place to the disciple who listens to His instruction. Let us go...and do the same.

- In our scripture passages today we see Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Martha caring for the needs of a visitor. How do you practice hospitality in your own life?
- If Jesus were speaking to you, what burdens and anxieties would He tell you to let go of?
- When someone's name is called twice in the Bible his/her life is about to change forever. Have you experienced a moment in your life where you felt God calling you to something new?

- How might you find more time in your daily life to sit at Jesus' feet and listen?



About Liturgy: Praying Through The Details

A question that many liturgists and liturgical ministers have is how to pray at Liturgy when they have so many things to worry about in doing their ministry. Presiders and liturgists, especially have a tough job being in charge of the entire liturgical flow of the Liturgy while still appearing, as some of the old liturgical rubrics said, "as if to pray." Surely, Martha must be the patron saint of liturgists!

Unfortunately, Martha often gets placed in a bad light for her attention to detail and focus on the tasks at hand. Yet if we didn't have any Martha, what would become of the liturgy, much less dinner?

Even as we might try to avoid being overly focused on small things and sustaining an unhealthy anxiety over things we cannot control, we can also revel in remembering that it was Martha, not Mary, who made the highest statement of faith in Jesus at the side of her brother's tomb: "Yes, Lord, I have

come to believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, the One Who is coming into the world.” (John 11: 27) When faced with ultimate crisis, Martha was prepared to place her faith in Jesus. If you worry about worrying as you do your ministry, here are some ideas that might help.

Be prepared as much as you can be before the Liturgy. Use the days before Liturgy to prepare, rehearse, check, and double-check every small detail you are responsible for. On the day of the Liturgy, take some time for yourself to pray. As you arrive at church, commit to giving your attention to the person right in front of you, for in them, you are entertaining angels. Then once the Liturgy begins, become the Martha not of the table, but of the tomb, putting all your trust in Jesus.



On behalf of all of us, I extend heartfelt congratulations to **Mr. & Mrs. Paul Oha and Mr. & Mrs. Michael DeWitt** whose marriages were blessed over the last week. May God continue to bless you with all that is necessary for strong faith, hope, and love all the days of your married life. Congratulations!



Fire Chaplaincy Training

As many of you know, I am the Chaplain for East Contra Costa Fire Protection District. Training for Fire Chaplaincy is an ongoing requirement and this coming week, from Tuesday, July 23rd through Friday, July 26th, I will be attending an Academy for Fire Chaplains at the ConFire Training Facility in Concord. Classes are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. I will preside for Eucharist tomorrow morning, Monday, July 22nd and then the liturgies for the remainder of the week will be Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion services. Please keep both our Chaplains and firefighters in your prayers as we continue to move through the height of the fire season.

Editorial: Our children are dying at the border. Bishops, where are you?

Jul 3, 2019

by [NCR Editorial Staff](#)

The bodies of Salvadoran migrant Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez and his 23-month-old daughter, Valeria, were seen June 24, after they drowned in the Rio Grande in Matamoros, Mexico, while trying to reach the United States.

The arresting image of the bodies of Salvadoran migrant Óscar Alberto

Martínez Ramírez and his nearly 2-year-old daughter Valeria, face down in the shallow waters of the Rio Grande River, was finally enough to elicit [an impassioned plea](#) from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: "This image cries to heaven for justice. This image silences politics. Who can look on this picture and not see the results of the failures of all of us to find a humane and just solution for the immigration crisis?"

It took that photo and a statement of lament by Pope Francis about the image to move the bishops to the kind of language that begins to gather in the horror of this national moment along our southern border. It took this moment, a mere dot on a tragedy-riddled timeline, to move the bishops beyond the anodyne and saccharine pronouncements previously pushed out of their headquarters following the evidence of caged children, separated families and manipulations of law by the Trump administration and its operatives, all clearly designed to punish, rather than relieve, desperation.

It might be easier if the image silenced politics and removed it from the calculus of the bishops' response. But that probably is not the case. Little else but a wish to remain cozy with the Trump administration can explain the hierarchy's resounding reticence in the current situation.

If the image, as the bishops claim, demonstrates the results of the failures to find a just solution, it also should conjure for them the seemingly endless stacks of images that emanated from Central America, particularly Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, in recent decades. They showed, for those who

cared to look, the deplorable consequences of long U.S. involvement in the region, of our complicity with some of the bloodiest thugs in the region. If, as some have stated, we should look at the deeper causes of today's problem, an honest investigation would be unsettling for North Americans.

Immigration policy is a complex matter. Borders do matter, as does the rule of law. But desperation, the need to seek safety and opportunity for one's family, reaching a conclusion that no alternatives exist but to flee — these are not the motives of "bad hombres," to use one of a stream of imbecilic terms the president has ascribed to those seeking refuge. San Pedro Sula, San Salvador, Guatemala City and their vicinities have become unpredictable and extremely violent territories. Much of the violence is due to the power of drug cartels, which feed the insatiable demand for narcotics in the United States.

People showing up at the border are not vacationing. They are frantic and out of alternatives. This is survival, not opportunism.

It is futile to attempt to argue with, much less expect something better, from an administration that has justified separating families and caging children in deplorable conditions — unsanitary, without proper food and crowded to cruel proportions. What can be said in the face of the outrageous reasoning of Ken Cuccinelli, the acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, who couldn't even drum up a bit of empathy for the dead father and his daughter?

[During a recent CNN interview](#), Cuccinelli said that the drowning was the fault of the father, who should have observed the rules regarding asylum. Notwithstanding that the claim is absurd, and disgusting, on its face, the fact is that even if the anguished father had kept up with the news and the law on the dangerous and difficult trek northward, one might have excused him for becoming confused. The Trump administration plays daily games, at times, shifting the rules. The basic fact is that anyone can seek asylum anywhere along the border. It is not illegal.

It is, however, cruel to contemplate rule changes, as is currently underway in this administration that would essentially eliminate asylum for Central Americans.

It should not be a futile wish that the Catholic community's leaders, so insistent on the worth of every human, would be crying out from the tops of their chancery offices over the blatant injustice at the border. There are exceptions. It seems clear that while the conference in its official statements has been mealy-mouthed, bishops along the border have felt free to be more impassioned in their responses.

One of the more notable statements came from Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, who was reacting to a different drowning — this of a 20-year-old Guatemalan mother and her three children, two infants and a toddler — and to the deplorable conditions children were being detained in at the border, as well as to comments that the drowned were not "our children." On his Twitter account June 25, Flores said, "Any discussion about immigrant children that begins with 'but they are

not our children' is starting from a position both contrary to natural law and Catholic Faith."

Flores further argued that national boundaries "are not absolute. To argue that we may defend them by any means deemed effective is statist voluntarism. It manifests at the level of government the false claim of an individual's right to unconstrained will. Either way, the powerful decide who gets thrown away."

Bishop Mark Seitz of the border Diocese of El Paso, Texas, has been equally uncompromising in his advocacy for migrants and in his critique of U.S. culture.

"Standing here at the U.S.-Mexico border, how do we begin to diagnose the soul of our country?" he asked [in a June 27 statement](#). "A government and society which view fleeing children and families as threats; a government which treats children in U.S. custody worse than animals; a government and society who turn their backs on pregnant mothers, babies and families and make them wait in Ciudad Juárez without a thought to the crushing consequences on this challenged city. ... This government and this society are not well," he said.

Flores and Seitz are perhaps the most visible signs of an official Catholic voice in this matter, but the people of God are prophetically and powerfully active in helping to ameliorate the worst effects of U.S. policies. In this case the normally led are doing the leading. Catholic groups and individuals on both sides of the borders are doing heroic work to bring some comfort to those in greatest need.

There is no greater example of Catholic action than the Hope Border Institute, a grassroots effort "that seeks to bring the perspective of Catholic social teaching to bear on the social realities unique to our region." No regional issue is more pressing than the plight of refugees, and the organization does laudable work on both sides of the border.

What's missing are the connections the U.S. bishops once had with their Central American counterparts. Why haven't U.S. bishops invited some of the bishops from the most affected countries to address both the conference at their semi-annual meetings, and dioceses around the country, to better explain the reality on the ground and the needs in Central America?

One need not do a great deal of interpreting of our sacred texts to get this one right.

It's not complicated. The mass of people arriving at our border are mostly escaping desperate and dangerous circumstances, trying to protect their children — our children. Our government is brutalizing them — men, women and children — under the cover of manipulated law and a narrative that raises unjustifiable fear and prejudice.

Bishops, where are you?

Artifacts show that early church women served as clergy

'Women are seen at the church altar in three of the most important churches in Christendom'

Jul 13, 2019

by [Sarah Mac Donald](#)

New research recently unveiled in Rome suggests women had a greater role in the early church's ministries and liturgies than previously thought and were present at church altars as deacons, priests and even bishops.

Ally Kateusz, research associate at the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, presented her findings July 2 to the International Society of Biblical Literature, drawing on iconography from ancient Christian art.

A specialist in the history of late antiquity, she has taught at both Webster University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She told the conference, which was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, that three of the earliest surviving images of Christians worshipping at church altars show women in official liturgical roles.

One of the artifacts she bases her findings on is an ivory reliquary box dating from around A.D. 430 that depicts a man and a woman standing on either side of an altar, each raising a chalice. The altar is that of Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The gesture of raising a chalice is recognized as a liturgical act performed by priests.

Two other artifacts also depict women at altars: One is a sixth century ivory pyx of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and the other is a stone sarcophagus front from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, which dates from around A.D. 430 and shows a male and a female figure standing on either side of the altar, holding their arms up in the *orans* pose.



"Pyx with the Women at Christ's Tomb," ivory pyx, circa A.D. 500s, Made in Eastern Mediterranean (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Kateusz believes that the images are significant because they show women and men in parallel roles, their bodies and gestures mirroring one another, and she suggests that this parallelism is indicative of their equality in their liturgical roles.

"If the sculptors had portrayed only men at these church altars, everyone would assume that they had important liturgical roles," she said.

According to Kateusz, author of *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership*, the artworks "illustrate that early Christian women routinely performed as clergy in orthodox churches."

"The art speaks for itself because women are seen at the church altar in three of the most important churches in Christendom," she told NCR. She believes it is likely that women's participation in liturgies and the

Eucharist in the early church was routine.

Virtually no liturgical manuscripts survived from the first seven centuries of Christianity in relation to ordination, leading to a long gap in the historical record. The oldest manuscript describing ordination in the Roman rite, the *Ordo Romano*, dates from the ninth century, centuries after these three artifacts.



"Pyx with the Women at Christ's Tomb," ivory pyx, circa A.D. 500s, made in Eastern Mediterranean (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

"Later scribes easily censored texts that would have originally described women's ordination. But these artifacts survived because they were buried. They were dug up in the 20th century," explained Kateusz. The artifacts provide "precious windows through which we can see the early Christian liturgy as it was once performed," she said, pointing out that there is no early Christian art where only men are depicted at the church altar.

But not everyone is convinced that these female figures were priests.

"The woman raising a chalice would be consistent with the deacon's role at the time of the showing in the Mass, and there is documentation that women deacons participated in the Mass in this manner," Phyllis Zagano, adjunct professor of religion at Hofstra University in New York and a member of Pope Francis' commission on women and the diaconate, told NCR. Zagano also highlighted that there are no extant ordination ceremonies for women as priests, but there are many for women as deacons.

Interpreting the depiction of the lifting of the chalice on the fifth century ivory reliquary box as exemplifying priesthood rather than the diaconate is not clear cut, Kateusz acknowledged.

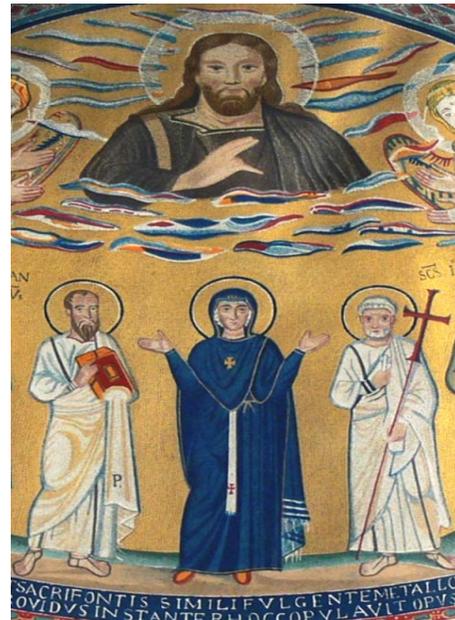
"In most cases we might assume they were two priests or two bishops presiding together at the altar," she said. "Yet a writing, known as the *Didascalica Apostolorum*, describes early Christian communities in the East where a pair of male and female deacons supervised the offerings. The male deacon symbolized Christ while the female deacon symbolized Holy Spirit, who was feminine gender everywhere Aramaic was spoken, and this pair ranked above the presbyters, who merely represented the apostles."

Other female figures depicted in liturgical roles in the artifacts could be women deacons.

"The portrayal of some of the men and women in Old St. Peter's altar area seems consistent with the role of deacons," Kateusz said. "The two women seen carrying censers of incense at the altar in the Church of the Holy

Sepulcher in Jerusalem is clearly consistent with the role of deacons."

In Rome, Kateusz led a group to see a mosaic at San Venantius Chapel in the Lateran Baptistery which depicts Mary wearing what appears to be a pallium, a symbol of episcopal authority given to new bishops. According to Miriam Duignan of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, who was part of the group, the Holy Office decreed in 1916 that all images depicting Mary in priestly vestments were to be banned and this mosaic was obscured by a massive altar piece. Most of the documented red tesserae comprising the cross on Mary's pallium were removed. The mosaic shows Mary's arms raised as if performing the Eucharist.



Altar apse mosaic, circa A.D. 650, San Venantius Chapel, Lateran Baptistery; an 1890s painting of the mosaic by Giovanni Battista de Rossi, that depicts Mary wearing an episcopal pallium with a red cross. (Courtesy of Ally Kateusz/Wijngaards Institute of Catholic Research)

"The episcopal pallium was not seen on anyone in art until 550. This is 650. It is only ever given to someone considered a bishop. Pope Theodore commissioned this mosaic including the bishop's pallium. It is a symbolic way of saying Mary was a church leader," Duignan said.

Some experts believe that women depicted with a pallium are abbesses. However, Kateusz refers to Russian art historian Alexei Lidov's research. He believes this seventh century mosaic of Mary with the pallium is a symbol of her priesthood, comparing it with an 11th century wall painting in Old St. Clement Basilica in Rome, that depicts Pope Clement with his arms raised wearing the same pallium while performing the Eucharist at an altar table.

"Why would we interpret the episcopal pallium seen on Mary standing with her arms raised above the altar in the Lateran Baptistery just half a mile away differently?" Kateusz asked.

Gary Macy, John Nobili SJ, Professor of Theology at Santa Clara University, said the question of ordaining women to the priesthood has been closed by the Vatican, but that should not, and will not, stop historians from analyzing new material and texts that may portray women as either deacons or priests.

Speaking to NCR, he agreed that Kateusz's female figures could be deacons or priests.

"Women deacons also had the pallium," he explained, shown by the 10th century ordination rite for a deaconess. Macy, author of *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in*

the Medieval West, acknowledged that the fifth century ivory reliquary box depicting a female figure lifting a chalice could suggest priesthood. "It is a possibility," he said, but there are other Christian artifacts that depict a woman lifting a chalice. "St. Barbara, for example, is traditionally portrayed as holding a chalice."

As to whether a woman with a pallium is a bishop or an abbess, Macy told NCR, "Some abbesses acted as de facto bishops. Mary could be depicted as a deacon because she 'made the word present' just as the deacon does when the Gospel is read."

"The most obvious interpretation of these artifacts is that women held liturgical roles in the early church," Macy said. "For centuries, it was just presumed that women did not lead the liturgy or perform certain liturgical functions in Christianity. That presumption is no longer held, so one looks at the remains of the past without that presumption."

Macy does not believe, however, that the Vatican tried to hide the evidence of women in liturgical roles.

"Sometimes attempts have been made to change the texts or portrayals, but I suspect these are individual acts, not some concerted plan," he said.

But Duignan believes the Vatican has hidden evidence and this new research is unlikely to find too many supporters even today.

"The Vatican will undoubtedly be reluctant to engage with these findings because they have led a campaign to

exclude women via the argument of tradition," she said. "But for most Catholics, the research will confirm what they suspected all along — that the ban on female clergy has always been about the silencing and suppression of women and never about true tradition."

[Sarah Mac Donald is a freelance journalist based in Dublin.]

The rise of EWTN: from piety to partisanship

Massive media empire shifts to become 'Fox News' of religious broadcasting

Jul 16, 2019

by [Heidi Schlumpf](#)

This series represents a continuation of NCR's look at the effect of money, largely making its way through the expanding and uniquely American non-profit system, on the Catholic narrative both inside the church and beyond.

EWTN is one of the major vehicles for that narrative. NCR delves into the development of the network that now has a truly global reach and includes several print publishing arms as well as the TV enterprise. This is Part One.

On Memorial Day, viewers who tuned into [EWTN's News Nightly](#) for "news from a Catholic perspective" were treated to two previously recorded one-on-one interviews by anchor Lauren Ashburn.

In the first, a 10-minute sit-down with Mike Pence during his March visit to Ave Maria University in Florida, the

vice president bashed "media elites and Hollywood liberals," called Democrats "the party of abortion on demand, even the party of infanticide" and described President Donald Trump as "the most pro-life president in American history."

In the second interview, Ashburn served up softball questions for 11 minutes with former White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders. The EWTN anchor gushed about the latest unemployment numbers and asked why the mainstream media hasn't given more coverage to this accomplishment, held up a devotional book she learned Sanders reads daily before asking about religious liberty, and ended with a query about her favorite ice cream. (It's mint chocolate chip.)

As part of a question that cited a poll showing white Catholics were holding a 44 percent favorable approval rating for Trump, Ashburn pointed out: "And I would just say that 44 percent number could be a lot higher if he came on to News Nightly."

"We'll work on that," Sanders responded with a laugh.

The segment was clear evidence of how a television outlet once devoted to expressions of Catholic piety and conservative catechesis and apologetics has grown into a truly influential media empire, well connected to Republican politicians and the Trump White House.

EWTN, where the "Catholic perspective" is unabashedly partisan, has also become the media star in a web of connections including wealthy conservative Catholic donors and some of the most public anti-Pope Francis forces in the Catholic world. Those

connections, traceable through a maze of non-profit organizations, helped fuel EWTN's development. It is a complex tale involving the matchup of a peculiar brand of U.S. style conservative Catholicism with conservative political ideology and economic theory.

NCR made repeated requests over nearly a week for comment from EWTN, but the network said it was unable to produce anyone to answer questions before publication.

If Ashburn were to land the Trump interview she was teasing Sanders about, it wouldn't be EWTN's first. Less than two weeks before the 2016 presidential election — while Trump was still embroiled in the "Access Hollywood" controversy in which he was caught on tape joking about sexually assaulting women — EWTN news director and anchor Raymond Arroyo did an "exclusive" sit-down with the candidate at Trump's Miami hotel.

Arroyo asked about the tapes and gave Trump two chances to apologize or take back the extremely lewd comments about women, but the candidate insisted it was "all made up" and "just locker room talk," adding that "You can't go back. You have to look forward." In the end, he blamed the "nasty primary" and "nasty campaign."

During the 15-minute interview, Trump refused to talk about his prayer life and rambled about the Affordable Care Act being a "disaster" and religious liberty being "in tremendous trouble," but he gave clear, succinct answers when it came to an issue that is a central concern to the EWTN audience.

"You weren't always pro-life, but you now are determinedly and decidedly pro-life," said Arroyo, not exactly asking a question.

"Yes, I am pro-life," Trump affirmed. "You said you are going to appoint judges who are pro-life," Arroyo said, again in statement form. "Right," said Trump.

Eleven days later Trump was elected in a surprise victory, helped along, according to the Pew Research Center, by strong support from white Catholics, especially those who are regular Mass-goers — a typical EWTN viewer.

The day after Election Day at least one EWTN vice president made his vote clear. John Manos, EWTN's general counsel (and former assistant attorney general for the State of Michigan) tweeted, "When I went to vote yesterday, I said to the poll worker, 'Hold my beer and watch this!' " His tweet includes the hashtags: #Trump #TrumpTrain #Trumpocalypse #TrumpPresident

Although the network had been friendly in the past to the Republican party because of shared positions on abortion, gay marriage and religious liberty issues, EWTN's political partisanship has become more visible since Trump's election, most notably on its two news shows, "News Nightly" and "The World Over."

Both shows regularly include as guests political conservatives discussing domestic and international policies. In a 2016 interview, former House Speaker Paul Ryan told Ashburn that he would continue to defend Republican

principles, as a "Catholic exercising prudential judgment in public life." Former Trump White House advisor Steve Bannon, in a 20-minute interview with Arroyo in April, gave his opinions on church and political issues, defending the Trump administration and other "populist/nationalist/sovereignty movements" as better reflecting Catholic social teaching than Pope Francis.

In June, EWTN News Nightly's White House correspondent covered Trump's "Make America Great Again" 2020 campaign kick-off rally in Florida, providing somewhat balanced coverage by including interviews with some less-enthusiastic attendees and even a Trump critic found at a nearby daily Mass.

But at Fox News, Trump's campaign launch coverage was less balanced, with their on-the-ground reporter calling it "an incredible display" and "an amazing accomplishment." That reporter was none other than EWTN host Arroyo, who is also the official biographer of founder Mother Angelica.

Since 2017, Arroyo has been a regular contributor to Fox News and has substituted for Laura Ingraham on her commentary show on Fox News. Ingraham has stirred considerable controversy for defending a white nationalist, mocking a Parkland school shooting survivor and calling immigrant detention facilities "summer camps."

Arroyo also joins Ingraham on her show for segments such as "Seen and Unseen," where he makes fun of Nancy Pelosi's jaw movements, or "Friday Follies," where he ridicules "political correctness."

Commentators are speculating whether Arroyo will jump ship and join Fox full-time, but for now the partnership seems to be working for both parties.

While secular alternatives to Fox News exist — from its counterpart on the left, MSNBC, to more centrist major network broadcasts — no alternatives are available to EWTN in the Catholic world. Once it overtook an early and flawed attempt by the U.S. bishops to form their own network, EWTN quickly became the only major Catholic voice on the television landscape in the United States — and that voice has gone global.

Settling into the 'Tower of Hope'

When the Diocese of Orange consecrates its new cathedral in Garden Grove, California, this month — after seven years and more than \$70 million of renovations — the former "Crystal Cathedral" will have been transformed from its earlier use as the television set for the "Hour of Power," one of the most long-running and popular evangelical Protestant shows.

Whether the Crystal Cathedral's founding pastor and star, the late Rev. Robert H. Schuller, would agree with the message, he might appreciate the sheer reach of the current inhabitant of the adjacent cross-topped Tower of Hope. There, on the eighth floor, resides the newest, West Coast studio for what is today the largest religious media network in the world, the Eternal Word Television Network.

At his peak in the 1980s Schuller reached some 15 million viewers weekly. EWTN's 11 networks — broadcasting 24/7 — claim a reach of more than a quarter of a billion people

worldwide in more than 145 countries and territories. EWTN programming is available through more than 6,000 TV affiliates as well as on ROKU, Apple TV, Amazon Fire and YouTube. In addition to the Orange County studio, EWTN has studios in Washington, D.C., and at the company's headquarters outside Birmingham, Alabama. And that's just the television portion of the business.

EWTN also provides free radio programming to more than 500 domestic and international affiliates and on SIRIUS/XM and iHeart Radio, as well as through its worldwide shortwave radio station. It also owns and operates the largest Catholic website in the United States, as well as the National Catholic Register newspaper, an English- and a Spanish-language online news wire service, a book publishing arm and a religious goods online catalog.

It is truly a global media empire, one so diversified and complex it can be difficult to estimate its total budget or net worth. The television 501c3 non-profit alone (there are at least three others) has a budget of about \$50 million to \$60 million a year — with the other enterprises likely contributing another \$10 million, according to tax documents.

While this still pales in comparison to the roughly \$400 million annual budget of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the network founded in 1981 in the monastery garage of a then-unknown Poor Clare nun named Mother Angelica, arguably has more influence than the official church leaders, especially since their authority, already in decline, was further diminished by their mishandling of the clergy sex abuse crisis.

The bishops themselves are now apparently shaped by the EWTN empire. According to a recent study of the U.S. episcopate, the EWTN-owned National Catholic Register is the religious publication read by the most bishops, with 61 percent saying they read it. But what the bishops — and others, Catholic and non-Catholic alike — are getting is a very particular slice of Catholicism from EWTN and its affiliate organizations, one not necessarily representative of the U.S. church as a whole. Polling and ongoing studies of the Catholic population in the United States consistently finds a far greater diversity of views and tolerance for questions than is the case on EWTN broadcasts. EWTN has become the only regularly televised image of Catholicism in America.

"By taking this one orthodox approach to Catholicism out of the church and putting it on television, you're making it way more visible," said Michelle Nickerson, an associate professor of history at Loyola University Chicago. "It's declaring to Catholics and non-Catholics that this is who we are: We're here and we're staking out this ground." The media portions of the organization — from EWTN to the Register to the Catholic News Agency — are hardly objective, doing a type of "journalism" expected on Fox News but not necessarily from what started as a devotional network where the homebound could find televised Mass and other spiritual programming.

Some may have thought that the network, under lay control since 2000, would disappear or at least decline after the death of its charismatic founder in

2016, but it has only continued to grow in size and apparent influence, especially among individuals and groups with an interest and the money to control the storyline of contemporary Catholicism.

Libertarian love-fest

In addition to its slanted political coverage, EWTN and its affiliate journalistic enterprises also have connections to economic libertarian ideologues, including EWTN governors' board member and major donor Timothy Busch, who has said he supports anti-union "right to work" laws, opposes minimum wage increases and advocates for free market capitalism as a tool for raising people out of poverty.

Busch is an attorney, wealth manager, real estate investor (including hotels and resort/spas), winery owner and philanthropist based in Southern California. He and his brothers also own a chain of upscale food markets cofounded by their late father in Michigan.

He also is behind the Napa Institute, which combines conservative theology and libertarian economics, and its new co-organization, the Napa Legal Institute, which has made health care a priority.

Two months after Trump's inauguration, Busch used the occasion of an opening Mass for a conference at the Catholic University of America business school that bears his name to praise the new presidency.

Speaking at the beginning of Mass — televised by EWTN — from the sanctuary of the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the

Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Busch called the moment "a time when many of us as Catholics saw it as a time of darkness and now we see a time of light."

"We will in the next day learn more in our hearts and our minds where this next term will take us, and we pray it will be for greatness to restore our country," Busch said, according to NCR reporting. The business school, named for Busch after his \$15 million gift to the university, also previously hosted outspoken libertarian Charles Koch at an event co-sponsored by the Napa Institute.

In addition to Napa and EWTN, Busch is involved in other conservative Catholic organizations and causes, including as a "cooperator" for Opus Dei, a conservative lay and clerical organization, and a longtime member of Legatus, an organization for wealthy Catholic business leaders. He also cofounded and chairs the board of the Magis Center, which describes itself as a faith-and-reason institute.

Magis (and its partner apologetics organization Credible Catholic — both ministries of former Gonzaga University president Jesuit Fr. Robert Spitzer) is headquartered on the Christ Cathedral campus, just one floor above the EWTN studios, leading one publication to call the building a "Catholic Super Center." Other neighbors in the Tower of Hope include the Colorado-based Augustine Institute, an organization dedicated to the "new evangelization" and founded by several graduates of Franciscan University of Steubenville at the request of then-Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput.

Also on the ninth floor is [Dynamic Catholic](#), which specializes in Catholic content and resource creation. It was founded by motivational speaker Matthew Kelly, whose secular business consulting clients [include](#) the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy and Air Force, McDonald's, Proctor & Gamble and FedEx.

The plan is to make the cathedral campus home to "multiple movements" in the church, Busch told a [Breitbart reporter in 2014](#). "This is going to create great synergies among those ministries, to collaborate on donor bases and organizational structure," he said. In fact, the idea for the diocese to purchase the Crystal Cathedral was Busch's, according to an [article](#) detailing the involvement of multiple Legatus members in the decision and funding. "It's like going to a Legatus meeting," one Legatus member said of meetings of the Cathedral Guild, a group of major donors to the project.

And Busch's former law firm, Busch & Caspino (since [split](#)) represented the diocese in court for the purchase of the cathedral, even convincing Schuller to accept the diocese's lower bid of \$57.5 million for the property worth an estimated \$500 million.

Busch, who joined the EWTN board in 2017, is a staunch supporter of the Republican Party and candidates. An analysis of his recent political contributions indicates only GOP recipients, including candidates and organizations in Missouri, Virginia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Idaho, Vermont, Oklahoma as well as California.

EWTN's alignment with Busch, fellow board member Frank Hanna III and other individuals, as well as organizations such as Fox News and the Catholic University of America, has either been done knowingly as a strategy, or the network is being unintentionally used by outsiders, said a theologian who studies religion and history.

Either way, "it's a dangerous game," said Jesuit Fr. Mark Massa, director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. "While they claim to be simply trying to educate Catholics in useful piety and a robust spiritual life, they're being used by people on the right for their own purposes," Massa told NCR. "Either they are disingenuous or not awake."

This merging of ideological and political causes with theological ones is concerning. Said Massa: "When religion links itself to political causes, it always turns out badly for religion."

[Heidi Schlumpf is NCR national correspondent. Her email address is hschlumpf@ncronline.org. Follow her on Twitter [@HeidiSchlumpf](#).]

EWTN's voice is powerful, partisan and problematic

Jul 17, 2019

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)

Ten years ago, I began researching my biography of the Rev. Jerry Falwell. I had been familiar with the religious right, of course: In the 1980s, Falwell was a frequent TV guest opining on the political issues of the day through the

lens of his particular brand of conservative Christianity. Still, I learned a great deal about evangelical Christianity in those years of research.

One of the things that most impressed me as I conducted my research was the degree to which the diffuse ecclesiological structures of evangelical Protestantism limited its reach and aggravated a certain coarseness. In fact, structure is too strong a word. The politico-theological complex of evangelical Christianity had a variety of different, sometimes wildly different, points of influence, and it utterly lacked the kind of hierarchic ecclesiological structure the Catholic Church has.

Our hierarchic structure, whatever its problems, served historically as a moderating influence and had, for many centuries, insisted on an intellectual rigor that was formidable. We Catholics might get things wrong, and individual Catholics might be politically obtuse, but people would know who speaks for the Catholic Church and they would know that while there was political relevance to the church's theology, our church would not become an arm of any political party. In addition to our structures, there was a body of official teaching, developed over the centuries, that stood as a bulwark against any attempt to co-opt it for partisan ends.

It was during those same years of research, that my dad began asking me some questions about our Catholic faith. My father, an educated man, started wondering about things that struck me as bizarre, asking if the church really believed something it didn't, or opposed something about which the church's stance was nuanced. He would ask me

political questions that were premised on conservative talking points that were at best arguable and at worst outright lies. I came to realize that he was occasionally tuning into EWTN.

Yesterday, my colleague Heidi Schlumpf began a four-part series about EWTN. And, one of the things her research shows is that EWTN is every bit as powerful a voice among the Christian right as any particular evangelical outlet, and the network engages in precisely the kind of coarse partisanship that I had found so different, and so dreadful, in Falwell's career. The mainstream media hears the phrase "Christian right" and thinks of Jerry Falwell Jr., Franklin Graham, Robert Jeffress and Tony Perkins. They need to start adding Raymond Arroyo, Lauren Ashburn and Edward Pentin to the roster.

Falwell Sr. was an empire builder and he looked to American Catholics as a model. He said he wanted his Liberty University to be an evangelical Notre Dame. There is nothing so distinctive about 20th century American Catholicism as its prowess at infrastructure. EWTN is no exception, and it has added a news service and a newspaper to its media empire. The television network has expanded exponentially and its reach is unparalleled among religious programming.

But, there is a difference. The vast complex of parishes and schools and hospitals and fraternal associations that American Catholics built in the 20th century were all, in some meaningful way, connected to the hierarchy of the church. People might agree or disagree

with what the church had to say, but they knew who spoke authoritatively for the whole. EWTN, however, severed its official ties to the church at the same time as it had eclipsed the bishops' own efforts to create a Catholic television network. NCR is proud of its independence from any official control, but EWTN repeatedly claims it is presenting the news "from a Catholic perspective." When you are the only Catholic network, people can be forgiven for thinking the "Catholic perspective" being presented is authentic and accurate.

And that claim could not be more wrong. Despite their insistence that they are loyal to the magisterium, EWTN has always been highly selective in presenting church teaching. They distort some teachings and ignore others. They inflate those teachings they like to the point that they block out other important teachings. They evidence none of the historical suspicion with which the Catholic tradition has always viewed capitalism. NCR has always acknowledged its role as a kind of loyal opposition. EWTN has claimed to be loyal to the party in power, but now in the age of Pope Francis, their disloyalty is no longer able to be hidden.

Later this week, Schlumpf's series will examine the *ad intra* concerns raised by EWTN, their willingness to challenge Francis in ways that are remarkable. But, as she shows today, their political coverage lacks all the nuance and depth that the Catholic intellectual tradition brings to political issues. I almost always watch Arroyo's "The World Over" and he repeatedly obfuscates explicit Catholic teaching on issues like immigration or the death penalty. On

issues like abortion and same-sex marriage, a particular political or legal agenda is presented as the only way of honoring the church's moral teaching. Never do you hear a frontal challenge to anything said by President Donald Trump. The trenchant partisanship at EWTN has not turned the network into Falwell Lite. It has turned it into Catholic Lite.

Do I exaggerate? In 2014, Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley went to the U.S.-Mexico border near Nogales, Arizona, to lead a Mass for the repose of the souls for those who had died trying to cross the border. He was joined by several other bishops. The image of O'Malley and Bishop Gerald Kicanas distributing Holy Communion through the slats in the border fence to fellow Catholics on the other side brought tears to my eyes. But, in addition to the emotional impact, the image showed a profound Catholic truth: The Communion we share in faith cannot be broken by any political border. "Somos juntos en una familia in Cristo," Kicanas said. Later that week, on Arroyo's show, George Weigel called the Mass "an act of political theater." Really?

To be clear: I have nothing but respect for conservative friends and scholars who wrestle with the Catholic intellectual tradition and who reach conclusions different from my own, but conclusions that do not vitiate or contradict Catholic social teaching. That is not what EWTN does. And, increasingly, they serve as a means for taking stories from the lunatic fringe like LifeSiteNews or Church Militant, and mainstreaming them, making them sound plausible when they are actually fantastic.

The bishops have a large problem on their hands. They have lost control of communications within the church. Millions of Catholics watch EWTN. How many read a press release from the bishops' conference calling for protections for undocumented immigrants? How many read a diocesan newspaper if there still is one? EWTN is not a nuisance, it is a claimant problem. Had the bishops confronted the organization bit by bit over the years, they would not be in the situation now of having to lance the boil. But, that is the situation they are in and, as always happens when a boil is lanced, it won't be pretty.

[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]



Parish Tour To France

I have begun to plan another tour in 2020 to Paris and the North of France, visiting its famous cathedrals, museums, historical sites, Normandy, and Lourdes.

Linda Grelli and Black Diamond Travel are our travel consultants and are putting the tour together. I am very pleased to share with you, that after consultation with Linda, we have set the dates for the tour as the following: August 25 – September 5, 2020. I have attached the proposed itinerary to the Insert.

If you think you might be interested in joining us, please give the parish office a call and leave your contact information,

name, phone number, etc. and we will be in touch to firm up the arrangements. Also, watch my Insert for updates and detailed information.



Please remember to send in your Tithes and Offerings during the summer months. While we are able to take vacation and get away, the bills, financial obligations, staff salaries, and other financial responsibilities continue. We appreciate how faithful you are in supporting the parish and the building of God's kingdom here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. The summer months, June through August, present the greatest challenge to our budget. Thank you in advance for making sure that your weekly offering/tithe/pledge is sent in.



On behalf of all of us, our gratitude and thanks to all those who do so much to help care for the parish and its needs throughout the week. To those who clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Jean Rogers, Mency Osborne, Reno and Thelma**

Benasfre, Al Cosce, Jun Bajet, Carole Miller, and Alfred Madoshi.

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms throughout the week: **Rose Salamanca, Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Father Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Frances Rojek, Mel Costanza, Maryann Peddicord, Estrella Rusk, Alicia Perez, Joe Fanfa and Paul Riofski.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Beth Enea, Richard Enea, Kathy Augusta, Vince Augusta, and Sherry Webb.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Tony Gumina.**



The outside Stations of the Cross which are located at the far North end of our parking lot were in need of some tender loving care. They were in disrepair caused by time, the elements, and insects.

Over the past two weeks they have been refurbished and should now last for years to come. This work included the replacement of all posts with treated redwood and the refinishing of the Stations themselves. A final coat of protective stain was applied to the each Station in the color of our Church sign at the main entrance.

By the time you read this article the project should be complete. Please take a few minutes to visit these Stations as they are there for all of us to enjoy and to nourish our devotional prayer life.

40th Anniversary Photographic Book

I just received last week a beautifully done photographic book of our parish's 40th Anniversary celebration. I would like to thank Lilya Superales of *Photography By Lilya*, for doing such a wonderful job of capturing the Liturgy and the festivities and dinner afterward.

If anyone is interested in purchasing this book of photographic memories, please contact Lilya at 925-852-3075 or by email at:

superalesphotography@gmail.com .

