

Fall 2020

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Habari Gani - [Swahili term meaning "What's the Word?"]

Office of African American Ministry - Diocese of Beaumont



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Let us pray the Rosary together.

October is the month of the Rosary

The rosary is one of the most cherished prayers of our Catholic Church. Introduced by the Creed [I believe in God, the Father Almighty] followed by the Our Father, three Hail Marys and the Doxology [Glory Be]. The rosary involves the recitation of five decades, each, consisting of the Our Father, 10 Hail Marys and the Glory Be. In more recent years the *Fatima Prayer* [O My Jesus, forgive us our sins.....] has been added by many. During this recitation, the individual meditates on the saving mysteries of the life of Our Lord. The Mysteries of the Rosary tell the story of the Life of Christ. The mysteries begin and end with Mary from her "yes" to be the Mother of God to her being crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Journeying through the Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous and Glorious Mysteries of the rosary, the individual brings to mind Our Lords' Incarnation, His Passion and Death and His resurrection from the dead. In so doing, the rosary assists us in growing in a deeper appreciation of these mysteries, in uniting our life more closely to Our Lord and in imploring His graced assistance to live the faith. We also ask for the prayers of our Blessed Mother, who leads all believers to her Son.

The origins of the rosary are "sketchy" at best. The use of "prayer beads" and the repeated recitation of prayers to aid in meditation began in the early days of the Church and are rooted in pre-Christian times. Evidence exists from the Middle Ages that strings of beads were used to count Our Fathers and Hail Marys. Actually, these strings of beads became known as "Paternosters," the Latin word for "Our Father."

Tradition does hold that St. Dominic (d. 1221) devised the rosary as we know it. Moved by a vision of our Blessed Mother, he preached the use of the rosary in his missionary work among the Albigensians, who had denied the mystery of Christ. The rosary gained greater popularity in the 1500s, when Moslem Turks were ravaging Eastern Europe. Recall that in 1453, Constantinople had fallen to the Moslems, leaving the Balkans and Hungary open to conquest. With the Moslems raiding the coast of Italy, the control of the Mediterranean was now at stake.

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In 1571, Pope Pius V organized a fleet under the command of Don Juan of Austria, the half-brother of King Philip II of Spain. While preparations were underway, the Holy Father asked all of the faithful to say the rosary and implore prayers of our Blessed Mother, under the title of Our Lady of Victory, that Our Lord would grant victory to the Christians. Although the Moslem fleet outnumbered the Christians in both vessels and sailors, the forces were ready to meet in battle. The Christian flagship flew a blue banner depicting Christ crucified. On October 7, 1571, the Moslems were defeated at the Battle of Lepanto. The following year, Pope Pius V established the Feast of the Holy Rosary on October 7, where the faithful would not only remember this victory, but would also give thanks to the Lord for all of His blessings and remember the powerful intercession of Our Blessed Mother.

The fact that our Church continues to include the Feast of the Holy Rosary on the liturgical calendar testifies to the importance and goodness of this form of prayer. Archbishop Fulton Sheen said, *The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged whose eyes close upon the shadow of the world and open on the substance of the next. The power of the rosary is beyond description.*

Authored by Fr. William Saunders – History of the Rosary



A prayer to Our Lady from St. Padre Pio when we recite the rosary: *Have pity on me! May one compassionate look of yours revive me, purify me and lift me up to God; raising me from the filth of this world that I may go to Him Who created me, Who regenerated me in Holy Baptism, giving me back my stole of innocence that original sin had so defiled. Dear Mother, make me love Him!*

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary

1. **Whosoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary shall receive signal graces.** [A signal grace may be a simple sign in daily life that answers a question made in prayer or points towards the will of God. For example, seeing a rose after finishing a novena to St. Therese of Lisieux could be considered a signal grace. Signal graces are often subtle or seemingly coincidental.]

As we are all aware, this is an election year. In addition to the Presidential race, there are many state, county and city elections. Many areas have other issues on the ballot that will affect our everyday lives. Please read the following article from our guest columnist, Coquese Williams.

Faith in Action - The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

As we enter the last weeks of the **Election 2020** voting season, we, as Catholics, have a responsibility to participate in political life to assure that governmental policies and practices are governed by Catholic Social Teaching. In a quote from Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis states, *If indeed 'the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,' the Church cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.*

One of the most misunderstood policies of the Church, in my opinion, is that we are to be politically active. That activism applies to all members of the Church. We are all encouraged to learn the issues on the ballot at the local, state and national levels; to learn the policy positions of those running for office; and, to responsibly vote for the people and issues that are in line with our moral convictions.

Catholic lay men and women need to act on the moral principles of the Church and become involved. That includes running for office, working within political parties and communicating concerns to elected officials. *Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.*

As stated previously, our participation should be guided by Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The four principles most related to our political participation are: ***the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity***. Not all issues will be morally equivalent and looking at issues through these four principles does not reduce Catholic Social Teaching to one or two issues. These anchor our commitment as Catholics to defend human life and other human rights from conception to natural death.

We are asked, as Catholic voters, to use CST to examine the positions of candidates on issues and consider candidates' integrity, philosophy and performance in making our decisions. We are asked to see beyond political parties. In addition to the CST principles mentioned above, these other principles should also be incorporated in our deliberations: ***human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for Gods creation and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.***

We encourage you to go to the USCCB website <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship> to read the written material on which this column is based, and links to videos which also explain the challenges and ways in which you can overcome them.

Coquese L. Williams, Director of Parish Social Ministry,
Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary [cont.]

2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.

It is with great pleasure that I share an article with you that was written by my colleague, F. DeKarlos Blackmon, who is the Secretariat Director | **Life, Charity, and Justice for the Diocese of Austin**

Social Justice

Considering the totality of the Gospel of Life as we cast our votes

By F. DeKarlos Blackmon | *Columnist*

Bringing our faith to the public square is a fundamental expression of how we share God’s love for each other as we work toward building a virtuous civilization of love. In *Deus Caritas Est*, the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, we are reminded of our responsibility to share with others the love God lavishes upon us. Pope Benedict reminded us, and Pope Francis reiterates, that if we truly believe “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice” ([Deus Caritas Est](#), 28; [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 183).

Considering the government has a responsibility to create a just society, we — as church — must also accept our responsibility to stimulate, advocate and serve as catalysts to compel the government to always advocate for what is right and just for the common good. As we approach the November elections, bombarded with extensive rhetoric about which candidates are worthiest of our votes, I recommend considering the following points as we form our consciences.

Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person’s life ([Evangelium Vitae](#), 81). Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin often reminds us that God has given each of us an inestimable dignity that can never be taken away. If we believe the Gospel of Life is the core of the church’s social teaching, then we must strive arduously not only to preserve and protect life after conception, but also to nurture and respect life from conception to natural death. This means that we need to express care and concern for every member of society.

Justice is inseparable from charity and intrinsic to it ([Caritas in Veritate](#), 6). The state, together with economic institutions, has a responsibility to make the kinds of systemic changes needed to protect the vulnerable, the impoverished and various peoples suffering from discrimination and exclusion. In keeping with our promotion of the sanctity of life, we should keep before us that this ideal encompasses the serious concerns of extensive hunger, euthanasia, violence, capital punishment and the absence of adequate health care.



We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 48). Pope Francis reminds us that our missionary impulse enables us to go forth to everyone without exception. Considering the inseparable bond between our faith and the poor, we should never forget that it was for our sake Christ became poor although he was rich — for it was by his poverty that we would become rich. Just as Christ loved us so much that he gave up his life to save us, we too should desire to follow Christ’s example expressing concern for the poor. Our advocacy on behalf of the poor expresses the authenticity of our love and concern for the inviolable dignity of every person without regard for distinction.

We must consider all the churchs teaching on human life, human rights, justice and peace as we discern for whom to vote in the upcoming elections. Considering the subjective media attention concerning the presidential elections, we must carefully take the time to form our consciences within the framework of the *totality* of the Gospel of Life. It is not the responsibility of bishops, priests and deacons to tell us for whom to vote. If anything, they are obliged to teach the truth to aid in the formation of our consciences through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and the authoritative teaching of the Magisterium.

Finally, let us not fall into the temptation of broadly disparaging any political party or group because they disagree with our views. Let us not find ourselves misusing Scripture and church teaching to antagonize or demonize those whose political views differ from our own. Rather, let us share with those who disagree with us the love God has lavished on us as we endeavor to build a virtuous civilization of love. This is, in part, how we may fully promote the Gospel of Life in this contemporary age.

DeKarlos Blackmon, OblSB, is the Director of the Secretariat of Life, Charity and Justice for the Diocese of Austin. Contact him at (512) 949-2471 or dekarlos-blackmon@austindiocese.org

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary [cont.]

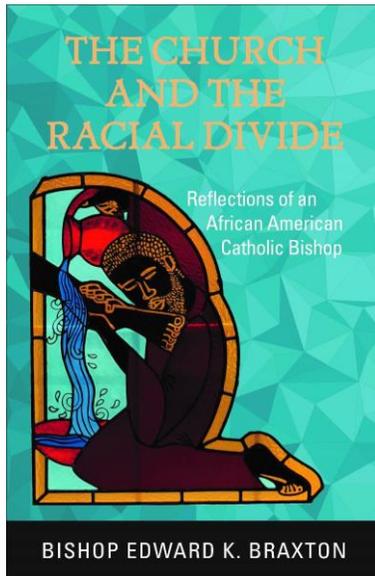
3. The Rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin and defeat heresies.

4. It will cause good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire for Eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means!

5. The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary shall not perish.

I am looking forward to reading this book. I have always enjoyed books and articles by Bishop Braxton. I am sure I will not be disappointed. Shall we read it together? **The book will be available February 2021.**

THE CHURCH AND THE RACIAL DIVIDE:
Reflections of an African American Catholic Bishop
Bishop Edward K. Braxton



After the shooting death of Michael Brown by a white police officer in nearby Ferguson, Missouri, Bishop Braxton of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois, issued his first major pastoral statement on the racial divide in America. This timely and thought-provoking volume opens with that statement, and concludes five years later with the bishop’s reflection on the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. These events, five years apart, are the bookends on an ongoing effort to contend with the persistent racial divide and its meaning for the nation and the Catholic Church in America. But they also reveal the ongoing journey—and the gradual personal awakening—of an African American Catholic theologian and bishop in response to the challenge posed by resistance to the reality that “Black Lives Matter.” In his addresses, essays, and pastoral letters, Bishop Braxton invites a dialogue for healing in the church and the

nation, by urging readers to acknowledge difficult truths with an openness to the Holy Spirit’s call to conversion, justice, and reconciliation. Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D., is Bishop Emeritus of Belleville, Illinois.

A former member of the faculties of theology at Harvard Divinity School, University of Notre Dame, and The Catholic University of America, he was invited by Cardinal Peter Turkson to participate in the international conference that marked the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul IV’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples).

Bishop Braxton is author of *The Wisdom Community and The Faith Community*. February 2021 ISBN978-1-62698-406-6 \$26.00 softcover RELIGION / Christianity / Catholic RELIGION / Christian Living / Social Issues RELIGION / Christian Theology / Ethics

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary [cont.]

6. Whosoever shall recite the Rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its Sacred Mysteries, shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of Eternal Life.

[An unprovided death means dying while not in a state of grace (that is, in dying with unconfessed mortal sin in the soul). The Blessed Mother promises that anyone who regularly prays the Rosary and earnestly tries to live according to the will of God will be spiritually prepared when their time of death comes.]



Will You Be the Light?

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, [TCCB] reminds us, through the St. Joseph Ministry, that our responsibility is to care for orphans and children in the foster care system. In fulfillment of our obligation, we have been encouraged to partner with those agencies and organizations who provide services and resources to foster children and the families who nourish them. The success of this ministry is dependent on the number of individuals, families and parishes who become involved.

The Christian Alliance For Orphans [CAFO] is an international organization that unites churches and individuals worldwide to inspire and equip Christians with effective orphan care. Several years ago, CAFO adopted the initiative "Orphan Sunday". On the second Sunday of November, Christians are asked to "stand" in their churches and pray for children who are in the foster care system. This year, "Stand Sunday" will be Saturday/Sunday [for Catholic Churches] November 7/8, 2020. The theme for this year is "Be the Light".

In 2018, Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD and ministries in the Diocese of Beaumont – African American Ministry, Youth Ministry, Superintendent of Schools Office and Evangelization and Catechesis – partnered with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops [TCCB] Christian Alliance For Orphans [CAFO], Court Appointed Special Advocates [CASA] and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services [TDPRS] to use the most powerful tool provided to us by God – Prayer – to intercede for our foster children and families. Last year, more than 7000 names were distributed within the ministries and parishes in the Diocese of Beaumont. As a result, a record breaking 6,000 children, of 31,000 children in care, were adopted out of the Foster Care System in the State of Texas.

This year, I would like to thank Bishop David Toups, Linda Duhon-LaCour, Melanie Ehrlich, Marcia Stevens, Bryan Reising and Deacon Steve McGaha of the Diocese of Beaumont for their willingness to follow the commandments of God. We know that, with God, all things are possible and we are so grateful that each of you and your ministries has decided to *Be the Light* as we pray for every child in Texas who is in the foster care system.

If you, or someone you know, would like to learn more about being a Foster Parent or a Court Appointed Special Advocate [CASA], please contact me by email at multicultural@cafo.org

Eleanor W. Johnson, Multicultural Director, CAFO
Orphan and Stand Sunday Coordinator

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary [cont.]

7. Whoever shall have a true devotion for the Rosary shall not die without the Sacraments of the Church.

[Our Lady ensures that the soul will receive sanctifying grace through the Sacraments prior to its departure from the body.]

8. Those who are faithful to recitation of the Rosary shall have, during their life, and at their death the Light of God and the plenitude of His Graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the Merits of the Saints in Paradise.

9. I shall deliver, from purgatory, those who have been devoted to the Rosary.

10. The faithful children of the Rosary shall merit a high degree of Glory in Heaven.

LOOKING FORWARD

Sunday November 1, 2020 6:00 PM

Virtual Celebration of the Feast of St. Martin de Porres – Liturgy of the Hours – Evening Prayer. Please join us through the Diocesan YouTube channel

<https://youtu.be/rWsydJkhHuQ>

November 7, 2020 - Called, Formed and Sent Evangelization and Catechesis Workshop –

Bishop Toups will be the Keynote Speaker. Learning Session Presenters will include: Sr. Misty Garriga, Paul Thomas, Very Rev. Michael Jamail and Bryan Reising. The workshop will be Live Streamed via Diocesan YouTube channel

<https://youtu.be/rWsydJkhHuQ>

Saturday/Sunday November 7/8, 2020 at all Masses

Stand Sunday – Prayers are recited at Vigil Masses on Saturday, November 7 and Sunday Masses on November 8

NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY MONTH

November 1- 30, 2020 – Virtual presentations on the contributions of the African and African American Catholics to the life of the Church. Watch for it on the Diocesan page and Facebook.

15 Promises of Our Lady to those Who Pray the Rosary [cont.]

11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by recitation of the Rosary.

12. All those who propagate the Holy Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.

13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the Rosary shall have for intercessors the entire Celestial Court during their life and at the hour of death.

14. All who recite the Rosary are my Sons and Daughters and brothers and sisters of my Only Son, Jesus Christ.

15. Devotion to my Rosary is a great sign of predestination.

[By this the Blessed Mother means that a devotion to the Rosary is a good indication that the devotee is on the path to Heaven.]

VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

November 1-7, 2020

National Vocation Awareness Week [NVAW], celebrated November 1-7, 2020, is an annual weeklong celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life. This is a wonderful opportunity for prayer, education and to support those who are considering one of these particular vocations.

NVAW began in 1976 when the United States bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year for NVAW. In 1997, this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Beginning in 2014, NVAW was moved to the first full week of November.

Many families include a Vocations Prayer when they pray Grace Before or Grace After Meals. It is a wonderful opportunity for catechesis with our children.

This is the prayer my family and I recite for vocations which we learned from the Josephites years ago.

*O Lord, Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest
And Source of All Life,
Grant the grace of the Religious Life to many.
Inspire our families to give generously of themselves to you.
The Harvest is still great and the Laborers are so few.
We pray that many will be encouraged by your word and
Able to respond to your invitation with love and fortitude. Amen.*

*St. Joseph Society of the Sacred Heart
The Josephites*