School is out and students across the Diocese of Austin have begun their summer break. During the midst of summer camps, swimming and other summer activities, as Catholics we can take the opportunity to bring faith and prayer into the summer fun. As parents we sometimes have difficulty finding activities for our children to do in the summer once school is out. These are just a few ideas for making this a summer focused on faith and prayer.

- **In a family setting,** take some time to learn about the saints and holy people that have contributed to our Catholic Faith. Dedicate each day of summer to a saint, many of these saints already have feast days that can correspond to the summer calendar. A clever idea might be to match the life and works of some of these saints with people in your parish community or family that resembles their character and charism.

- **Take a road trip** and make a visit to one of our many beautiful and historical churches in our diocese. We have many parish communities that tell a great story like St. Francis on the Brazos and Old Washington, St. Mary Cathedral and the Schoenstatt shrine.

- **Write a letter or send a card** to our diocesan seminarians and women in formation. These men and women are typically on break from their...
studies and in many cases serving in one of our different parish communities over the summer. We always ask that you pray for them through the year but sending them a letter or note of support and prayer would help encourage them in their discernment.

- Pray the rosary and learn some of the not-so-common prayers of the church. The Diocese of Austin has a wonderful prayer book that can be purchased with many of the prayers and devotionals that can be prayed as a family.

- Attend Mass on Sunday or during the week at a diocesan parish different from your parish. Attend Mass at the Cathedral, Holy Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Austin, Holy Cross Parish in Austin, Santa Teresa in Bryan/College Station and Our Lady’s Maronite Parish.

- As a family, create a service project that allows for you and your children to be of service to others. Some ideas include visiting a nursing home, bringing flowers to the elderly, helping clean the flowerbeds, planting greenery around the church grounds or make lunch sacks with food for distribution to those in need. Check with ministries in your parish, such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

- Enjoy a movie night with the family. Try classics such as The Miracle of Marcelino, The Song of Bernadette, or The Day the Sun Danced.

- Take the time to record an interview with grandparents and ask them to share their stories of when they witnessed the presence of God in their life.

- Bring the whole family out to a baseball game. Catholic night at the Round Rock Express is scheduled for July 14.

Finding ways to incorporate faith and prayer into summer activities is a wonderful way for children to expand their knowledge of the faith and their faith experience.
With three goals, nine initiatives and 24 objectives, the Core Team for the Pastoral Plan, Bishop Vásquez and Bishop García decided to focus on the “Priest as Pastor and His Leadership Role.” In the fall of 2016, a focus group of priests was formed and, over several months, met regularly with the bishops. Fortunately, at this time in the life of the U.S. Catholic Church, there are a number of organizations, institutes and movements available to offer training and enrichment for priests in their role as pastoral leaders. The focus group studied these opportunities and recommended to Bishop Vásquez that he support the work of the Amazing Parish Movement. By recommending one particular training opportunity, the focus group hoped to provide a common language for the priests to encourage one another as they implement the recommendations in their parishes. In the summer of 2017, the Core Team reached out to Amazing Parish to learn more about the movement and how our priests can participate. There were already a number of pastors who had attended an Amazing Parish Conference and this afforded us the chance to increase that number. In April, an Amazing Parish Conference was held in Dallas. Every effort was given to encourage pastors to attend with four parishioners who would make up a leadership team. The Pastoral Plan Core Team and Bishop Vásquez were excited that 11 parishes attended along with a diocesan team with Bishop Garcia. The diocese will continue to support and promote the work of the Amazing Parish Movement and the ongoing formation of the pastors and lay parishioners in their pastoral leadership roles.

Amazing Parish seeks to invigorate the church by preparing pastors and pastoral leaders with means to create vibrant and thriving parishes. A recurring theme of the conference concerned foundational pillars to making a parish “amazing.” Those pillars, or building blocks, are (1) a reliance on prayer and the sacraments, (2) a commitment to building a healthy organization and (3) a passion for evangelization and discipleship. Regardless of the socioeconomic character of a parish, these building blocks are accomplished when we profoundly consider encounter and accompaniment.

So it is no surprise that Amazing Parish complements the diocesan Pastoral Plan, Encounter that Leads to Transformation. Each seeks to help us become more effective ministers of the Gospel. Together they provide the guiding principles to foster and develop cultures of collaboration between parish staff and lay leadership. Developing this culture requires us to share our experiences and hopes to bring about an energizing experience for parishioners and to coordinate our initiatives and priorities to accomplish the mission of Jesus Christ.

Our work on behalf of the Church—serving parishes, organizations, families and individuals—helps to bring about that encounter that leads to transformation. While the Pastoral Plan articulates and promotes a phenomenal mission and vision, we are mindful of our individual and collective responsibility to rely on prayer and the sacraments, to commit to building a healthy organization, and to work toward evangelization and discipleship through accompaniment and active communication.

At the diocesan level, we must also exercise a reliance on prayer and the sacraments, commit to building a healthy organization, and endeavor to evangelize. The success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity’s living union with Christ, that is, a solid spirituality, nourished by active participation in the liturgy and expressed in the style of the evangelical beatitudes. The pastoral offices at the diocesan level are committed to supporting parochial communities.

For more information and Amazing Parish resources to uplift, improve and help your parish turn into a missionary community, visit www.amazingparish.org
Catholic radio is alive and thriving in the Diocese of Austin in English and Spanish. Within the last 10 years, five radio stations have launched. These radio stations bring quality Catholic programming, Mass, the rosary, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and other devotions every day.

Most people in the Austin metro are familiar with the local affiliate of Relevant Radio on 970 AM. But recently, two Spanish Catholic stations have gone live. Radio Encuentro is broadcasting on 1560 AM and Emaus Radio is an online station only broadcasting at emausradio.com. Radio Encuentro took its name from the V Encuentro process currently under way in the U.S. Both of these stations are working to evangelize the growing number of Spanish-speaking Catholics in the diocese. Relying on the Internet for their broadcast, Emaus Radio is available all over the world and keeps costs down by not having to secure a license to operate on the AM-FM spectrum.

In Bryan/College Station locally run RED-C Catholic Radio is on 88.5 FM. RED-C has also launched an affiliate, KYAR 98.3, in Lorena and Waco. Armor of God, KOOV 106.9, is set to begin broadcasting in Copperas Cove, Killeen and Belton later this summer. All of these stations are available online or through mobile apps. The RED-C stations broadcast the daily Mass from the diocesan Pastoral Center including a weekly show produced by the diocese called “In the Sacristy,” giving listeners a behind-the-scenes look at the people who participate in daily Mass.

These Catholic radio stations are not owned or operated by the Diocese of Austin. Most of them were started by volunteers who had never worked in radio before but felt a call to bring the ministry to their communities. The station directors maintain a relationship with the diocese, which assists the stations with finding guests to appear on their shows and helps ensure the authenticity of Catholic teaching.

The burst of new Catholic radio stations in the diocese is certainly a response to the call of the New Evangelization, which urges Catholics to share their faith with those around them in new and creative ways. Add these radio stations to your “favorite” buttons of your radio and give them a try when you are driving throughout Central Texas.

You can find out more about Catholic radio in the Diocese of Austin by visiting austindiocese.org and clicking on "Media" under the "Quick Links" tab.
St. John Paul II once said, “The synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture but also of faith.” With this simple comment, he reminds us Christians have a special responsibility in our presence in the world. He encourages us to live our encounter with Christ beyond the walls of our parishes and homes, fully integrating it into our daily lives. Surely St. John Paul II, who was so fond of young people, had this particular population in mind as ideal synthesizers of faith and culture. Even with this encouragement, however, many young adults find it difficult to share their faith in a pluralistic world. They face barriers such as a lack of engagement with their local parish or a lack of confidence in their knowledge of the faith that prevents them from speaking about it to others. When faced with such a daunting task, the solution often lies in starting somewhere and trusting the Holy Spirit with the rest.

Last month, as our 2018 class of Ascend Emerging Leaders finished their two-month long intensive leadership development curriculum, we sent them out to their families, communities, workplaces and parishes with an experience of reflection and applied practice of the necessary skills required of Christians to genuinely live out faith in the world today. They have started their journey to make a difference in the Church, in the larger culture and on their peers as stewards of the gifts they have been given. Having studied topics such as a leader's role in society, prayer, discernment, conflict resolution, relationship building, leadership settings, leadership styles, boldly sharing our faith and more, they are now able to offer their unique gifts to the service of the faith in ways that they hadn't imagined before. They join the three previous Ascend classes as new leaders ready to tackle contemporary problems.

In the book Disarming Beauty, Father Julián Carrón states, “By living within reality, living our jobs, living the answer to life's challenges starting from the encounter with the event of Christ, we can give proof of the difference that it introduces into our approach to everything. We can be like a seed.” This seed is the way that we live our lives because we know Christ's love. This difference of approach allows us to share Christ's love proactively instead of being subject to the various inevitable challenges that life presents. It is my hope that our Ascend Emerging Leaders graduates can serve our church and communities as witnesses of Christ's love in all the settings that Father Carrón mentions. As a Church community, we continue to welcome young adults and at the same time, confidently know that these young adults might challenge us as church. This seed is the synthesis between culture and faith, a vision of a church where all generations are present, engaged and living their faith. As the work of engaging young people in the church continues in various ways, we remember that we are incomplete without them.
Celebrating Saints

St. Lawrence

AUGUST 10, LAWRENCE (DIED 258), DEACON AND MARTYR (FEAST)

Very little is known about St. Lawrence except that he was a deacon, responsible for the distribution of alms to the poor, and was martyred during the persecution of Emperor Valerian in 258. Devotion to St. Lawrence was widespread by the fourth century and the fact that we celebrate today as a feast day and mention his name in the canon of the Mass reflects the importance of this saint. According to legend, St. Lawrence sold some of the possessions of the Church and gave the money to the poor. When the emperor heard about it, he demanded that St. Lawrence bring him the treasures of the Church instead. For three days, St. Lawrence gathered the poor, the widows and orphans, and the sick of Rome and then presented them to Valerian declaring, “These are the riches of the Church.” Enraged, the Emperor ordered him killed. St. Augustine says of him, “In his life he loved Christ; in his death he followed in his footsteps.” St. Lawrence, pray for us that we, too, will love Christ and follow your example by seeing and serving others as the treasure of the Church.

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