Golden Anniversary Prayer

Almighty and ever-living God, your gifts of love cannot be numbered and your goodness cannot be measured.

As our local Church celebrates “Fifty Faithful Years” as the Diocese of Brownsville, we give you thanks for the many blessings you have bestowed on us.

Send your Holy Spirit to continue opening the hearts of your faithful, that we may bring the Good News of salvation by sharing your gifts in loving service.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Oración por el Jubileo de Oro

Dios todopoderoso y eterno, tus dones de amor no pueden ser contados y tu bondad no tiene medida.

Al celebrar “Cincuenta Años Fieles” como la Diócesis de Brownsville, nuestra Iglesia local te da gracias por las bendiciones que nos ha otorgado.

Envía tu Espíritu Santo a seguir abriendo los corazones de tus fieles, para que podamos llevar la Buena Nueva de salvación al compartir tus dones en servicio amoroso.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo, nuestro Señor.

Amén.
CELEBRATING faith

Congratulations to the faithful of the Diocese of Brownsville and the Rio Grande Valley as you mark the 50th anniversary of your Diocese.

May the light of Christ continue to shine brightly in South Texas!

Be assured of our continued prayers.

Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Auxiliary Bishop George A. Sheltz
Archbishop Emeritus Joseph A. Fiorenza
Retired Auxiliary Bishop Vincent M. Rizzotto

The Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
The Valley Catholic - OCTOBER 2015

DIOCESE GOLDEN JUBILEE

A new diocese is born

Decree: “We judge this to be for the good of the people”

Pope Paul VI established the diocese in 1965

By ROSE YBARRA
The Valley Catholic

“One of the great gifts of the Rio Grande Valley is that we are blessed because our people – you, our people – are very good,” said Bishop Daniel E. Flores during the homily of the Golden Jubilee Mass on Sept. 2 in front of the mosaic at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle-National Shrine. “Vivimos entre un pueblo muy generoso y muy bueno.” (We live among a very generous and good community.)

The 50th Anniversary of the Diocese of Brownsville is being celebrated with several events and activities throughout 2015.

The open air Mass, which was celebrated just as the sun was setting, drew more than 3,000 people. It was the principal event of the Jubilee Year.

Sept. 2 was chosen as the date for the Mass because it marks the date the Most Rev. Adolph Marx was installed as the first bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

Faithful from all over the diocese were included in the celebration as lectors and gift bearers. The prayers of the faithful were read in three different languages – English, Spanish and Tagalog – representing the diversity in our diocese.

During his homily, Bishop Flores said it is important for the Church to give thanks to God.

“We have a lot to be thankful for,” he said, as he highlighted the contributions of his predecessors and also thanked the generations of religious sisters and brothers and priests who traveled far and sacrificed to educate and inform Valley families in the Catholic faith.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston was present at the Mass as well as several other bishops, including the Most Rev. Ruy Rendon of Matamoros; the Most Rev. Jose S. Vasquez of Austin; the Most Rev. Placido Rodriguez, CMF; of Lubbock; the Most Rev. Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, Bishop Emeritus of San Angelo and the Most Rev. Raymond J. Peña, Bishop Emeritus of Brownsville.

Cardinal DiNardo gave a few words before the final blessing.

Referring to the Second Reading, (Romans 10:9-18) Cardinal DiNardo reminded the crowd that we are all sent to preach the Good News.

“Sisters and brothers, when we think of missionaries being sent, we obviously first think of religious, consecrated life, priests and sisters, our priests here who preach and teach – and that’s very important,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “But if we are going to really pay attention to this reading tonight, then it means we’re sent and it means our words and our actions echo, not just throughout this valley, but echo all over and we become a living sign of what the Lord Jesus wants of us.”

Cardinal DiNardo continued, “I think that is what Pope Francis is saying, so sisters and brothers, thank you for 50 years of the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this Valley here. God bless you all. God keep you in his grace and strength.”

A rich and deep tradition of the Catholic faith has endured in the Rio Grande Valley for almost 500 years.

The first seeds of the Catholic faith were planted in 1519 in the time of the Spanish Conquistadores. An expedition under the command of a Spanish captain named Alonso Alvarez de Pineda brought the first Catholics to the Gulf Coast Area.

The teachings, rituals and customs of the Catholic Church have been handed down continuously from generation to generation, fulfilling the mission that Christ entrusted to the apostles and to us.

The Catholic faith may be deeply rooted in the Valley’s history and culture, but its diocese is young.

While the area was part of the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville from 1874 to 1912, the Diocese of Brownsville was established on July 10, 1965 by Pope Paul VI.

The ninth diocese in Texas was formed by detaching four counties – Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr — from the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

Today, the Diocese of Brownsville includes more than a million Catholics, who worship in 71 parishes and 44 missions.

Consecration Prayer

Holy Mary, Immaculately conceived, Virgin and Mother of the Word Incarnate, with renewed gratitude for your maternal presence we join our voice to that of all the generations who call you blessed. We celebrate in you the works of God, who never tires of looking with mercy upon us who are wounded and afflicted by sin. Accept with the benevolence of a Mother the act of consecration that we perform today with confidence, before this image of you that is so dear to us. We are certain that every human life is precious in your eyes.

Hold our lives in your immaculate heart, bless and strengthen every desire for good in us; revive and nourish faith; sustain and enlighten hope; awaken and animate charity; guide all of us along the path of holiness.

Teach us your own preferential love for the little and the poor, for the excluded and the suffering, for sinners and the outcast;

We commend to your maternal protection Our families, our children — those born and those still in the womb; Victims of violence along the border, both in the United States and in Mexico;

The undocumented, the elderly and the sick among us; bring everyone under your protection

We express our profound gratitude for all who have preceded us; for all who labor and struggle for justice in the world.

We commend to your care and protection Our country, our states, our cities, our local parishes, our parishes, our families, our schools, our hospitals, our prisons.

Protect our clergy, our religious, our laity, our catechists, our youth and young people, our men and women in ministry;

We entrust to your care all those who have preceded us, especially those who have gone on now to your presence.

With faith-filled confidence we entrust to you the souls of the deceased; with renewed gratitude we praise you, who are our heavenly Mother, Virgin, Queen and Mother of the Church.

We invoke your powerful intercession for the needs of the Church and the world;

We commend every person who seeks to live a life of virtue and to spread the Gospel in the manner that Christ has taught;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, each of us, the working poor, the unemployed, the forgotten, the lonely and the dying;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, our leaders and all those who have public charge;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, our country, and our world, that it may be a generous and welcoming home for all people;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all your children who have gone before us, and those who are about to be born;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, the absolutely innocent; victims of violence, torture, and persecution;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, the faithful and the children of God who suffer hunger;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of health, and ask that all who are sick may be healed and restored;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of education, and ask that they may be educated in spirit and in truth;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of courage, and ask that they may be strengthened and comforted;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of strength, and ask that they may be helped and upheld;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of peace, and ask that they may be made whole and secure;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of guidance, and ask that they may be directed and comforted;

We entrust to your care, Most Holy Mother of God, all who have need of justice, and ask that they may be defended and protected.

In every moment of our life, and in our deaths, we entrust to you, Most Holy Mother of God, the needs of all who seek your help.

Amen.

- By Bishop Daniel E. Flores, Closing Mass for the Year of Faith
SJNH is one of 18 nursing homes in Hidalgo County and the only not-for-profit Catholic facility of its kind in the Diocese of Brownsville. We are blessed to be located next to the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle, which for many of our families, is a comfort knowing we abide in the protection of Our Holy Mother.

SJNH offers both Short and Long Term stays as well as Respite Care. We provide IV Therapy, Wound Care, Wound Vac, Trache, BPAP/CPAP, Colostomy, and G-Tube/NG-Tube; Physical, Occupational and Speech therapy; Restorative and Recreational exercises and activities; we have a full Pastoral team committed to the spiritual needs of our residents. Religious services are provided on a daily basis and Mass is celebrated every Sunday. We are deeply committed to practice compassionate presence, being attentive to all dimensions of our residents’ well being, incorporating spiritual practices as appropriate.

In a recent audience, Pope Frances reminded us that being old is no time for resting. Instead, he suggested, “it is a time for finding one’s new purpose, an invitation to become poets of prayer.” The prayers of this golden generation, he emphasized, “are a great gift for the Church” and they offer “a great infusion of wisdom for all of society.” What beautiful words of inspiration and encouragement for our ministry as we seek to foster this very sentiment in our services. Our mission is to embrace the Healing Ministry of Christ. With deep respect for the sacredness and dignity of all persons, we commit ourselves to work diligently to enrich the lives of our residents — physically, spiritually, and socially.

As we look to the future of healthcare for this population, we are awakened to the challenges we face: mainly that of renovating our facility, enhancing our home, where our ‘loved ones’ can age with grace, honor and meaningfulness. One of our dreams today is to expand our chapel - to comfortably fit our Sunday Mass attendance. If you wish to be part of this endeavor, please contact us, we’d love an opportunity to sit with you and together, build a better tomorrow.

(956) 787-1771
 timeline

11000 BC
The first peoples begin to build communities in what is now Texas. They live by hunting and later by farming.

1040 BC
Many different tribes and peoples live across Texas and the Rio Grande Valley.

1519
Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, a Spanish explorer, maps the Texas coast and travels through the Rio Grande Valley, claiming the land for Spain.

1521
Fray Zamora, a member of the Narváez Expedition into Mexico, is credited with establishing the town of Peñitas.

1554
Three Spanish ships are wrecked off the Texas coast, including several Dominican priests.

1747
Spain returns to the Rio Grande Valley. José de Escandón maps the region and sends Franciscan priests and many colonists from Mexico.

1753
Fray Juan Bautista establishes a settlement for native converts near what is now Rio Grande City.

1789
Father Joaquin Sanchez and his parishioners build a stone church called San Antonio de Laredo, the first parish church in South Texas.

1804
Padre José Nicolás Balle establishes the Nuestra Señora del Refugio Mission on what would come to be called “Padre Island” in his honor.

1845
Texas is annexed to the United States. The Rio Grande Valley prepares the center of a border dispute between the United States and Mexico, leading to the Mexican-American War.

1846

1848
The Rio Grande Valley is added to the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Galveston. Jean Marie Odin is named the first Bishop of Galveston.

1849
The Missionary Oblates of Mary immaculate (OMI) arrive in Port Isabel and Brownsville at the invitation of Bishop Odin.

1849
Oblates build La Lomita Mission Chapel (it will be rebuilt in 1889).

1850
On Dec. 2, 1849 four Oblate priests arrived in Port Isabel, which was the base of the Fourth United States Artillery. The soldiers accommodated the priests and prepared a temporary chapel for their first Mass, which was celebrated on Dec. 3, 1849. It was the first holy Mass celebrated by the Oblate priests in Texas. The first Mass in Brownsville was celebrated five days later, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

1851
In 1849, Bishop I.M. Odin of Galveston, whose diocese included the entire State of Texas, went to Canada in search of priests for his vast territory, particularly for Brownsville, whose residents had petitioned him for priests, according to information from the cathedral's sesquicentennial program from 2009. While in Canada, Bishop Odin met several priests of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, a religious order that was founded in France in 1826. After hearing Bishop Odin read some pleasing letters from Brownsville citizens, the first group of Oblates agreed to come to the Rio Grande Valley. On Dec. 2, 1849 four Oblate priests arrived in Port Isabel, which was the base of the Fourth United States Artillery. The soldiers accommodated the priests and prepared a temporary chapel for their first Mass, which was celebrated on Dec. 3, 1849. It was the first holy Mass celebrated by the Oblate priests in Texas. The first Mass in Brownsville was celebrated five days later, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

1859
In 1859, Father Adrien Pierre Telmon, one of the first Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate to come to Brownsville, built a small wooden church between Adams and Jefferson streets that accommodated 300 people. The first Mass was celebrated on June 29, 1850.

1866
Conversions to the Catholic faith were so numerous that a need for a large church arose. Three years later Father Jean Marie Casimir Verdet started the design and construction of a larger church to replace the temporary wooden structure. The cornerstone was laid on July 6, 1856. More than 250,000 clay bricks were made for the church in the village of Santa Rosa, three miles east of the old town site of Brownsville.

1882
Father Verdet died on a ship on his way to Mexico, and later by farming.

1882
The church became a reality with the construction of the cathedral, 10 years after the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate first arrived in the Valley. It was blessed and dedicated by Father Augustin Guadet on June 12, 1859, which was Pentecost Sunday that year.

1888
The church was credited with being the largest church in Texas at the time. The utmost care and detail went into the construction of the church. The ceiling is of specially prepared canvas painted blue, and at one time it was covered with gold stars. The pulpit was built of native mesquite by a local cabinetmaker and a conical spiral stair provided access to the pulpit.

1890
The rectory behind the church was the site of the first Texas Oblate seminary and served as a haven for priests fleeing revolutions in Mexico. It was built at the request of Bishop Odin and completed in 1891.

1912
The church became a reality through the generous contributions of its parishioners throughout the years. In 1866, a parishioner gave $1,400 for the purchase of chandeliers, which were ordered from a factory in Paris. That same year, Captain Mifflin Kenedy donated $2,000 for three bells for the tower. A smaller bell that was used in the original church was moved to the tower as well. These same bronze bells ring today in Brownsville’s downtown area, announcing each Mass.

1950
This historical church was elevated to a cathedral in 1874 when the large Texas diocese was divided and the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville was established. It remained as such until 1912 when the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville was converted into the Diocese of Corpus Christi. The Immaculate Conception Church was designated a Cathedral again in 1965 by Bishop Adolph Marx upon the creation of the Diocese of Brownsville.

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1960
Beginning in 1960, the Cathedral was closed for more than a year-and-a-half — at first to complete repairs on the roof of the church and later to construct a new altar and add a reredos (altar screen).

“The work on the altar was replicated somewhat the look of the church in 1956,” said Lloyd Young, office manager and bookkeeper for the cathedral. “The goal of the project was to have a restoration as close as possible to original look of the church.”

The new altar includes furnishings from the late 1800s, including a bishop’s chair (cathedra) and servers’ chairs in a French neo-Gothic style, an ambo from Belgium and a tabernacle. A new oak floor was also installed and the cathedral’s original chandeliers were also repaired.

The work on the altar was completed by Pablo Nortega Urbania of Brownsville, an art restorer and conservator, oil painter and master carver in wood, who serves customers around the world. No modifications had been made to the altar in more than 30 years.

The cathedral is included in the National Register of Historic Places and also bears a Texas Historical Marker.
Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, Auxiliary Bishop Daniel E. Garcia, and the faithful of the Diocese of Austin, congratulate Bishop Daniel E. Flores and all the faithful of the Diocese of Brownsville on its 50th Anniversary. Ad multos annos!
**BISHOPS**

**Bishop Adolph Marx**

Adolph Marx, who had formerly served as auxiliary bishop to Bishop Mariano S. Garriga of the Diocese of Corpus Christi, was the first bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville. He was the bishop of our diocese for only two months when he died unexpectedly at the age of 50.

Shortly after his installation at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville on Sept. 2, 1965, Bishop Marx left for Rome to attend the meetings of the Second Vatican Council. During a break, he traveled to Germany to visit relatives. He died of a heart attack on Nov. 1, 1965 in his parents' home in Cologne, Germany.

“His death was a great shock,” said Msgr. Patrick Doherty, a retired priest of the Diocese of Brownsville who served as a pallbearer at Bishop Marx’s funeral. “He seemed to be in good shape.”

Bishop Marx was born on Feb. 2, 1915 in Cologne, Germany. Bishop Emmanuel Boleslaus Ledvina, who was the bishop of Corpus Christi from 1921 to 1949, was celebrating Mass at a church in Cologne when he met the young Bishop Marx.

“Bishop Marx was working as an altar server or a sacristan when he met Bishop Ledvina,” Msgr. Doherty recalled. “Bishop Ledvina brought Bishop Marx to the Diocese of Corpus Christi as a seminarian.”

Bishop Marx moved to Texas from Germany sight unseen and was appointed the second bishop of Brownsville on April 14, 1966.

**Bishop Humberto Sousa Medeiros**

Rev. Humberto S. Medeiros of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass. was appointed the second bishop of Brownsville on April 14, 1966. He was installed at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville on June 29, 1966 and served until the autumn of 1970.

He was installed as the Archbishop of Boston on Oct. 7, 1970 and elevated to cardinal on March 5, 1973. He died on Sept. 17, 1983 of coronary arrest at the age of 67, a day after undergoing emergency heart surgery, according to his obituary by the Associated Press.

Bishop Marx moved to Texas from Germany sight unseen and was appointed the second bishop of Brownsville on April 14, 1966.

**Bishop John Joseph Fitzpatrick**

His motto: “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” From the Epistle of St. Paul 1:21

Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick was appointed the third bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville on April 21, 1971. He was installed at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral on May 27, 1971.

Bishop Fitzpatrick is remembered as an ardent advocate for social justice.

“He always worried about the underdog as any social justice-minded person would,” said Msgr. Gustavo Barrera, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, who worked closely with Bishop Fitzpatrick and cared for him in his retirement. “He would do anything possible to improve the lives of those in need.”

Among his many accomplishments in his 20 years as the shepherd of the Diocese of Brownsville, Bishop Fitzpatrick advocated for and traveled with migrant farm workers, promoting “send-off” and “welcome home” ceremonies at each parish to bless the 100,000-plus migrant workers who lived in the Rio Grande Valley in the 1970s and 80s.

He was a co-founder of Casa Oscar Romero in 1982, which sheltered about 130,000 refugees from Central America and served about 2.5 million meals in its lifetime. In 1983, Bishop Fitzpatrick started Valley Interfaith, which worked to improve the standard of living for the thousands
Congratulations to the Diocese of Brownsville as you celebrate 50 Years serving the Gospel in the Rio Grande Valley

Bishop Michael Mulvey Diocese of Corpus Christi
Timeline

1912  St. Benedict Parish, San Benito established.

1915  St. Paul Parish, Mission established.

1917  The Sisters of Mercy build the first Catholic hospital in Brownsville, Mercy Hospital.

1917  Sacred Heart Parish, McAllen established.

1926  Resurrection Parish, Alamo established.

1927  Sacred Heart Parish, Edinburg established.

1927  Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Harlingen established.

1927  St. Margaret Mary Parish, Pharr established.

1927  Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, Port Isabel established.

1927  Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Raymondville established.

1928  Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Brownsville established.

1928  St. Joseph Parish, Donna established.

1929  St. Joan of Arc Parish, Weslaco established.

1930  St. Francis Xavier Parish, La Feria established.

1940  St. Anthony Parish, Harlingen established.

1941  Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, McAllen established.

1943  St. Helen Parish, Rio Hondo established.

1946  St. Anthony School in Harlingen established.

1946  Our Lady of Sorrow School in McAllen established.

1948  St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus Parish, Edcouch and St. Joseph Parish, Edinburg established.

1949  Bishop Mariano S. Garriga, a native of Port Isabel, becomes the first native Texan elevated to the episcopate when he is named Bishop of Corpus Christi.


1966  Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick’s retirement.

1968  Bishop Paul J. Dahm is installed as Coadjutor of the Diocese, following Bishop John’s retirement.

1970  Bishop Joseph P. Naumann’s retirement.

1972  Bishop Raymond J. Peña is installed as Coadjutor, following Bishop Joseph’s retirement.

1976  Bishop Raymond J. Peña is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

1981  Bishop Raymond J. Peña is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

1986  Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick’s retirement.


1996  Bishop Raymundo J. Peña is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

1999  Bishop Raymond J. Peña is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

2010  Bishop Raymond J. Peña is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

2015  Bishop Daniel E. Flores is installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville.

Bishop Enrique San Pedro

A native of Cuba and a former missionary, Bishop Enrique San Pedro, S.J., became the fourth bishop of the Brownsville Diocese, upon Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick’s retirement. He had been installed as Coadjutor of the Diocese on Sept. 26, 1991.

He was born in Havana, Cuba, on March 9, 1926, where he lived until he left in 1946. He entered the Society of Jesus on Dec. 7, 1941 and was ordained a priest on March 18, 1957.

Bishop San Pedro was appointed the first Hispanic auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston on April 1, 1986. Consecrated as bishop on June 29, 1986, he served as auxiliary bishop of Galveston-Houston until 1991. At the time of his ordination as bishop, he was only the third Jesuit to be named a bishop in the United States.

Bishop San Pedro spoke seven languages and served as a missionary in the Philippines and China.

Following his studies, Bishop San Pedro taught at various universities until this appointment as auxiliary bishop of the Galveston-Houston Diocese. He was in Vietnam from 1963 to 1975 but left before the Communist takeover. He also served in Suva, Fiji, 1978-1980, and Boynton Beach, Florida, 1981-1985.

At the age of 65 he was installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville on Nov. 30, 1991.

Lydia Pesina, director of the Family Life Office, said Bishop San Pedro “was an educator ‘par excellence.’ In the tradition of the Jesuits, he

Motto: “Most gladly I will spend myself and be spent for your sakes” - 2 Corinthians 12:15

Bishop Raymundo J. Peña

Even in retirement, Bishop Emeritus Raymundo J. Peña maintains a full schedule. He is the chaplain of the Newman Catholic Student Center at the Edinburg campus of the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. He also celebrates daily Mass for the Capuchin Poor Clare Nuns at the St. Joseph Chapel of Perpetual Adoration in Alamo and organizes a Holy Hour for vocations each week on Thursdays at 7 p.m. He invites priests to take turns presiding at the Holy Hour and bring their parishioners.

Bishop Peña, 81, led the Diocese of Brownsville for 14 years before retiring in December 2009. When asked about his plans for retirement, he responded, “To live happily ever after.”

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Motto: “Haz todo con amor” - 1 Corinthians 16:14

Bishop Daniel E. Flores

South Texas native Bishop Daniel E. Flores was installed as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville on Feb. 2, 2010 at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle - National Shrine.

Prior to being appointed as shepherd of our diocese, Bishop Flores was an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit from 2006-2009. While serving in Detroit, he spearheaded the archdiocese’s Hispanic outreach.

Bishop Flores, 54, has strong roots in South Texas. The second son of Fernando and Lydia Dilley Flores, was born on Aug. 28, 1961 in Palacios and baptized in Zapata. His family moved frequently during his childhood due to his father’s occupation as a construction worker.

The family ultimately settled in Corpus Christi and Bishop Flores graduated from Flour Bluff High School in 1979.

His father passed away in 1984, that same year his maternal grandmother, Teresa Dilley, also passed away. She was always an intimate part of the Flores-Dilley family and the bishop often shares anecdotes about his grandmother in his homilies and talks.

His mother still lives in Corpus Christi. His siblings and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins also reside in South Texas and the bishop enjoys having them close by.

Bishop Flores was ordained a priest for service in the Diocese of Corpus Christi in 1988, where he served as chancellor, secretary to the bishop and diocesan master of ceremonies, among many other titles. He was also rector of the St.

Motto: “Verbum Mittitur Spirans Amorem” (The word is sent breathing love)
Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS, and the Faithful of the Archdiocese of San Antonio Congratulate Bishop Daniel Flores and the People of the Diocese of Brownsville as they Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of their Diocese.

We rejoice as you prayerfully mark these five decades.

El Rosario & La Merced Charitable Trust

In 1965, there came a beacon of light into being in the Valley to offer spiritual guidance. For this reason many have come to know peace and love.


We offer a warm and heart-felt congratulations, on your Golden Anniversary.
**COAT OF ARMS**

At the top of the Coat of Arms there is a silver crescent moon. This lunar symbol comes from “Revelations” on the Apocalypse: “And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (12:1) The moon is a symbol associated with the Immaculate Conception, the very name of the Cathedral of Brownsville.

Beneath the moon is a symbol of a fort, which represents the Fort Brown. The City of Brownsville was originally laid out in 1848 around Fort Taylor. The area was renamed Fort Brown in honor of Major Jacob Brown who became mortally wounded in the defense of the Fort. The Old Fort Brown, now the City of Brownsville, was selected by Papal Authority to be the See of the Diocese of Brownsville in 1965.

The Latin cross bearing the crown of thorns and a lance and reed is a part of the insignia of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. These Oblate Fathers were the first to come into the territory preaching the Word of God and giving great personal sacrifices. The Oblates have been here spreading the faith for more than 150 years in the Rio Grande Valley.

**First days of the diocese: Vox populii**

The Diocese of Brownsville, the ninth diocese in Texas, was officially established on July 10, 1965 by Pope Paul VI. It was formed by detaching the four counties of Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr from the Diocese of Corpus Christi. The newly formed diocese consisted of almost a quarter of a million Catholics.

At the time, there were 85 priests of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate serving our diocese along with four diocesan priests and four priests of the Missionaries of the Holy Family.

What do you remember about the early days of the Diocese of Brownsville?

“I was one of the four diocesan priests in the entire Valley at the time and the only one in Brownsville. All the rest of the priests in Brownsville were Oblates and they were helpful, they were very courteous and they invited me to all their meetings. I considered myself half an Oblate because I was around them for so long. The Oblates did a tremendous job in the Valley. We will always be thankful for all that they did.”

- Msgr. Patrick Doherty, a retired priest of the Diocese of Brownsville, who was pastor of Christ the King Parish in Brownsville when the diocese was established

“The biggest thing that I think that happened in the first few years was a diocesan-wide census. In that, we tried to visit every single home in the diocese. That census laid out for us the extent of the growth of the Catholic faith in the Valley. It helped us determine where we needed parishes and other ministries. It was exciting, putting things together.”

- Harry Schuckenbrock, 82, of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who was associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Brownsville when the diocese was established. Bishop Humberto S. Medeiros appointed him director of religious education for the diocese in 1966
First days of the diocese: Vox populii

“When the Diocese of Brownsville was established, there was already a strong devotion to the Virgen de San Juan. Families came to the shrine in groups and still do. I believe the San Juan Shrine is a major reason so many people in the Valley are Catholic and why the Church grew so much in the early years of the diocese. Our Blessed Mother, our model of faith, has brought many people to church and keeps them coming back.”

- Elias Cantu, 66, who has worked at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle-National Shrine since 1980

“Bishop (Adolph) Marx was the chaplain to the sisters at our motherhouse in Corpus Christi before he was a bishop. Some of the older sisters have shared stories with us about him. He faithfully celebrated Mass at the convent every day and was known for giving lessons and instruction on the faith to the newer sisters. He was a catechist and teacher at heart.”

- Sister Irma Gonzalez of the Sisters of Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, campus director of Incarnate Word Academy and the Villa Maria Language Institute in Brownsville

“Once we had our own diocese, there was a new excitement and energy among Catholics in the Valley. Our bishop and the diocesan offices are nearby and more accessible. The whole operation is local and things get done more quickly. It was a very positive change for the Valley.”

- Raudel Jose Lopez, 68, a parishioner at Resurrection Church in Alamo. He was a parishioner at Sacred Heart Church in Elsa in 1965

“First days of the diocese: Vox populii continues from pg. 8

Medeiros, continued from pg. 8

people of his diocese. As the Valley was recovering from Hurricane Beulah in 1967, he opened his home to 11 families and also took in many dogs that were lost and abandoned in the storm.

A native of the Azores, an island chain off the coast of Portugal, Cardinal Medeiros was born Oct. 6, 1915, in the village of Arrifes on St. Michael Island. Unable to speak English, he came to the United States when he was 16. He took a job sweeping floors in a textile plant in Fall River, Mass. for 62 cents a day.

After graduating from high school, he studied for the priesthood at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and was ordained a priest for service in the Diocese of Fall River on June 15, 1946.
1967 The Diocese of Brownsville publishes its first newspaper, Valley Catholic Witness, which will continue until 1972.

1967 The following parishes were established: Holy Family Parish, Edinburg; Queen of Peace Parish, Harlingen; Mary, Mother of the Church Parish, Brownsville; Sacred Heart Parish, Escobares; Holy Family Parish, La Grulla; Sacred Heart Parish, Hidalgo; Prince of Peace Parish, Lyford; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, McAllen; St. Joseph the Worker Parish, McAllen; St. Mary Parish, Santa Rosa; San Martin de Porres Parish, Weslaco; St. Ignatius Parish, El Ranchito; San Martin de Porres Parish, Alton and Our Lady of St. John of the Fields, Mission.

1968 The Visitors for Christ movement is established to promote stewardship.

1968 Groundbreaking for La Mercedes Homes in Mercedes and El Rosario Homes in Mission—low-income rent housing administered by a non-profit board formed by the Diocese of Brownsville.


1969 The Migrant Apostolate—team ministries of priests, religious, and lay women and men—are established to assist migrant families while living away from their homes in the Valley.

1970 St. Joseph the Worker Parish, San Carlos established.

1970 The Missionary Sisters of Jesus, a new diocesan religious community, is formed.

1970 St. Mary’s School opens in Brownsville.

1970 Bishop Medeiros is appointed Archbishop of Boston. He will be elevated to the rank of Cardinal in 1973.

1970 The Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle is destroyed by fire after an airplane crashes into it.

1971 “La Iglesia en el Mundo,” a weekly half-hour Spanish program, is launched on KGBT radio.

1971 Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick, a native of Canada, is installed as the third Bishop of Brownsville.

1970 after 21 years of expanding the shrine grounds and developing it into an important pilgrimage site.

1970 The Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle is dedicated in April 19, 1980.

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CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY OF ST. PHILIP NERI
THE PHARR ORATORY SCHOOL SYSTEM
ST. JUDE THADDEUS CATHOLIC CHURCH
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH

Congratulations

Catholic Diocese of Brownsville

50
faithful and fruitful years

Our Lady of the Assumption & San Felipe Neri Church of Harlingen are blessed to be Gospel witnesses in the power of the Sacraments and the love of our Blessed Mother Mary in the past FIFTY FAITHFUL years of our beloved Diocese of Brownsville

...you shall be my witnesses... - Acts 1:8

1313 W Buchanan St, Harlingen, TX 78550 (956) 423-4670
DIOCESE GOLDEN JUBILEE

Timeline

1973  St. Anne, Mother of Mary Parish, Pharr established.
1980  The new Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle is dedicated, 10 years after the original shrine was destroyed.
1980  A new program is established, Training Lady in Ministry, which in eight years will prepare 1,200 lay people for special ministries in the Church.
1981  A new program for the formation of permanent deacons results in the ordination of 23 new deacons for the Church.
1981  Holy Spirit Parish, McAllen established.
1982  Casa Oscar Romero opens its doors to refugees from Central America. Before it closes in 1992, it will shelter about 130,000 refugees and serve about 2.5 million meals.
1983  RGV Educational Broadcasting, Inc., a non-profit corporation, is established under the auspices of the Diocese of Brownsville. It provides public broadcasting and Catholic religious programming to the Rio Grande Valley.
1983  Oratory Academy opens in Pharr.
1985  KMBH-TV Channel 60 goes on the air.
1987  Oscar Romero Center moves to a larger facility in Brownsville.
1990  Small Base Communities are formed. By 1991 there are over 500 active communities.
1991  Father Robert Maher launches the "Church Alive!" television program on KMBH-TV.
1991  Bishop Enrique San Pedro SJ, is installed as Coadjutor Bishop of Brownsville on Sept. 26, succeeding to the See on Nov. 30, when Bishop Fitzpatrick retires.
1993  The Casa Romero Center becomes the Ozananam Center, a homeless shelter in Brownsville.
1993  Life-size Stations of the Cross statues are dedicated at the Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle-National Shrine in San Juan.

Places of Prayer

St. Jude Thaddeus Church
Address: 509 S. Ironwood, Pharr
Directions: Take I Road Exit and head south past Business 83 (I Road becomes S. Veterans Blvd.) Turn right on E. Kelly Ave and left on S. Ironwood St.

Dioecese rich with locales to reflect, give thanks

By BRENDA NETTLES ROJAS
The Valley Catholic

St. Ignatius of Loyola speaks to the value of our space, place and posture of prayer in his Spiritual Exercises. He suggests that the space and place within which we pray matters.

The following are some peaceful locations in our diocese where one can pray and retreat, even if briefly, from the day's demands.

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, Rio Grande City
Lourdes in southwestern France draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims each year as the site where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a 14-year-old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, in 1858.

The Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette 18 times. During the ninth apparition, Bernadette, as instructed by the Virgin Mary, dug a hole in the ground with her hands, and a gush of water was released from an unknown spring. She was instructed to drink the water and wash herself there. The site is known around the world for its healing waters.

During another apparition, the Virgin Mary identified herself saying, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Closer to home, Our Blessed Mother draws people west to Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, a replica of the grotto itself. The mountain shaded by the oak trees nearby is decorated with plants from the desert and the rocks were gathered from the grotto built on the north side of Immaculate Conception Church or sit on a stone bench shaded by the oak trees nearby.

Benedictine Monastery of the Good Shepherd
Address: 3167 Monastery Lane, Rio Grande City, TX 78582
Directions: On Highway 83, two miles west of Rio Grande City, take a right on Farm Road 3167 and drive north for six miles. A large white cross on the left marks the entrance.

While there are no healing waters in a county where drought conditions persist, the man-made setting provides a quiet prayer space. One can choose to kneel in the grotto built on the north side of Immaculate Conception Church or sit on a stone bench shaded by the oak trees nearby.

Father Gustav Getlach, a German-born priest and a member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate built much of the grotto himself. The mountain is decorated with plants from the desert surround Rio Grande City and the rocks were gathered from around Roma and the petrified wood from the neighboring town of Escobares.

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto
Address: E. 4th Street and N. Britton Avenue, Rio Grande City
Directions: Turn left on 4th Street. Grotto is north of Immaculate Conception Church.
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, a replica of the grotto where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette 18 times. During the ninth apparition, Bernadette, as instructed by the Virgin Mary, dug a hole in the ground with her hands, and a gush of water was released from an unknown spring. She was instructed to drink the water and wash herself there. The site is known around the world for its healing waters.

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Questions & Answers with Bishop Daniel Flores

What is the state of the Catholic Church in the Rio Grande Valley?

The Church is in a state of growth here. Many of our parishes struggle to make ends meet, but then, so do most families here in the Valley. There is a strong spirit of cooperation and generosity. And I am most hopeful when I travel around and see the faith and joy of the people.

What is the significance of the Golden Jubilee to all faiths in the Valley?

I think it is a good sign of God’s grace that we are able to rejoice with and for each other. All of the local faith communities have a rich history here, and that has been one of the great factors in making the people of the Valley so hospitable and generous. I am always happy to see our different religious commu-
“El corazón de la diócesis es el corazón del pueblo.”
- Bishop Daniel E. Flores
“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” - Matthew 25:35
St. Luke Catholic Church
Established January 1974

Congratulate the diocese on celebrating
50 years of service.

Rev. Fernando Gonzalez
Pastor

Rev. Andres E. Gutierrez
Parochial Vicar

There Are No Strangers At St. Luke, Only Friends We Have Yet To Meet!

Incaritate Word Academy
A Catholic Tradition of Academic Excellence Since 1853

Congratulations to the Diocese of Brownsville for Fifty Faithful Years of service to the people of the Rio Grande Valley.
**Welcoming the stranger:**

Staff, volunteers have cared for more than 24,000 refugees

The Valley Catholic

The Diocese of Brownsville answered the call to welcome the stranger once again in 2010 when another humanitarian crisis unfolded in our area.

An influx of immigrant families have come to the United States to escape violence, political unrest and crushing poverty in their native lands. Mothers or sometimes fathers and their children arrive at an immigrant respite center in McAllen. They are scared, exhausted and hungry.

When they walk through the doors, they are cheerfully greeted by volunteers with a round of applause and shouts of, “Bienvenidos!” (welcome).

The warm reception brings many of them to tears. Most of them have endured difficult journeys to the United States and it’s the first time in days that they are treated nicely.

More than 24,000 immigrants have passed through the immigrant respite center, located at Sacred Heart Parish McAllen, since it opened June 10, 2014.

The immigrants, mostly from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, are dropped off by U.S. Immigration and Customs agents at the McAllen bus station a few blocks away from the church after being detained and processed. They are given a court date and granted permission to travel to their final destination.

Many of the immigrants were sleeping on the floor of the bus station and had no food or water. They hadn’t showered in days and sometimes, weeks. For about two months before the center opened, volunteers began taking food to bus stations for the immigrant families.

Sister Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, heard about the situation and responded by opening the center in McAllen for a few months, one in Brownsville on the grounds of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

The centers, which provided essentials such as food, clothing, water and a place to rest, were opened with the blessing and support of Bishop Daniel E. Flores and every day since June 10 of last year, people come in,” said Eli Fernandez, director of the center. “We haven’t had a day where nobody has come in. The need is still there.”

“We have kept our promise,” Sister Leticias Benavides of the Missionaries of Jesus, a counselor and administrative assistant for Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. “From the very beginning we said, as long as there is a need, we will be here. It is also what Jesus calls us to do in the works of mercy—Matthew 25.”

Some weekends the retreat center is packed with visitors. It’s a good idea to call in advance and make arrangements. Some weekends the retreat center and casitas fill with retreatants. Plus, the sisters like to be on hand to welcome every guest.

They prepare a note outlining some essentials (the gate code and the code to the Fountain of Life Chapel for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament). Included as well, some advice in case snakes are around. “Just let them pass and continue.”

The Good Shepherd Handmaids pray for you before you arrive, during your stay and in your absence,” reads the note.

St. Joseph Chapel of Perpetual Adoration, Alamo

Tucked away in a quiet residential neighborhood stands a historic church in Alamo where people come to pray before the Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament at the St. Joseph Chapel of Perpetual Adoration.

The Diocese of Brownsville’s St. Joseph Chapel of Perpetual Adoration, located at Rose Street, opened in December 2005 in the historic St. Joseph Church, built in 1924. It was designated a historical site in 1985.

The chapel is run by the Capuchin Poor Clares, cloistered nuns who live in a monastery behind the chapel. The sisters are devoted to contemplative life, praying for the people in whose midst they are, as well as for the needs of the church and society. They spend hours in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and strive to be models of a simple and peaceful way of life.

When you step inside the blue foyer, quiet welcomes you as does a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with open arms and another of St. Veronica.

While the cloistered sisters are not in sight, they have velitas (small candles) available for sale for $1 on the honor system and a basket where petitions may be left. When preparing for a pilgrimage, pilgrims often carry prayer requests, their own and others, to leave at a specific shrine or church.

The chapel is open to the community every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Daily Mass is scheduled at 8 a.m. Monday through Saturday and at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

The sisters lead a daily Rosary as well as the Divine Mercy hour at 3 p.m. and Vespers at 6 p.m.

Prayer, continued from pg. 16

Daniel said a chapel with a cross was built adjacent to “la cuerva” to remind people that Christ comes first and that St. Jude is an intercessor.

Benedictine Monastery, Rio Grande City

Sometimes, we need a break from routine, so I went west. I made my way to an oasis of quiet, hidden among the mesquites, brush and cacti in Starr County where the Sisters of the Benedictine Monastery of the Good Shepherd welcome visitors year round.

Some guests come to visit for a few hours, some to stay at one of the casitas on the property for a personal retreat, and some for a discernment weekend or a group retreat.

The rock and gravel road leading to the monastery slowed my pace from the start. There is no speeding, no rush, on Monastery Lane.

It’s a good idea to call in advance and make arrangements. Some weekends the retreat center and casitas fill with retreatants. Plus, the sisters like to be on hand to welcome every guest.

They prepared a note outlining some essentials (the gate code and the code to the Fountain of Life Chapel for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament). Included as well, some advice in case snakes are around. “Just let them pass and continue.”

“The Good Shepherd Handmaids pray for you before you arrive, during your stay and in your absence,” reads the note.

Sister Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, left, briefs Bishop Daniel E. Flores on the day’s events at the respite center at Sacred Heart Parish in McAllen.
La Catedral Inmaculada Concepción en Brownsville, una catedral gótica, es la sede del obispo de la Diócesis de Brownsville. Fue bendecida y dedicada el 12 de junio, 1859, que fue Domingo Pentecostal ese año.

La Catedral Inmaculada Concepción en Brownsville, una catedral gótica, es la sede del obispo de la Diócesis de Brownsville. Fue bendecida y dedicada el 12 de junio, 1859, que fue Domingo Pentecostal ese año.

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Peña,

continued from pg. 10

the Valley was in Alamo, when the area was still a part of the Diocese of Corpus Christi. “It’s interesting now that I am living here in the same house where I lived as a priest,” he said.

On Oct. 16, 1976, Father Peña was named titular Bishop of Trijú and Auxiliary to the Archbishop of San Antonio and consecrated on Dec. 13, 1976. At the age of 42, Bishop Peña was one of the youngest bishops in the country and the fourth Hispanic in the United States to become a bishop.

Four years later, Bishop Peña was appointed as the fourth Bishop of El Paso in 1980, serving for 15 years until his installation as the fifth bishop of Brownsville in August 1995.

On Sundays at the Edinburg campus of UT-RGV, he listens to confessions at 6 p.m. and celebrates Mass at 7 p.m. He also visits the Evans Juvenile Detention Center in Edinburg once a month, and celebrates Mass on the Sundays that the UT-RGV students have academic breaks.

Bishop Peña’s legacy remains evident throughout the diocese.

Flores,

continued from pg. 10

John Vianney House of Studies for seminarians in Corpus Christi and was part of the formation faculty of St. Mary’s Seminary and teaching faculty at the University of St. Thomas School of Theology in Houston.

Bishop Flores earned a doctoral degree in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

As Bishop of Brownsville, he has spoken nationally and internationally on the themes of immigration, human trafficking and advocacy.

In 2012-2013, he led listening sessions – or town hall-style meetings – in each of the eight deaneries of the diocese. Participants were invited to ask questions and share their hopes and dreams for the future of the Church in the Rio Grande Valley. Feedback from the listening sessions is being used in pastoral planning.

Bishop Flores also established two new parishes in 2013, St. Anne Quasi Parish in Peñitas to serve the burgeoning Western Hidalgo County community and Our Heavenly Father Parish in Olmito in response to the rapid growth in the northwest sector of the City of Brownsville.

He is also our first bishop to have a blog, which is called, “En Pocas Palabras,” and recently joined Twitter under the handle @bpdflores.
**Los Obispos**

**Obispo Adolph Marx**

*Su lema: “El amor es el cumplimiento de la ley.”*


El Obispo Marx nació el 2 de Febrero de 1915 en Colonia, Alemania. El Obispo Emmanuel Bohélias Ledvina, quien fue obispo de Corpus Christi desde 1921 hasta 1949, estaba cerca con el Obispo Marx.


El Obispo Marx se mudó de Alemania a Texas repentinamente y fue ordenado como sacerdote para el servicio de la Diócesis de Corpus Christi el 2 de mayo de 1940. Antes de que se le asignara ser obispo auxiliar, al Obispo Marx regularmente se le asignaban las parroquias de Laredo, que también eran parte de la Diócesis de Corpus Christi en aquel entonces.

El Obispo Marx fue sepultado en la Catedral de la Inmaculada Concepción el 27 de mayo de 1971. Fue instalado como el Arzobispo de Boston el 7 de Octubre de 1970 y elevado a Cardenal el 5 de Marzo de 1973. Murió el 17 de septiembre de 1983 de una enfermedad coronaria a la edad de 67, un día después de haber tenido una cirugía de emergencia de corazón, según su obituario por Associated Press.

Como Obispo de Brownsville, añadió 18 parroquias nuevas y y cuidó de él durante su retiro.

**Obispo Humberto Sousa Medeiros**

*Su lema: “Adveniat regnum tuum (venga a nosotros tu Reino).”*

El Rev. Humberto S. Medeiros de la Diócesis de Fall River, Mass., fue asignado como el segundo obispo de Brownsville el 14 de abril de 1966. Fue instalado en la Catedral de la Inmaculada Concepción el 29 de junio de 1966 y permaneció hasta el octubre de 1970.

Fue instalado como el Arzobispo de Boston el 7 de Octubre de 1970 y elevado a Cardenal el 5 de Marzo de 1973. Murió el 17 de septiembre de 1983 de una enfermedad coronaria a la edad de 67, un día después de haber tenido una cirugía de emergencia de corazón, según su obituario por Associated Press.

Como Obispo de Brownsville, apoyó la construcción de los Hogares de Mexicoamericanos, según Associated Press. A veces viajaba con los trabajadores migrantes porque, “hacia todo lo posible por mejorar las vidas de aquellos con necesidades.”

Entre sus muchos logros durante sus 20 años como pastor de la Diócesis de Brownsville, el Obispo Fitzpatrick abogaba y viajaba con los campesinos migrantes, promoviendo ceremonias de "despedida" y "bienvenida" en cada parroquia para bendecir a los más de 100,000 trabajadores migrantes que vivían en el Valle del Río Grande en la década de los 70 y 80. Fue cofundador de la casa Oscar Romero en 1982, que albergaba alrededor de 130,000 refugiados de...
Obispo Enrique San Pedro

Su lema: “de buena gana entregué lo que tengo, me lo mataron al mismo, para el bien de ustedes” – 2 Corintios 12:15.

El Obispo Enrique San Pedro, S.J., un nativo de Cuba y ex missionsi, se convirtió en el cuarto Obispo de la Diócesis de Brownsville, después del retiro del Obispo John J. Fitzpatrick. Se había instalado como Coadjutor de la Diócesis el 26 de septiembre de 1951.

Nació en la Habana, Cuba el 9 de marzo de 1926, donde vivió hasta que tuvo que huir de su país debido a la Orden de la Compañía de Jesús el 7 de diciembre de 1941 y fue ordenado sacerdote el 18 de Marzo de 1951. El Obispo San Pedro fue nombrado el primer obispo auxiliar hispano para la Diócesis de Galveston-Houston el 15 de abril de 1968. Consagrado como obispo el 29 de junio de 1968, sirvió como obispo auxiliar de Galveston-Houston hasta 1991. Durante su ordenamiento como obispo, sólo era el tercer jesuita nombrado como obispo en los Estados Unidos.


Obispo Raymond J. Peña

Su lema: “Haz todo con amor” 1 Corintios 16:14.

Incluso después de retirarse, el Obispo Emérito Raymond J. Peña, 54, sigue sirviendo la diócesis. Es capellán del Centro Católico de Estudiantes Newman en el campus de la Universidad de Texas del Valle del Río Grande. También celebra Misa los días de las Monjas Capuchinas de Santa Clara en la Capilla de San José de la Perpetua Adoración en Alamo y organiza una Hora Sagra- da para las vocaciones cada semana los jueves a las 7 p.m. Invita a sac- erdotes para tomar turnos llevando a cabo laHora Sagrada y enviar a feligreses.


El Obispo tiene 57 años de momentos especiales en su min- inistro desde que se ordenó como joven sacerdote el 25 de mayo de 1957. Dentro de esos momentos está su ordenación sacerdotal en la Catedral de Corpus Cristi por el Reverendísimo Mariano S. Gárriga, con dos compañeros de clase que habían estudiado con él en San Antonio en el Seminario Asunción.

Una de sus primeras asigna- ciones como sacerdote en el Valle fue en Alamo, cuando el área aún pertenecía a la Diócesis de Corpus Cristi. “Es interesante ahora que es- toy viviendo aquí en la misma casa donde viví como sacerdote,” comenti- miento.


Los domingos en el campus de UT-RGV en Edinburg, escucha las confesiones de varias mujeres Misa a las 7 p.m. También visitó el Centro de Detención Juvenil Evins en Edinburg, donde celebra Misa de los domingos cuando los estudiantes de UT-RGV tienen descansos académicos.

El legado del Obispo Peña se mantiene evidente a través de la diócesis. Cuando se retiró, casi el 50 por ciento de los sacerdotes di- ocesanos habían sido ordenados por él. Habría hablado sobre su retir- arse, y cuando se retiró había 22 o 23.

Algunos de los otros logros reg- istrados incluyen el establecimien- to del Instituto Ministerial de San Juan Diego para el entrenamiento de futuros diáconos permanentes y ministros laicos eclesiásticos; el éxito de los Discípulos en Misión enviendo más de 500 personas de puerta en puerta proclamando el mensaje de Jesucristo; la estab- lecimiento de la Oficina de Inmi-igración; la inclusión de mujeres en posiciones de liderazgo en la diócesis y entidades relacionadas con la diócesis; y el nombramiento del Santuario de Nuestra Señora de San Juan del Valle como un santu- ario nacional en 1998 y una basilica menor en 1999.

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is blessed to be part of the Diocese of Brownsville, and congratulates it on its 50th Anniversary!

Corpus Christi y el Obispo Flores se graduó de la Preparatoria Flour Bluff en 1979. El Obispo Flores, hijo segundo de Fernando y Lydia Dilley Flores, nació en 1961 en Palacios, Texas. Su padre falleció en 1984, ese mismo año también falleció su abuela materna, Teresa Dilley. Ella siempre fue una parte íntima de la familia Flores-Dilley y el obispo frecuentemente comparte anécdot- as sobre su abuela en sus homilías y pláticas.

Su madre aún vive en Corpus Christi. Todavía trabaja pero su salud ha dejado antes de los idiomas y posee gran- dura. ¿Cuándo construiría la comunidad Española? El Obispo Flores recibió su títu- lo de doctorado en la teología de Santo Tomás de Aquino en Roma.
A la edad de 65 años fue instalado como Obispo de la Diócesis de Brownsville el 30 de noviembre de 1991.

Lydia Pesina, directora de oficina de Family Life, dijo que el Obispo San Pedro “era educador ‘por excelencia’. Por su tradición Jesuita, él creía en la educación y formación para todos los involucrados en los ministerios parroquiales.”

En marzo de 1993, el Obispo San Pedro fue parte de la delegación de obispos para hacer frente en las Naciones Unidas sobre la situación de los refugiados. Algunos obispos habían sido enviados desde el sur de la Florida a su diócesis.

El Obispo San Pedro a la edad de 68, falleció de cáncer el 17 de julio de 1994 en Miami Beach, Florida. Fue sepultado en una sección reservada para obispos y sacerdotes en el cementerio Católico “Nuestra Señora de la Merced” en Miami.
BLESSING OF HOLY OILS

Annual Chrism Mass a joyful celebration of our faith, tradition

In our diocese, the Chrism Mass is typically held on the Tuesday of Holy Week at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle National Shrine. During this Mass, the priests, deacons, and representatives of the diocesan community gather with the bishop, who blesses the holy oils—the oil of the sick, the oil of catechumens, and the sacred Chrism—for use in the coming year.

Of all the events held in the diocese each year, the Chrism Mass yields the largest gathering of priests and deacons. The faithful are invited to be a part of this special liturgy. By participating in the Chrism Mass, the faithful show support for their priests and deacons, encourage them, and pray for them.

The Chrism Mass is also a time for the priests of the diocese to renew their commitment to priestly service. During the liturgy, the priests stand and renew their "dedication to Christ as priests of His new covenant."

At the end of the liturgy, the holy oils are distributed to the church pastors and brought back to parishes of the diocese for use in the coming year. Whenever the holy oils are used in a parish or mission, the ministry of the bishop who consecrated them is symbolically present.

Congratulations to the Diocese of Brownsville on a joyous and blessed 50th jubilee year.

As we celebrate the History of our Faith in the Rio Grande Valley, may the Lord continue to pour out his blessings upon Bishop Flores, all our clergy, the religious and the faithful of the diocese.

Deacon Luis Zuniga, Director, Cindy Castillo, Secretary, Laura Portilla, Librarian
700 N. Virgen de San Juan Blvd., San Juan, Texas, 956-784-5059
“No dejen de practicar la hospitalidad, pues saben que algunos dieron alojamiento a ángeles sin saberlo” - Carta a los Hebreos 13:2

Recibiendo al foráneo

CASA OSCAR ROMERO

Centro se mantuvo en operacion por más de 10 años

The Valley Catholic

La tradición bíblica es rica en imágenes de hospitalidad, de recibir al foráneo. La Diócesis de Brownsville se esfuerza para mantener la dignidad de cada persona al promover el legado de bienvenida de la Iglesia.

En 1982, Casa Oscar Romero abrió sus puertas en San Benito a refugiados de Centroamérica que dejaban sus países en Guerra. La mayoría de las personas eran de Nicaragua y El Salvador. Ambos países se encontraban sitiados por el crimen y la violencia policial y miles fueron asesinados.

El centro se mantuvo en operación hasta junio 1992. Alrededor de 130,000 refugiados de Centroamérica fueron alojados y cerca de 2,5 millones de alimentos fueron servidos durante su existencia.

“Cuando estos refugiados venían de sus países, tenían a alguien que los recibiera y les diera algún tipo de esperanza algún tipo de cuidado”, dijo el Obispo John J. Fitzpatrick al describir el trabajo de la Casa Oscar Romero.

Nombra por el arzobispo asesinado en El Salvador en 1980, ahora el beato Oscar Romero, el centro a aлоjó a más de 700 personas al día en 1985, pero una orden de la corte en 1989 lo limitó a 200 personas.

La hermana Juliana García, que falleció en noviembre de 2014 a la edad de 81 años, y la hermana Norma Pimentel de las Misioneras de Jesús, estuvieron a cargo del funcionamiento diario de la Casa Oscar Romero y recibieron ayuda de una variedad de fuentes.

El centro cambió de locación en muchas ocasiones debido a problemas de espacio y en otras ocasiones, fueron “sacados del vecindario”, dijo la hermana García en una entrevista en 2011.

“Muchas veces, los vecindarios no querían a ‘esas personas’ en su comunidad”, recordó. “Pero hicimos lo mejor para hacer que los refugiados se sintieran amados y darles el ánimo para seguir.”

Existía mucha controversia en ese tiempo debido a la lucha entre aquellos que buscaban ayudar a los refugiados y aquellos que buscaban deportarlos. Algunos acusaron al Obispo Fitzpatrick de operar un santuario ilegal y criticaron los esfuerzos de la Iglesia. El Obispo Fitzpatrick se sintió profundamente decepcionado con estas acciones.

“Si estás en muchos juicios tribunales, dijo el “Me ha costado la decepción de que muchas personas que presumientemente son Cristianos, y que son católicos, encuentran error en los esfuerzos de una persona para alimentar a los pobres.”

Al final, el centro fue movido a una localización más grande en un tramo de seis aceras de tierra en Brownsville en julio de 1987. Conforme el número de refugiados disminuyó, el centro fue reutilizado y ahora es el Centro Obispo Enrique San Pedro Oreamo es un albergue para indigentes que alberga hasta a 200 personas.

Basilica, continued from pg. 14

at all rational,” Anderson said in a 2010 interview with The Valley Catholic. “Without thinking, I ran back into the church and pieces of the roof were starting to fall down.”

Anderson went to the tabernacle, pulled out the coibitors filled with the Body and Blood of Christ and headed back out of what was left of the burning church.

After the fire was extinguished, Anderson walked around the charred remains of the church property.

“In a flash I saw the miracle,” he said. “With the roof gone and only the steel beams that the supported the roof left in place. I saw then the beam directly in line with the impact of the plane had been bent inward so it looked like a ‘V’. The plane had made a direct hit on that steel beam. From there it bounced off the roof of the cafeteria building next door.

“Had it gone six feet in either direction, it would have punched right through the roof and landed on top of us. I’m not sure I would be here today if that would have happened — that was the miracle of the day.”

A new shrine was dedicated on April 19, 1980. Cardinal Medeiros, our second bishop, joined Bishop Fitzpatrick at the dedication with an estimated 50,000 people.

The basilica grounds, shaded by mesquite, oak, elms and palm trees, provide a peaceful setting for pilgrims.

The grounds feature 14 life-size images of the Stations of the Cross crafted in bronze and designed by Italian artist Edmund Rabanser. Rabanser, who last visited the basilica in 2007, to view his work, said he feels a part of them.

“I will never make something like this again,” he said. “Few sculptors have a chance to work on a project like this.”

Banchs placed along the three-quarter mile path along the Stations of the Cross, which were installed and dedicated in 1993, make it convenient to sit in prayer and reflection.

A 45-foot mosaic located on the north exterior wall of the basilica features Jesus and the Virgen de San Juan del Valle. The creation, which was dedicated in 1995, is titled, “Christ Presents His Mother,” and can been seen from the expressway (Interstate 2/US 83).
The Valley Catholic

Whether it be assisting during a natural disaster or providing resources for spiritual growth, the Church in the Rio Grande Valley has been serving the people in our community in multiple ways.

Here is an overview of some of the ministries in the Diocese of Brownsville:

Office of Catechesis

Realizing that “faith lives in the hearts of believers” (GDCO105), the Office of Catechesis encourages and inspires the catechetical leaders and catechists in the Diocese of Brownsville to embrace their faith in Jesus Christ and in his Gospel, so that they may effectively transmit it to the students enrolled in the parish programs of religious formation and education.

The Office of Catechesis serves the religious education programs in 70 parishes and 44 missions in the Rio Grande Valley. This includes more than 33,000 children and youth, pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade and many young adults who volunteer.

The Office of Catechesis provides formation, programs, resources, advocacy and support to pastors, catechetical leaders and catechists and helps them to plan, evaluate and update staff and programs for continuing education and retreats.

Immigration Office Ministry

The Immigration Office for the Diocese of Brownsville provides support to individuals and families, assisting them to localize their residency status and become naturalized citizens.

The mission of the Immigration Office Ministry is to welcome the stranger in the spirit of the Gospel.

Services are offered to people of all cultural and religious backgrounds both in the United States and abroad.

Communications Ministry

The purpose of the Communications Ministry is to coordinate the communication efforts of the Diocese of Brownsville and to keep the Catholic community and the public at large informed about the programs, activities and services of the diocese.

The ministry provides communication advice and support to Bishop Daniel E. Flores, priests, pastors, schools and other Catholic institutions in the diocese.

The diocesan Communications Ministry is also responsible for the official website of the Diocese of Brownsville (www.cdbb.org); the diocesan Facebook, YouTube and Twitter pages; Weekly Update, an email blast which highlights several upcoming events and communicates timely information; the Mobile Journalist Project, which provides training in the basic journalistic skills of storytelling for teens and young adults throughout the diocese.

The project engages the youth in life in the Church while teaching them valuable skills: Diocese Inspect, a half-hour interview program on KMBH-TV and for The Valley Catholic, the official newspaper of the diocese.

Media Resource Center

The Media Resource Center is the Diocese of Brownsville’s primary collection of books and multimedia materials. The multimedia materials are available in a variety of formats including VHS, DVD, audio CD, CD-ROM and audio cassettes. Parish priests, Catholic schools and ministry organizations may check out items from the Media Resource Center to use in their programs.

Located in the Bishop San Pedro Brownsville Building of the San Juan Campus Center near the grounds of the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle, the Media Resource Center features movies of VHS, 16mm, of what have been considered classic films, as presented by Sister Dorothy.

Books include the Bible (Old and New Testament), the canon of sacred scripture, the New Testament, church government, all seven sacraments and even secular material that promotes Christian values.

The Campus and Young Adult Ministry

The Campus and Young Adult Ministry Office (CAYAMO) supports the ministry to single and married young adults ages 18-35, adolescents and local college campuses.

The office organizes various events throughout the year that connect young adults to their faith, church and community.

The Campus and Young Adult Ministry Office, located in the Bishop San Pedro Brownsville Building of the San Juan Campus Center near the grounds of the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle, the Media Resource Center features movies of VHS, 16mm, of what have been considered classic films, as presented by Sister Dorothy.

Books include the Bible (Old and New Testament), the canon of sacred scripture, the New Testament, church government, all seven sacraments and even secular material that promotes Christian values.

Sacraments may check out items from the Media Resource Center to use in their programs.

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, the charitable branch of the Diocese of Brownsville, sponsors programs that provide assistance to individuals and families experiencing a crisis in their lives, regardless of religion. It is part of the larger family of Catholic Charities USA and Caritas Internationalis.

Programs sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley include emergency assistance, which provides rental, utility and financial assistance for the infirmed, unemployable and the homeless as well as assistance with medical transportation, fire loss and funeral costs. Counseling for individuals, couples and families is also available.

Each year, more than 100,000 Valley residents receive assistance from Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley also respond to requests in the event of natural disaster such as hurricanes, floods and other catastrophic events; providing short-term and long-term solutions.

Office of Vocations

Office of Vocations is to support and advise those who are in the process of discernment. Once a person has an interest in the vocation of priest or Religious, the Office of Vocations of the Diocese of Brownsville is here to foster that call and help them through the discernment process.

The office does not push anyone to enter the priesthood or religious life but rather, they assist the individual in cooperating with God’s will.

Many men and women discern a call to the priesthood or religious life through prayer, retreats, visits to the study or giving of time and other opportunities.

Catholic Charities USA and Caritas Internationalis provides trained chaplains to numerous medical facilities throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

The Catholic Charities USA program, Advance ED, offers a holistic education, counseling and support to youth in grades 6-12 as well as consultation, resources and programs.

The ultimate goal of the Office of Youth Ministry is to encourage young ministry leaders to draw young people closer to the Lord and to participate in the life, mission and work of the Church.

The Office of Youth Ministry is an affiliated member of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and other national organizations.

These partnerships and relationships provide tools to better serve the youth and young leaders in our diocese.

Hospital Chaplains

During his earthly ministry, Jesus showed a profound care for the sick and the suffering. Our Lord often interacted with the sick as illustrated in the Gospels.

The role of a hospital chaplain is to provide pastoral care counseling. Jesus Christ. A chaplain provides spiritual and emotional care to patients, their families and hospital staff – regardless of their faith – during times of demand or crisis, joy or suffering.

The Diocese of Brownsville provides trained chaplains to numerous medical facilities throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Catholic Schools Office

The Catholic Schools Office provides guidance and services to school pastors, principals, teachers, school councils and other leaders in the Diocese of Brownsville.

There are 13 Catholic schools throughout the Rio Grande Valley with a total enrollment of 3,844 students (Pre-K3-12th Grade).

The Catholic Schools office in the diocese, all of which are accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and recently by Advance ED, offer a holistic education, combining academic excellence with spiritual and faith formation. The students are taught to care for those within their school communities and beyond. All the schools participate in community service projects that assist their neighbors in need.

Stewardship and Development Office

The Stewardship and Development Office is dedicated to securing financial resources to support diocesan and parish works.

The office coordinates an annual appeal along with the bishop’s benefit dinner, the Bishop’s Appeal and the Oblate Trail Ride.

Through various programs, the office also educates and encourages the faithful to respond to the call of discipleship through stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

Office of Permanent Deacons

The Office of the Permanent Deacons promotes vocations to the permanent diaconate and coordinates the formation for ordination.

It also seeks to minister to the needs of deacons and their families and provide them with opportunities for continued academic, spiritual and pastoral formation.

There are currently 71 active and 18 retired permanent deacons serving in our diocese and another 48 men in formation.

Jail/Prison Ministry

Led by Ofelia De Los Santos, diocesan Associate of the Jail/Prison Ministry and Father George A. Gonzalez, chaplain, the Jail Ministry and of merging efforts to spread the Good News of Christ Jesus to those behind bars.

Staff and 150 volunteer ministers to inmates in more than 30 prisons and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers, evangelizing through religious education classes, Bible study, prayer services, retreats, workshops and Sacrament preparation in addition to coordinating Masses.

They also offer kind wards, encouragement and support to the prisoners and their families.
Our oldest parish and newest church are 160 years apart

The Valley Catholic

The Diocese of Brownsville, which encompasses the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy, has 71 parishes and 44 mission churches.

The oldest parish in the Diocese of Brownsville, Our Lady of Refuge Church in Roma was established in 1853 and newest, Our Heavenly Father Church in Olmito, was established 160 years later in 2013.

Franciscan missionaries evangelized northern Mexico and what is now the Rio Grande Valley beginning in 1689 and later, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate would pick up the baton, tending to the spiritual needs of the area.

The City of Roma was founded in 1765. The city and the surrounding ranches were home to many Catholics but political unrest made it difficult for missionaries to work in the area.

Roma’s first mission was served by priests from nearby Mier (Mexico) from 1829-1840. In 1849, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate arrived in Deep South Texas. Their ministry covered 200 miles along both sides of the Texas-Mexico border and about 100 miles north of the border.

They served the families who lived on ranches scattered throughout the area.

The Oblates constructed a small, temporary wooden chapel in Brownsville that would serve as the cornerstone for their operations in South Texas. A few months later, they also built the La Lomita chapel in Laredo, which encompassed the whole state of Texas by that time. Bishop Odín was joined by Father James Benavides, pastor of the church in Laredo and two Oblate priests, Father Jean-Marie Gaye and Father Pierre Yves Keralum. The church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Our Lady of Refuge.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Father Keralum also served as the architect of the new church as well as the mason and stonemason. Our Lady of Refuge Church would be the first permanent church constructed by the Oblates in Texas.

Father Keralum later used his architectural and carpentry skills to construct several other religious edifices (and furnishings) in South Texas, including the Immaculate Conception Church (later cathedral), a convenl and a priest’s residence in Brownsville as well as San Agustín Church (later cathedral) in Laredo.

Our Lady of Refuge Church has served the growing northwest sector of the Community of Brownsville.

From the start, the community worked to build their church. Before its dedication as a mission, the community members held a variety of fund-raisers in the mid-1950s to purchase the first barricade that originally served as the church.

Before the first Mass was held under an ebony tree on the grounds of the Olmito School in March, 1955, some of the first catechism classes were taught in a vegetable shed and under the shade of a tree. Later the community used a classroom or school auditorium. Once the barricade was purchased, the church was named Santa Ana Catholic Church.

The community continued raising funds and with the help from the Catholic Extension Society of America, they built a church in 1967.

Bishop Humberto Medeiros dedicated the new church on Sept. 23, 1967.

A year before its 25th anniversary, the church was destroyed in a fire on Ash Wednesday in 1991. It was rebuilt a year later in time to mark the silver anniversary on Sept. 23, 1992.

According to the 2010 census, the population for Olmito is 1,210, but a rapid pattern of development in the area is increasing the number of families at the parish.

Father Hector J. Cruz, a Marist Priest of the Society of Mary, who has been serving the church since Sept. 12, 2007 and Deacon Augusto Chapa tend to the pastoral needs of Our Heavenly Father Parish.

Deeply Rooted in Faith

Our Lady of Refuge Church in Brownsville is 160 years old.

The parish was named Santa Ana Catholic Church. Three years later, the church was designated as a mission in St. Cecilia Parish in Los Fresnos up until 2006 when parish boundaries changed and it became a mission of Our Lord of Divine Mercy Parish in Brownsville.

For a community to be strong, there needs to be a foundation of families that care about each other, of young people who think in terms of service to others, and of respect for human life and dignity, and a reverence for the elderly. These are spiritual resources that the Church offers to help the entire region be more compassionate and generous.

Q&A, continued from pg. 17

nates happily share their gifts.

Evidence suggests that traditionally Catholic strongholds, such as Ireland, are growing more secular. Is that a concern in the Valley?

Well, secularization is a phenomenon having varied effects throughout the industrialized West. It mostly shows itself in how religion is allowed or not allowed to express itself. In that sense, the public square is less open to the religious influences affecting everyday people. That is a challenge for the Church, certainly. But I think we are blessed in the Valley because our people maintain a strong sense that for life to be good, we need God in it. Our young people are very open to inviting faith and prayer into their lives. I am particularly moved by how the faith of the Church is expressed by our people through public processions and great feast day celebrations. There is a great public outpouring of affection for the Lord, His Blessed Mother and the saints. This is very special here in the Valley.

The Catholic Church played a leading role in providing humanitarian relief to the surge of Central American immigrants that came through the Valley in the past year. What does that say about the faithful in this region?

To me, it is a great sign of the generosity of our people. And that is a fruit of God’s grace taking root in a deep way in our local communities. This is one of the poorest areas in the nation, economically speaking. Yet, as I said in a letter to Pope Francis last year, it is one of the richest in terms of compassion and generosity. And to be sure, this generosity in the Catholic Church has been met by an equally generous outpouring from people of other faiths, and from people with no faith at all. I think the Valley has a lot to teach the rest of the nation about human priorities.

What is your hope for the Diocese of Brownsville looking ahead?

We hope to establish and open more parishes for the growing community. I hope we continue to be a generous and hospitable people. I hope that in 100 years they say we built up strong communities of faith, hope and charity.

What role should the church play as this region continues to grow?

For a community to be strong, there needs to be a foundation of families that care about each other, of young people who think in terms of service to others, and of respect for human life and dignity, and a reverence for the elderly. These are spiritual resources that the Church offers to help the entire region be more compassionate and generous.

Growth in economic resources and in population cannot complete the human and community picture. A people must grow also in goodness. The Gospel and the sacraments are indispensable for this kind of growth.

What role should the church play as Hispanics continue to gain national influence?

Again, the Church must first offer spiritual resources to all who come, so that the people themselves can be agents of faith, compassion and mercy in an increasingly cruel and secular world. This means that nationally the Catholic Church must work really hard to welcome the Hispanic communities, and to encourage education and leadership formed in the Catholic tradition of faith and service to the wider culture. In many ways the Church in the Valley can help the wider U.S. Church appreciate how important and urgent this mission is.
**Timeline**

1994  
Bishop Enrique San Pedro dies on July 17 after a lengthy illness. Father Bob Davola is appointed administrator of the diocese until a new bishop is appointed.

1995  
The mosaic “Christ Presents His Mother” is dedicated at the Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle.

1995  
Bishop Raymundo J. Peña is appointed the fifth Bishop of Brownsville on May 23 and installed on August 6.

1996  
New parishes established in Brownsville: St. Eugene de Mazenod and San Felipe de Jesús.

1997  
The diocese gets its first website: www.cdob.org

1997  
Casa San José House of Studies is established to assist seminarians.

1997  
St. John Vianney Retirement Home, the first retirement home for priests, is established on the grounds of the Basilica in San Juan.

1998  
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops name the Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valley a National Shrine.

1998  
Oratory Athenaeum for University Preparation opens in Pharr.

1999  
The Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle is named a basilica, one of only three in Texas.

1999  
San Martin de Porres Parish in Weslaco opens a new school.

1999  
The Diocese of Brownsville establishes an Office of Immigration to assist people seeking residency status in the United States.

2000  
The worldwide observance of the Great Jubilee Year 2000 brings a year of evangelization, renewal, and celebration for the faithful of the Diocese of Brownsville.

2000  
The Benedictine Sisters of the Good Shepherd begin building a new monastery in Rio Grande City.

2000  
The first Diocesan Synod opens on June 10.

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**MOMENTS IN TIME...**


First graduating class from Juan Diego Academy Catholic Regional High School in 2015.

Father Eddie Villa with altar servers from St. Paul the Apostle Parish in La Puerta in 2015.
Timeline

2000
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Las Milpas established.

2002
San Juan Diego de Cuahhtla-toatzin Parish is established in McAllen.

2002
Guadalupe Regional Middle School opens in Brownsville.

2002
Capuchin Poor Clares of Zamora, Michoacan, Mexico arrive in the diocese to establish a new monastery.

2003
San Juan Diego Ministry Institute begins its first fall semester.

2004
The first Diocesan Synod, which began in 2000, concludes its work.

2004
Father José Maria Azpiazu, OMI dies at the age of 100. He was the first pastor of the San Juan community in 1949, and founded the original Virgen de San Juan del Valle shrine.

2004
San Cristobal Magallanes and Companions Parish is established in Mission.

2004
Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Mission re-opens.

2005
Lord of Divine Mercy Parish established in Brownsville.

2005
A new program for the formation of permanent deacons is established.

2009
Bishop Daniel E. Flores, a native of Corpus Christi, is appointed the sixth bishop of Brownsville by Pope Benedict XVI.

2009
The Diocese of Brownsville began publishing The Valley Catholic newspaper.

2009
St. Paul Parish established in La Puerta.

2011
Juan Diego Academy, a Catholic regional high school, opens in Mission.
Timeline

2012
Bishop Flores hosts listening sessions in each deanery to begin pastoral planning. Sessions continued in 2013.

2013
St. Anne Quasi-Parish, Penitas and Our Heavenly Father Parish, Olmito established.

2014
Respite centers for immigrants open in McAllen and Brownsville, to minister to a flood of immigrants from Central America. Thousands are welcomed, fed and clothed.

2014
Bishop Flores consecrates a new altar for the Cathedral on September 15.

2015
The Diocese of Brownsville marks its Golden Jubilee.
Who we are...

Our formation as a people of faith began almost 500 years ago. We have shared the Good News of Jesus Christ in our churches, our schools, our homes and even in the streets. Our Catholic faith is a tradition that we have nurtured and lovingly passed along from generation to generation by professing it, by living it and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer. Thank you to everyone who shared their photos. A sampling is provided here and more will be posted online at www.cdob.org.

HISTORY RETOLD

Graphic novel depicts stories from our past

Sampling of the graphic novel about the history of the Diocese of Brownsville which has been produced for the 50th Anniversary of the diocese. For a copy of the book, please check with your parish or call The Valley Catholic at (956) 784-5055.
The Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle is happy to join in the celebrations of our Diocese’s 50th Anniversary