

Pope Francis visits the USA

Bishop Larry Silva's reflection, 2 | The World Meeting of Families Herald pilgrim diary, 3 | Special 9-page section, 9-17



CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz

Pope Francis waves from a window after boarding an American Airlines jetliner at Philadelphia International Airport Sept. 27 for his return to Rome following a six-day apostolic visit to the U.S.

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CNS/Paul Haring

Pope Francis and members of the Synod of Bishops on the family concelebrate the opening Mass of the synod in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 4.

Pope says synod is not parliament, but place to listen to the Holy Spirit

By **Cindy Wooden**
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The world Synod of Bishops on the family is not a parliament where participants will negotiate or lobby, Pope Francis said, but it must be a place of prayer where bishops speak with courage and open themselves to “God who always surprises us.”

Opening the first working session of the synod Oct. 5, the pope said the synod’s 270 voting members need courage, “pastoral and doctrinal zeal, wisdom, frankness and to keep always before our eyes the good of the church and of families and the supreme law — the salvation of souls.”

Arriving about 15 minutes before the session began, Pope Fran-

cis welcomed to the synod hall the members, delegates from other Christian communities and the men and women who will serve as experts and observers.

The synod is not a convention or a parliament, Pope Francis said, “but an expression of the church; it is the church that walks together to read reality with the eyes of faith and with the heart of God.”

Synod members must be faithful to church teaching, “the deposit of faith, which is not a museum to be visited or even simply preserved, but is a living spring from which the church drinks to quench the thirst and enlighten” people, he said.

The synod hall and its small working groups, he said, should

Continued on page 18



Our Philadelphia pilgrimage

A whirlwind adventure. A journey of faith

The people we met and events we encountered were God's way of reminding us, 'Hey! I'm right here'

By Darlene J.M. Dela Cruz
Hawaii Catholic Herald

A whirlwind adventure. A journey of faith. A dream come true.

The Sept. 20-28 diocesan pilgrimage to Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families was an unbelievable week. This once-in-a-lifetime trip included inspiring talks, mingling with people from around the globe and being in the presence of Pope Francis.

Our Island pilgrimage group first met at Honolulu International Airport late at night Sept. 20. We were a diverse, enthusiastic bunch of travelers — Bishop Larry Silva, two priests, a young Honolulu couple, a retiree from Maui and another from the Big Island, and three diocesan staffers (including me).

Kristina DeNeve, diocesan adult faith formation coordinator, was the pilgrimage host. She and diocesan Safe Environment director Kristin Leandro wrote daily pilgrimage perspectives on our Hawaii Catholic Herald blog.

Kristina departed early from Honolulu in order to greet the rest of our group when we landed in Philadelphia. We took a red-eye flight from Honolulu to Phoenix, then from Phoenix to Philly.

An “ohana,” or family spirit sparked quickly in our small group of faithful. During 10 hours of flying, we shared stories of past travels and our admiration of Pope Francis.

Crisp fall breezes and colorful signs with the pope's smiling face welcomed us at the Philadelphia airport Sept. 21.

We hopped cabs to the Wyndham Garden Hotel in Trenton, New Jersey, about an hour's drive away. After settling in our rooms, Bishop Silva closed our inaugural evening on the East Coast with a hearty dinner and prayer at the hotel restaurant.

World Meeting opening day

Our routine for the World Meeting of Families week entailed early morning commutes with pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Chicago from our hotel to Philadelphia. The Chicago group had driven 14 hours by bus from the Windy City to attend the World Meeting of Families.

We arrived at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on Sept. 22 at about 10 a.m. Pilgrims from more than 100 different countries flooded the lobby for World Meeting check-in.

What a thrill it was to hear Spanish, French, Vietnamese and African languages in that hall!

The registration process was impressively efficient. Each of us swiped our check-in forms at an “express counter” and were given backpacks and nametags.

Bishop Silva joined us for lunch before checking into another hotel near the convention center. He and his fellow bishops had a special itinerary, which included meetings and Mass with Pope Francis in Washington, D.C.

Thousands of World Meeting of Families participants that after-



HCH photos | Darlene Dela Cruz

noon gathered for kick-off remarks from Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput, mayor Michael Nutter and event organizers.

Newly ordained Los Angeles auxiliary bishop Robert Barron delivered a riveting keynote talk on the topic, “Living as the Image of God: Created for Joy and Love.”

“I was loving every minute because Bishop Barron presented on one of my mostest, favoritest tenets of our faith: ‘Imago dei,’ the Judeo-Christian view that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God,” wrote Kristina DeNeve on the Herald blog.

“Bishop Barron suggested that imago dei is more than a belief in our innate goodness. Rather, imago dei is a concept for the world. It is our mission and responsibility. No other philosophy, religion or social theory holds the human being in a higher light.”

Archbishop Chaput celebrated the World Meeting of Families opening Mass. Bishop Larry and our own Father Boniface Waema from St. John the Apostle and Evangelist Church in Mililani were among the hundreds of concelebrating priests and bishops.

Talks and other activities

Pope Francis touched down in Washington, D.C., while we celebrated the World Meeting of Families opening Mass on Sept. 22.

We tried our best to catch highlights of the pope's activities on TV as we wended down at our hotel each evening. During the day, we were kept busy with the many talks and activities in Philadelphia.

World Meeting of Families organizers provided an extensive lineup of speakers and sessions that covered many facets of the Catholic faith, Christian love and family life.

“The World Meeting of Families has offered something for every one of us — breakout sessions for every decade, for every generation,” Kristina DeNeve blogged. “From dealing with the ‘hook-up’ culture to great-grandparenting, the sessions have been pleasantly age-discrepant.”

One of the sessions I attended was a talk by “Dynamic” Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers of Oregon. On Sept. 23, the deacon spoke on the topic, “Mary of Nazareth: First Disciple and Mother of the Redeemer.” It was breathtaking to see Mary's strength, faith, courage and humility in a modern light.

Clockwise from top: Bishop Larry Silva and Island pilgrims join a group of travelers from the Archdiocese of Chicago Sept. 22 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center for the first day of the World Meeting of Families; Pope Francis' concluding Mass in Philadelphia is broadcast on a Jumbotron TV in the city, Sept. 27; banners welcome the pontiff to the City of Brotherly Love.

I also liked the Sept. 24 presentation by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila. He spoke on “The Family: A Home for the Wounded Heart.” His warm smile, shining eyes, joyful humor and contagious passion for sharing Jesus' healing love carried the message of his talk with something intangible.

“A home is the gift of a loving presence,” Cardinal Tagle said. Jesus “knows our wounds and transforms our wounds into triumphs of love.”

Moments outside

Island pilgrim Kristin Leandro shared on the Herald blog some of her favorite moments outside the “classroom” sessions in Philadelphia.

On Sept. 24, she and other Hawaii pilgrims stepped away briefly from the World Meeting of Families to watch on TV Pope Francis' address to Congress. Awaiting this historic papal speech, Kristin likened her emotions to the an-

icipation of a Super Bowl football game.

“The most exciting ‘I'm getting butterflies’ moment for me ... is the opening kickoff,” she wrote. “All the cameras in the stadium are flashing as I wonder, ‘What in the world is going to happen?’”

“So it was, that same ‘I'm getting butterflies’ moment ... when, as we watched from the lobby of the Downtown Philadelphia Marriott, the announcement was made, ‘Mr. Speaker, the Pope of the Holy See.’ When Pope Francis' historic address to the U.S. Congress concluded, I sat there and just said, ‘Wow.’”

Kristin also had a humorous “international incident.” At the World Meeting of Families, three “boisterous” women from Zimbabwe asked her to take their picture and drew a crowd of onlookers from different countries.

“A very excited family from Ecuador could not contain their ex-

Continued on page 5

Philadelphia pilgrimage

Continued from page 3

citement for these three ladies,” Kristin reported. “Suddenly, mom photo-bombed the ladies from Zimbabwe, complete with her Ecuadoran flag.”

The papal weekend

The pinnacle of our Philadelphia pilgrimage was Pope Francis’ visit.

We journeyed to see him at the Sept. 26 Festival of Families. That day was beautiful. We got to Benjamin Franklin Parkway at roughly 2 p.m., which gave us a five-hour wait before Pope Francis’ scheduled appearance there.

We passed the time as if enjoying a concert in the park. Jumbotrons broadcasted live music and multicultural entertainment. We ate hot dogs and lazed in the cool autumn air.

Pope Francis’ address at Independence Hall was broadcast live in the parkway as well. By that time, people were buzzing as the Holy Father would shortly make

his way from the hall to the Festival of Families in a “papal parade.”

Before we knew it, Pope Francis zoomed by us on the pope-mobile. Folks screamed with joy and snapped videos and pictures on their cell phones and cameras.

Bishop Noel Simard of Valleyfield, Quebec, Canada said to me excitedly after the pope passed by, “We waited five hours for that five seconds” of glimpsing the Holy Father!

Bishop Simard was a highlight for us Hawaii pilgrims. He danced with us to “We Are Family,” sung live by the music group Sister Sledge.

“His enthusiastic attitude and unabashed love for everything are contagious,” wrote Kristin Leandro.

The papal Mass

More than a million people were expected to attend Pope Francis’ Mass at Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Sept. 27, the culminating event of his American trip.

Although we were given tickets to the papal Mass through the World Meeting of Families, most of our Island pilgrims did not get into the parkway. Bishop Silva and Father Waema, fortunately, were

able to concelebrate Mass with the Holy Father.

Security and law enforcement officials were all over the streets of Philadelphia when we arrived. There was a wall-to-wall line of people waiting to get into the parkway’s many check points. By the time we found our place in line, we were at least a half-mile from the Mass site.

The Mass began at about 4 p.m. After more than two hours of waiting, we were disappointed to realize that the odds of making it into the parkway before the end of Mass were slim.

Several of us Hawaii pilgrims walked out of the line and instead found a city plaza where dozens of people were watching the Mass on a big screen TV.

We watched Pope Francis celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

People knelt during that portion of the Mass and followed along as if the pontiff were at a real altar in front of us.

After Mass, the train stations were jam-packed with people trying to get out of Philadelphia. We were in the city as dark set in. At nearly 8 p.m., we found an improvised bus service deployed by Philadelphia’s transportation department to aid with shuttling the crowds.

That Sunday was absolutely chaotic, but one we’ll never forget.

Final reflections

“Not only does God make amazing plans, he also has an awesome sense of humor,” Kristin Leandro wrote at the end of the pilgrimage.

She said the people we met and events we encountered in Philadelphia were “God’s way of re-

minding me, ‘Hey! I’m right here.’”

Treasuring love and family in its many different forms was the pilgrimage lesson I gleaned.

Each day of the trip I was reminded of the relatives, friends and colleagues who helped shape my faith and my life. I was inspired to pay forward all the love they have shown me.

I also came away with a new “family” in my fellow pilgrims.

“Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home,” Pope Francis said in his Sept. 27 Philadelphia Mass homily. “Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love.”

Visit the Hawaii Catholic Herald blog at <http://hawaiicatholicheraldblog.wordpress.com> to read our bloggers’ full papal pilgrimage reports.



Photo courtesy of Sister Malia Dominica Wong, OP

The three Chinese government bishops pose at Mini Garden Restaurant in Honolulu Sept. 24 with Hawaii’s hosts. Bishop Vincent Zhan Silu is standing third from left. Behind him is translator Father Yang Yu. Standing, front right, are Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin and Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting.

Three Chinese bishops make brief Hawaii stopover

By Sister Malia Dominica Wong, OP
Special to the Herald

They quietly came last month, and quietly left, three seekers on a pilgrimage of personal and global effect from the Catholic Church in China to the Catholic Church in the United States, concluding in Hawaii.

Three officers of China’s government-sanctioned bishops’ conference — conference president Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin of the Diocese of Kunming, and vice presidents Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting of the Diocese of Yulin and Bishop Vincent Zhan Silu of the Diocese of Mindong — visited with local clergy and Island Catholics of Chinese ethnicity.

They were accompanied by their English translator Father Yang Yu.

According to a story about the bishops’ U.S. trip by the Union of Catholic Asian News, the Vatican does not recognize the government bishops’ conference. UCAN said that Bishops Ma and Zhan were “consecrated without papal mandate,” while Bishop Yang was ordained a bishop with both papal approval and government recognition.

On a trip that coincided with

the visits of Pope Francis and Chinese President Xi Jinping to the United States, the three bishops visited various universities and religious congregations looking for educational support of their seminarians and lay leaders.

Arrangements for their Sept. 23-25 visit to Hawaii were made at the request of Father John Worthley, a retired priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y., who has played an ongoing role in Vatican-Beijing relations, to his friend Sacred Hearts Father William Petrie, pastor of St. Damien Parish on Molokai.

The bishops were hosted at the Sacred Hearts Sisters’ St. Anthony Retreat House in Honolulu. They made a pilgrimage with Father Petrie to Kalaupapa and were hosted by the Chinese Catholic Club of Hawaii and its president Daphne Lee, at a dinner Sept. 24 of 40 guests and 17 clergy and religious.

At the dinner, Bishop Yang expressed how grateful they were to be in Hawaii. Representing Bishop Larry Silva, Father Gary Secor, vicar general of the Diocese of Honolulu, recognized the challenges in their country and offered Hawaii’s love, prayers and support.



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The St. Francis Kūpuna Village at Liliha now features the Clarence T. C. Ching Villas, a 119-bed skilled nursing facility, operated by Ohana Pacific Management Company.

In 2016, we’ll unveil a senior community center that will offer a broad spectrum of social, educational, and recreational activities for active seniors as well as education and support for caregivers.

In 2017, we will offer an assisted living facility; and in 2018, a cluster of townhomes for senior independent living.

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