Bishop Agustín Román: May 5, 1928 - April 11, 2012

Miami bids farewell to its ‘living saint’

Thousands visit shrine and attend funeral Mass for retired Auxiliary Bishop Agustín Román

**ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO**  
Florida Catholic staff

**MIAMI |** To his fellow priests, he was a father. To the lost sheep of exile, he was a pastor. To those who came to the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity, he was the ever-present priest, who never said no to a request for confession or a plea for a blessing.

The English-speaking world discovered him in 1987 when, armed only with a rosary, he walked into two federal prisons being held by rioting Mariel detainees and literally disarmed them with an Our Father.

In Miami, we knew him all along as Monseñor Román, our living saint.

Bishop Agustín Román, Miami’s retired auxiliary bishop, died at age 83 after suffering from a weak heart for two decades. It finally gave out early in the evening of April 11, as he prepared to give catechesis at the hall named in his honor, next to the Marian shrine whose construction he spearheaded — a shrine that became an icon for Cuban exiles and a place of solace and prayer for im-

**PLEASE SEE FUNERAL, 12**

Angelina Jenkins Lopez, below left, kneels while Marianna Paz holds a rosary and framed picture of Bishop Agustín Román. They were part of crowds gathered at Calle Ocho (S.W. Eighth Street) and S.W. 13th Avenue. (MONICA LAUZURIQUE | FC)

Archbishop Emeritus John C. Favalora greets Nivaldo and Iraida, brother and sister of Bishop Agustín Román, during the visitation held at Shrine of Our Lady of Charity April 13. (ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC)
Those who knew him remember holy priest, faithful friend

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO  
Florida Catholic staff

MIAMI | "Many tears," said 89-year-old Zoraida Cabrera as she sat in a front pew of the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity for the noon Mass April 12. "I am very emotional because I loved him very much." She first met Bishop Agustín Román 30 years ago, she said. "When I arrived from Cuba, they told me, 'Let's go to the shrine.' So I went to the shrine, and I kept coming here because I loved it."

Sitting next to her, trying to comfort her, was a friend, Sulema Nieves, the Venezuela-raised daughter of Cuban exiles. She had met Bishop Román 12 years ago. "I came here out of desperation," she recalled. Her mother, now 87, was gravely ill and in the hospital but she had no money to pay the bills. "He advocated on our behalf so they would help us."

Ever since then, on Bishop Román's birthday, Nieves would go to the shrine to see him, "and I would put my mother on the cell phone so that she would give him her blessing."

"He taught me to love Cubans and that is why I am here with you today," said Father Fabio Arango, a native of Colombia who shared a home on the grounds of the shrine with Bishop Roman and several other priests.

"He spoke at the same Mass April 12, a Mass that was celebrated by Msgr. Pedro García, retired pastor of St. Ann Mission in Homestead. Msgr. García found Bishop Roman unconscious in his car the night he died, called rescue and anointed him.

"Msgr. García had met Bishop Roman when he joined Acción Católica (Catholic Action), a youth group in Cuban. Bishop Román was then a seminarian at the newly established San Alberto Magno Seminary in Matanzas province — a seminary administered by the Canadian Missionaries, and aimed at creating priests who would not wait for people to come to them, but rather go out and evangelize."

Even then, Agustín Román had a reputation for holiness, Msgr. García recalled. The people in the town and the members of Catholic Action would refer to him as "the saint." "It's a natural saintliness," said Rogelio Zelada, associate director for Hispanic formation in the Office of Lay Ministry and Adult Faith Formation. He met Bishop Román when the latter spoke a few words at the end of a Mass in Puerto Rico in 1985. Zelada was impressed by how quickly and how simply the bishop spun the occasion into a lesson of faith.

"I feel a vast emptiness, as if we were all of a sudden orphaned," said Zelada. "He was a unique figure, who brought peace, who exuded cordiality, who had a great spirit of prayer."

"He lived as Christ did — putting the other first," said Father Manny Álvarez, associate pastor of St. Gregory Parish in Plantation. Father Álvarez’s father was in...
Synod is coming

Goal is to ‘listen to needs of the faithful,’ revitalize Church’s witness to faith and hope

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

MIAMI | The more than 400 Catholic school students who attended this year’s Chrism Mass witnessed a historic event: Archbishop Thomas Wenski convoked the second general synod in the archdiocese’s 54-year history. After the archbishop announced the synod in his homily, Father Chanel Jeanty, archdiocesan chancellor, unfurled the scroll and read out loud the proclamation convoking the synod. It stated that the goal of the synod is to find ways for Catholics in South Florida to “live into the future as disciples of faith, missionaries of hope.”

The Chrism Mass, usually celebrated the Tuesday of Holy Week, is when the priests of a diocese renew their ordination promises. It is also when the bishop of a diocese blesses the holy oils that will be used in baptisms, for confirmations and ordinations, oil of catechumens for baptisms, and oil of the sick for anointing those who are ill.

This year, as usual, St. Mary Cathedral was filled to capacity with more than 300 priests, more than 400 students from 10 archdiocesan elementary schools and two high schools from throughout South Florida.

In his homily, Archbishop Wenski explained that the synod “is a listening process, which is a practice to assist me in my task of pastoral governance. It will be specifically designed to help me and the priests of this diocese understand the needs of those whom we serve. We will listen to the needs of the faithful, and at the same time, we will be prepared to act on those needs.”

The first archdiocesan synod took place between 1985 and 1988, and was convoked by Miami’s second archbishop, Edward McCarthy. The synod began with a “listening process” in every parish and also included a scientific survey that for the first time painted a statistical portrait of South Florida’s Catholic population.

Archbishop Wenski’s synod will take less time but begin as well with information-gathering sessions.

“Through the synod process,” the archbishop said, “all the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Miami, its priests, its deacons, its religious and its laity, will have the opportunity to recommend to me as your shepherd a course of action so that together as disciples in faith and missionaries of hope we might meet the challenges of a new evangelization in this local Church.

This second archdiocesan synod is expected to last a year. In the coming months, Archbishop Wenski will issue guidelines for its implementation. Those guidelines are sure to revolve around one central theme. As stated in the proclamation: ‘Let us listen to the Holy Spirit, and let us listen to the Spirit speaking in each other. Let us discern in this year ahead how we as individuals, and as a community, encounter Christ, yesterday, today and forever. And, let us proclaim this future as disciples of faith and missionaries of hope.’

Coinciding with the archbishop’s announcement, the archdiocese announced the appointment of Rosemarie Banich as synod director. This role will be to work with Catholic Leadership Institute, the Archdiocese of Miami in order to create a vibrant pastoral plan for the future.

Banich is a native South Floridian, born in Miami Beach, raised in Miami Shores, a graduate of St. Rose of Lima School and Archbishop Curley Notre Dame High School.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of South Florida and a law degree from the University of Miami.

She practiced as a civil litigator and specialized in disability discrimination cases in Miami before moving to California, where she took up teaching — English at the college level and religion as a volunteer vacation Bible camp director in her parish. Eventually, she became the full-time director of religious education and director of youth and confirmation ministry at her parish.

She also worked as the national manager of the volunteer and child protection office of the American Youth Soccer Organization.

She moved back to Miami Shores in 2011 and promptly became a volunteer Virtus facilitator for St. Rose of Lima Parish. Banich and her husband, Marc, have a son who attends St. Rose of Lima School.

See excerpts from Archbishop Wenski’s homily announcing the synod on Page 4.

ARCHBISHOP THOMAS WENSKI AND FATHER CHANDEL JEANTY, ARCHDIOCESAN CHANCELLOR, CONVOKED THE SECOND GENERAL SYNOD IN THE ARCHDIOCESE’S 54-YEAR HISTORY. AFTER THE ARCHBISHOP ANNOUNCED THE SYNOD IN HIS HOMILY, FATHER CHANDEL JEANTY, ARCHDIOCESAN CHANCELLOR, UNFURLED THE SCROLL AND READ OUT LOUD THE PROCLAMATION CONVOKING THE SYNOD. IT STATED THAT THE GOAL OF THE SYNOD IS TO FIND WAYS FOR CATHOLICS IN SOUTH FLORIDA TO “LIVE INTO THE FUTURE AS DISCIPLES OF FAITH, MISSIONARIES OF HOPE.”
Call to synod is call to evangelization

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me! For he has anointed me!" The annual Chrism Mass is a special sign of the unity of our priesthood and witnesses that we—bishop and priests—share a common ministry to teach, to govern and to sanctify the people of God. For these reasons, I deemed it an opportune occasion for me as the fourth bishop of this local Church to solemnly convocate our second archdiocesan synod.

The years ahead will bring new opportunities and challenges. For me, this underscores our urgent need for prayerful consideration of our call to conversion and holiness, and our need to forge a common vision and plan for the Archdiocese of Miami in its many expressions throughout South Florida — our parishes, Catholic Charities, Catholic organizations that bear witness to our life-changing work.

Through the synod process, all the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Miami, its priests, its deacons, its religious and its laity, will have the opportunity to claim me as your shepherd a course of action so that together as Disciples in Faith and Missionaries of Hope we might meet the challenges of a new evangelization in this local Church.

If the Gospel of Christ is to be seen and heard in a world that pays less and less attention to the deep questions about God, about the meaning of life and faith, it will have to be seen and heard in the lives of believers, such as you, who are called to be Christ’s disciples and missionary/ers. People want to see witnesses — persons of faith and communion. I call you to reflect on the theme to be taken up later this year in Rome by the Synod of Bishops, calls us to reignite the faith among the young and in our parishes and missions. In our parishes to be “tired” in the faith and therefore only adhere to it half-heartedly. The New Evangelization calls us to recognize that being a Christian is not a burden but a gift; the New Evangelization calls us to recognize that having encountered the Lord in a new way, in a way that has ever happened to us and to share him with others is a joy.

Thus, our synod, with God’s help and your active collaboration, can be for all of us the beginning of an exciting work of pastoral revitalization. If we are to lead others to faith we must also grow in that faith ourselves.

While this is only the second synod in the relatively young history of our diocese, synods are as old as the Church herself — and throughout her history, synods have been used by bishops in their role as shepherds to seek counsel from their immediate collaborators, the priests, and from the people of God themselves, to assist them as they teach, rule and sanctify our local Churches entrusted to their care.

Like the bishops who have gone before me, whose contributions to the life of this Church I gratefully acknowledge, I also must turn to people like you to seek your counsel, your collaboration and your support. Together we must devote our best efforts to proclaim the Gospel more compellingly, to foster the growth in holiness of our own hearts and souls, and to transmit the treasure of our faith to the younger generation more effectively.

We will listen to the needs of the faithful, and at the same time, we will be prepared to act on those needs. We will translate into pastoral lives of our Church, adapted to our circumstances, the “plan found in the Gospel and the living tradition of making Christ known, loved and imitated so that in Him may live the life of the Trinity and with Him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem.” (Novo Millennio Ineunte)

With our faith and the hope it brings, we will be able to face the challenges of the present with enthusiasm and the opportunities of the future with confidence and hope. This synod will help us all — priests, deacons, consecrated persons, and members of Christ’s faithful — to continue to respond to the universal vocation to holiness as Disciples in Faith and Missionaries of Hope.

APPOINTMENTS
Archbishop Thomas Wenski has made the following appointments: Effective March 1:
Mgr. Michael Souckar — ad interim judicial vicar in the Metropolitan Tribunal
Father Antony Velyalkar-Kattoor — chaplain to Villa Maria Nursing Center, North Miami.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP
Thomas Wenski

Llamada a Sínodo es llamada a evangelización

¡El espíritu del Señor Dios está sobre nosotros! Porque él nos ha ungido! La Misa Cristal celebrada anualmente es un signo especial de la unidad de nuestro sacerdocio y testimonio de que nosotros — obispo y sacerdotes — compartimos un mismo ministerio, en su misión de enseñar, gobernar y santificar al pueblo de Dios. Por estas razones, consideré una ocasión propicia para mí como el cuarto obispo de esta diócesis de convocar solemnemente nuestro segundo sínodo arquidiocesano.

Los próximos años traerán nuevas oportunidades y desafíos. Para mí, esto pone de relieve nuestra necesidad urgente de una piadosa consideración de nuestra llamarada a la conversión y la santidad, y nuestra necesidad de forjar una visión común y un plan para la Arquidiócesis de Miami, en sus múltiples expresiones en todo el suelo de la Florida — nuestras parroquias, nuestras escuelas, Cátedras Católicas y las muchas otras organizaciones de las que damos testimonio de nuestra labor transformadora.

A través del proceso sinodal, todos los componentes de la Iglesia en la Arquidiócesis de Miami, sus sacerdotes, sus diáconos, sus religiosos y su laica, tendrán la oportunidad de recomendar un nuevo evangelización de la fe que se oye y se ve en la vida de los creyentes, en la de aquellos de nosotros que decimos ser discípulos de Cristo y misioneros de la Evangelización en esta iglesia local.

Si el Evangelio de Cristo ha de ser visto y oído en un mundo que presta cada vez menos y menos atención a las preguntas más profundas sobre Dios, sobre el significado de la vida y la fe, tendrá que ser visto y oído en la vida de los creyentes, en la de aquellos de nosotros que decimos ser discípulos de Cristo y misioneros. Las personas quieren ver testimonios, personas de fe y de convicción. La “New Evangelization”, un tema que deberá abordarse a finales de este año en Roma por el Sínodo de Obispos, nos llama a reavivar la fe entre aquéllas que, aunque bautizadas, parecieran estar “cansados”

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FROM THE ARCHBISHOP
Thomas Wenski
Child abuse protection: 10 years and counting

To date, half a million adults and children have received Virtus training, 66,000 adults have been fingerprinted

JAN RAYBURN
Special to the Florida Catholic

MIAMI | The Archdiocese of Miami has implemented the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People since its creation by the U.S. bishops in 2002, including the revisions in 2011. In these 10 years, the Charter’s goal has remained the same — to provide a plan for dioceses to follow in order to protect children from sexual abuse and promote healing in those abused in the past. After completing the thorough audit process, the Archdiocese of Miami, under the direction of Mary Ross Agosta, has been found to be in compliance every year. Compliance began with the creation of a Safe Environment Department, comprised of a director, a Safe Environment Coordinator, a Victim’s Assistance Coordinator and the Background Check Office. The success is credited to the department’s ability to administer, evaluate and adjust as needs dictated.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR
In the last 10 years, approximately 92,000 adults were trained in the Virtus program. In the last audit year, more than 20,000 adults and 62,000 children were trained in the Virtus program.

One component of the department is the awareness and prevention training offered through the Virtus programs. The Safe Environment Coordinator arranges and provides training programs to educate adults on the nature of child sexual abuse and the scope of the crime. More importantly, the trainings also teach adults the five tangible steps they can take now to prevent this crime from happening.

Of course, as with any new program, there were growing pains along the way. Some people misunderstood the program and its objectives and felt offended by the requirement, especially as it applied to volunteers. Fortunately, today, most understand that all the efforts are simply a matter of applying the best practices for providing safe environments. In the last 10 years, some revisions were made and implementation plans have been tweaked. Even today, policies and procedures remain perpetual under review to assure the most vulnerable among us is protected.

This month the archdiocese has newly compiled the “Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults.” It updates some of the guidelines for compliance with the bishops’ Charter, primarily in the case of “covered volunteers” — that is, volunteers who have supervised interaction with children.

The revised policy may be read in its entirety on our website, www.miamiaarch.org.

This year also, we have asked our parishes and schools to assign a local coordinator to assist with the compliance and record-keeping of the policy at their site. Through our team efforts, to date, a half million people have received training in our archdiocese. This includes children and adults. While parents are the first protectors and educators of children, it is important to also give children the information they need to protect themselves. This includes lessons on recognizing grooming behavior, how to identify their safe adult, and encouragement to talk to their trusted adult when a situation makes them uncomfortable. Research indicates that children who have received training are more likely to report inappropriate behavior, less likely to blame themselves, and less likely to become victims of abuse.

VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR
Another component of the department is the pastoral care of victims and appropriate reporting of abuse cases. The Archdiocese of Miami has a review board that offers recommendations in accordance with not only canon law but also civil law. In every case the archdiocese works in cooperation with the legal authorities.

Additionally, the Victims Assistance Coordinator serves as a liaison between the victim and the Church. Often this person is perceived as more approachable by a victim than the traditional Church hierarchy. The coordinator’s ministry is to hear and help people abused by members of the clergy or Church. The goal is to turn victims into survivors. The coordinator also facilitates the arrangement for care and treatment for the victim.

The hotline number for the Victims Assistance Coordinator is 1-866-802-2873.

BACKGROUND CHECK OFFICE
In the last 10 years, more than 66,000 background checks were administered. The Archdiocese of Miami screens employees and volunteers with a digital level-two background check that covers both state and federal screenings. This goes above and beyond the Charter requirements, but is considered to be essential given the transient nature of our beautiful Sunshine State. There are multiple fingerprinting locations in the three-county area including one at the Pastoral Center, 9401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores.

Rayburn is the Virtus training coordinator for the Archdiocese of Miami.
Reunion stories abound among Miami pilgrims to Cuba

‘CUBA WILL CHANGE – EVENTUALLY

HAVANA | On their last night in Cuba, some of the pilgrims from Miami, along with representatives of the U.S. bishops’ conference and other pilgrims from New York, Boston and elsewhere in the U.S., were invited to a reception at the home of John Caulfield, chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. The Interests Section functions as an unofficial embassy, since Cuba and the U.S. broke off diplomatic ties back in the 1960s.

Speaking to the group, Caulfield, a career diplomat, explained his role in Cuba and the Obama administration’s early attempts to improve the relationship between both nations. He said the policy pursued by President Obama, relaxing travel restrictions and increasing the frequency and quantity of the re-mittances Cuban exiles can send to their relatives on the island, marked the “biggest change” in U.S. policy toward Cuba since the Carter administration.

Unfortunately, three months after that change was announced the Cuban government arrested Alan Gross, a contractor for the U.S. Agency for International Development, for bringing computers and satellite phones to Jewish group on the island. Gross is currently serving a 15-year sentence.

‘Now I know I belong here’

ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO
Florida Catholic staff

HAVANA | Teresa Gonzalez traveled to Cuba thanks to the generosity of another. The trip allowed it to not only witness the pope’s visit, but to return a priceless keepsake to a family she had never met.

A donation allowed the director of the Archdiocese of Miami’s Mission Office and of the lay missionary group Amor en Accion to embark on the pilgrimage. Gonzalez is the youngest of three children and the only one born after exile in Puerto Rico.

The Cuban revolution had burdened her family with everlasting pain. But while in Cuba she decided to run an errand for her mother and later father, who held on to wedding and family photographs of another couple. The two Cuban couples had been friends from the time they were both dating decades ago. Before Gonzalez’s parents left Cuba, their friends gave them their own wedding pictures for safekeeping. The couple who stayed in Cuba hoped to retrieve them when they left the island. But they never did.

Forty years later, Gonzalez carried some of the pictures in manilla envelopes. She also made a picture book from the wedding photos. With the help of a friend from Miami and his Cuban cousin, she set out after the Mass in Havana’s cathedral to find the house in the La Vibora neighborhood where her parents had lived, the Passionist church nearby where they had gotten married, and the friends they had left behind.

Riding through the neighborhood, she could see the town the house. The locals who were driving behind asked if she was sure. How did she know? “I knew the house. I said, ‘This is it,’ I’ve been looking at that picture for 40 years,” she said.

After the shock of seeing her and the ensuing emotion on both sides, Gonzalez and her parents’ friends sat down to talk and look at the pictures. They thought half of them had been lost forever. They were amazed at the picture book she had created of their wedding. “They had never seen anything like that.”

Gonzalez was amazed at how well they knew her and her siblings and the stories of their lives. “You’re the rebel,” they told her.

The couples had stayed in touch until last year. The last thing the family in Cuba had heard was that Gonzalez’s father had died. They had written to her mother but the letter had been returned.

She also was amazed at seeing another side of her parents: the sweethearts going on double dates and taking a look around — perhaps buy wooden images of “Cachita” from El Cobre’s residents, who honed their skills as artisans after the copper

‘Cachita’

Florida Catholic staff

MIAMI | Father Felix Varela, the man who “taught Cubans how to think,” is now officially “Venerable.”

Following the unanimous recommendation of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, Pope Benedict XVI has given his approval for the Servant of God, Father Felix Varela, to be given the status of “Venerable” — which means that he could be beatified with the recognition of one miracle granted through his intercession, and canonized with the recognition of a second miracle.

Some thought the announcement would be made during the pope’s trip to Cuba March 26-28. In fact, the pope’s declaration was signed March 14, 2012, in Rome. But it was announced Easter Sunday by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, where Father Varela served as vicar general and ministered to Irish immigrants for nearly 30 years.

Reacting to the news, Archbishop Thomas Wenski stated: “In his homily in Havana, Pope Benedict called Father Felix Varela a ‘shining example’ of the contributions a person of faith can make in building a more just society. Father Varela in his own words reminds us that ‘there is no authentic fatherland without virtue.’ In recognizing this holy priest’s heroic virtue by conferring on him the title of ‘Venerable,’ the pope offers to the world a role model who in being ‘the first to teach his people how to think’ also shows us a path to a true transformation of society.”

Born in Havana on Nov. 20, 1788, Father Varela was ordained a priest at age 23. He already had distinguis-
Father Felix Varela, the man who knew Fidel and Fidel, the man who supported and protected Venerable Father Felix Varela, to be beatified. Ten years ago, Cardinal desserted the idea after it was made clear by the Vatican that it would be up to the theologian to decide whether it would be possible to beatify Father Varela, the man who knew Fidel and Fidel.

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Camp Hope helps kids heal from loss

Catholic Hospice presents Camp Hope, a special camp for children who have experienced the death of a loved one, April 27-29 at Camp Owaissa Bauer, 17001 S.W. 264 St., Homestead. The camp is free for all children between the ages of 7 and 14 in need of psychological help. Any family who has a child facing the death of a loved one may participate. Established in 1995, Camp Hope provides bereaved children with the services of an interdisciplinary team of bereavement coordinators, nurses, social workers and trained volunteers. The services include: music therapy, pet therapy, art therapy, sports, a memorial service including a bonfire and s'mores, and much more. For more information or to register a child, contact Paula Schimpf at 305-351-7026 or email Pschimpf@catholichospice.org.

Divine Mercy Mass to open congress

The opening Mass of the Congress of Divine Mercy will take place May 4-6 at the Fort Lauderdale Marriott North, 6050 N. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale. Hosted by the Broward District Council of Catholic Women, the convention will feature speakers such as Randy McGorry of Catholic Legal Services, Sheila Hopkins of the Florida Catholic Conference, Val Leone of St. Justin Martyr Women's Club in Key Largo, and Judy Powers, president of the National Council of Catholic Women. Archbishop Patrick Pinder of Nassau, Bahamas, will celebrate the opening Mass May 4, 4 p.m., at Assumption Church, 2001 S. Ocean Blvd., Lauderdale-by-the-Sea. Topics to be discussed include immigration, human trafficking, and spirituality. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems. Award presentations include Our Lady of Good Counsel, Outstanding Member, and/or systems.
In his apostolic exhortation, “Verbum Domini” (“The Word of the Lord”), Pope Benedict XVI advocates for a much more aggressive biblical formation in the Church, even recommending diocese-level programs of study for the laity. In connection with the subject of catechesis, the pope says, “A knowledge of biblical personages, events, and well-known sayings should thus be encouraged; this can also be promoted by the judicious memorization of some passages which are particularly expressive of the Christian mysteries” (Verbum Domini, No. 74).

This emphasis on knowledge of the Scriptures is reflected in the liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

This statement represents an invitation by Jesus to his Jewish listeners to a humble trust in imitation of the pagan foreigner. It is the wisdom of the Church that we recall this anonymous centurion of Capernaum before we receive the Lord because we need his awareness of the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ. The Son of God comes to us and offers us intimacy, a personal communion with him. We need at least to recognize the disproportion of God’s mercy. His love is certainly not congruent to our unworthiness.

That is why there is a poetic justice to the humility of reciting the centurion’s prayer before partaking of the bread from heaven. We receive the Lord not into our homes, but into our hearts in Communion. We beg the healing not of a servant boy, but of our very selves. It is as a recognition of the tremendous gift of God’s love that we use the words from the Scripture. The metaphor of coming under our roof is inexact, in fact a terrific understatement, but it is right to clothe our thoughts with the prayer of another because otherwise we would be speechless. The Lord himself used the metaphor of a house when he spoke of communion with his disciples. "Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he will have me" (Rev 3:20). This could have been said in other language, without the imagery of someone opening up a door for a guest, but the Lord chose to speak poetically. When we say "under my roof" we can recall these words of Jesus about coming into a house to dine, and thus our words will have a double scriptural resonance. Let us recall the quote from “Verbum Domini” with which I began this reflection. The short prayer of preparation to receive has all of these things: personages, events, a well-known saying and a little memorization.

Msgr. Antall is a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland who spent the past 20 years as a missionary in El Salvador. He has written about his missionary experience for the national Catholic weekly, Our Sunday Visitor. He also has written three books of theological reflections.

Know Someone With Cancer? (or other life-threatening illness?)

St. Peregrine prayed and the Lord miraculously cured his cancer. You need only ask St. Peregrine to intercede for your friend or family member and he will. God answers all prayers.

Also ask St. Peregrine to intercede with the Lord to make your loved one ready for the moment when a loving God comes to meet us face-to-face.

A SOLEMN NOVENA OF MASSES AND PRAYERS to seek the aid of St. Peregrine - Patron of those afflicted with cancer or other life-threatening illness – will start May 11. Please send your intentions today and ask for your free folder and blessed St. Peregrine medal. God is our comfort and hope.

ROMAN MISSAL
‘Under my roof’

Before Communion, centurion’s words remind us to be humble before God’s tremendous gift of love

Last in a series

MSGR. RICHARD ANTALL Special to the Florida Catholic

The few words the centurion speaks and his plain but clear military example about authority be- speak a wonderful sincerity and a lack of pride, something usually rare among troops occupying a foreign land. In fact, Luke says the centuri- on did not even feel worthy to speak to Jesus personally. Instead he sent the Jewish leaders to him, and then some "friends" with messages. The discrepancy between the two Gospel accounts is interest- ing, although not irreconcilable. Matthew has the official speak di- rectly to Jesus. Luke through inter- mediaries. This could be because the official did not speak the same language as Jesus. There are dis- putes about whether Jesus spoke Greek, which the centurion would probably speak along with Latin. I think Jesus did because he grew up in Galilee, but I also think it is a good bet that his circle of disciples did not necessarily speak it, or at least were not fluent in the language.

Luke’s detail might be just a case of stricter accuracy. What the centu- rion said he did through others. But the variation also has a thematic function because it underscores the interior disposition of the Ro- man soldier. He was so humble, so convinced of his unworthiness, that he did not speak directly to Jesus but sent messengers. His humility and his faith elicited the praise of the Son of God himself. "I assure you I have not found such faith in Israel," Jesus said (Mt 8:10). This statement represents an invitation by Jesus to his Jewish listeners to a humble trust in imitation of the pagan foreigner. It is the wisdom of the Church that we recall this anonymous centurion of Capernaum before we receive the Lord because we need his awareness of the surpassing greatness of Jesus

Before Communion, centurion’s words remind us to be humble before God’s tremendous gift of love

Last in a series

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In his apostolic exhortation, “Verbum Domini” (“The Word of the Lord”) Pope Benedict XVI advocates for a much more aggressive biblical formation in the Church, even recommending diocese-level programs of study for the laity. In connection with the subject of catechesis, the pope says, “A knowledge of biblical personages, events, and well-known sayings should thus be encouraged; this can also be promoted by the judicious memorization of some passages which are particularly expressive of the Christian mysteries” (Verbum Domini, No. 74).

This emphasis on knowledge of the Scriptures is reflected in the liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. The new English translation of the Mass is part of a concerted liturgical renewal fostered by Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

This statement represents an invitation by Jesus to his Jewish listeners to a humble trust in imitation of the pagan foreigner. It is the wisdom of the Church that we recall this anonymous centurion of Capernaum before we receive the Lord because we need his awareness of the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ. The Son of God comes to us and offers us intimacy, a personal communion with him. We need at least to recognize the disproportion of God’s mercy. His love is certainly not congruent to our unworthiness.

That is why there is a poetic justice to the humility of reciting the centurion’s prayer before partaking of the bread from heaven. We receive the Lord not into our homes, but into our hearts in Communion. We beg the healing not of a servant boy, but of our very selves. It is as a recognition of the tremendous gift of God’s love that we use the words from the Scripture. The metaphor of coming under our roof is inexact, in fact a terrific understatement, but it is right to clothe our thoughts with the prayer of another because otherwise we would be speechless.

The Lord himself used the metaphor of a house when he spoke of communion with his disciples. “Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he will have me” (Rev 3:20). This could have been said in other language, without the imagery of someone opening up a door for a guest, but the Lord chose to speak poetically. When we say “under my roof” we can recall these words of Jesus about coming into a house to dine, and thus our words will have a double scriptural resonance. Let us recall the quote from “Verbum Domini” with which I began this reflection. The short prayer of preparation to receive has all of these things: personages, events, a well-known saying and a little memorization.

Msgr. Antall is a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland who spent the past 20 years as a missionary in El Salvador. He has written about his missionary experience for the national Catholic weekly, Our Sunday Visitor. He also has written three books of theological reflections.
Archbishop Thomas Wenski pauses after placing a copper rock from El Cobre, Cuba, atop the casket of Bishop Román before his burial at Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery in Miami. ANA RODRIGUEZ-SOTO | FC

Bishops from Cuba and Florida take part in the funeral Mass for Bishop Agustín Román. From left are Bishop Mario Mestral of Ciego de Avila, Bishop Emilio Aranguren of Holguín, Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, Bishop John Noonan of Orlando, Bishop Felipe Estevez of St. Augustine, Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg and Archbishop Dionisio García of Santiago de Cuba. (MONICA LAUZURIQUE | FC)

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BISHOP FROM 2

Bishop Agustín Román — the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the image of Our Lady of Charity on the Bay of Nipe. Radio Paz had no budget for their trip so Bishop Román paid for it, Ferrer said. Not with the shrine’s money, but with “his own Social Security money.”

“He was a man of God. From the time he woke up to the time he went to bed, his was a constant relationship with God,” Ferrer said. “My only regret is that I never persuaded him to return to Cuba.”

And yet, he added, “He had a role on this side. There was a very wounded community here that he helped.”

Lorenzo Ferrer first met the future bishop when he was 5 years old. “When I first entered school, he entered the seminary,” said Ferrer, noting that his school was across the street from San Lorenzo Magno Seminary, and the seminarians had been his teachers. When the future bishop returned from higher studies in Canada to be ordained in 1959, Ferrer was selected to serve at the altar. They met again when Ferrer was ordained a priest — and a few days later, when he celebrated one of his first Masses at the altar. They met again when Ferrer was selected to serve at the chapel that existed on the site before the shrine was built.

Since her own retirement, Novaro had been answering the bishop’s emails, typing up his frequent columns to newspapers and keeping track of all the ordination anniversaries of the priests of the archdiocese — for every year without fail, Bishop Román would send a congratulatory note to each and every one of them.

And every Monday when she came to work, Novaro would find a vase of flowers on her desk — cut and arranged by the bishop himself. With those flowers and daily doses of “500 thank yous,” or the promise of a “café con leche,” the bishop had appreciated her work.

“We could decipher his scribblings, or three gathered in His name” One person leads, the other reads. It challenges us to mediate on the “Greatest Story Ever Told”.

Bishop Román’s advice: “When the Lord calls, you have to respond immediately.”

Nine years to the day after that talk, Father Alvarez was ordained a priest — and a few days later, when he celebrated one of his first Masses at the shrine, the bishop humbly knelt at the side of the altar.

“Ferre’l had told me he was the image of priestlyhood. He was the epitome of holiness. He was what all of us aspired to be,” Father Alvarez said.

He would have made a great husband, too, said his secretary for the past sixty years, Alina Novaro. She actually met the future bishop when he was first assigned to the shrine as a priest. She was the sacristan for the chapel that existed on the site before the shrine was built.

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And every Monday when she came to work, Novaro would find a vase of flowers on her desk — cut and arranged by the bishop himself. With those flowers and daily doses of “500 thank yous,” or the promise of a “café con leche.” if she could decipher his scribblings, Bishop Román let her know he appreciated her work.

“He was a gentleman,” Novaro said, adding that she would always tell him, “If you had gotten married, you would have been the ideal husband.”

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FUNERAL: Miami’s beloved shepherd, Bishop Agustín Román, is laid to rest

FROM 1

migrants and refugees from every other nation in the Americas. As soon as people heard news of his death, they began coming to the shrine to pray and cry for him. For more than 48 hours, day and night, thousands lined up to view his body and pay their last respects. Hundreds lined up again April 14 along S.W. Eighth Street — Miami’s famed Calle Ocho — as his funeral procession, and the pilgrimage image of Our Lady of Charity, made their way from the shrine to St. Mary Cathedral for his funeral Mass.

Described as both “a man of God and a man of Cuba,” Bishop Román embodied the best of both: He was universally admired by priests and laity for his genuineness, his simplicity, his prayerfulness and his humility. And he was universally admired by Cubans for his patriotism — a passionate love of country but a passion bereft of shrillness. Hurt, yes; anger, no; resentment, no; and charity, always. His faith resembled the royal palms of his native land: tenaciously resistant to the buffeting winds of life, and always striving toward heaven. He described himself as “desherrado” — literally, uprooted — from his homeland. Yet except for a brief visit to the Haitian and Cuban refugees detained in Guantanamo in 1994, he never returned.

His reasoning was simple: He had been expelled along with 130 others back in 1961 simply because they were priests. He had never renounced his priesthood, and the government that expelled him had not renounced its ways. Yet he never failed to welcome Cuban bishops and priests to the shrine. He never failed to help the Cuban Church or rejoice with its people at the visits of two popes.

He even described his own journey to exile — a monthlong sea voyage from Cuba to Spain, with only one change of clothes and no passport — as a “spiritual retreat” led by Havana’s auxiliary Bishop Eduardo Boza Masvidal, who had told his fellow voyagers: “God, for some reason, wants this Cuban Church to be missionary to the world.”

The afternoon of his death, Bishop Román was officially notified of the very good news he had been waiting for: The cause of canonization for Bishop Boza, who later became auxiliary bishop in Los Teques, Venezuela, had been approved to go forward by the diocesan bishop. Bishop Boza is now a “Servant of God.”

A few days earlier, on Easter Sunday, the Vatican also announced that the cause of Father Felix Varela, a Cuban patriot and exile who wound up ministering to Irish immigrants in New York at the turn of the 19th century, also was moving forward. Father Varela has been declared “venerable” by the pope.

It had indeed been “three weeks of great intensity” as Archbishop Thomas Wenski said in his homily at the funeral Mass, recounting, in addition to the papal visit to Cuba and the Varela announcement, the countless hours that Bishop Román had spent in the confessional during Holy Week.

He called Bishop Román a man who, like Father Varela, “understood that he was no less of a patriot for being a Catholic, and no less of a Catholic for being a patriot.”

Archbishop Wenski had known Bishop Román since the 1970s, when he was a seminarian assigned to St. Benedict Parish in Hialeah. The bishop had taught him how to evangelize: by taking Mary’s image through the streets, and inviting people to pray the rosary.

The model was followed last year by Cuba’s bishops, who used the motto: “To Jesus through Mary: Charity unites us.”

Visibly moved during the Mass and while preaching the homily, Archbishop Wenski noted that Bishop Román spent his last hours “the same way he spent his entire life: evangelizing, preaching the Gospel. He was what he should have been: a friend of the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, the exile and the immigrant. … He was light; he was fire. His passion for evangelization, for catechesis, was never about making people follow him, but rather to lead them to Jesus.”

Archbishop Wenski celebrated the funeral Mass along with several Cuban bishops — Bishop Mario Mestril of Ciego de Ávila, Bishop Emilio Aranguren of Holguín, and Archbishop Diosdado Garcia of Santiago de Cuba — and fellow Florida bishops — Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, Bishop John Noonan of Orlando, Bishop Felipe Estevez of St. Augustine, Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg and Bishop Emeritus Victor Galeone of St. Augustine.

Back in 1987, when the Mariel detainees, facing either indefinite detention here or immediate deportation back to Cuba, had rioted in Oakdale, La., and Atlanta, they had asked to speak to a Cuban bishop who had kept in touch with them and their families via letters. One of their handwritten signs referred to him as Bishop San Román, a combination of the name of the two Cuban bishops in the U.S. at the time: Bishop Roman and Bishop Enrique San Pedro of Brownsville, Texas.

The detainees might not have been far off the mark.

Shouts of “Santo subito” (sainthood now) were heard as Bishop Román’s remains made their last trip through Miami’s Calle Ocho. And those who attended his funeral Mass at St. Mary Cathedral — bishops, priests, religious and laity — stood up and applauded for two minutes when Archbishop Wenski repeated the words he had said upon hearing the news of Bishop Román’s death: “The Archdiocese of Miami has lost a great evangelizer who tirelessly preached the Gospel to all. And the Cuban nation has lost a great patriot. Bishop Roman was the Felix Varela of our time.”

To see more pictures of Bishop Román’s wake and funeral, read Archbishop Wenski’s complete homily, and donate to the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity in Bishop Román’s memory, go to www.miamiarcih.org.

Father Juan Rumín Domínguez, rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity, sings the Cuban national anthem with the crowds gathered at Calle Ocho (S.W. Eighth St.) and S.W. 13th Avenue to pay final tribute to Bishop Agustín Román. (MONICA LAUZURIQUE | FC)

Bishop Agustín Román’s remains are carried into St. Mary Cathedral for the funeral Mass April 14. His funeral procession went through the streets of Miami, with stops at Calle Ocho and S.W. 13th Avenue. (MONICA LAUZURIQUE | FC)