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APRIL 2019

*Father Troy
Gately:*

LIVING HIS
FAITH



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*Energy Corridor
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page 15*

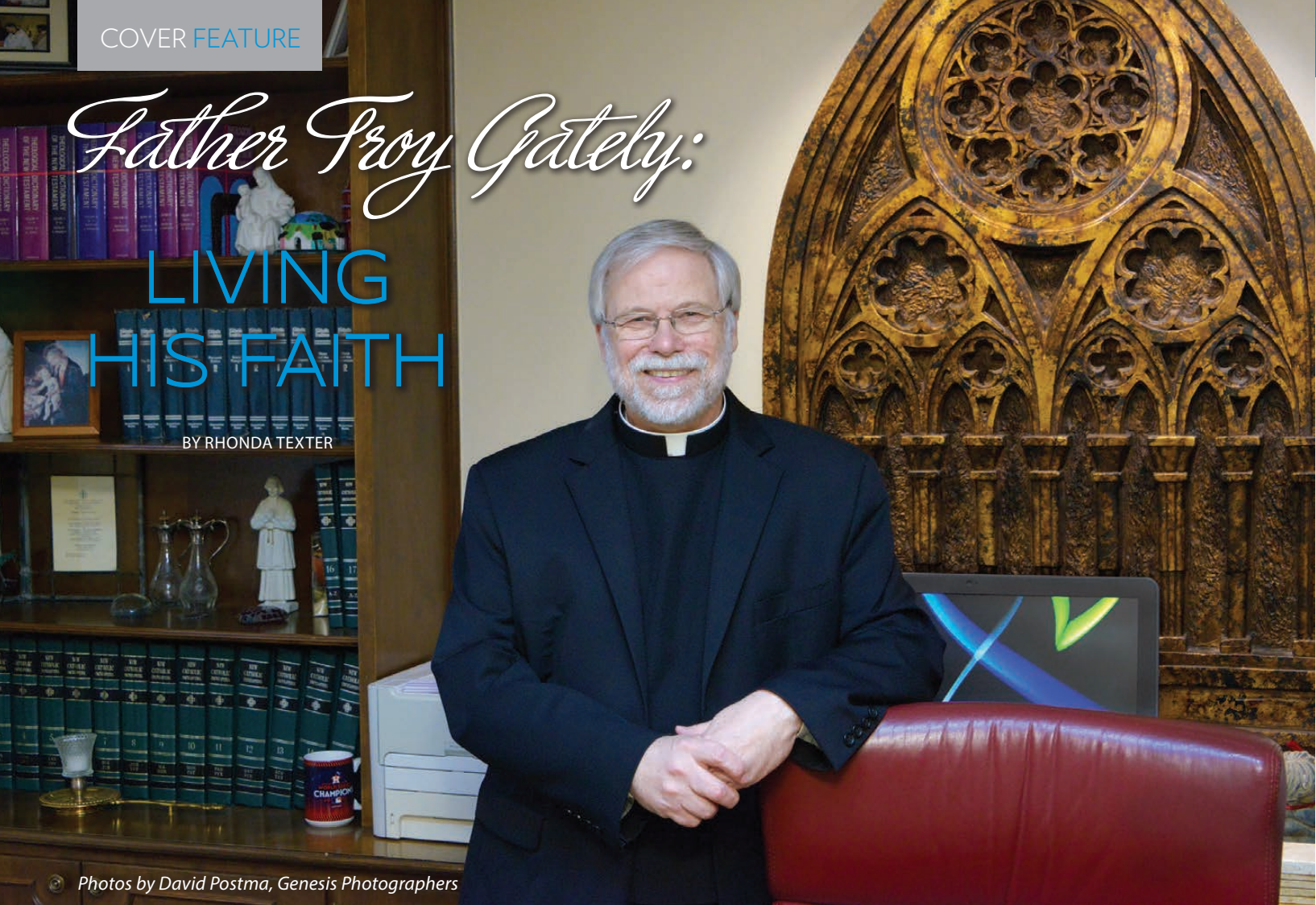
*Houston, We Have a
Problem—page 23*

Cover photo by David Postma, Genesis Photographers

Father Troy Gately:

LIVING HIS FAITH

BY RHONDA TEXTER



Photos by David Postma, Genesis Photographers

Nestled in the heart of the Energy Corridor, St. John Vianney Catholic Church is not only a spiritual home for many residents, but also a source of support for the community. The church's mission statement says, "In our personal lives, professional lives, at home, work, school or church, we strive to be a community of living faith, changing lives, and making a difference." This mission is reflected in the actions of its pastor, Father Troy Gately, who said, "The way we love God, love our families and love one another is by living our faith each day, week after week, year after year. A living faith is part of the very essence of our being. It is like the marrow in our bones!"

Father Troy, as he is known among parishioners, felt the priesthood calling from childhood. Born in Galveston, Texas, he was greatly influenced by the wonderful priests who served at St. Mary's Cathedral in Galveston. "One of the young priests, the one who baptized me, Father Joe Crosthwait, eventually became the second pastor of St. John Vianney Parish. He was the pastor I served under when I was first ordained in 1989," said Father Troy.

Before his ordination, Father Troy studied at the University of St. Thomas and St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, as well as St. Meinrad's Seminary in Indiana. From 1989 to 1992, he served as assistant pastor at St. John Vianney, before moving on to serve as an assistant at St. Martha parish in Kingwood and administrator of Queen of Peace parish in Houston. He also served as rector of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and Vice Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

When Father Troy was transferred to serve as pastor at St. John Vianney in 2008, the announcement was bittersweet for parishioners of Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, where he was much beloved and had spearheaded the building of the new Co-Cathedral and the Cathedral Centre in downtown Houston. In the years since his return to the Energy Corridor, he is just as beloved by the parishioners at St. John Vianney and the larger community outside of its doors.

Describing the area, Father Troy said, "It is vibrant and getting younger! The people of the area have a great sense of community and a terrific 'can-do' attitude. As so many are from all over the country and from throughout the world, there is a natural welcoming spirit." This spirit was tested during Hurricane Harvey, but Father Troy takes pride in the way hundreds of volunteers in his parish put others first and lent helping hands. The church's social services office opened to distribute supplies to everyone, regardless of faith. Father Troy offered CenterPoint use of the church's newly paved parking lot to set up a temporary power station, and set up a launch pad for the Cajun Navy, which rescued people from their submerged homes.

While recovering from Hurricane Harvey might have been the parish's finest hour, it is the day-to-day work of pastoring that Father Troy finds most gratifying. "Celebrating the Holy Mass each day is a great joy. Being with people at the important moments of their lives—births, marriages, deaths, and in their everyday joys and struggles is immensely rewarding."

More than 5000 families (or 15,000 people) worship at St. John Vianney, and this number continues to grow. The parish offers spiritual and religious programs, social and community activities for all ages including art and music, as well as services for those in need. "All of our programs and services are for all," said Father Troy. "We have, in addition to our worship and religious services, dinners, sporting events, social services, pilgrimages and trips, opportunities to help those in need, support groups, and enrichment and education programs and classes. We have more than 130 groups, ministries and organizations that have something for everyone: young children, youth, young professionals, married couples, singles, and seniors." Father Troy especially loves visiting the holy sites in the Holy Land and in Rome, and sharing these places with parishioners on pilgrimage.

He also loves sharing a good laugh with his parishioners. Father Troy recalled an amusing encounter with a member of his flock. "I was at the grocery store (in regular clothes and not in my clerical collar) and I saw someone looking at me with obvious confusion. Finally, they stopped and asked me, 'Do I know you? I think I know you! You look so familiar.' So I asked, 'Where do you go to church?' and they exclaimed, 'That's it! You go there too, don't you?' I responded 'Yes, I do!' When they saw me at mass the next Sunday, they were a little embarrassed when they realized I was their parish priest! But then we both had a good laugh about it. Now they make it a point to say 'hello' to Father Troy in the grocery store."

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Sharing struggles, triumphs, and joys (even an inside joke) help turn a community into a family. While the Energy Corridor includes many religions and cultures, we are at our best when we walk outside our homes, businesses, and churches to serve each other as one family. This is St. John Vianney's mission and how Father Troy lives out his faith.

"For more than 50 years," he said, "We have been honored to be part of and able to serve this community of west Memorial and the Energy Corridor. The people of St. John Vianney try every day to live our faith, change lives, and make a difference. You are always welcome to come and share the joy!"

St. John Vianney is located at 625 Nottingham Oaks Trail and is offering an extensive Lent, Holy Week, and Easter schedule of services to which everyone is welcome. For more information, visit www.stjohnvianney.org. 



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