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From Outsider to Insider

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KNOW IF YOU DON'T
TRY



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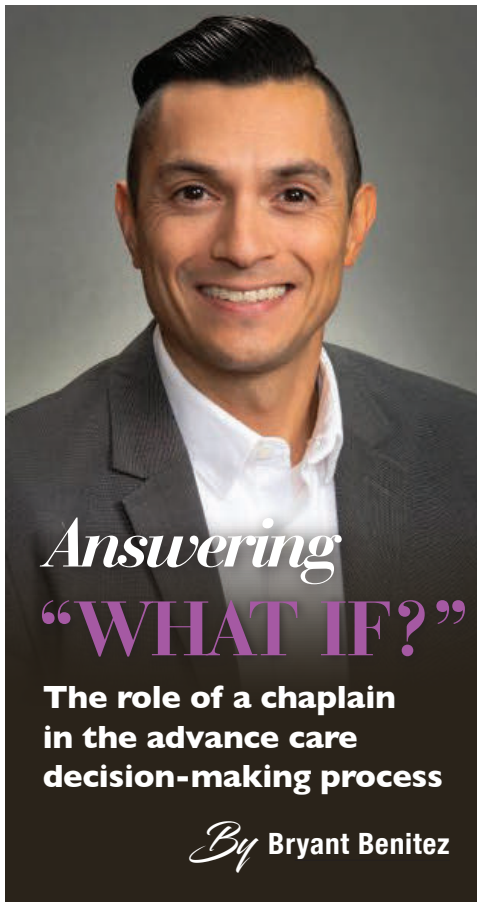
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Answering
“WHAT IF?”
**The role of a chaplain
in the advance care
decision-making process**
By **Bryant Benitez**

“Hello, I’m Bryant. I’m a Chaplain ...”

The patient replies, “Oh goodness, what do I not know!”

This is a common experience for me as a chaplain. The patient seems worried about something, but she’s not quite sure exactly what.

“It sounds like you’re worried about what if something were to happen that maybe you’re not prepared for. Would you like to talk about it?”



❖ MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

allows you to name another person to make your medical decisions if you are unable to make your wishes known.

.....

❖ DIRECTIVE TO PHYSICIANS

allows you to state your healthcare wishes. It is often called a "Living Will." It typically states your wishes about life-sustaining treatment. It only becomes effective if your physicians determine you are in a terminal or irreversible condition.

Listening to her, her questions all started, "What if?" What if an emergency happens? What if I don't like my options? What if I fall? What if I can't speak? What if death is perhaps closer than I think?

I try to support the patient with a discussion about advance directives. "I want to make sure you have all the information you need to feel confident about the process of advance care planning. Are you worried about something specific?"

She shares that she is worried that she would lose her power to make her own decisions. I thank her for her honesty and explain how a **Medical Power of Attorney** is about choosing someone you trust to make medical decisions for you, and that it only becomes effective if you are unable to make your wishes known. **The Directive to Physicians**, or living will, lets

you state your wishes about life support in critical situations. This patient believed she was simply signing away her medical rights, a very common misconception and an important reason to give patients not only the correct information, but also the time to process and understand it as well.

I share that it is helpful to talk with the person you choose as your medical power of attorney, and to share with them your general healthcare wishes, and, importantly, to review these documents periodically. These are not easy discussions.

As a chaplain I allowed her to take the lead on her future healthcare wishes and to face the "What if?" questions with confidence and a clear and hopeful plan: advance directives that help her emotionally and physically when it comes to her body, her life, and her healthcare wishes. ❖

.....

All patients have the right to make their own medical decisions, through informed decision-making with their physician. For more information about Advance Care Planning visit www.christushealth.org/plan-care/advance-care

>>> SEE AD ON **PAGE 6** TO LEARN MORE



Heaven knows we care

Patients have the right to make their own medical decisions, but who will speak for you when you no longer can?

As a Catholic health system, CHRISTUS Health honors the dignity and rights of our patients and encourages everyone to consider Advance Care Planning, ensuring end-of-life medical decisions are already made when patients can no longer advocate for themselves.

These Advance Directives, as they're commonly called, include Medical Power of Attorney, Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates, as well as The Out-Of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate Order. These forms can be conveniently downloaded from our website where we also answer common questions, including how each document works, who should have copies, and more.

We also provide helpful information on Church teaching regarding end-of-life decisions, including the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs) describing the importance of following a patient's wishes.

By preparing now, patients can remove a burden from family members who would otherwise be faced with difficult decisions, while ensuring their own wishes are honored.



CHRISTUShealth.org

FROM OUTSIDER TO INSIDER

TESTIMONIAL FROM A RESIDENT OF THE VILLAGE AT INCARNATE WORD

By Richard Natalicchio, resident of The Village at Incarnate Word

For a good many years, my wife Kitty and I volunteered in Noah's Cart gift shop at The Village at Incarnate Word. We also helped with gala events, which raise funds for the Sisters Care ministry. From this distance, we had just a glimpse of life in The Village from the outside. In July 2022, we moved into Independent Living. Over the past several months, we have made many new friends. With joy, we have come to know what great people reside here. The Village is buoyed up by the people who live and work here. We have seen firsthand, the kindness, gentleness and overall camaraderie found in these our residents. It is a spirit unique to this community!

Here we not only have food for the body, but food for the soul (daily Mass, devotions to Mary, Bible classes, etc.) The management staff run a great ship and with transparency. The folks on the front line, Fernando, Nelly, Andrea, Esther, and Jo Ann are stalwarts in their unending efforts to make the residents' lives as happy as can be. Every so often, one may hear someone grumbling about one thing or another. To them I say, "Look at all

the great things we share here." There is no lack of activities, entertainment, parties or special occasions (monthly birthday dinners). There is a state-of-the-art swimming pool with a hot tub. We have a gym with a variety of machines to help us keep the body moving. We have movies, a variety of games, and so on. Transportation is provided regularly, allowing residents to get out to do some shopping. There is a concierge service available 24/7! As insiders, we see The Village as an institution comprised of people living in different stages of life, workers dedicated to their jobs and who are always courteous and friendly to all.

Now that we have crossed over from the outside to the inside, we couldn't be happier with the decision we made to move into The Village at the Incarnate Word.

For information about The Village at Incarnate Word and senior living options, call Alma Cosme at (210) 829-7561 or visit www.thevillageiv.org. ❖



THE VILLAGE
AT INCARNATE WORD

"The Village is buoyed up by the people who live and work here. We have seen firsthand, the kindness, gentleness and overall camaraderie found in these our residents."



Kitty and Richard Natalicchio are residents of The Village at Incarnate Word.

>>> SEE AD ON PAGE 2 TO LEARN MORE

TODAY'S CATHOLIC
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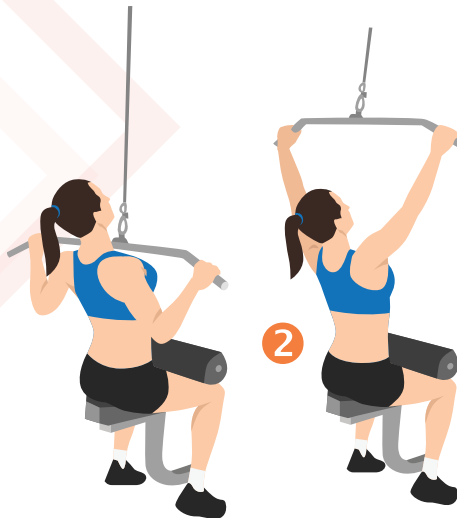
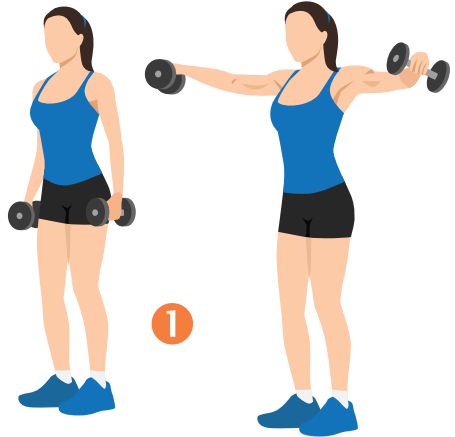
NO BACK FAT HERE

Are you tired of that pesky back fat that seems to never go away no matter how much you exercise? Don't worry, you're not alone. Back fat can be stubborn and frustrating, but with the right exercises, it is possible to target and get rid of it. Here are four exercises to help you get started.

REVERSE FLYES:

The reverse fly targets your upper back and shoulders.

- 1 Grab a pair of dumbbells and stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- 2 Bend your knees slightly and lean forward from the hips, keeping your back straight.
- 3 Slowly raise your arms out to the side, squeezing your shoulder blades together.
- 4 Pause for a moment before returning to the starting position. Repeat for 10-12 reps.



LAT PULLDOWNS:

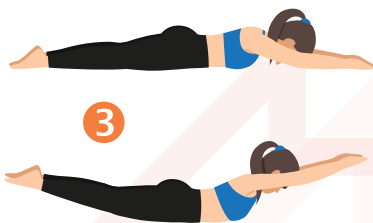
The lat pulldown is an excellent exercise that targets the muscles in your upper back.

- 1 Sit down at a lat pulldown machine with your feet flat on the ground.
- 2 Grab the bar with an overhand grip, making sure your hands are wider than shoulder-width apart.
- 3 Pull the bar down towards your chest while keeping your back straight.
- 4 Pause for a moment before slowly releasing the bar back up to the starting position. Repeat for 10-12 reps.

SUPERMAN:

The superman is a great exercise that targets your lower back.

- 1 Lie face down on a mat with your arms extended out in front of you and your legs straight behind you.
- 2 Lift your arms and legs off the ground at the same time, squeezing your glutes and lower back muscles.
- 3 Hold for a moment before lowering back down to the starting position. Repeat for 10-12 reps.



PLANK ROWS:

Plank rows target your upper back and core muscles.

- 1 Start in a plank position with your hands on dumbbells.
- 2 Lift one weight off the ground and bring it up towards your chest, keeping your elbow close to your side.
- 3 Pause for a moment before lowering the weight back down to the ground.
- 4 Repeat on the other side and continue alternating for 10-12 reps.



Remember, consistency is key when it comes to getting rid of back fat. Incorporate these exercises into your routine 2-3 times a week and pair them with a healthy diet to see results. And don't forget to listen to your body – if an exercise feels uncomfortable or painful, modify or skip it altogether. With patience and dedication, you'll be on your way to a stronger, leaner back in no time.

Vitamin C

THE SKINCARE POWERHOUSE YOU NEED IN YOUR ROUTINE

By Giselle Taylor

It seems like everywhere you look these days, there's a new skin care product boasting the benefits of vitamin C. And for good reason—this powerful antioxidant has become a staple in many women's daily skin care routines. Here's why vitamin C is so good for your skin, and why you should consider incorporating it into your own regimen.

Vitamin C is a natural antioxidant that helps protect the skin from damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are harmful molecules that are generated



by environmental stressors like pollution and UV radiation, and can contribute to premature aging and other skin concerns.

Vitamin C also plays a key role in collagen synthesis, which is essential for maintaining healthy, youthful-looking skin. Collagen is a protein that gives skin its strength and elasticity, and as we age, our bodies produce less of it. By applying vitamin C topically, you can help boost collagen production.

Another benefit of vitamin C is its ability to brighten the skin and even out skin tone. This is because vitamin C inhibits the production of melanin, which is responsible for dark spots and hyperpigmentation. Regular use of a vitamin C serum can help fade these

areas of discoloration and leave your skin looking radiant and even.

So why are skin doctors recommending face creams with vitamin C as a daily regimen? Simply put, it's because it works. Vitamin C has been shown to have numerous benefits for skin health, from protecting against environmental stressors to promoting collagen synthesis and brightening the complexion.

Whether you're dealing with fine lines and wrinkles, dark spots and hyperpigmentation, or just want to keep your skin looking radiant, incorporating a vitamin C serum into your daily routine is definitely worth considering. So go ahead, give your skin the gift of vitamin C and watch it glow. ■



• natural beauty



healthy body

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET: MORE THAN JUST A TREND

By Anastasia Iverson

The Mediterranean diet has been making waves in the world of healthy eating, with many people choosing it as a lifestyle, not just a diet. But what exactly is the Mediterranean diet, and why is it all the craze?

The Mediterranean diet is based on the traditional eating habits of people in the Mediterranean region. It emphasizes whole, minimally processed foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and fish. It also includes healthy fats such as olive oil and encourages moderate consumption of red wine.

The Mediterranean diet is not just for people who want to maintain weight or be

healthier. Studies have shown that the Mediterranean diet can also be effective for weight loss. One study found that participants who followed the Mediterranean diet for two years lost an average of 9.7 pounds compared to those who followed a low-fat diet who only lost an average of 6.4 pounds.

The Mediterranean diet is rich in nutrients, fiber and healthy fats. It is low in processed foods, refined sugars and unhealthy fats. The emphasis on whole, minimally processed foods makes it a healthier alternative to the standard Western diet, which is typically high in refined sugars, unhealthy fats and processed foods.

One of the key components of the Mediterranean diet is olive oil. Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fats, which have been shown to improve heart health and reduce inflammation. The Mediterranean diet also includes a variety of fruits and vegetables, which are packed with antioxidants and other beneficial nutrients.

The Mediterranean diet also emphasizes lean proteins such as fish and legumes, which are a good source of protein and are lower in unhealthy fats than red meat. Additionally, the Mediterranean diet encourages moderate consumption of red wine, which has been shown to have health benefits such as reducing the risk of heart disease.



The Mediterranean diet is more than just a diet, it's a lifestyle. People are choosing it because it emphasizes a balanced, whole-foods approach to eating that can be sustained long-term. Unlike fad diets that restrict certain food groups or require strict calorie counting, the Mediterranean diet encourages a wide variety of foods and is focused on overall health and wellness.

The Mediterranean diet also promotes a sense of community and socialization around food. Meals are often shared with family and friends, and the focus is on enjoying food and savoring the experience. This approach to

eating can promote a healthier relationship with food and reduce the risk of disordered eating habits.

The Mediterranean diet is more than just a trend. It is a lifestyle that emphasizes whole, minimally processed foods, healthy fats and a balanced approach to eating. The Mediterranean diet can be effective for weight loss, but it's also a healthier alternative to the standard Western diet. The Mediterranean diet promotes overall health and wellness and can be sustained long-term. So, if you're looking for a healthy, sustainable approach to eating, give the Mediterranean diet a try. ■



BROCCOLI SALAD

By Nellie Palmer

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups broccoli florets, chopped
- 1/2 cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 large apple peeled, cored and chopped
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup pistachios
- 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Begin by blanching the broccoli florets in boiling water for 1-2 minutes until they are slightly tender but still crispy. Drain and set aside to cool.
- 2 In a mixing bowl, combine the broccoli florets, red onion, dried cranberries, apple and pistachios.
- 3 In a separate bowl, whisk together the Greek yogurt, apple cider vinegar, honey, salt and pepper until well combined.
- 4 Pour the dressing over the broccoli mixture and toss to coat evenly.
- 5 Cover the salad and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavors to meld together.
- 6 Serve chilled and enjoy your healthy and delicious broccoli salad!





KETO MOZZARELLA CRUST PIZZA

By Nellie Palmer

INGREDIENTS

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 oz cream cheese, cubed
- 3/4 cup almond flour
- 1 large egg

Toppings:

- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/3-1/2 cup low-carb pizza sauce
- Optional: pepperoni, sausage, veggies or any toppings you like



DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat your oven to 425°F and line a baking sheet or pizza pan with parchment paper.
- 2 Put the mozzarella and cream cheese in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 1 minute, stir and then microwave for another 30-60 seconds, or until melted, and stir until smooth.
- 3 Stir egg and almond flour together. Mix egg and flour mixture into cheese mixture. Knead the dough with wet hands until thoroughly combined and it resembles flour dough.
- 4 Wet hands and spread “dough” onto parchment paper. Poke rows of holes with a fork to avoid bubbles.
- 5 Bake in the preheated oven for 8-10 minutes. Check the crust and poke any holes if there are bubbles. Spread a layer of sauce onto the crust. Top with cheese and desired toppings.
- 6 Return to the oven to cook for another 10-12 minutes or until slightly golden.
- 7 Let cool for a few minutes before slicing and serving. ■

TIP:

Serve with a big salad for added nutrition.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6

NUTRITION

Macros: Fat: 25.8g | Total Carbs: 4.8g | Fiber: 1.7g |
Sugar Alcohol: 0g | Net Carbs: 3.1g | Protein: 17.2g
| Calories: 315



YOU'LL NEVER KNOW IF YOU DON'T TRY



By Janet Mefrige, for Today's Catholic

Age is just a number." "You're only as old as you feel." How about "You'll never know if you don't try!" I am here to tell you it's all true! It's never too late to get out of your comfort zone and take on a challenge!

At the age of 53 I ran my first half-marathon. Although I had always wanted to run a marathon, I was not a runner. Over the years I dabbled in running but never did it consistently and did not take it seriously. At times I would feel an urge to run regularly, and after a few weeks I got bored and stopped.

In recent years I had considered running a marathon (or half-marathon) on several occasions but quickly talked myself out of it with "I'm too old to start running" and "I could never do that." Last August, a co-worker mentioned in passing that he was going to run the San Antonio Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon. My ears perked up and immediately I thought, "He is around my age and doesn't exercise regularly.if he can do it, maybe I can too!" Again, I felt an impulse to run. It had been a long time since I had challenged myself physically and mentally, so I de-



ecided to go for it. I researched the half-marathon and local training programs, and as a busy mom of four busy children, I questioned whether or not I could really commit to this. Will I have time? Will I REALLY get up every Saturday morning for group runs at 6 a.m.? Will my body be able to handle this? Will I stay consistent for 16 weeks and see this through? As I sat at my computer on a Friday night staring at the screen pondering all the doubts and questions running through my head, I clicked "Register," and I became the newest member of the San Antonio Roadrunners at 10:30 p.m. the night before training began at 6 a.m. the next morning!

I will never forget that morning driving downtown in the dark by myself trying to find the meeting place. I felt alone and questioned what I was doing. As I approached the crowd of people it seemed

that everyone knew each other; greeting one another warmly. I was the new kid in SARR and had to overcome my insecurities. I found all the people who were doing a combination of running and walking and then joined the slowest-paced group. There were many coaches and pace leaders available to answer questions and help at any time. We completed 3 miles that morning and I felt so accomplished! I still doubted myself, but decided that I was going to take this “project” week-by-week and if at some point I felt like it was too much for me or that I didn’t enjoy it and didn’t want to continue, then I could quit.

The weeks that followed were filled with feelings of frustration, gratitude, pain, accomplishment, disappointment, pride, camaraderie, appreciation, and mostly happiness as my completed miles progressed and gradually increased each week. I ran on my own as well as with the group. Through San Antonio Road-runners I met some wonderful people who made me want to continue week after week. We encouraged one another during the difficult moments and high-fived each other after the triumphant moments. The beautiful thing was that there were all kinds of people there — runners, walkers, fit, out of shape, and new runners as well as veterans. Together we

conquered the heat and humidity in August and braved the cold and rain in November! I loved the camaraderie, but I also enjoyed the fact that if I didn’t feel like being social, at any time I could run with the group but keep to myself.

Race day came December 4 and I was excited yet very nervous. The morning was unexpectedly cold and raining, so that undesirable weather became a hurdle to get over, both mentally and physically. My only goal was to finish the course. I did not need to complete 13.1 miles in a certain amount of time or beat anyone else — it was me against me! The race was definitely challenging in the rain and at 48 degrees, but I kept plugging along

with my group, one mile at a time. It was thrilling and memorable to see and hear the thousands of people along the route, cheering for all of us runners with their signs, applause and shouts of encouragement — a sight that was unforgettable! I

endured sore knees, black toenails, tired legs, unpredictable rain and endless puddles, but I crossed the finish line and instantly felt a sense of pride and accomplishment! What seemed almost impossible 16 weeks earlier had become a reality and I was so happy I stuck with it!

The key to my success was taking baby steps. I chipped away at my goal bit-by-bit, a little at a time, making it less daunting and much more doable. For anyone who wants to accomplish something that seems out of reach, I encourage you to get out of your comfort zone, set small, manageable goals and go for it! You’ll never know if you don’t try!



Janet Mefrige is director of Development for Catholic Television of San Antonio, CTSA 15.

Re-charge in Nature

By Jose J. Matos Auffant,
TECABOCA Executive Director



Under the guidance of the Marianist family since 1937, Tecaboca fosters outdoors recreation, spiritual retreats, family days, religious engagement, faith and science lessons, and much more.

"... Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste..."

(Luke 1:39)

The encounter between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth is one of the most compelling meetings found in the Gospel of Luke – the new meets the old, the blessed meets the barren, the Mother of Our Saviour meets the Mother of the Precursor: all to demonstrate that there is nothing impossible to God! Among many interpretations, this Scripture passage is also an invitation to take time to go out of our daily environment and share with others the wonders that God works in our lives.

Tecaboca Marianist Center for Spiritual Renewal is a place for transformative reflection in nature. Our unique location in the Texas Hill Country allows you to meditate on the "Gospel of Creation" to be shared with others: "an integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us" (*Laudato Si*, 225).

Under the guidance of the Marianist Family since 1937, Tecaboca fosters outdoors recreation, spiritual retreats, family days, religious engagement, faith and science lessons, and much more. Our summer camps, one day and weekend retreats, outdoor environmental education programs, among other opportunities, are all possible thanks to a growing community of Lay Marianists, professed religious, youth, young adults, and even retired folks who staff and volunteer throughout the year.





CAMP & RETREAT CENTER



We value, appreciate and recognize the communities of faith that have made Tecaboca their preferred site to host retreats and special events. Many retreat styles are implemented here — ACTS, Awakening, Kairos, among others. Religious communities also host their silent retreats, as well as spiritual renewal programs.

At Tecaboca we aim to develop the whole person through faith, community, nature and simplicity. Our core values include faith and family spirit, inclusive community, simplicity,

growth and development, and stewards of natural resources: "being out in nature helps a person connect with God."

While your church community has all the elements needed to sustain your Christian vocation on a daily basis, a weekend or day out in nature for "religious recreation", as suggested by Pope Francis, refreshes the soul and helps with perspective. Visit www.tecaboca.com to learn more. Tecaboca is your Mountain Home too — come and recharge in nature! ❖

>>> SEE AD ON **BACK PAGE** TO LEARN MORE



"At Tecaboca we aim to develop the whole person through faith, community, nature and simplicity..."





VILLA DE SAN ANTONIO

Making you feel at home

When visitors enter the front door at Villa de San Antonio Senior Living, they are welcomed by a fun and vibrant atmosphere. Residents and staff are so friendly and inviting. The culture at Villa de San Antonio draws people in, without a doubt.

This is not your average senior living. The "Villa," as residents lovingly call it, makes you feel at home. There is always something fun happening, and residents dine like royalty. The food at Villa de San Antonio is world class, with a huge variety of chef prepared options.

Stop by any day and you'll see lively happy hour parties, card games, exercise classes, water aerobics, wine tastings, yoga, book club gatherings, astronomy presentations; the list goes on and on. But, beyond all this fun, there something even more special that makes Villa de San Antonio feel like home; The Saint Anthony Chapel.

When asked what makes the community so special, Gladys Kana, a resident of six years, said, "We have such wonderful people here, and so many exciting activities. But my favorite part is coming to Mass here in our very own chapel!"

This stunning chapel is truly what sets Villa de San Antonio apart from other senior living options, it is the heart and focal point of the community. Residents, associates and guests are welcomed to this beautiful and reverent space to spend time both in liturgical and

private prayer. Over the last few years, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary have made Villa de San Antonio their new home, bringing their knowledge and experience to the community as well.

Many people who come to visit Villa de San Antonio for the first time are stunned to see that there is a full Catholic Church, right in the middle of this bustling commu-

nity. So many have decided to make the Villa their new home to spend their "golden years" because they value being able to simply walk down the hallway to go to Mass every day, and rosary every afternoon, as well as the availability of 24-hour Adoration. This easy accessibility gives seniors their independence back. When they no longer feel comfortable behind the wheel, seniors can still attend Mass whenever they like, without relying on others to get them there. This simply adds to the long list of reasons why Villa de San Antonio has been the top

choice for seniors since they opened their doors in 2006.

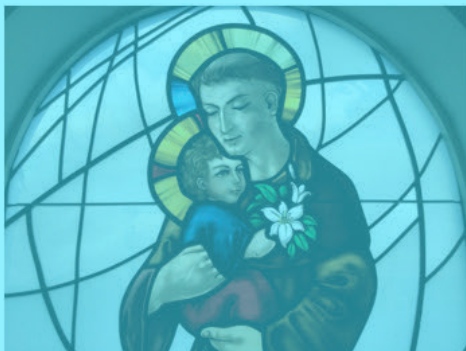
There is everything a person could want or need when they are ready to enjoy their retirement. Villa de San Antonio's independent living offers carefree living with tons of amenities, while the assisted living offers that plus a helping hand to those who need personal care. The team at Villa de San Antonio invites visitors to call or stop by for a tour to learn more about this beautiful community. ❖

"We have such wonderful people here, and so many exciting activities. But my favorite part is coming to Mass here in our very own chapel."

**—Gladys Kana,
resident—**

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We all need a little help every now and then. Being mentally healthy is just as important as being physically healthy, even if the health status is not as noticeable. Poor mental health can have a negative impact on physical wellness, whether it is something caused by stress or grief or just a result of a poor decision. Mental health helps guide each person's decisions. For example, when some people are feeling stressed out, they might seek out a comfort food and over-indulge in it. This could have long-term effects on the body's health as high caloric intake can lead to problems with metabolism or obesity, which itself can lead to other physical health problems. Finding healthy ways of offloading stress is important to our well-being, but the choices are not always obvious to us. Fortunately, there are resources available to help guide us to leading a healthy lifestyle.

Since its opening on Nov. 21, 2021, Grace Counseling has been committed to providing quality, holistic, and affordable counseling to all individuals, children, couples, and families in San Antonio and Del Rio. Catholic Charities offered counseling and consultation services prior to having its branded program, Grace Counseling. Counselors are specifically and professionally trained to treat a variety of mental health issues.

Grace Counseling is dedicated to serving individuals with all types of mental health challenges. Its counselors offer affordable professional services that work holistically to treat each client's mind, body and spirit. In 2021, Grace Counseling guided over 2,200 sessions to individuals, children, couples, and families to improved mental health and wellness.

Individuals, children, couples, and families interested in teletherapy are encouraged to call the Grace Counseling office to schedule an appointment with a counselor. Free therapy for pregnant and parenting families with children under the age of three is available. Insurance and sliding scale pay are offered. For more information or to make an appointment, contact Grace Counseling at (210) 377- 1133 or visit us online at gracecounseling-sa.org. Spanish-speaking counselors are also available.



GRACE
COUNSELING



A Life Coach

FOR YOUR HEALTHY MIND

By Alexandria Ingram

WE ALL STRIVE FOR A HEALTHY MIND, BUT SOMETIMES LIFE CAN THROW US UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES THAT MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN OUR MENTAL HEALTH. THAT'S WHERE A LIFE COACH CAN COME IN. A LIFE COACH CAN HELP YOU NAVIGATE THESE CHALLENGES, SET AND ACHIEVE GOALS AND CREATE A MORE FULFILLING AND BALANCED LIFE.



A life coach is trained to provide objective support and guidance to help you overcome challenges and achieve your goals. They can help you identify and address the root cause of any mental health issues you may be experiencing, and provide strategies and tools to help you manage stress, anxiety and other negative emotions.

A life coach can help you identify your values and priorities, and create a life plan that is aligned with your goals and aspirations. They can help you develop a healthy work-life balance, set boundaries and prioritize self-care.

They can help you identify your strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to overcome any obstacles that may be preventing you from reaching your full potential.

Finding a trustworthy life coach can help you improve your relationships with others by providing communication skills and techniques that can help you navigate conflicts and communicate effectively. They can also help you identify and address any patterns or behaviors that may be impacting your relationships.

Your newfound life coach can also can provide ongoing support and accountability to help you stay motivated and on track towards achieving your goals. They can help you identify any barriers or obstacles that may be preventing you from reaching your goals, and provide strategies and tools to overcome them.

With the right life coach, you can achieve your full potential and live a more fulfilling and meaningful life. ■

A JOURNEY TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

By Mary Jane Fox, Pilgrim Center of Hope

In the midst of what we are all experiencing in the world today; from pressures of deadlines, the economy and various personal concerns, one can get caught in the hole of fear and despair. This can impact our spiritual life as well.

There is hope! There is always hope when we focus on God and His love for us.

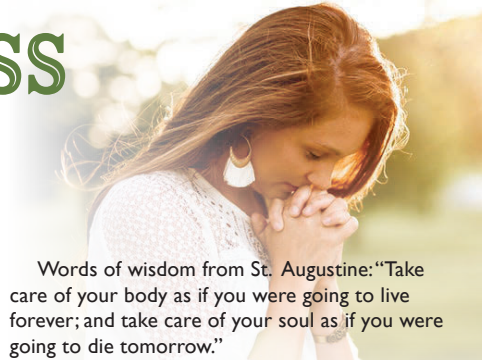
Scripture teaches that those who allow God to guide their lives generally live healthier lives. St. Paul writes: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

All of us should take our health seriously if we want to live a life that glorifies God. If we don't take our wellness seriously, we will break down. If that happens, we can't live for the people that matter to us most.

A friend who is a fitness health coach shared this tip called The Hero Minute, which is a reminder to take a minute to pray and count your blessing(s). It's about changing our habits one step at a time. One minute at a time. For example, choosing to take a minute to read a bible verse or to take your gym bag with you to work as a reminder to exercise. When we focus on our own wellness, we can become happier, healthier, and more productive in our daily duties.

Here are some tips for your spiritual wellness:

- Begin and end everyday with God in prayer.
- Don't look at your phone until you meet with God.
- Take back your Sundays! Worship, rest and fellowship.
- Make an appointment with the Divine Physician through Eucharistic Adoration.
- Have a daily devotional by your desk at work or by your bed.
- Have photos of family on your desk; include one of your favorite sacred art.
- Go to Mary, the Mother of God in prayer with the Rosary
- Subscribe to a Catholic podcast that teaches, encourages and inspires us to walk with Christ.



Words of wisdom from St. Augustine: "Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever; and take care of your soul as if you were going to die tomorrow."

The saints of our Church have discovered that good health can only be found in a deep and personal relationship with our Lord. Although most of them lived in poverty and frail health their joy was supernatural because of the health of their soul. Every person can have that same joy if we have the wisdom to surrender our lives to God in whom all mysteries find their end.

Yes, we follow our doctor's advice, watch our diet, exercise and make prudent choices, but ultimately our health and peace of mind rest in the wisdom of God whose plan for us is eternal. ❖

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CORSA DEI SANTI

COMPETITORS RUN IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SAINTS IN VATICAN'S ANNUAL 10K RACE

CNA • More than 2,400 contestants raced through Rome in the 14th annual All Saints' Day 10K last fall, the Corsa dei Santi (Race of the Saints), where competitors run the streets traversed by many saints over the centuries.

The athletes, professional and amateur, ran by the Colosseum, the Spanish Steps, and other sites in the Eternal City in the Nov. 1 race.

Taking part in the race last year were Marcell Jacobs, an Italian 100-meter gold medal winner in the 2020 Olympics, and former long jump world champion Fiona May.

Also competing in the Corsa dei Santi was Elizabeth Mazza, a graduate student in theology at the Angelicum University. Encouraged by her friends to take part in the race, Mazza told CNA that she sees the Corsa dei Santi as more than just physical exercise.

"I was really struck with this as I ran: that we're running to heaven. Timothy talks about the race to heaven, and the saints completed that," Mazza said,

referencing the letter writer of the New Testament.

"The saints lived that pathway to heaven, that race, bringing as many people as they could with them," she said. "So, the significance of the race today for me was as a spiritual race to heaven."

Mazza said it was her first official race. Training by running and walking through the streets of Rome, she gained inspiration from the saints who had walked the same streets. Like them, she relied on her friends and her faith to strengthen her through the physically demanding training.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul encourages Christians to model the actions of their faith after the training rituals of an athlete.

He wrote: "Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win.

Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we, an imperishable one."

Mazza said the rigor of her physical training strengthened her faith as well.

"Running a race pushes us to do something that we are made to do," Mazza said. "But it's not necessarily easy. You know, God made us for health in mind, body, and soul. Running that physical race course reminds us of the physical excellency that God made us for. But it also pushes us toward spiritual excellency."

"Running a race like this completely humbles you and makes you realize that you can't finish it without God's help," she added.





Erythritol AND HEART RISKS

By Andrew Irwin

Erythritol is a popular sugar substitute that is commonly used in low-calorie or zero-calorie sweeteners. It is a type of sugar alcohol that is naturally found in some fruits and fermented foods. Erythritol is preferred by many as a sugar replacement because it contains zero calories and has a similar taste to sugar without the negative effects on blood sugar levels. However, recent studies suggest that erythritol may be linked to an increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

A study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* in 2019 found that consuming erythritol may increase the risk of heart disease in some people. The study followed more than 80,000 women over a period of 14 years and found that those who consumed the most erythritol had a significantly higher risk of developing heart disease compared to those who consumed the least.

The study also found that erythritol consumption was associated with an increased risk of high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. This is because erythritol can affect the way the body processes sodium, which is a key contributor to high blood pressure. One possible explanation for the link between erythritol and heart disease and stroke is that erythritol can disrupt the balance of gut bacteria in the body. The gut microbiome plays a crucial role in regulating various bodily functions, including blood pressure and cholesterol levels. When the balance of gut bacteria is disrupted, it can lead to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Erythritol may contribute to the formation of blood clots, which can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Blood clots can form when the blood vessels become damaged or when there is a buildup of cholesterol and other substances in the arteries.

It is important to note that the studies on the link between erythritol and heart disease and stroke are still relatively new and more research is needed to fully understand the relationship. Additionally, the studies were observational in nature, which means they cannot establish causality.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that consuming large amounts of erythritol may not be as safe as previously thought, especially for those who are already at an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Individuals who have a history of heart disease, high blood pressure or stroke should consult with their healthcare provider before consuming erythritol or any other sugar substitute.

While erythritol is a popular sugar substitute that can help reduce calorie intake, it should be taken into account that it may be linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. If you're concerned about the potential risks erythritol might pose, schedule a consultation with your health care provider to determine whether you should avoid this sweet substitute. ■

"And I think that's the most fundamental thing. You're just running. It's just you and God, and only his grace sustains you to the end."

All profits from the *Corsa dei Santi* go toward funding a new school complex in Tshikapa, Congo. The project, headed up by the Salesians, seeks to provide disadvantaged children in the area with a quality and stable education. Currently, the district has only a 48 percent literacy rate, according to the race's website.

Pope Francis in his Nov. 1 Angelus welcomed and thanked the runners for their participation in the event.

"I am happy to welcome the participants in the *Corsa dei Santi* race, organized by the Don Bosco Missions Foundation, to live the commemoration of All Saints in a dimension of popular celebration," he said. "Thank you for your beautiful initiative and for your presence!"

The *Corsa dei Santi* will return this year on the Solemnity of All Saints, giving Catholics the chance once again to run in the footsteps of the saints, both physically and spiritually. ❖

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