

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Bishop Kevin Vann sprinkles holy water on the small crowd assembled for the blessing of the new St. Benedict's Mission, the first Catholic outreach ministry to the homeless of Fort Worth, Jan. 3. The mission, a ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, offers a place of welcome to the poor on the East Side of Fort Worth. It has been open since Dec. 3. Assisting Bishop Vann is Deacon Len Sanchez. At right is Father Bernard Murphy, general superior of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. (photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Bishop Vann dedicates St. Benedict's Mission, the CFR's new ministry to Fort Worth's homeless

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

"Every time I come in here, I feel the presence of God."

That's how Larry, a frequent resident of the Presbyterian Night Shelter, describes his daily visits to nearby St. Benedict's Mission. Three times a week the unemployed Fort Worth man and other homeless poor are invited into the unassuming, single story dwelling operated by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal for some strong, mid-morning coffee and a simple noon meal. The welcoming presence of the bearded men in gray-robos has eased the hopelessness that blankets Cypress Street.

"They feed us here and have fresh coffee. That's important for people who don't have anything to eat. It's a blessing," said Samuel, another homeless person served by the mission,

adding that if it were not for St. Benedict's, people would be "smoking crack on the corner."

Since opening St. Benedict's Mission Dec. 3, the friars have gotten to know many of the homeless who populate the East Lancaster neighborhood near downtown Fort Worth. Many of their new friends turned out Jan. 3 to watch Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann bless the concrete building that now stands as a milestone for the Diocese of Fort Worth. Over the years, many Catholic groups have made sandwiches or volunteered at the Presbyterian Night Shelter down the street, but the Church has never operated its own ministry in the area.

"This is the first visible, institutional presence of the church here in terms of mission outreach, so it's a very important milestone," Bishop Vann told the *North Texas Catholic*. "Thanks to the friars and

SEE MISSION, P. 8

Respect Life Office announces Postcard Campaign against FOCA

The Respect Life Office of the diocese has announced a Postcard Campaign to fight FOCA (the "Freedom of Choice Act") or any similar legislation intended to roll back gains made in the battle to protect the unborn over the past 36 years. The Postcard Campaign will be promoted in most parishes of the diocese, Jan. 24-25, however, individuals should check with their parishes for details.

"Throughout our nation and our diocese, we are preparing to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision known

as *Roe vs. Wade*," the office announced. "This decision, given on Jan. 22, 1973, legalized abortion in the United States. Fortunately, through hard work and sound legislation great strides have been made in limiting abortion through parental consent laws and limitations on partial-birth abortions.

"Now, however," the statement continues, "we as a nation face the threat of The Freedom of Choice Act or FOCA. This law will effectively sweep away all of the pro-life gains that have been made over the past 36 years and force taxpayers to fund abor-

tions." The Respect Life Office asks Catholics to check their parish bulletins or contact their parishes regarding the FOCA postcard campaign.

"These postcards," the announcement says, "will ask our U.S. Representatives and Senators to 'oppose FOCA or any similar measure, and retain laws against federal funding and promotion of abortion.'" For further information contact your parish or Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, Director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.



These folkloric dancers processed up the center aisle of St. Patrick Cathedral Dec. 12 as part of the early morning celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. For the full story in English and more pictures, see pp. 12 and 13 of this issue of the NTC. For the story in Spanish and pictures, see p. 19. (Photo by Kathy Cribari Hamer)

Bishop Vann to celebrate Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 7 p.m. Jan. 16

The Respect Life Ministry of the diocese invites all to join Bishop Kevin W. Vann Friday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. for the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton

St. in downtown Fort Worth. The diocesan liturgy each January marks the anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. The landmark ruling striking down

all state laws restricting abortion was handed down Jan. 22, 1973. A candlelight procession will be held in remembrance of the millions of deaths that have occurred as a result of abortion.



The Catholic Schools Office wants everyone to know they're invited to join Bishop Kevin Vann for the 22nd annual Celebration of Catholic Schools at the Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom Saturday evening, Jan. 31. The Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation will be honored with the 2009 Diocesan Leadership Award. See details, p. 4

We should consider immigration issues in light of the Gospels as we near the end of Christmas season

Dear Brothers and Sisters
in the Lord,

We begin the New Year with a continuation of our celebration of the Christmas Season. While the current liturgical calendar officially brings the Christmas Season to an end with the celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, on Jan. 11, it was not always so.

Many Catholics around the world celebrated 40 days of Christmas and brought the season to a close on Feb. 2, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, also known as Candlemas, or the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Even to this day, at Vatican City, the manger scene in the center of the square is not taken down until after the Feb. 2 celebration.

It is in this spirit that I invite all Catholics to continue to reflect and meditate on the wonderful mysteries of the Christmas Season, which still continues.

During these final days of the Christmas Season we concentrate our reflections not so much on the Birth of Jesus but on his infancy. A key mystery of Jesus' infancy which we celebrate is the Epiphany. The word "epiphany" is from the Greek language, meaning manifestation. Thus, the love of God is shown or made manifest to the entire world — symbolized by the Magi — in the person of the Christ Child. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in paragraph 528, offers us a beautiful summary of this celebration.

The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Savior of the world. The great feast of Epiphany celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East, together with his baptism in the Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee. In the magi, representatives of the neighboring pagan religions, the Gospel sees the first-fruits of the nations, who welcome the good news of salvation through the Incarnation. The magi's coming to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be king of the nations. Their coming means that pagans can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Savior of the world only by



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

Immigration is often categorized as a political issue. In reality this is truly an issue of faith. These late days of the season of the birth of Christ help us to see the faith dimension of this reality. Do we see each and every immigrant as our brother and sister in Christ? Do we see Christ in every immigrant? How were our own ancestors received in this country?

turning toward the Jews and receiving from them the messianic promise as contained in the Old Testament. The Epiphany shows that "the full number of the nations" now takes its "place in the family of the patriarchs," and acquires Israelitica dignitas (is made "worthy of the heritage of Israel").

The Magi are also a prime example of those who cross borders and travel from one country to another. The fact that Jesus manifested Himself to the wise men reminds us of the universality of God's love and redemption. It also reminds us that all are sons and daughters of the same God and that the unifying and life-giving salvation by the Incarnate Son of God is offered to all, regardless of national origin. This bond of grace, this *communio*, we have in, with, and through Jesus Christ is stronger, and of more value, than the bonds we have by nationality or even blood.

After the visit of the Magi, who had traveled from distant lands, the Holy Family leaves the comfort of their own nation and also travels and seeks refuge in the land of Egypt; today they would be considered immigrants or political refugees.

It is in connection with this that the Catholic Church in the United States will be celebrating National Migration Week from Jan. 4, Epiphany, to Jan. 10.

The Catholic Church in the United States has a long history of active pastoral and social ministry for immigrants from all nations. The vast majority of us are descended from immigrant families, myself included. The Catholic Church has also been actively involved in the promotion of a reformation of the immigration laws in the United States. In recognition of this fact, the FIDES News Agency, an instrument of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, published on Nov. 29 of this past year, a dossier on *The Question of Immigration in the United States of America*. I offer you a small portion of the introductory remarks of the dossier.

With regard to tougher measures taken in recent years to regulate the migratory immigration, an emblematic case is the situation on the U.S.-Mexico border, where the latest strategies of

closure culminated in the approval by the U.S. Congress of a proposal to build a 700-mile wall along the border. The United States Catholic Bishops' Conference, together with the whole local Catholic community, has firmly condemned the ineffectiveness and violence of these measures. For many years the Catholic Bishops of America have strenuously fought for migrants and against systems of repression, actively involved in promoting immigration reforms, which encourage legality and respect for human rights.

Immigration is often categorized as a political issue. In reality this is truly an issue of faith. These late days of the season of the birth of Christ help us to see the faith dimension of this reality. Do we see each and every immigrant as our brother and sister in Christ? Do we see Christ in every immigrant? How were our own ancestors received in this country?

As disciples of Christ, do we limit our involvement with all immigrants to only their social or political needs, or do we also share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them? This is not an either/or question; we are called to do both, and we must be careful to never abandon either.

Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for the 95th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which is also celebrated this month, reminded us of how Saint Paul is a great example of a disciple who evangelized immigrant Gentiles by his life and word. Pope Benedict reminds us that...

This is the mission of the Church and of every baptized person in our time too, even in the era of globalization; a mission that with attentive pastoral solicitude is also directed to the variegated universe of migrants — students far from home, immigrants, refugees, displaced people, evacuees — including for example, the victims of modern forms of slavery, and of human trafficking. Today too the message of salvation must be presented with the same approach as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, taking into account the different social and cultural situations and special difficulties of each one as a consequence of his or her condition as a migrant or itinerant person.

As we approach the end of the Christmas Season, may we see in the Holy Family, on their way to Egypt, the best example of an immigrant family, and may we see Christ in every immigrant who has come to live among us.

A very blessed new year to all of you. Thank you for your witness to our Faith, and from that witness, the love you show to all of the family of God.

God bless you always.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+ Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann
Bishop of Fort Worth



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To reach young, church must explain core beliefs, says Fr. Augustine DiNoia

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If the church wants to reach young people today, it must avoid the temptation to “fudge” on core Catholic beliefs in an effort to make them more agreeable to contemporary tastes, a Vatican official said.

Instead, it should confront with courage the major barriers in modern evangelization, including cultural resistance to the proclamation of Christ as the unique savior, said Dominican Father Augustine DiNoia, undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“No one in his or her right mind will be interested in a faith about which its exponents seem too embarrassed to communicate forthrightly,” Fr. DiNoia said.

“We have to be convinced that the fullness of the truth and beauty of the message about Jesus Christ is powerfully attractive when it is communicated without apologies or compromise,” he said.

Fr. DiNoia made the remarks in the Carl J. Peter lecture delivered Dec. 7 at Rome’s Pontifical North American College. His speech took its theme from Pope Benedict XVI’s talk to U.S. bishops last April, when the pope said they could best help people meet God by “clearing away some of the barriers to such an encounter.”

Fr. DiNoia said these barriers are in part intellectual, and can be remedied by robust preaching and teaching that responds to the younger generation’s openness to discussion and debate.

“In our conversations with young people, we have to avoid the temptation to fudge — to adapt the Catholic faith so as to make it palatable to modern tastes and expectations,” Fr. DiNoia said.

“This so-called ‘accommodationist’ approach generally fails, and it fails doubly with young people. There is a risk in this approach that the Christian message becomes indistinguishable from everything else on offer in the market stalls of secularized religious faith,” he said.

Fr. DiNoia examined what he said were the three biggest obstacles to evangelizing young people today. The first, he said, is “the notion that it is arrogant to claim that Jesus Christ is the

unique mediator of salvation.”

He said that in confronting this barrier the church needs to first make clear that faith in Christ’s uniqueness does not devalue other religions, which are worthy of respect and study as “monuments to the search for God.”

But what makes Christianity different is that it is principally about “God’s search for us” and God’s desire to give human beings a share in divine life, he said.

“Given that salvation in the Christian sense of the term involves both reconciliation of sinners and the elevation of creaturely persons to a new kind of life, it cannot come from within this world. Saviors are a dime a dozen when one fails to grasp what’s really at stake. We need to be delivered not just from error, or suffering, or desire, or injustice, or poverty,” he said.

“God desires nothing less than to share his life with us,” he said. Only Jesus Christ could accomplish that, he said, and Christians need to affirm that in bringing salvation for them and for others, Jesus is “not just any savior.”

Fr. DiNoia identified a second barrier to the evangelization of young people in the mistaken and predominant belief that being a Christian means giving up one’s freedom and replacing it with conformity to an external set of rules.

It is true that Christian faith requires conformity to Christ, he said. But this is not a “slavish conformity”; it presupposes the full realization of the unique human person, not his suppression, he said.

The third major barrier, Fr. DiNoia said, is the idea that the church’s moral teachings are more or less arbitrary, allowing or forbidding certain things regardless of their real relationship with human goodness.

Young people need to know that the church rejects this “culture of legalism” in theology, and that Catholic teachings are aimed primarily at fostering virtue, not instilling obedience. Like an athlete’s exercise and diet regime, which prepares him for a good performance, the church’s moral teachings are designed to lead the person to goodness and happiness, he said.

*Responding
to God’s Call*

Happy New Year! How important is extended family?

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

There is something natural and good about the celebration of a new year. A new year gives us a moment to pause and to reassess our lives to determine if we are headed in the right direction in regard to God, church, and family. It was good, then, to celebrate the new year with several Masses and to see an increase in the number of families and extended families choosing to do likewise.

For me personally, 2008 was a bumpy road that just wouldn’t end. I spent the month of December reassessing my balance, or rather imbalance, of family time, prayer, priestly ministry, weekend ministry in parishes, vocational work, and down time.

I have a lot to improve upon in each category, believe me, but something very strong arose in the midst of my prayers in December that had everything to do with the imbalance I experienced throughout 2008.

I spent this Advent preaching on the topic — “Christ our Eternal Joy has come.” As Christ fed us each week through the Holy Eucharist, and as we each received our Lord’s joy, I challenged my parishioners to share this joy.

Each week I challenged

my parishioners to welcome someone back to their family (or parish) by way of visit, phone call, or e-mail, someone who had gone astray, was isolated, or had separated because of a past hurt.

As lots of names popped into their minds, I then asked them to turn to the Lord in prayer and to let God direct their prayer and their heart to determine who that person might be.

As we neared Christmas, many parishioners had taken that challenge to heart, and they had amazing stories of reconciliation or of renewed friendships through the spirit of the Lord.

This led me to reflect on my years away from my own family — over 20 years. I began to remember some older traditions that few families have kept alive. That is to say, if we are not actively being a family, then we will soon begin to drift apart and not be a family. All the more, we are not just family, rather we should be able to say that we are part of a joyful Christian family.

So what are some essentials to being a member or extended member of a joyful Christian family?

A family needs to be attentive to one another, having regular gatherings or long distance phone calls that draw us back to the center of life: Christ and family or Christ and Church.

But, as in any house of order, there are a few rules to play by. Paul’s letter to the Colossians states “You must put that aside now: all the anger and quick temper, the malice, the insults, the foul language (Colossians 3:8).”

Thus, you can’t build someone up when you are constantly putting them down or blowing up at them. Rather you should “clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...and over all these

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, is shown walking out of Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster following his ordination to the priesthood in May 2002. Even then, he appeared to be inviting people to ask if they were being called to a vocation.



put on love, that is, the bond of perfection (Colossians 3:12-14).”

A second need to being a joyful Christian family is to pray together (and sing): “Persevere in prayer (Colossians 4:2)” and “sing gratefully to God from your hearts in psalms, hymns and inspired songs (Colossians 3:16).”

Practically speaking I see a great way of building joyful Christian families and extended families in 2009 by getting back into some longstanding traditions of having weekly or bi-monthly gatherings that begin with a set time of prayer such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, or Liturgy of the Hours, followed by a short period of catechesis or brief presentations on topics relating to Christ and the Church, followed by a social hour to include a meal and the enjoyment of being a family.

Sometimes extended family members will need that prayer time; at other times they may arrive for the food and the joyful social reconnection with family. Either way, they know that they have a place to call home where they are loved.

So, part of my struggle in 2008 was being separated too long from a joyful Christian family. I have neglected my family. So, how important is extended family? It likely means everything in the world, the sparkle of joy, that many if not most members need more frequently.

I do hope for myself, my family, and yours, that 2009 will be a time to put family and extended family first by establishing regular family gatherings. A family that prays together stays together. Peace and Joy to you in the year 2009 of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father Kyle Walterscheid is the director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

Catholic Schools Banquet planned

The 22nd Annual Celebration of Catholic Schools will be held Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

This annual event in the diocese celebrates the mission of Catholic schools and honors outstanding individuals for their service to the Catholic school communities of the diocese. The Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation will receive the Diocesan Leadership Award.

The evening will include a social hour followed by dinner. Sister Carol Cimino, a national consultant for the William H. Sadler Company, will be guest speaker. Bishop Kevin Vann will also be in attendance.

Reservations are \$75 per person. Everyone is invited to the celebration to show their support and commitment to Catholic schools.

For more information and to secure reservations, please contact the Catholic Schools Office at 817-560-3300, or e-mail rsvp@fwdioc.org.

Lewisville churches sponsor annual Ecumenical Service

The ninth annual Ecumenical Sunday Service for 2009 will feature Bishop Kevin Vann at 3:30 p.m., Jan. 18, at the West Side Baptist church, at 900 Bellaire Blvd. in Lewisville.

The Rev. Kenneth Blake, pastor of West Side Baptist, will introduce the program, announcing the International theme, "That they may become one in Your hand" (*Ezekiel 37: 15-24*).

Seven churches from Lewisville and Flower Mound will participate in the prayer service, including First Presbyterian, Annunciation Episcopal, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic, St. Philip Catholic and West Side Baptist churches from Lewisville; and Flower Mound Methodist, and Trinity Presbyterian churches from Flower Mound. A collection will be taken to benefit Christian Community Action.

The West Side Baptist choir will lead the singing.

For more information, call ecumenical organizer Kathleen Easler at (817) 430-2454.

Tribunal Ministry offers free seminar, Feb. 7

Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington, will present an introduction to tribunal ministry from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville.

The course is designed for those who are interested in learning about tribunal ministry, and the roles and tasks of parish tribunal volunteers. Attendance at this seminar, at this or any other time, is a prerequisite to enroll in tribunal volunteer training, which will be offered during the summer.

There is no charge, but preregistration is required. To preregister, call Deborah Hawks at Good Shepherd at (817) 421-1387. For more information, contact the Tribunal Office at (817) 560-3300 ext. 200.

Training sessions offered for EMs for homebound, hospitalized

St. Michael Church at 3713 Harwood Rd. Bedford will offer a training session for new extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the homebound, hospitalized, and nursing home residents.

The training is divided into two sessions from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 31 and Feb. 7.

Participants will learn basic visit skills, what pastoral care to the sick and the dying is, and the overall importance of this ministry. Participants from outside St. Michael will be charged a fee of \$8 to cover cost of materials. Lunch will be provided.

To RSVP, contact Martín Peña at (817) 283-8743. Deadline for registration is Jan. 19.

Cathedral to host Patriotic Rosary service

St. Patrick Cathedral will host a Patriotic Rosary for the United States as it assumes new leadership during a time of many difficulties and trials. The prayer service will be from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth.

"We must pray for wisdom and courage for our president and government officials; and that they will act according to the revealed will of God and the foundational principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States," say event organizers.

The Patriotic Rosary is in the framework of traditional prayers, accompanied by spiritual reflections of America's forefathers.

For information call the Fort Worth Queen of Peace Center at (817) 244-7733 or (817) 558-9805.

St. Bernard Abbey to host vocation retreat

St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, Alabama, will host a Come and See retreat January 23-25.

Men between the ages of 18 and 45 are invited to experience life with the monks, participate in the Divine Office and celebrate the Holy Mass in the Abbey Church, learn *Lectio Divina*, monastic traditions, and the history of Benedictine monasticism, and get to know other monastic seekers and learn about their background, vocation journey, and how they came to arrive at St. Bernard.

The weekend will also include an opportunity for participants to speak with some of the monks in panel discussions and share their stories. Space is limited. There is no charge for the retreat.

For more information contact Brother Benedict Dyar, OSB, vocation liaison for St. Bernard Abbey at 1600 St. Bernard Drive, SE, Cullman, AL 35055 or call (800) 722-0999 ext. 138 or e-mail brbenedictosb@yahoo.com.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



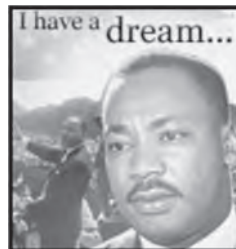
ST. JOSEPH, RHINELAND – The Hispanic Community of St. Joseph Church in Rhineland held an Our Lady of Guadalupe Feastday Celebration on Friday, Dec. 12. The members met at the Rhineland Gym and had a dance parade to the doors of the church. Father Charles Gorantla, sacramental minister, officiated at the special Mass. Following the Mass, a play reenacting the Juan Deigo visit from our Lady of Guadalupe was held. To end the special celebration, a meal consisting of many tasty dishes followed.

Bishop Vann to celebrate Mass in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Bishop Kevin Vann will celebrate a Mass for the 23rd Annual "Celebration of Life for Martin Luther King, Jr." at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17 at St. Joseph Church at 1927 SW Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington.

A reception will follow the Mass. The annual celebration held in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., takes place in a different location every year.

For more information, contact Deacon Len Sanchez at (817) 560-2452 ext. 305 or lsanchez@fwdioc.org.



Educate the Children gala Feb. 13

Bishop Kevin Vann will be the guest speaker at the Fifth Anniversary Gala for Friends of Educate the Children 6:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 13 at the Tarrant County College Northeast Campus at 828 Harwood Rd., in Hurst.

The Gala will include a dinner and a silent auction. Father Robert Thames of Cabezas, Bolivia, will be the honoree.

For more information contact Hilda Flores at (817) 560-3300 ext. 112 or hlflores@fwdioc.org.

Catholic homeschooling information meeting Jan. 16

Catholics interested in homeschooling their children are invited to an information meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 16 to learn about the different philosophies of homeschooling, the different Catholic curriculums available, and the legalities of homeschooling.

Experienced homeschoolers will be available to answer questions as well as show materials.

Catholics Teaching at Home (CATH), a homeschool group for Catholics in the Fort Worth Diocese, will sponsor the presentation.

For more information, contact Diane Ashour at (972) 601-9751 or ashour_23@sbeglobal.net.

NTC deadlines for submission

The *North Texas Catholic* is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published.

Items for the Jan. 23 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 14. Items for the Feb. 6 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Cardinal Newman Institute to offer 'Liturgy and Sacraments' course in January

The Cardinal Newman Institute of Fort Worth will offer its spring 10-week course on the liturgy and sacraments beginning Saturday, Jan. 17. The course will be offered from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the St. Maria Goretti Church's Holy Family Life Center, located at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington.

Participants will examine the fundamental liturgies of the Catholic Church, such as the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as the role and nature of the sacraments, their relationship to the plan of salvation and the history of their development.

The Institute "highly recommends" the course for religion teachers, those preparing others for the sacraments, and Catholics wishing to enhance one's participation in the Mass and sacramental life.

Students will examine basic documents of the Church as liturgical directives. Tuition is \$200, with at least half payable at the first class. Full-time employees working in the Church's catechetical, pastoral and educational ministries are eligible to receive a half-tuition reduction.

For information or to pre-register to obtain the reading list and begin to acquire resources, call (817) 277-4859 or e-mail at cni.info@yahoo.com.

Courage group meets twice monthly

Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for Catholics striving to live chaste lives according to the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality, meets the second and fourth Friday evenings of each month.

For more information, e-mail to CourageDFW@Catholic.org or call (972) 938-5433.

Memorial Mass for Unborn Babies to be held at St. Andrew

St. Andrew Church's Family Life department will offer a Memorial Mass for Unborn Babies at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23.

The department invites everybody, especially those who have family members who have lost children because of miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion, to attend the memorial service.

A naming ceremony, which allows families to name their unborn babies, will take place before the service in the Chapel at 6:30 p.m. Anybody who would like to participate in the ceremony is asked to RSVP at (817) 927-5383.

A reception will follow in the parish hall.

Childcare will be provided if reservations are made at least 48 hours in advance to (817) 924-6581. There is a \$5 fee per child.

For more information, contact Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or via e-mail at acurran@standrewcc.org.

Knights of Columbus scholarships available for Lewisville area students

Three \$600 Knights of Columbus scholarships, for a Catholic college-bound senior from Lewisville High School, Marcus High School, and Flower Mound High School, will be awarded in May. Applicants must be Catholic.

Two additional \$600 scholarships have been added this year for students attending any area high school, provided the student's father is a member of St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, or a member of Knights Council # 9884.

Instructions and applications for the 19th annual Knights of Columbus Scholarship are now available from high school counselors at Lewisville High, Flower Mound High, and Marcus High, as well as the St. Philip the Apostle Church office.

The scholarships are funded by contributions from Council 9884, the Lady Knights, and local Fourth Degree Pope Paul VI Assembly #2291. Applications must be postmarked by Feb. 14.

For more information, contact chairman Mike Crivello at macrivello@hotmail.com.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Jan. 22

The Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Their Families regularly meet the fourth Thursday of the month.

The next regular meeting of the ministry will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

Theology professor to speak about Catholic perspective on Rapture

Sister Dorothy Jonaitis, OP, will present "The Left Behind Alternative: A Workshop on Apocalyptic Literature" from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31 at St. Bartholomew Church at 3601 Altamesa Blvd. in Fort Worth.

Sr. Jonaitis is the author of *Unmasking Apocalyptic Texts: a Guide to Preaching and Teaching*, and an assistant professor at the University of Dallas School of Ministry. She will present the Catholic teaching of apocalyptic texts, especially related to the rapture and imagery of the Book of Revelation.

Sr. Jonaitis will sign copies of her book, which may be purchased at the workshop.

For more information, call Marco Castellon at (817) 293-5589.

Diocesan

Catholic Committee on Scouting awards Bishop Vann, other adults

On Dec. 5, the Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Diocese of Fort Worth held its annual Bishop's Dinner. This event is an opportunity to provide recognition to the dedicated adult leaders who have made significant and outstanding contributions to the spiritual development of Catholic youth through scouting programs within the diocese.

The Bronze Pelican Medal, which is awarded to adults for their contributions through Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs, was awarded to Bishop Kevin Vann in recognition for his sustained support of Catholic scouting. Terry Bachman and Victor Nguyen also received the Bronze Pelican award.

Patricia Glasgow received the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award for her contributions through Girl Scout and Camp Fire programs; the Saint George Emblem, given to adults who have previously received the Bronze Pelican Medal



Bishop Kevin Vann, shown with other award recipients, (from left to right) John Houters, Richard Mathews, Patricia Glasgow, Victor Nguyen, Bill Bellman, and Terry Bachman, received the Bronze Pelican Medal for his contributions through Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs.

and who continue to make extensive contributions to the spiritual development of Catholic youth, was given to Bill Bellman, John Houters, and Richard Mathews.

More information on the Catholic Committee on Scouting and Catholic Emblem programs may be found on the organization's Web site www.bsaccs.org.

Tribunal to host presentation by canon lawyer Fr. Patrick Lagges, JCD, Jan. 26

The Marriage Tribunal of the Diocese of Fort Worth will host a workshop Monday, Jan. 26, at Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 2100 N. Davis Dr. in north Arlington. Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m.; the workshop will begin at 10 a.m. and will conclude at 4 p.m. Father Patrick Lagges, JCD, judicial vicar of the Marriage Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Chicago and lecturer in canon law at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago, will serve as the presenter and will address recent developments in tribunal theory and practice.



Fr. Patrick Lagges

Fr. Lagges has years of ex-

pertise in dealing with issues related to the annulment process in the Catholic Church, said Meg Hogan,

those who might be interested in tribunal ministry, and anyone who's ever wanted to learn more about marriage annulments or how tribunals work," said Hogan. "Fr. Lagges is an engaging speaker and has a wealth of experience and knowledge in Tribunal work."

There is no charge for attending the workshop; lunch and materials will be provided. Preregistration is required prior to Friday, Jan. 23 at 4 p.m. To register, call the Tribunal office at (817) 560-3300, ext. 200, or e-mail to mhogan@fwdioc.org.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL, DENTON – Two-thirds of the seventh grade class at Immaculate Conception Catholic School has earned the recognition of Duke Scholar by placing in the 95th percentile in the nation or higher on standardized testing, school officials said. The Duke University Talent Identification Program identifies and recognizes academically talented students and provides programs to support their optimum educational potential, according to a program release. The 15 ICCS seventh-graders are now eligible to take the college-level ACT or SAT entrance exam this spring. ICCS students recognized include in the front row from left to right Haley Davis, Taylor Sorrells, Rachel Davis, Hannah Thies, and Meagan Wood, and in the back row from left to right Lorenzo Salas, Shane Sirignano, Mary Baker, Allie Shelton, Christian Luke, Kaaren Piñeda, Brianna Stachowiak, Hannah Johnson, Phillip Cleminson. Not pictured is Stephen Bevilacqua.

Diocesan retreat for young adults scheduled for Feb. 27 to Mar. 1 at CRC

Members of the Diocesan Young Adult Council will sponsor "Quo Vadis," (Where Are You Going?) a retreat designed for single or married young adults, ages 18 to mid-thirties. The retreat will be offered Friday, Feb. 27 through Sunday, March 1, at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth.

The cost for registration prior to Feb. 2 is \$35. Registrations will be accepted at \$45 per person through Feb. 16.

Retreat promotion materials ask young adults, "Are you stuck at a crossroads in your life? Do you know where you are going? And, more importantly, do you know where God is leading you?"

The weekend retreat, prom-

ise organizers, "... is just what you need to help you find your way! Come join the Diocesan Young Adult Council for a weekend of prayer, fellowship, and fun. Let God be your GPS and figure out where you may be going!"

According to organizers, the retreat will include opportunities to listen to dynamic speakers, participate in small groups, enjoy prayer and quiet time, and to discuss other topics that relate specifically to young adults.

For more information, contact Shawndra Hall at Retreats@fortworthyoungadults.org or at (512) 809-6131.

A printable registration form may be found on the Web under Young Adult Ministry at www.fwdioc.org.

Knights to sponsor End of Life Issues Workshop in Arlington, Jan. 21

Terms such as "medical directives," "health care proxies," and "living wills" may seem confusing, but "help is on the way," according to Jerry Hauck, a member

of the Knights of Columbus, St. Jude Council #6269. The Knights will sponsor a workshop on end of life issues Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Knights'

Council Hall, 2625 S. Cooper St. in Arlington. Father Tom Kennedy, associate pastor at St. Michael's in Bedford, will lead the workshop. The event is free.

Fr. Kennedy, an experienced hospital chaplain, will offer workshop participants the opportunity to work through the information in San Antonio Archbishop José H. Gómez's brief book, *A Will to Live: Clear Answers on End of Life Issues*. Participants will be provided copies of the book, and copies of the National Catholic Bioethics Center publication, *A Catholic Guide to End-Of-Life Decisions*.

According to Hauck, Fr. Kennedy will lead participants in working with the forms all Catholics should possess in case

of a medical emergency. "Every attendee will leave the seminar with a witnessed health proxy [form] and an Advance Medical Directive that takes into account Catholic faith," said Hauck. "As Catholics who respect life, we not only care about the beginnings of life, we care about the end of our lives here on earth. One of the things we can easily prepare for is the eventuality of not being able to make decisions about our own health care. We do not want to end up without documentation that is in accordance with our Catholic teachings."

The "living will" is specifically designed to give medical instructions while a hospital patient is still able to make critical decisions,

Hauck explained. "The proper terminology for Catholics is an Advance Medical Directive. This is a witnessed document that gives general and specific instructions to any care provider about your medical well being. You can add the specific instructions as you desire," said Hauck.

A witnessed health proxy document, also known as a "durable medical power of attorney," provides a loved one with instructions for care in the event of an emergency. For more information about the workshop, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, diocesan director of the Respect Life office, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 257, or e-mail to cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org.

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Diocesan



Milton Peterson, President of the Catholic Union of Texas (KJT) #109 St. Augustine, based out of Our Lady of Mercy Church in Hillsboro, presented a \$250 check to Vernon Markwardt, director of Religious Education at Our Lady of Mercy Church to help purchase new cassocks for altar servers. Peterson also presented checks to the Knights of Columbus Council #10375 and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court #2143 for their help with the Czech Heritage Meal and for the Catholic Daughters' help with the Angel Tree. Pictured in front from left are Vernon Markwardt and Milton Peterson. Looking on from the second row are Janice Markwardt, Diane Davidson, Josephine Kozlovsky, Bill Kozlovsky and Irene Peterson.

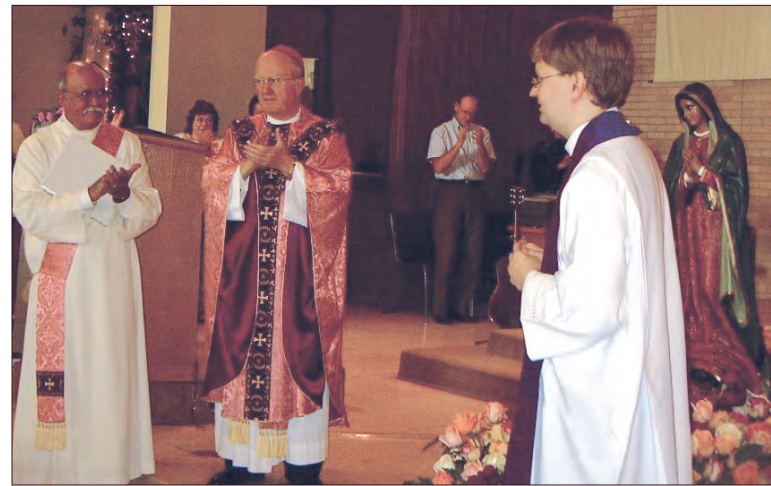
Fr. Skeldon installed as OLG pastor in Wichita Falls

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

Bishop Kevin Vann told parishioners that he was "honored and delighted" to preside at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass celebrated at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (OLG) in Wichita Falls on Dec. 14. Father John Robert Skeldon, who has presided at Masses at the parish since January of 2007 and has served as parochial administrator since June of 2007, was officially installed as pastor at the Dec. 14 liturgy.

"You are fortunate to have such a talented priest to serve this community," the bishop told the congregation. "Be sure to take good care of him!"

The parish community has indeed appreciated Father Skeldon's presence with them, said Jo Ann Parker, who serves as a part-time secretary at OLG. "His Spanish is very good," she said, noting that parishioners attending Spanish Masses are enthusiastic about Fr. Skeldon's appointment. "We all talk about



Bishop Kevin Vann installs Father John Robert Skeldon as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Wichita Falls. Fr. Skeldon has been serving as parochial administrator since June 2007. In addition to his pastoral duties, he is also an instructor at the Biblical School of the School of Ministry at the University of Dallas.

how smart he is and how we love his teaching ability. He has a beautiful singing voice, and that's something we all really enjoy."

Fr. Skeldon, a native Texan from San Antonio, was ordained in 2000. He will also be the keynote speaker for the Diocese's Ministry Formation

Day Jan. 10 at Nolan Catholic High School.

He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Dallas and a master's in divinity from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He is also an instructor at the Biblical School of the School of Ministry at the University of Dallas.

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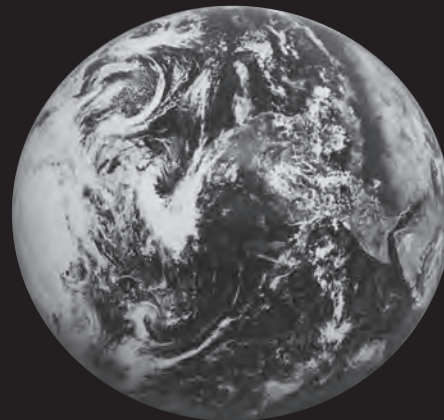
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Diocesan

Bishop installs Fr. Mathew as new St. Thomas pastor

Story and Photo by
Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Acknowledging the fruits of past leadership and promising to give the parish new life and direction, Father Antony Mathew, TOR, officially became the new pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Church and Holy Trinity Mission during a Dec. 7 installation ceremony.

Parishioners in the packed sanctuary watched Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann conduct the rite during the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass. The bishop described the responsibilities a pastor assumes in a parish: the catechetical formation of children and adults, fostering works of social justice, ensuring the Holy Eucharist remains the focal point of parish life, reaching out to the un-churched, and helping families live faith-filled lives, along with other duties. The installation of a new pastor is a time of transition, he told the gathering.

"It seems like a lot, but a pastor does it always with the love of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, and the workings of the Holy Spirit," Bishop Vann ex-



Bishop Kevin Vann installs Father Antony Mathew, TOR, as the new pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Church and Holy Trinity Mission in Fort Worth.

plained. "As Catholics we belong to a larger reality where God calls pastors at different times to different people to share their talents and gifts. That's what we are celebrating today."

Fr. Mathew, a native of Kerala, India, follows other Third Order Regular Franciscans as pastor. Bishop Vann thanked the order for their continued service to the parish and reminded the congregation to pray for their new leader.

Addressing the faith community, Fr. Mathew said he is looking forward to his first appointment as pastor of a church in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"Both communities have a great past, but now we are looking toward something new and that's where I come in," he said. "I'm looking forward to taking both communities to where the Spirit leads us, so we can become instruments of God's kingdom."



Winners of the 12th annual Frank B. Staton Scholarship Awards were recognized Dec. 14, at Our Mother of Mercy Church (OMM) in Fort Worth. The scholarship, sponsored by the Knights of Peter Claver Council #89, is presented to students attending OMM School in fourth through eighth grades. Shown from right to left are award winners Ida Mingo, first place; Deneica Green, third place; and second place winner Bobby Pegross. Pictured with the students are OMM School alumnus and retired educator Frank B. Staton and Dr. Carolyn Yusuf, OMM School principal. All three award winners are also participants in the scholarship program known as STAR.

Theologian and environmentalist to speak at TCU; art competition offered

Mary Evelyn Tucker, Ph.D., a theologian and environmentalist, will speak at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4 at Ed Landreth Hall at Texas Christian University (TCU). The auditorium is located at the corner of South University Drive and Cantey Street in Fort Worth. Tucker's presentation, "A New Way Home," will be offered through TCU's annual Brite Divinity School's Roman Catholic Lectureship.

Tucker, a lecturer, author, and research scholar at the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in the Religious Studies Department at Yale University, is co-founder and co-director of the national Forum on Religion and Ecology.

Tucker will speak about the ethical dimensions of the environmental crisis. In conjunction with her lecture, Brite Divinity School is sponsoring an art and photography competition. According to materials promoting the competition, "We invite you to take an original photograph or create a work of art that can encourage humans to become a healing, helpful presence on the planet. Our hope is that your artistic endeavor will help us rethink the relationship between humans and our Earth

home."

Competition participants are invited to submit a photograph or image of their artwork in ".jpg" format, along with a completed entry form, by e-mail to britephotos@tcu.edu by Jan. 14. Entry forms may be found on the Brite Divinity School Web site at www.brite.tcu.edu.

Prizes of one \$100 award and two \$50 awards will be presented in each of the following categories: Pre-K to fourth grade; fifth to eighth grade; ninth to 12th grade; undergraduate students; graduate students; and the general public. Winners will be notified by Jan. 30. Winning entries will be presented in a slide show at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 4, prior to the lecture offered by Tucker at 7 p.m.

Student tickets to the lecture are free with a valid student ID; general admission is \$15 per person. Reserved seating with parking and admission to the reception prior to the presentation is \$35 per person. For additional information about the competition, contact Mary Jo Kaska at (817) 257-7575. For more information about the lecture, contact Toni Craven, Ph.D., at (817) 257-7575 or at t.craven@tcu.edu.

Holy Cross Church completes furniture remodeling project

Members of Holy Cross Church in The Colony celebrated the completion of their project of remodeling the church with a Mass of Blessing held Saturday, Dec. 20.

The 5 p.m. Mass included a blessing rite for the new altar, pews, and other altar furniture, led by Holy Cross Pastor Father Michael Holmberg.

Begun in July, the renovations are now concluded with the addition of the permanent furniture.

"I'm excited about the new pews and how much more reverent our worship area has become. I am not a cradle Catholic, so my entire worship experience has been without kneelers. Now my children and I will have the chance for the first time to worship in a more traditional setting," said parishioner Melani Sonnier, who serves as a cantor and member of the parish choir.

Masses that weekend offered the first chance that most parishioners had to see the new pews



Father Michael Holmberg, pastor of Holy Cross Church in The Colony, blesses the remodeled altar during a Mass of Blessing held at 5 p.m. Dec. 20. In addition to the altar, the blessing rite was offered for the church's remodeled pews and altar furniture.

and altar furniture, something they had anticipated for quite a while.

Parishioner Richard Anderson also approved of the church's new look. "Walking

in and seeing the beautiful new altar, pews, all the wood — it just made Mass more reverent and dignified, and at the same time, more warm and welcoming to all," he said.

Diocesan

In tradition of St. Francis, local Friars of the Renewal dedicate their

Mission to the Door

FROM PAGE 1

and everyone else who helped, we're here, and that's a great achievement, especially now."

Job losses and home foreclosures could force more people to live in the night shelter. Talk of expanding St. Benedict's has already started.

"There are definite dreams, thoughts, and prayers of expanding the ministry of the mission, but we'll have to wait to see what that is," the bishop said.

According to Brother Peter Westall, CFR, his order began working to set up an apostolate for the homeless since arriving in Fort Worth in July 2007. The charism of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal is two-fold, he explains. Members are challenged to serve the materially poor and to preach the Gospel through evangelization.

"Working with the poor is always something we do," he said. "We began researching to get something off the ground as soon as we could."

St. Benedict's Mission is housed in a building leased to the diocese by the Presbyterian Night Shelter. Initially, the gutted, 800-square-foot structure had no ceiling, interior walls, or electricity. Volunteers organized by Deacon Len Sanchez, director of Community & Pastoral Services, remodeled the eyesore to create a small but homey room that can comfortably accommodate a small group. The hospitality house is open every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During that time, two friars and several volunteers serve coffee and pastries to their homeless visitors and prepare a lunch of rice and chili or rice and soup. Seating is limited to 20 people for safety reasons.

"Crowds create agitation and conflict, and we try to maintain a peaceful atmosphere here," said Br. Peter. "Our guests always comment on how peaceful it is."

The ministry that pairs food with fellowship is offered as a public service, but some elements of faith are included. Grace is recited before lunch, and many of the conversations friars have with their patrons include some aspect of faith.

Ann Falgout, a secular Franciscan from St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington who volunteers at the mission, says the spirituality of street people would



Brother Patrick Crowley, CFR, hugs one of the participants in the dedication ceremony. The downtown resident is a frequent guest at St. Benedict's Mission.

surprise most observers. Many of the homeless she encounters can quote Scripture passages.

"Working here is a very humbling experience," she said. "The people that come through show their humility to us. They are very giving and thank us for being here."

Father Bernard Murphy, general superior of the CFRs who traveled from the order's New York base to attend the blessing ceremony, thanked the crowd for welcoming the friars to Fort Worth and helping them launch their latest ministry to the poor.

"Our life as a community is to live and work with our less fortunate brothers and sisters and to offer them a little bit of the blessing the Lord has given to us," he said. "We'd have nothing to offer, if it weren't for you and oth-

ers who, over the months since we've been down here, have been so very generous to us."

Started 21 years ago in New York's South Bronx area with eight men, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal now has 125 members in locations around the world. The order recently opened a house in Nicaragua and is hoping to expand into Northern Ireland.

"God has blessed us in a very particular way because so many people have been generous and helpful," he said in closing. "Thank you for your assistance in making this day, this mission, this outreach in the East Lancaster area, so much a possibility. May God be present to you as we seek, as friars, to be present to our brothers and sisters here in the streets."



Gospel choir members from Our Mother of Mercy Church (OMM), led by OMM pastor Fr. Jerome LeDoux, SVD, sing a rousing hymn at the conclusion of the mission's dedication ceremony. The Friars worked closely with the parish when they first moved to the diocese.



Young adults from St. Michael the Archangel in Garland, interested in learning more about the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, prayerfully participate in the dedication ceremony.



After the dedication ceremony, Bishop Vann speaks with one of the visitors to the mission.

"This is the first visible, institutional presence of the church here in terms of mission outreach, so it's a very important milestone. Thanks to the friars and everyone else who helped, we're here, and that's a great achievement, especially now."

— Bishop Kevin Vann



Br. Crowley speaks at the conclusion of the ceremony, thanking participants for attending and inviting them to enter the newly-remodeled building for refreshments.

Br. Crowley, joined by mission supporters, chats with a visitor. St. Benedict's Mission is the work of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and was created to serve the homeless in the downtown area.



Diocesan

Diocese plans pilgrimage to Rome for 40th anniversary



ABOVE: A large glass disc painted with gold shows Sts. Peter and Paul. The glass is part of the Christian Museum collection in the Vatican Museums. (CNS photo/courtesy of the Vatican Museums)

Bishop Kevin Vann has announced a special pilgrimage to Italy in 2009 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Pilgrims from the diocese, led by the bishop, will travel in Italy Nov. 10 – 16 and will have the opportunity while in Rome and Assisi to enjoy several days of worship, sightseeing, and a papal audience. Travelers will also have the option to spend three days and nights before or after the pilgrimage visiting other Italian cities with significant Catholic histories, including Venice, Florence, Verona, Padua, Milan, and Turin.

The Diocese of Fort Worth was established by Pope Paul VI on Aug. 9, 1969, as a separate entity from the Diocese of Dallas. Bishop John J. Cassata, a native of Galveston and auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth, was installed Oct. 2, 1969, as the first bishop of the diocese, which includes 28 counties in North Central Texas. The diocese is currently comprised of more than 550,000 Catholics in 90 parishes, which are administered by 110 priests and deacons.

Father J. Michael Holmberg, pastor of Holy Cross Church in The Colony, has been appointed by Bishop Vann to direct the pilgrimage.

"The anniversary pilgrimage to Rome will be a deeply spiritual experience," Bishop Vann told the *North Texas Catholic*. "It will give me a unique opportunity to travel with our pastors and the faithful of our diocese during this special year of grace and prayer," the bishop said. Bishop Vann will preside at Mass during each day of the pilgrimage.

"Rome, home to St. Peter and his successors, including our current Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, is one of the most important



LEFT: Pope Benedict XVI gives the faithful his blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome and the world) in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 8, 2007. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

cities in the Christian world, and is the second most visited site in Christendom after Jerusalem," said Fr. Holmberg. "It contains the precious relics of the two great apostles St. Peter and St. Paul as well as relics of many other significant saints."

According to Fr. Holmberg, Bishop Vann will lead the pilgrims in departing from DFW International Airport on a flight to Rome on Monday, Nov. 9, arriving in Rome on Nov. 10. Upon arrival, the group will experience a broadly ranging tour of Rome before checking into a first class hotel near the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica. In the late afternoon, Bishop Vann will celebrate Mass for the pilgrims in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

"During the next five days, the group will visit the major sights of Rome, including St. Peter's, the Vatican Museums, Michelangelo's renowned Sistine Chapel, and the Basilicas of St. John Lateran and St. Mary Major," said Fr. Holmberg. "The group will also attend the weekly papal audience, during which Pope Benedict XVI will bless the assembly, followed by a visit to the Christian Catacombs."

Pilgrims will also have the opportunity to kneel on the Holy

Stairs — the 28 marble steps of Pontius Pilate's Palace in Jerusalem that Jesus climbed during his Passion, added Fr. Holmberg.

A special aspect of the pilgrimage will be the group's travel to Assisi, the ancient holy village where St. Francis lived and preached. The itinerary will include St. Francis's Basilica, the *Porziuncola* and the Church of St. Claire. The group will also visit the *Duomo di Orvieto*, a large 14th-century Catholic cathedral in the town of Orvieto in Umbria, located in central Italy.

Pilgrims will also be offered an option to visit *Montecassino*, the second home of St. Benedict, and Pompeii. The pilgrimage will end with a tour of Rome by night.

The cost of the pilgrimage is \$2,799 per person with double occupancy, said Fr. Holmberg. He noted that this price includes roundtrip airfare and taxes from Dallas to and from Rome, six nights in a four-star hotel with a private bath and a daily buffet breakfast and dinner. The price also includes all transfers in Italy and applicable sightseeing and entrance costs, daily motor coaches, gratuities for drivers, guides, and escorts. Each motor coach will have its own coordinator from the Diocese of Fort Worth, in addition to a local escort and driver throughout the journey.

Medical and cancellation insurance is also included in the package price, as well as a special commemorative T-shirt, luggage tags, and a detailed information booklet with all program details, destination information, contacts, terms, conditions, and maps.

Interested Catholics are asked to make arrangements to participate through their individual parishes. Additional information may also be obtained through Barbara Boone, diocesan pilgrimage coordinator, at (972) 721-4118 or at ministry@udallas.edu or by contacting Fr. Holmberg at (972) 625-5252.



This is an August 2000 file photo of a statue of St. Paul at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. (CNS photo by Nancy Wiechec)



Pope Benedict XVI celebrates the Mass of the Lord's Supper at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome April 5, 2007. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile)

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Space is limited — to avoid disappointment, sign up now

The Pilgrimage is open to all members of the parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth.

Contact your Pastor and/or his designated Rome Pilgrimage Coordinator for the detailed itinerary, price, registration form, and all the inclusions — air and taxes from DFW, 6 nights first class hotel near the Vatican, Rome, breakfast and dinner daily, fully escorted, all applicable entrances, sightseeing, transfers, and insurance.

Or call the Diocesan Pilgrimage Coordinator Barbara Boone at 972-721-4118 or Pilgrimage Director Father J. Michael Holmberg 972-625-5252.



The 20th annual Interreligious Prayer Meeting for Peace concluded in Assisi, Italy, Sept. 5, 2006. A joint appeal for peace was delivered in front of the Basilica of St. Francis, seen in this photo. (CNS photo/Daniele Colarieti, Catholic Press Photo)

Viewpoints

Holy Family encourages us to make our own families holy

By Lucas Pollice

One of the wonderful feasts that we celebrate during the season of Christmas is the feast of the Holy Family that is always celebrated the Sunday after Christmas. This feast calls us to reflect upon the fact that the Savior of the world was born into a human family where he was formed, nurtured, protected, and educated. Most profoundly, Christ, through the Holy Family, redeemed and sanctified the human family and placed the family at the heart of both society and the Church.

Most of us are accustomed to seeing very peaceful and serene pictures of the Holy Family on Christmas night surrounded by the angels and the shepherds. While this does accurately depict the wonder and miracle of the first Christmas night, we also need to remember that the Holy Family experienced the everyday joys, concerns, and sufferings of life that every family throughout history experiences.

We must remember that Mary and Joseph were called while Mary was with child to go on a long and difficult journey to Bethlehem for the Roman census. Imagine their concern and fright when Mary was in labor and could not find room in the inn. After Christ's birth, the Holy Family became refugees and fled to Egypt because of Herod's murderous threats against the Christ child. We also hear the incredible story of Mary and Joseph losing Jesus in Jerusalem and then finding him in the temple. Can you imagine the mixed emotions Mary and Joseph must have felt once they found him! The Holy Family is not just some untouchable ideal, but they were a real family with real concerns and lived through daily life themselves.

These are stories and situations that

Through the parents, the seeds of faith are planted and then carefully nurtured in children, so they may produce great fruit. Thus, the family is called the "domestic church" not only because it is called to be a model of the Church, but also the Church is strengthened and continues to grow and flourish by way of the family.

any of us who have the awesome vocation of raising a family in the world today can relate to. Yes, there are many struggles, sacrifices, and suffering involved in family life. But what the Holy Family reveals to us is that families are called to holiness. The everyday struggles and sacrifices will not go away, but families are called by Christ to live the ordinary experiences of life extraordinarily...that is through holiness.

The Holy Family inspires families to embrace married and family life and to live faithful to the Gospel, trusting in God's grace and providence. Believe me, raising a family in 2009 is one of the tallest orders God can ask of anyone, but we must be reminded that it is possible, but only through the grace of the sacrament of marriage through which God gives spouses all the graces they will ever need to live out Christ's will for their lives and for their families.

Families must also rely on the transforming grace and power of the Eucharist and the frequent reception of the sacrament of penance to help them in their growth in holiness as they journey together toward heaven. It is especially through this holy witness of Christian families that the world can be transformed from a culture of death to a true culture of life. Without holy families, both our culture and the Church will suffer.

The family from the very beginning of time has always been not only the source of human life, but also the source and nurturing of the divine life of faith. God has willed that Christian spouses be faithful witnesses of Christ and his love for the Church. It is within the family that the love of Christ is first witnessed to children. Through the parents, the seeds of faith are planted and then carefully nurtured in children, so they may produce great fruit. Thus, the family is called the "domestic church" not only because it is called to be a model of the Church, but also the Church is strengthened and continues to grow and flourish by way of the family.

Parents have a particular responsibility to bring children up in the faith. They are the first heralds of the Gospel, bringing to their children the light and life of Christ, therefore through the fam-

ily the Church becomes "incarnate" in society. As John Paul II states:

The Church thus finds in the family, born from the sacrament, the cradle and the setting in which she can enter the human generations, and where these in their turn can enter the Church.

— *On the Christian Family in the Modern World, Familiaris Consortio, 15.*

Thus, families are also indispensable in forming new and fruitful vocations in the Church. In reality, the recent vocations crisis in the Church is a crisis of the family. The decline in the traditional family and the breakdown in families through divorce and other cultural and moral factors have led to the rapid decrease in vocations. In many ways, the family is the first and original "seminary" in which the seeds of vocations are nourished and brought to fruition, especially through family prayer, catechesis, and involvement in parish life. The future of vocations in the Church rests squarely with the holiness of families today.

The family also has an indispensable role in society as the living witness of faith, hope, and charity in an often dark and hostile world. It is within holy families that children first learn the basic virtues of justice, charity, forgiveness, and generosity. It is within this framework that these virtues and lessons of life are first introduced, lived, and taught. Thus citizens of good will, working for the common good, are formed for society. Therefore, not only is the family the "domestic church," but it is also the "vital cell of society" on which civilization itself depends. As Pope John Paul II states:

Since the Creator of all things has established the conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society, the family is "the first and vital cell of society." The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life: It is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is

within the family that they find the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of the existence and development of society itself.

— *On the Christian Family in the Modern World, Familiaris Consortio, 42*

Families are also called through baptism to be the living witness of Christ and the Church to the secular world. They have a unique and indispensable role of witnessing and proclaiming the Gospel in their schools, workplaces, and even places of leisure. Through their words and example, Christian families truly become the leaven in the world, making the presence of Christ incarnate in even the most ordinary places of society and culture. By its very nature, the family is the first place of evangelization, not only within the Church, but also in society itself. As John Paul again states:

Animated in its own inner life by missionary zeal, the Church of the home is also called to be a luminous sign of the presence of Christ and of His love for those who are "far away," for families who do not yet believe and for those Christian families who no longer live in accordance with the faith that they once received. The Christian family is called to enlighten "by its example and its witness... those who seek the truth.

— *On the Christian Family in the Modern World, Familiaris Consortio, 54*

Therefore, as we continue to ponder the mystery of the saving power of Christ through his Incarnation, may our own families be inspired by the witness and example of the Holy Family and continue to grow in holiness to become in a unique and powerful way a "sacrament" of life and love bringing the light and love of Christ more powerfully into the world. This is indeed a tall order, but nothing is impossible through the grace of Christ and the Church, and the world indeed stands on the strength and holiness of families today.



Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master's degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have five children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, Christian, and Julia.

Ending Poverty

not the poor

By Tom Grenchik

As we begin a new year, Pope Benedict XVI challenges each of us to confront the issue of global poverty.

In his 2009 World Day of Peace Message, "Fighting Poverty to Build Peace," the Holy Father repeats the observations of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. "Our world," he wrote, "shows increasing evidence of another grave threat to peace: Many individuals and indeed whole peoples are living today in conditions of extreme poverty. The gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations. This is a problem which the conscience of humanity cannot ignore, since the conditions in which a great number of people are living are an insult to their innate dignity and as a result are a threat to the authentic and harmonious progress of the world community."

Pope Benedict then points to misguided ways that some powerful nations and organizations attempt to solve worldwide poverty. He states that: "Poverty is often considered a consequence of demographic change. For this reason, there are international campaigns afoot to reduce birth rates, sometimes using methods that respect neither the dignity of the woman, nor the right of parents to choose responsibly how many children to have; graver still, these methods often fail to respect even the right to life. The extermination of millions of unborn children, in the name of the fight against poverty, actually constitutes the destruction of the poorest of all human beings."

While this reproach is addressed to the entire world, it also poses a profound challenge to Americans as we prepare for a new administration and a new Congress. Will America regress to "extermi-

Currently, the Mexico City Policy prevents our taxes from funding non-governmental organizations that perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning abroad. We must urge President-elect Obama to not rescind the Mexico City Policy by executive order, as more than 60 pro-abortion groups are calling him to do.

nating millions of unborn children, in the name of the fight against poverty?" Tragically, there is already great pressure to do so.

Currently, the Mexico City Policy prevents our taxes from funding non-governmental organizations that perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning abroad.

We must urge President-elect Obama to not rescind the Mexico City Policy by executive order, as more than 60 pro-abortion groups are calling him to do.

They are also demanding that our new president restore funding to the United Nations Population Fund. Under the Kemp-Kasten Amendment, the president has the authority to deny funding to any organization that he determines is supporting or participating in a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. Since 1985, all presidents except President Clinton have invoked this policy to deny funding to the UN Population Fund for its support of China's coercive population control program.

We must urge President-elect Obama to not fund the UN Population Fund or any

program that "in the name of the fight against poverty, actually constitutes the destruction of the poorest of all human beings."

The Holy Father closes his message on peace by extending "to every disciple of Christ and to every person of good will a warm invitation to expand their hearts to meet the needs of the poor and to take whatever practical steps are possible in order to help them. The truth of the axiom cannot be refuted: 'to fight poverty is to build peace.'"

Let us pray for and encourage our nation's leaders to build peace by fighting poverty, while respecting the lives of the poorest, especially the child in the womb.



Tom Grenchik, is the executive director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). To learn more about the bishops' pro-life activities go to www.usccb.org/prolife. Prior to his appointment as director, Grenchik served as the founding director of the Pro-Life office of the Archdiocese of Washington.

With articles on facing pages in the Theresian magazine all these years, Kathy's always felt a special connection to Father Robert Wilson

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Once upon a time long ago, when my hair was growing long enough for a prince to climb up the tower on (and that never happened, I assure you), I wrote a story about nuns.

The story concerned habits and Latin and Vatican II and adaptation; not a bad story for a girl whose brain power mostly stuck with the question of which kind of electric curlers would hold a style better.

In the magazine article, I wrote that change was inevitable and acceptance was paramount. Now, after a lifetime of changes that were painful and met with reluctance, I wonder how I began so wise, and ended so puzzled.

The story was on pages 6 and 7 of the *Theresian* magazine, published by the Theresians of America, an organization that "fostered sisterhood vocations." It had been founded in my hometown, Pueblo, Colorado, by Msgr. Elwood C. Voss, who was superintendent of my high school.

Being a member of the first chapter of the Theresians, and published on pages 6 and 7 of their magazine seemed stellar to me. Basically I was allowed to say whatever I wanted to, with the bonus of having my photograph, long flowing hair and all, floating at the top of the page.

My mom was proud, and carried the story around with her, like it happened to be in her pocketbook when she got out money to pay for groceries. I was used to that because Uncle Charlie had done the same thing with my college newspapers, just in case anyone in the city might want to read one — anyone who hadn't already run into my mom. It was nice to have fans. Even when they looked just like you and had the same last name.

But today, this day, I am prouder of that magazine than I ever was then. You see, I wasn't the only person published in it. The person whose article ran on pages 4 and 5 of that same issue was a priest.

His story was headlined "Woman — Go Forth!" and addressed the needs of the church and women's impact on religion. He had dark hair, and, according to his bio, was "Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, Vicar for Religious, parish pastor of St. John's Church, and a member of the Board of Consultants for the Theresians of America."

His name was Father Robert Wilson.

Sometimes we get 15 minutes of fame; sometimes our

SEE HAMER, P. 22

For the first time in five years, people from throughout the Diocese rise early to honor

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Story and photos by
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

The diocesan celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe was set in a brilliant display of color, blended through a cross section of the people of the local church. It seemed to be a near perfect representation of the family of God.

Children, grandparents, parents, musicians, and dancers all had gathered at St. Patrick Cathedral before dawn Dec. 12, to celebrate the holy day for all of the Americas. All had come to praise God for the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and to commemorate that appearance to St. Juan Diego, a peasant, to whom she delivered her messages, and who left her image imprinted on his cloak.

They had, in fact, come in such numbers that shortly after 4 a.m., coveted parking spaces in downtown Fort Worth were already filled. Business was not as usual on this Friday workday; it was a fiesta!

The diocesan celebration, coordinated by Josefina Villarreal, administrative assistant at the Cathedral and Sister Alma de Jesus of Chihuahua, Mexico, was the first such liturgy to take place at the Cathedral, previous years' having been observed at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

In the program for the event, Cathedral Rector Father Richard Flores welcomed the assembly, writing, "Today, if we were in Mexico City, we would be privileged to witness a wave of humanity making its way to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Many would be approaching the shrine on their knees as a sign of homage and veneration."

The Fort Worth event began inside the church at 5 a.m., with Las Mañanitas, an hour-long, early-morning serenade by Mariachi Aguilas de Mexico. The 10-piece ensemble of string and brass instrumentalists stood at the front of

the cathedral sacristy, facing away from the people, reverently looking toward the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as they performed traditional music directly to her.

As harmoniously as the music was presented, it became not just a performance, but respectful praise, emanating from the instruments, but even more intensely from the faces of the musicians.

During the hour of prelude music, a young man dressed as Juan Diego, to whom the Blessed Mother appeared in 1531, reenacted the apparitions with Fr. Flores and Bishop Kevin Vann, who celebrated the Mass.

The liturgy itself began at 6 a.m., with the full force of the celebration processing up the center aisle, dancing forward, some in traditional folkloric gowns, with huge circular skirts in brilliant hues, some in the attire of indigenous Native Americans, playing drums and maracas.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, as Fr. Flores described in the program, was "a young woman in her teens, with black hair, dark eyes and brown skin." When she appeared to Juan Diego, at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of Mexico City, she instructed him to ask the bishop to build a temple on the site, then she left an image of herself imprinted on his tilma, a poor quality cactus-cloth, which has not deteriorated some 477 years later.

He said she represents the faith in her Son that knows no frontiers or boundaries, and that "all indeed are welcome under her mantle, and welcome here! The opening for the Gospel that she became for Juan Diego and the people of Mexico so many

years ago, is truly a gift now for all of the Americas and the entire Church!"

Looking around the Cathedral, where a cross section of the faithful of all ages sat, some with babies cradled in blankets, Bishop Vann said in his own life, he has found Our Lady of Guadalupe to be everywhere.

"It never fails," he told the people, "that in moments of concern or reflection, or of challenge, or when I am walking, I see her image. This is both in moments good and difficult. I look up and see her looking at me, almost as if she was speaking the words to me that she spoke to Juan Diego so long ago. What great consolation this is to me as it gently reminds me of her care and points me back to her Son."

In like spirit, the program for the feast day Mass concluded with a quote taken from the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City: *¿No estoy yo aquí que soy tu madre? ¿No estás bajo mi sombra y resguardo? ¿No soy yo tu salud? ¿No estás por ventura en mi regazo? ¿Qué más has de menester?*

[Am I not here, I, who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Is it not I that am your source of contentment? Are you not cradled in my mantle? Cuddled in the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else for you to need?]



RIGHT: Diana Medrano, a member of the Ballet Folklórico de Fort Worth, dances during the offertory procession.

BELOW: Miguel Hernandez and Priscilla Martinez, colorfully dressed, participated in the procession at the beginning of the 6 a.m. liturgy.

BELOW: Members of the Mariachi Aguilas de Mexico serenade the Virgin with the traditional "Mañanitas."



ABOVE: Knights of Columbus processed down the aisle of the cathedral during the entrance procession, led by Father Joseph Mary Deane, CFR, (left) and by Father Joy Joseph, TOR.



RIGHT: Bishop Vann accepts a serape blanket and rebozo from Mario Garcia (left) and Jaeklyn Montelongo, dancers with the Ballet Folklórico de Fort Worth.



Members of the Ballet Folklórico of Fort Worth bow during the entrance procession and are followed by members of the Herencia Mexicana Charros group.



Matachines Danza Tocoaleche enter the cathedral to the beat of a large drum.



Enjoying the mariachi singers on her feast day, as the singers serenade the Virgen de Guadalupe, is Fr. Flores' mother, Guadalupe Flores (far right), who is named after Our Lady of Guadalupe.



Members of the Mariachi Aguilas de Mexico play the "Misa Latinoamericana."



Performing the "Danza de Ofertorio" as they present gifts from the life of the pueblo are Mari Lopez (left) and Patty Rategin.



Bishop Vann and Cathedral Rector Father Richard Flores participate in a re-enactment of St. Juan Diego's presentation of the December roses and the miraculous image imprinted on his tilma.



Matachines with the "Danza Tocoaleche" process to the altar at the beginning of the liturgy.

Fr. Wilson's legacy continues in the life of the local Church



Bishop Kevin Vann and Fr. Robert Wilson begin Holy Redeemer's groundbreaking service March 10, 2008 by processing down what will soon become the center aisle of the church's new building. (photo by Kristin Zschiesche).



Lisa Abbett and daughter Darby view architectural renderings of Holy Redeemer's new church at the groundbreaking. (photo by Kristin Zschiesche).



his graduate degree in psychology in 1964 and his doctoral degree in educational psychology in 1974, believed in the value of professional counseling and, while serving as pastor of St. John the Apostle Church, made sure that counseling services were available through the parish, said Luby.

"When you live in a place with a distinct landmark — like a mountain, or a body of water — you can always orient yourself by that landmark," he added. "He has been an important part of my life, in the lives of my family members, for so long. Now, we feel the absence of that landmark. We will miss him."

Memorial gifts in honor of Fr. Wilson can be sent to the Rev. Robert W. Wilson Seminary Fund, 800 W. Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108.

Left: Fr. Wilson delivers a vivid version of his homily to the children of Holy Redeemer Church on the day it was announced that East Parker County Catholic Community had become Holy Redeemer Church. (Photo by Jeff Hensley)

FROM PAGE 24
Wilson's "rare combination of strength and kindness," and of his commitment to Centering Prayer, a form of contemplative prayer with a strong emphasis upon interior silence.

When traveling with friends and family members to various parts of the world, Fr. Wilson was known for seeking out small, quiet churches where he could reflect and pray at length, said Leighton. "He was a man at peace with the world, with himself, and with his God. The faithful servant, the messenger, he has now returned home," said Leighton. "We give thanks to God for sending him to us."

Other words of tribute were offered by Judie and Don Woodall of Holy Redeemer Church. Judie Woodall serves as pastoral assistant for the parish, and worked closely with Fr. Wilson in planning for the establishment of the parish, which was officially founded in 2001.



Fr. Mel Bessellieu and Fr. Wilson share a laugh as they process in for the deacon ordination Mass in 2003, along with other priests of the diocese.

"He was most passionate about his vocation to the priesthood," she said, explaining that Fr. Wilson spent hours studying Scripture and working with a group of parishioners each week to prepare his homilies. Noting his leadership in establishing the diocesan Mission Council and outreach to the Diocese of Juticalpa, Honduras, Woodall described the connection between Holy Redeemer parishioners and members of their sister parish, Immaculate Conception, in Juticalpa.

"Fr. Bob brought so many people to Honduras," she said. "It was about building relationships, making spiritual connections. We have parishioners here who have godchildren in Honduras — and it's all because of Fr. Bob."

Fr. Wilson, known as "Uncle Bob" to his niece, Dana Pilson Childs, and his nephew, Corey Pilson, served as a surrogate parent to the two young adult children of his sister, Maralynne Wilson Pilson, after her death several years ago, said Dana Childs, in an emotional tribute to her beloved uncle.

"He was always there for me, and for my brother," she said. "I can never fully express the love, admiration, and respect that I have for him."

Among those attending the vigil service were Gail Schatzman, founder and director of the Catholic Renewal Center in Fort Worth. The center, the first retreat facility in the United States to be run by members of the laity, was established in 1972 with the help of Fr. Wilson. Schatzman had known and worked with him since 1966 when she was a parishioner at St. Cecilia Church in Dallas and he was a priest in residence there, she said.

"We worked together on a youth program called 'The Happening,' out of a building on the University of Dallas campus," said Schatzman. "We expanded into programs for the laity at the Renewal Center. [The center] wouldn't have existed without him. It was because of him that I went back to school and got my master's degree in counseling."

Dr. Dan Luby, STD, who holds the Tschoepe Chair of Homiletics at the School of Ministry at the University of Dallas, worked with Fr. Wilson for nearly 40 years. During those years, Luby served in continuing education and adult formation within the Diocese of Fort Worth and as the diocesan director of Christian Formation.

"Fr. Wilson had a vision about engagement with the mission of the church that was very expansive, very generous," said Luby. Fr. Wilson, who earned



Fr. Wilson blesses the people of Holy Redeemer Church Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001, the day its establishment as a parish was announced. (Photo by Jeff Hensley)



Fr. Wilson and Pastoral Assistant Judie Woodall hold the church document proclaiming the creation of Holy Redeemer Parish. (Photo by Laurie Sheridan)

In this 1999 photo, Fr. Wilson (at right) poses before a concrete block house being built to replace housing lost in Hurricane Mitch, the spur for the partnering of our diocese with the Honduran Diocese of Juticalpa. (L. to R.) Ralph McCloud, then-director of social justice ministries, Bishop Joseph Delaney, second bishop of Fort Worth, and Juticalpa Bishop Maurus Muldoon, OFM.



Fr. Robert Wilson's well-lived life is remembered fondly at his funeral at St. Patrick Cathedral

By Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

Seventy-three priests and four bishops processed into St. Patrick Cathedral Dec. 29, offering a massive demonstration of respect for Father Robert Wilson, who had died four days earlier, leaving a painful vacancy in their ranks.

The clergy were gathered to concelebrate a Mass of Christian Burial for Fr. Wilson, whose death Christmas Day was heartbreaking for his family and the diocesan family, but had symbolic relevance, and was, as Bishop Kevin Vann said in his remarks, "A proclamation of faith in eternal life."

"Just think," he said to the packed sanctuary gathered from the area, the state, and even from outside the U.S., "does not the wood of the manger point to the wood of the cross, and the cross lead beyond that to the resurrection?"

"Fr. Robert Wilson was allowed to go to the Lord on Christmas Day," Bishop Vann said. "For all of us it's a powerful reminder, in the midst of grief, of proclaiming the Gospel, which is always to be lived to eternal life with Christ in our view."

Bishop Vann was joined by three other bishops who concelebrated Mass for their good friend. Concelebrating were Bishop John McCarthy, retired bishop of Austin; Bishop William Dendinger, of Grand Island, Nebraska, a longtime "ski buddy;" and Bishop Maurus Muldoon, OFM, of the Diocese of Juticalpa, Honduras.

Fr. Wilson's friendship with Bishop Muldoon was based on his instrumental role in helping establish the diocese's extensive mission outreach to the Diocese of Juticalpa and through the connection of Immaculate Conception Parish in Juticalpa, with their sister parish, Holy Redeemer in Aledo, where Fr. Wilson, as pastor, was overseeing completion of their first sanctuary.

"Of all his ministries through the years," Bishop Vann said, "I think he was most grateful and proud of this part of his life, not only being able to build a new parish ... but helping bring together a new family of God, Holy Redeemer."

The bishop commended Fr. Wilson's work in Honduras, saying he made faith in the Gospels

"Fr. Robert Wilson was allowed to go to the Lord on Christmas Day. For all of us it's a powerful reminder, in the midst of grief, of proclaiming the Gospel, which is always to be lived to eternal life with Christ in our view."

— Bishop Kevin Vann in remarks at Fr. Wilson's Mass of Christian Burial

an integral element in mission work. "These trips," he said, "were...about helping strengthen and build another local church, another family of God, connected with us here in North Texas."

Significant to the people of Holy Redeemer was Fr. Wilson's involvement in building their church, including finishing touches, said art and environment committee member Carolyn Pass. Fr. Wilson worked on designing the stations and tabernacle, which would be carved from Honduran mahogany.

"On Fr. Bob's last trip to Honduras, just a few weeks ago," Pass said, "he worked on sketches all the way to the woodcarver's remote studio. The stations will be one of the most cherished pieces of art our parish will proudly display — designed by Fr. Bob and carved in a country he dearly loved."

Holy Redeemer's new sanctuary is scheduled for dedication April 25.

"I already have the invitation for his dedication," said Monsignor John F. Meyers, SAC, in his homily at the funeral Mass, "I received it in the mail just a few days before he died."

"He was always considerate and thoughtful," Msgr. Meyers said, speaking extemporaneously, casually reflecting about

the friend he knew so well. He mentioned the long list of Fr. Wilson's assignments, adding wryly, "He also was involved in lots of other things," then naming Fr. Wilson's doctoral degree, educational and diocesan positions, as well as his involvement in Centering Prayer.

"All this was in his spare time," Msgr. Meyers said slowly, emphasizing each word.

"And then, of course, he was chancellor of the diocese for [over 20 years], and he worked together with Father Joe Schumacher all that time," Msgr. Meyers said.

Holy Redeemer parishioner and diaconate candidate Scott France expressed profound grief at Fr. Wilson's death, calling him the second most important person in his life, "next to my father."

Fr. Wilson was instrumental in France's vocation. It was he who suggested, "I want you to go to the Light of Christ Institute," France recalled. "Fr. Bob could recognize things in people and get them involved when they had no inkling they wanted to be involved," he said.

"Some of us skied, but Bob didn't," Msgr. Meyers said of the "ski buddies." "He took skiing lessons, somewhere in Fort Worth in the summertime ... But then the night before he was to get on a plane to come to Colorado where we were, would you believe he had gone this far, and slipped on a little bit of ice and broke his wrist."

"When he called, we said, 'We're sorry about your wrist, but you still have to come because we need a fourth for bridge.'

"I don't know what you thought when you saw Bob lying there in the coffin," Msgr. Meyers said, fondly. "But I thought he had just enough of a curve on his lips that he was sort of saying to all of us, 'I've done it; I've been there; I have succeeded.'"

"We all loved Bob," the homilist concluded, "and now if we really want to be faithful to him, you might well know that he would like you to do something — basically things he has already shown us. He wants us to pray and worship the Father. He wants us to continue our education. He wants us to promote vocations, and he wants us to respond to the needs of others regardless of what country they happen to be in."

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Survey finds most people support some restrictions on abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A new online survey conducted for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops finds a majority of participants support at least some restrictions on abortion. The survey conducted online Dec. 10-12 asked 2,341 people about the circumstances under which they would favor or oppose legal abortion and about what kind of regulations of abortion they would support or oppose. Among its findings were that 78 percent favor requiring abortions be performed only by licensed physicians and that 72 percent favor requiring women seeking abortions be told of the potential physical and psychological risks and about alternatives such as adoption. It found 11 percent think abortion should be illegal in all circumstances and 38 percent said it should be legal only under limited circumstances, such as in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother. Forty-two percent said abortion should be legal for any reason. The USCCB news release noted that Harris Interactive, which fielded the study for the USCCB, said the data was weighted using a propensity scoring system to be representative of the total U.S. population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be on the Internet. Harris said no estimates of sampling error could be calculated, according to the USCCB release.

Cardinal Dulles remembered as 'priest's priest' at New York funeral

NEW YORK (CNS) — Cardinal Avery Dulles was remembered as a theologian, mentor, counselor, and "a priest's priest" at his funeral Dec. 18 at St. Patrick Cathedral in New York. At the request of Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Five other cardinals, 20 archbishops and bishops, and more than 125 priests concelebrated. Among the mourners were Archbishop Demetrios, primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, and representatives of ecumenical organizations. Cardinal Dulles died Dec. 12 at the age of 90. Since 1988, he had been a professor of religion and society at Jesuit-run Fordham University in New York. In 2001, the Jesuit priest was the first American to be named a cardinal without first being a bishop. Cardinal Egan, who was elevated by Pope John Paul II at the same consistory, said Cardinal Dulles' life story mixed triumph with suffering.

Coalition pushes debt relief for poor countries as economic stimulus

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With all that President-elect Barack Obama has facing his new administration regarding the economy, a coalition of religious, human rights, and labor advocates hopes that one concern won't be relegated to the bottom of the list: debt relief for the world's poorest countries. The Jubilee USA Network recognizes that debt relief's profile has declined dramatically from its high point just a few years ago. But the 80 organizations that make up the network know just as well that their advocacy work has kept the issue in front of Congress, the Bush administration, and the World Bank, if not in the headlines. The coalition takes its name from the Jewish tradition of forgiving debt every 50 years, as told in Chapter 25, Verse 10, of the Book of Leviticus: "This 50th year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you." Neil Watkins, Jubilee USA's national coordinator, said the network will be encouraging U.S. officials in the new administration and in Congress to continue their commitments to poor countries at a time when funds for international aid may almost disappear.

Scripture Readings



January 18, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) 1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10
- 2) 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
Gospel) John 1:35-42

By Jean Denton

I haven't seen the current movie, "Yes Man," but I know from the ads what the story line is: A man with a fundamental attitude of reticence turns down every offer or invitation he ever gets. But when he realizes this has caused him to miss a wealth of opportunities and experiences in life, he decides to make a radical change: to say "yes" to every possibility.

My friend Eric is that kind of yes man, saying yes to every request, every opportunity. He's also the kind of yes man that Samuel was in this week's first reading. Eric said yes to the Lord's calling when he became a permanent deacon. Once ordained, he continued to say yes to every chance to be God's servant.

He and his wife have four children and an active family life while also maintaining a thriving dental practice. His friends and parishioners know he's admired by his patients, but we wonder just when he ever sees them. Because it

"The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, 'Here I am.'"

— 1 Samuel 3:4

seems that he's always visiting a nursing home or hospital, teaching a class, working on multiple marriage cases for the diocesan tribunal, or studying Scripture and the lives of the saints, or officiating at a funeral or counseling confirmation candidates. He never turns down an opportunity to serve.

I've heard other friends say that Eric sleeps only two or three hours a night, getting up at 4 a.m. to pray. That may be an exaggeration to describe his seemingly bottomless well of enthusiasm, but it is so Samuel-like that Eric would rise in the dark to hear his Lord speak to him — and to listen. Knowing that, one realizes the source of his energy and commitment to constantly minister to God's people.

As a result, Eric is a model servant to his com-



munity. His positive yes-man, speak-Lord-your-servant-is-listening attitude holds sway as he ministers with vigor and strength. Consequently, like Samuel, the words he speaks are never "without effect" among those he serves.

When we hear God's voice, Eli tells us, we are to respond with openness and willingness to serve him. Such self-offering will allow God to work through us — and promises transformation.

QUESTIONS:

When was a recent occasion that you said yes to a specific opportunity to serve God? How did your openness to hear him speak through your action?

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Pope says Christians must resolve to trust God and help others in 2009

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christians should not fear what the continuing financial crisis will bring in 2009, but they should trust in God and resolve to help one another in the new year, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Leading an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica Dec. 31 to thank God for his blessings in 2008, the pope said people must be grateful first of all for the gift of time, which is a "precious opportunity for doing good."

The prayer service ended with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the singing of "Te Deum," a traditional hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the gift of salvation in Christ.

"In our days, marked by uncertainty and concern for the future, it is necessary to experience the living presence of Christ," the pope said.

"This year closes with the awareness of a growing social and economic crisis, which now involves the whole world; it is a crisis that requires of everyone more moderation and solidarity, especially to help people and



families in greater difficulty," he said.

Catholic parishes, organizations and aid agencies already are

preparing to help record numbers of people in the coming year, the pope said, "but the collaboration of everyone is necessary."

Pope Benedict XVI prays at the Nativity in St. Peter's Square following an evening prayer service Dec. 31.

At the service in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope thanked God for his blessings in 2008. (CNS photo/Emanuela De Meo, Catholic Press Photo)

"Even if on the horizon more than a few clouds are gathering over our future, we must not be afraid," Pope Benedict said.

"Our greatest hope as believers is eternal life in the company of Christ and the entire family of God," he said. "This great hope gives us the strength to face and overcome the difficulties of life in this world."

Pope Benedict asked the young adults present to "respond quickly" if God calls them to church work and to live lives

that witness to the values of the Gospel.

The world needs people who are not focused only on their own needs and desires, "because, as I said on Christmas Day, if people look only to their own interests, our world will certainly fall apart," he said.

On the eve of the feast honoring Mary, Mother of God, the pope said Catholics were placing in Mary's hands "the expectations and hopes as well as the fears and difficulties that dwell in our hearts as we bid farewell to 2008 and prepare to welcome 2009."

Before going to visit the Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square, the pope told people at the prayer service that, while "we stop to contemplate the baby Jesus, our gaze cannot help but turn with recognition toward his mother, who with her 'yes' made the gift of redemption possible."

Mary made it possible for the Word of God to be born on earth, to live among us, and to show us that our final destiny is to be with God in heaven, the pope said.

"It is Mary, the star of hope, who leads us to him," the pope said.

Scripture Readings



January 25, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle.

Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Acts 22:3-16
Psalm 117:1bc, 2
- 2) 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Gospel) Mark 16:15-18

By Jeff Hedglen

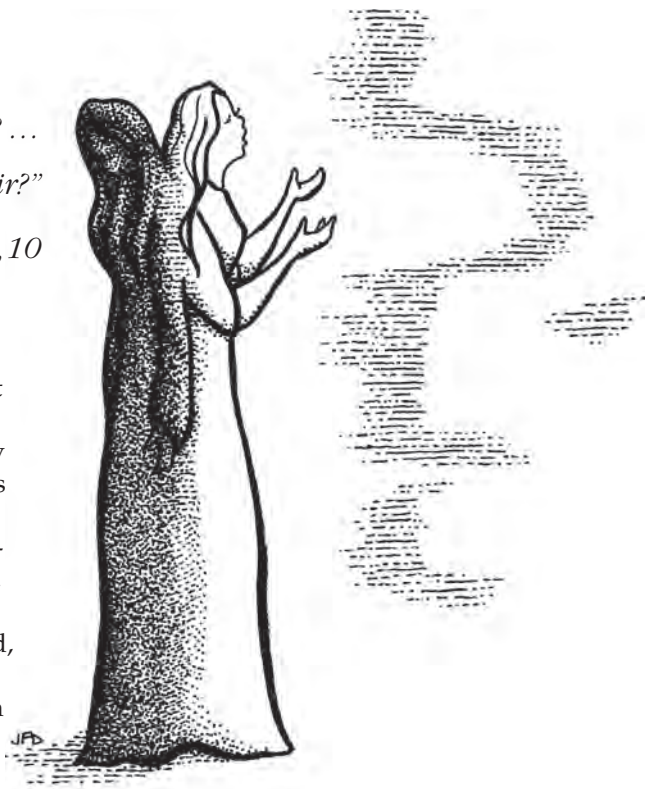
My wife began her journey back to the Lord in 1988 at an air show at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, four years before I met her. Her story is tragic and miraculous. She had been living a fairly worldly life, doing some things that should have had her knocking at the door of the confessional, but in truth she had not darkened the door of a church for almost 10 years.

At that air show, two Italian jets, in a maneuver overhead, accidentally clipped wings and sent burning jet fuel and plane parts raining down on the crowd. On either side of her people were killed instantly. She ran for her life.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, she reflected on her life, trying to find an answer to why she, with the way she had been living, had survived. She had not spoken to God in years, and all she could think of to say was: "God, are you out

**“Who are you, sir? ...
What shall I do, sir?”**

— Acts 22:8,10



there? If you exist, then you have to tell me what to do.”

This Sunday’s readings bring us another story with similar words. St. Paul’s first words to Jesus were “Who are you, sir?” and “What shall I do, sir?” In Acts we learn that on the road to Damascus, where he was going to persecute Christians, St. Paul heard a voice calling out from a bright light, “Why are you persecuting me?” He replied, “Who are you, sir?” Then he heard, “I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.” Upon hearing this Paul said: “What shall I do, sir?”

St. Paul had been persecuting Jesus and the early church. His encounter with Jesus was his moment of conversion. My wife says that she was persecuting Jesus every day with her choices. The shock of surviving the air show tragedy propelled her to her conversion.

Conversion is the starting point of faith.

Whether our turning to Jesus was dramatic or gradual, this feast of the conversion of St. Paul is a good time to remember why it is we believe. It is never too late — or too often — to ask: Who are you, sir? What shall I do, sir?

QUESTIONS:

What is your conversion story? Who are the people who have helped you grow in faith?

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Staying **Positive**, easier resolved than done

By Jeff Hedglen

My wife and I made a fantastic, heart-felt, faith-filled, and even a bit inspiring New Year’s Resolution and pretty much blew it on Jan.1. What is it about resolutions that seem so doable right up to the moment it’s time to put more than resolve behind the idea?

Our resolution is to spend 2009 doing our best to embody the words of St. Paul in Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

When we made up our minds to attempt this, I thought it would be a breeze. Who doesn’t like to think about things that are true, lovely, gracious, and honorable? But as the calendar turned, we awoke to a New Year’s Day that was filled with negative thinking,

If the process of bringing a resolution to fruition was not hard enough, the tricky part is that the most important ingredient, while free, is not in our control. Grace is freely given from God, but there is no convenience store to buy it from or drive-through window to pick it up from.

depressed moods, lethargic activity, and general despondency.

Back before the ball dropped, I shared my resolution with some friends. One of them brought a challenge back. She wanted to know what practical steps I was going to take to really live this way. I think this question holds a key to making any resolution more achievable. If we are serious about making a change of any kind, having a plan to go along with the resolve is a must.

So, after some thought I have come up with a couple of practical steps to achieve my resolution. I will read and meditate on the verse daily. To make this easier I made a picture frame with the verse in it to place on my desk. I will take a short two-minute break many times a day to think about the verse. In addition to this I will choose one part of the verse to focus on each day.

Along with a plan, there are two other ingredients to turn a well-meaning pledge for

change into true personal transformation. The first is all up to us. We have to actually do what we plan to do. Just like a well thought out resolution is not very likely to succeed without a plan, so too a finely laid out plan is useless unless we put it into action.

But that is not the end of the resolution realization process. The final step is grace from God. Willpower alone can achieve some success, but when we add the grace of God to the action we take, we can go farther and deeper. This is based in a truth that grace builds on nature. Our natural effort, when it is infused with the grace of God, becomes supernatural effort.

If the process of bringing a resolution to fruition was not hard enough, the tricky part is that the most important ingredient, while free, is not in our control. Grace is freely given from God, but there is no convenience store to buy it from or drive-through window to pick it up from.

Trying to explain how grace

works is like trying to decide which came first, the chicken or the egg? St. Augustine put it this way: “Indeed we also work, but we are only collaborating with God who works, for his mercy has gone before us. It has gone before us so that we may be healed, and follows us so that once healed, we may be given life; it goes before us so that we may be called, and follows us so that we may be glorified; it goes before us so that we may live devoutly, and follows us so that we may always live with God: for without him we can do nothing.”

Thus, before I am able to live out my resolution, I must realize that it is in God that I live and move and have my being. Once I realize this, which in itself is a grace, I am opened to receive the grace I need to fulfill my New Year’s resolution. Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw.org.

Al llegar a la culminación de nuestra época navideña, debemos considerar asuntos de inmigración a la luz del evangelio

Estimados hermanos y hermanas en el Señor,

Comenzamos el año nuevo con una continuación de nuestra celebración de la época de Navidad. Mientras que el calendario litúrgico actual oficialmente trae cierra a la época de la Navidad con la celebración de la fiesta del bautismo del Señor, el 11 de enero, no ha sido siempre así.

Muchos católicos alrededor del mundo han celebrado 40 días de Navidad y finalizaban la época navideña el 2 de febrero, la fiesta de la Presentación del niño Jesús en el templo, también conocida como la fiesta de la candelaria, o la fiesta de la Purificación de la santísima Virgen María. Incluso, es en este día, en la Ciudad del Vaticano, después de las celebraciones del 2 de febrero, se baja la escena del pesebre de la plaza central.

Es en este espíritu que invito a todos los católicos a que continúen reflexionando y meditando en los maravillosos misterios de la época de la Navidad que todavía continúa.

Durante estos días finales de la época de la Navidad concentramos nuestras reflexiones no tanto en el nacimiento de Jesús sino en su infancia. Un misterio dominante de la infancia de Jesús que celebramos es la Epifanía. La palabra "Epifanía" es de la lengua griega y significa manifestación. Así, el amor de Dios se demuestra o se manifiesta al mundo entero — simbolizado por los reyes magos — en la persona del niño Jesucristo. En *El catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, el párrafo 528 nos ofrece un resumen hermoso de esta celebración.

La Epifanía es la manifestación de Jesús como Mesías de Israel, Hijo de Dios y Salvador del mundo. Con el bautismo de Jesús en el Jordán y las bodas de Caná, la Epifanía celebra la adoración de Jesús por unos "magos" venidos de Oriente. En estos "magos", representantes de religiones paganas de pueblos vecinos, el Evangelio ve las primicias de las naciones que acogen, por la Encarnación, la buena nueva de la salvación. La llegada de los magos a Jerusalén para "rendir



Monsieur Kevin W. Vann

Los Reyes Magos son también un ejemplo típico de aquellos que cruzan fronteras y viajan de un país a otro. El hecho de que Jesús se manifestara a estos sabios de oriente nos recuerda de la universalidad del amor y la redención de Dios. También nos recuerda que todos somos hijos e hijas del mismo Dios y que la salvación unificadora y vivificante del Hijo Encarnado de Dios es ofrecida a todos, sin importar origen nacional. Este lazo de gracia, esta *communio* que tenemos en, con, y por Jesucristo es más fuerte, y de más valor, que los lazos que tenemos por nacionalidad o aún de sangre.

homenaje al rey de los Judíos" muestra que buscan en Israel, a la luz mesiánica de la estrella de David, al quien será el rey de las naciones. Su venida significa que los gentiles no pueden descubrir a Jesús y adorarlo como Hijo de Dios y Salvador del mundo sino volviéndose hacia los judíos y recibiendo de ellos su promesa mesiánica tal como está contenida en el Antiguo Testamento. La Epifanía manifiesta que "la multitud de los gentiles entra en la familia de los patriarcas" y adquiere la "israelítica dignitas".

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Después de la visita de los Magos de oriente, que habían viajado de diversas tierras lejanas, la sagrada familia deja la comodidad de su propia nación y también viaja en busca de refugio en la tierra de Egipto; hoy serían considerados como inmigrantes o refugiados políticos.

Es con respecto a esto que la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos celebrará *La semana nacional de la migración* a partir del 4 de enero, Epi-

fanía, al 10 de enero.

La Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos tiene una larga historia de un activo ministerio pastoral y social para inmigrantes de todas las naciones. La gran mayoría de nosotros venimos de familias inmigrantes, yo mismo incluido. La Iglesia Católica también ha estado activamente envuelta en la promoción de una reforma de las leyes migratorias en los Estados Unidos. En reconocimiento de este hecho, la agencia de prensa FIDES, un instrumento de *La congregación para la evangelización de los pueblos* localizada en el Vaticano, publicó este pasado 29 de noviembre, un dossier sobre *La cuestión de la inmigración en los Estados Unidos de América*. Le ofrezco una pequeña porción de las observaciones preliminares del dossier.

Con respecto a medidas más duras tomadas en años recientes para regular la inmigración, un caso emblemático es la situación en la frontera de E.E.U.U.— México, donde las últimas estrategias de encierro culminaron en la aprobación del Congreso de los E.E.U.U. de una propuesta para construir una pared de 700 millas de larga en la frontera. LA CONFERENCIA DE OBISPOS CATÓLICOS de los Estados Unidos, junto con toda la comunidad católica local, ha condenado firmemente la ineficacia y la violencia de estas medidas. Por muchos años los obispos católicos de América han luchado vigorosamente por los inmigrantes y contra los sistemas de represión, envueltos activamente en promover la reforma migratoria que anima la legalidad y respeto por los derechos humanos.

La inmigración se categoriza a menudo como tema político. En reali-

dad esto es verdaderamente un tema ligado a nuestra fe. Estos últimos días de la época donde celebramos el nacimiento de Cristo nos ayudan a considerar la dimensión de la fe sobre esta realidad. ¿Vemos a cada inmigrante como nuestro hermano y hermana en Cristo? ¿Vemos a Cristo en cada inmigrante? ¿Cómo fueron recibidos nuestros propios antepasados en este país?

¿Como discípulos de Cristo, limitamos nuestro involucramiento con todos los inmigrantes solamente a sus necesidades sociales o políticas, o también compartimos la buena noticia de Jesucristo con ellos? Esto no es una pregunta para seleccionar una u otra opción; tenemos que hacer ambas, y debemos tener cuidado en nunca abandonar cualquiera de ellas. Nuestro santo padre, el Papa Benedicto XVI, en su mensaje para la 95ª *Jornada mundial del emigrante y del refugiado*, que también se celebra este mes, nos recordó cómo San Pablo es un gran ejemplo de un discípulo que evangelizó a gentiles inmigrantes por medio de su vida y su palabra. El Papa Benedicto nos recuerda que...

También en la actualidad, en la era de la globalización, esta es la misión de la Iglesia y de todos los bautizados, una misión que con atenta solicitud pastoral se dirige también al variado universo de los emigrantes —estudiantes fuera de su país, inmigrantes, refugiados, prófugos, desplazados—, incluyendo los que son víctimas de las esclavitudes modernas, como por ejemplo en la trata de seres humanos. También hoy es preciso proponer el mensaje de la salvación con la misma actitud del apóstol de los gentiles, teniendo en cuenta las diversas situaciones sociales y culturales, y las dificultades particulares de cada uno como consecuencia de su condición de emigrante e itinerante.

Al acercarnos al final de la época navideña, que veamos en la sagrada familia — en su viaje a Egipto, el mejor ejemplo de la familia inmigrante, y que veamos también a Cristo en cada inmigrante que ha venido a vivir entre nosotros.

Les deseo a todos un nuevo año lleno de bendiciones para todos. Gracias por su testimonio de fe, y que ese testimonio le manifieste a los demás el amor que ustedes tienen por toda la familia de Dios.

Dios los bendiga siempre.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+Monsieur Kevin W. Vann
Obispo de Fort Worth



El obispo Vann y el rector de la catedral, el padre Richard Flores, participan en una recreación teatral de la presentación de Juan Diego al mostrar unas rosas en diciembre y la imagen milagrosa de la santa Madre sellada en su tilma.



El obispo Vann acepta un sarape y un rebozo de Mario García (a la izquierda) y Jaeklyn Montelongo, bailarines del Ballet folclórico de Fort Worth.



Diana Medrano, del Ballet folclórico de Fort Worth, baila durante la procesión del ofertorio.



Miembro del mariachi Águilas de México

Las mañanitas y una Misa especial en la catedral de San Patricio celebran la fiesta de

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Reportaje y fotos por
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Corresponsal

La celebración diocesana de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se llevó a cabo con la brillante y colorida participación de clero y feligreses, representando la diversidad de la iglesia local. Tanto así que parecía un retablo casi perfecto de la familia de Dios.

Niños, abuelos, padres, músicos y bailadores se reunieron todos en la catedral de San Patricio (St. Patrick's Cathedral) la madrugada del 12 de diciembre para celebrar este día festivo en todas las Américas. Todos habían llegado para alabar al Señor por la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en el monte de Tepeyac a San Juan Diego, a quien le dio sus mensajes, dejando su imagen sellada en la tilma del campesino.

De hecho, los feligreses llegaron a la catedral en tal número que un poco después de las 4 de la mañana el estacionamiento más popular del centro de Fort Worth ya estaba lleno. Este día laboral no se presentaba como cualquier viernes ordinario: ¡era día de fiesta!

La celebración diocesana fue la primera celebrada en la catedral, ya que en años pasados se había observado este día en el centro de convenciones de Fort

Worth. El rector de la catedral — el padre Richard Flores — le dio la bienvenida a los feligreses en el programa para dicho evento de esta manera: “Hoy día, si estuviéramos en la ciudad de México, tendríamos el privilegio de ser testigos de la llegada del pueblo en oleadas a la basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; veríamos a muchos creyentes acercarse al santuario caminando de rodillas, como símbolo de homenaje y veneración a la Guadalupe”.

El evento en Fort Worth comenzó dentro de la iglesia a las 5 A.M. con *Las mañanitas* — una serenata de una hora al amanecer — cantadas por el mariachi *Águilas de México*. El mariachi — un conjunto de 10 músicos con instrumentos de cuerda y de viento — estaba parado frente a la sacristía de la catedral, apartado del público, mirando con veneración a la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, y tocando su música tradicional directamente para ella.

La música — magistralmente interpretada por el Mariachi — trascendía su interpretación para convertirse en alabanza respetuosa a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, especialmente en los rostros mismos de los músicos.

Durante el prelude de una hora de música, un joven vestido como San Juan Diego, a quien se le apareció nuestra santa Madre en 1531, recreó las apariciones con el padre Flores y el obispo Kevin Vann, quienes celebraron la misa.

La liturgia en sí comenzó a las 6 de la mañana, con una marcha de celebrantes por la nave central, bailando hacia delante. Algunos vestían trajes folclóricos tradicionales, con grandes faldas circulares de colores brillantes, mientras otros vestían atuendos típicos de los indígenas de

América, tocando tambores y maracas.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, como el padre Flores la describió en el programa, era “una joven mujer en plena adolescencia, una morena de pelo negro y ojos oscuros”. Cuando se apareció a Juan Diego en Tepeyac, una colina al noroeste de la ciudad de México, le pidió que le preguntara al obispo que le construyera un templo en ese lugar. Luego le dejó su imagen sellada en la tilma del campesino — una tela de pobre calidad hecha de cactus. Hoy en día todavía no se ha deteriorado, aunque ya han pasado 477 años del hecho.

En la famosa imagen de la tilma de San Juan Diego que todos conocemos — el padre Flores describe — “Su cabeza está doblada ligeramente hacia la izquierda, si se mira la línea del centro de la costura. Tiene puesta una borla — banda de maternidad — mostrando que está esperando un hijo”.

La aparición, y la historia contada de nuevo por Juan Diego — que tenía 57 años en ese entonces — fue responsable por la conversión de literalmente millones de indígenas en todas las Américas. Su devoción ha continuado creciendo, y la nueva basílica es uno de los lugares sagrados más reverenciados en las Américas. Juan Diego fue canonizado el verano del 2002.

En su sermón durante la misa de celebración, el obispo Vann dijo que las apariencias de nuestra santísima Madre a Juan Diego se habían convertido en un mensaje de Cristo, no solamente para los indígenas de México, sino también para todo el mundo de hoy.

“En estos días de inseguridad económica y transiciones políticas de todo tipo”, el padre pidió que todos “se entreguen a

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y la vean como la estrella de una nueva evangelización, como la patrona de las generaciones venideras, la santa Madre de todos nosotros”.

Dijo que ella representaba la fe en su Hijo, quien no conoce fronteras ni límites, y que “en efecto, todos son bienvenidos bajo su mantilla; ¡todos están bienvenidos aquí! El comienzo del evangelio en que ella se convirtió para San Juan Diego y el pueblo de México tantos años atrás es verdaderamente un regalo ahora para todas las Américas, y para toda la iglesia”.

Pasando la mirada alrededor de la catedral, donde se sentaba una gran diversidad de fieles — de todas las edades y orígenes, algunos con críos arrullados en mantas — el obispo Vann confesó que en su propia vida él ha encontrado a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en todas partes.

“Nunca falla”, relató a los feligreses, “que en momentos de inquietud o reflexión, o de desafíos, o cuando estoy caminando, veo su imagen. Esto es igual en buenos momentos como en tiempos difíciles. Miro hacia arriba y la veo mirándome, casi como si estuviera contándome esas mismas palabras que le repitió a Juan Diego hace tanto tiempo. Qué gran consolación es esto para mí, ya que me recuerda gentilmente de su atención, y me señala otra vez más hacia su Hijo”.

En este espíritu, el programa de la Misa festiva concluyó con una cita tomada de la basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la ciudad de México:

¿No estoy yo aquí que soy tu madre? ¿No estás bajo mi sombra y resguardo? ¿No soy yo tu salud? ¿No estás por ventura en mi regazo? ¿Qué más has de menester?



Bailando *Danza del ofertorio* mientras presentan los regalos de la vida del pueblo están Mari Lopez (izquierda) y Patty Retegin.



Después de bailar las danzas sagradas de su cultura, los matachines Danza Tacualeche, de la iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Fort Worth, posan para una foto con el obispo Kevin Vann y el padre Richard Flores.



Miembros del Ballet folclórico de Fort Worth saludan durante la procesión introductoria, seguidos por miembros del grupo de charros Herencia mexicana.



Miembro del mariachi Águilas de México tocan la “misa latinoamericana”.

La oficina *Respeto por la vida* anuncia campaña contra la FOCA

La oficina *Respeto por la vida* (*Respect Life*), de la diócesis de Fort Worth, acaba de anunciar una campaña de tarjetas postales para combatir a la FOCA (*Freedom of Choice Act*, o la *Ley de libertad para escoger*), o cualquier legislación parecida que intente revertir las ganancias de los últimos 36 años para proteger al nonato. La campaña será promovida en las parroquias de la diócesis en uno o dos fines

de semanas: 17 - 18 y 24 - 25 de enero. "A través de la nación y en nuestra diócesis, nos estamos preparando para marcar el aniversario de la decisión de la Corte Suprema conocida como *Roe vs. Wade*", anuncia la oficina. "Esta decisión, tomada el 22 de enero de 1973, legalizó el aborto en los Estados Unidos. Afortunadamente, a través de una labor perseverante y una legislación sólida se han hecho

avances significantes para limitar el aborto, por medio de leyes requiriendo el consentimiento de los padres y demandando limitaciones para abortos tardíos.

"Sin embargo, ahora", continúa la declaración, "nosotros como nación nos enfrentamos contra la amenaza de la *Ley de libertad para escoger*, o FOCA. Esta ley efectivamente desechará las ganancias que el movimiento

pro-vida ha conseguido durante los últimos 36 años, y forzará a todo contribuyente de impuestos a financiar el aborto". La oficina *Respeto por la vida* les pide a todos los católicos que revisen los boletines de sus parroquias o que se pongan en contacto con las mismas en relación a esta campaña postal contra FOCA.

"Estas tarjetas postales", informa la oficina, "les pedirán a nuestros congresistas de la

cámara de representantes y del senado que 'opongan a FOCA o a cualquier ley semejante, y que conserven las leyes contra el financiamiento federal y la promoción del aborto'. Para más información, contacte a su parroquia o a Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, directora de la oficina *Respeto por la vida* de la diócesis de Fort Worth, al número telefónico 817-560-3300 Ext. 257.

Misa celebrando 'Respetemos la vida', 16 de enero, en la catedral San Patricio

Habrà una Misa el viernes, 16 de enero, a las 7 p.m., en la catedral San Patricio en Fort Worth, marcando treinta y seis años que la Corte Suprema legalizó el aborto. Todos están invitados a asistir. Su presencia y participación ayudará a

animar a aquellas personas que trabajan duro para proteger al más indefenso — el que no a nacido, el incapacitado, el anciano y el enfermo. Para más información, hable con Suzanna Ordóñez al (817) 560-3300, ext. 256.

Clases del método natural para la planificación familiar

El método natural para la planificación familiar es un método seguro, natural, de bajo costo y altamente confiable para evitar un embarazo, lograr un embarazo, espaciar el tiempo entre cada nacimiento o aceptar y

respetar su fertilidad de modo que no comprometa su salud o sus valores personales. Las clases en español empezarán el domingo, 22 de febrero a las 4 p.m. en el Centro Católico, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Fort Worth. Es

muy importante que se inscriban lo más pronto posible.

Si desean más información, llame a Suzanna Ordóñez al teléfono (817) 560-3300, ext. 256.

'Empezando una vida nueva' grupo de apoyo para separados, divorciados y viudos

Empezando una vida nueva es un grupo de apoyo para personas que están pasando por el dolor de una separación, divorcio o

muerte de su cónyuge. El grupo se reúne una vez por semana por diez semanas y su propósito es compartir destrezas de superación que otras personas han aprendido, encontrar nuevos amigos/as que caminarán con usted hacia el futuro, perdonar, adquirir aceptación y más. *Empezando una*

vida nueva comenzará el lunes, 26 de enero, de las 7 p.m. a las 9 p.m. en el nuevo salón parroquial de la iglesia *Todos los santos*, 214 N.W. 20th St., Fort Worth. Si desea inscribirse o desea más información, favor de hablar con Carmen Zacarías al (682) 472-8517.

Centro Diocesano de Cursillos

Estás cordialmente invitado a pasar un fin de semana de retiro —pláticas, reflexión, orientación, encuentro con el Señor y con otros buscadores de la verdad — en el



Centro de Cursillos de Fort Worth
2221 N.W. 26th, St., Fort Worth

Matrimonios

Todas clases de parejas, enero 30, 31 y febrero 1 comenzando a las 7 p.m., Para información o reservación, llame a Sergio o Dulce Morataya: (817) 733-3143

Mujeres

Entre los 16 y 30 años, febrero 27, 28 y marzo 1 comenzando a las 7 p.m., Para información o reservación, llame a María Querea: (817) 624-4911

Muchachos

Entre los 16 y 30 años, marzo 6, 7 y 8 comenzando a las 7 p.m., Para información o reservación, llame a María Querea: (817) 624-4911

Adultos

Hombres y mujeres, un día de retiro de cuaresma, domingo, marzo 15, desde las 8 a.m. a las 5 p.m. Para información o reservación, llame a Martha Galvan: (817) 770-6522

Todos estos retiros son en español

También se puede llamar para toda clase de información al Centro de Cursillos (817) 624-9411 o mandar correo electrónico a cursilloctr@aol.com.

Estamos para ayudarle en nombre del Señor y de nuestra diócesis.



OBISPO DE ARIZONA HABLA CON TRABAJADORES MIGRANTES EN MÉXICO — El obispo Gerald F. Kicanas, de Tucson, Arizona, habla con trabajadores agrícolas migrantes en San Luis Río Colorado, México, el 4 de diciembre. El obispo celebró una Misa especial para los trabajadores agrícolas. (Foto CNS/Bern Zovistoski, THE NEW VISION)

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

Si usted o alguien que conozca es víctima de conducta sexual inapropiada por parte de cualquier persona que trabaje para la iglesia, sea voluntario, empleado, o miembro del clero, puede reportarlo de las siguientes maneras:

- Llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de asistencia para víctimas, al número (817) 560-2452, Ext. 201, o, mandarle correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org

- Llamar al número de emergencia para el abuso sexual: (817) 560-2452, Ext. 900

- o Llamar al Centro Católico al número: (817) 560-2452, ext. 102 y preguntar por el canciller/moderador de la curia, el padre James Hart

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

Llamar al Ministerio de familias de Texas Servicios de protección (Servicios de protección de niños) al número: (800) 252-5400.

On Christmas, pope calls for peace, help for the world's children

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Christmas with a call to peace and a plea on behalf of the world's children.

In the face of violent conflicts, child exploitation and economic woes, the pope said, the birth of Jesus brings a light that "breaks through the gloom" and urges a mentality of solidarity with others.

In his Christmas message, the pope said a more generous and sharing attitude was essential to overcoming global problems, including terrorism, human rights violations and apprehension about "an increasingly uncertain future ... even in affluent nations."

"If people look only to their own interests, our world will certainly fall apart," he said.

The pope spoke from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, delivering a blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city of Rome and the world) and pronouncing Christmas greetings in 64 languages. In English, he said: "May the birth of the Prince of Peace remind the world where its true happiness lies; and may your hearts be filled with hope and joy, for the Savior has been born for us."

The 81-year-old pontiff looked fit and sounded good as he made his way rapidly through the multilingual salutations, which included Chinese, Arabic, and Swahili. He had been up late, celebrating a midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica that ended at 2 a.m.

In his Christmas message, the pope said it was important to remember that Jesus came with saving grace not for a few but "for all: Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, those near and those far away, believers and nonbelievers."

This grace is sorely needed today, he said, in places like the Holy Land, where "the horizon seems once again bleak for Israel-



Pope Benedict XVI blesses pilgrims from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Dec. 25 during his Christmas *blessing urbi et orbi* (to the city of Rome and the world). (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)

lis and Palestinians;" in Lebanon, Iraq and the rest of the Middle East; and in many other places where "the twisted logic of conflict" reigns.

The grace of Christ is sought by the people of Zimbabwe, "trapped for all too long in a political and social crisis which, sadly, keeps worsening," he said, referring to the African country's recent cholera outbreak and continuing political and economic unrest.

The pope highlighted what he called the "interminable sufferings" of people in the war-torn region of Darfur in Sudan and in Somalia, as well as the escalation of fighting in Congo. In a special way, children in these places need the light of Christ and the return of hope for their future, he said.

During midnight Mass the pope, dressed in white and gold vestments, accepted the offertory gifts from young children of different countries, blessing each of them as they made their way to the altar.

In his sermon, he said the arrival of the savior as a child should remind people everywhere of the suffering of children, including those denied the love of their parents and those who have been abused.

"Let us think of those street children who do not have the blessing of a family home, of

those children who are brutally exploited as soldiers and made instruments of violence, instead of messengers of reconciliation and peace," he said.

"Let us think of those children who are victims of the industry of pornography and every other appalling form of abuse and thus are traumatized in the depths of their soul," he said.

He said the infant Jesus "summons us once again to do everything in our power to put an end to the suffering of these children." The world will change for the better only when people accept Jesus and experience a change of heart, he said.

After the liturgy, the pope walked in procession down the main aisle of the basilica, smiling and blessing the faithful. At one point, the Vatican's chief security agent tackled a woman who had moved past the wooden barriers and appeared to be rushing toward the pope. The Vatican later said there was no danger to the pontiff.

On Christmas Eve, the pope lit a candle at his apartment window after the Vatican's larger-than-life Nativity scene was unveiled in St. Peter's Square below. This year's Nativity scene featured representations of domestic settings from the period, alongside Jesus' manger in Bethlehem.

told visitors in St. Peter's Square. "This is demonstrated by many traditions and social customs, especially gathering together as a family to share festive meals and exchange best wishes and gifts."

But, he said, it also is a time when "the discomfort and pain caused by certain family wounds are amplified."

The pope prayed that all Christian families would model their relationships on those of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, working

together, trusting in God, and taking care of one another.

Speaking in Spanish, he sent his best wishes to people gathered in Madrid, Spain, "to pray for the family and to commit themselves to working on its behalf with strength and hope."

"The family certainly is a grace of God, which allows us to see who he is: love," Pope Benedict said.

"Dear families, do not let your love, your openness to life and the incomparable bonds that unite

Conscience regulations to become law just before Obama takes office

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With their Dec. 19 publication in the Federal Register, regulations that protect the conscience rights of health care providers are scheduled to become law two days before President-elect Barack Obama takes office.

The regulations are designed to ensure "that Department of Health and Human Services funds do not support coercive or discriminatory policies or practices in violation of federal law," according to the title of the final rule.

Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications in the Office of Pro-Life Activities at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, praised the regulations in a Dec. 18 statement.

"Individuals and institutions committed to healing should not be required to take the very human life that they are dedicated to protecting," she said. "The enforcement of federal laws to protect their freedom of conscience is long overdue."

The regulations support three conscience provisions passed by Congress as long ago as the 1970s and as recently as 2004. They stipulate that no federal funds be given to health care institutions that require providers to participate in abortions or sterilizations or discriminate against those who decline to participate because of their religious or moral beliefs.

The final rule notes that "religious and faith-based organizations have a long tradition of providing medical care in the United States, and they continue to do so today."

"A trend that isolates and excludes some among various religious, cultural and/or ethnic groups from participating in the delivery of health care is especially troublesome when considering current and anticipated shortages of health care

"Catholic health care providers will especially welcome this mark of respect for the excellent life-affirming care they provide to all in need."

—Deirdre McQuade
Office of Pro-Life
Activities, USCCB

professionals in many medical disciplines and regions of the country," it added.

McQuade said that "Catholic health care providers will especially welcome this mark of respect for the excellent life-affirming care they provide to all in need."

But she added that Catholics are not the only ones who oppose "the deliberate destruction of nascent human life."

"All health care providers should be free to serve their patients without violating their most deeply held moral and religious convictions in support of life," McQuade said.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America is organizing opposition to the rule, saying it threatens patients' rights and would restrict health care access.

"We look forward to working with President-elect Obama and leaders in Congress to repeal this disastrous rule and expand patients' access to full health care information and services — not limit it," said Cecile Richards, Planned Parenthood president, in a Dec. 18 statement.

Pope prays for families, especially those in difficulty

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christmas celebrations underscore the importance of the family in people's lives, but for many it also is a time when wounds caused by one's family become more painful, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Reciting the Angelus Dec. 28, the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Benedict prayed for families in difficulty and for family members who are sick or out of work.

"Christmas is the family celebration par excellence," the pope

and division," he said. He also asked people to pray for the success of the Sixth World Meeting of Families, which will take place in Mexico City Jan. 14-18. The Pontifical Council for the Family is organizing the event.

Mexican church and government leaders had invited Pope Benedict to Mexico to preside over the celebration, but his doctors advised against the trip because of the city's high altitude, said Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, president of the council.

your home diminish," he said. "Constantly ask the Lord for this; pray together so that your plans may be enlightened by faith and strengthened by divine grace."

The pope said he is close to all the world's families, "praying to the Lord especially for those in every family who have greater need for health, work, comfort, and companionship."

Farmers 'pay down' world hunger by donating to Foods Resource Bank

WAUKON, Iowa (CNS) — On a typical crisp fall day in November, a group of farmers gathered in a ridge-top cornfield between Waukon and Churchtown to harvest a ripe field of corn. A combine donated by a local farm implement dealer rolled its header like a giant electric razor through more than 15 acres of corn, leaving stubble in its wake and stopping occasionally to unload its hopper into one of a continuous stream of grain trucks.

After bringing their grain to market, the farmers deposited the earnings into a bank — but it's no ordinary bank to help pay bills or mortgages. Rather, it's one that will help pay down world hunger.

The group of farmers in the field that day represented Cor-

ner of Hope, a growing project organized under the aegis of the humanitarian agency Foods Resource Bank. With members of participating area churches — including St. Patrick Catholic Church in Waukon, Old East and West Paint Creek Evangelical Lutheran, Zalmona United Presbyterian, and Zion United Church of Christ in Waukon — Corner of Hope has raised almost \$70,000 for various overseas agricultural programs since 2005, with \$32,000 of that from the 2008 harvest alone.

Begun in 1999, Foods Resource Bank has been providing funds for agricultural programs in the developing world through the donations of farmers, businesses and churches in the U.S. The organization describes itself on its Web

site (www.foodsresourcebank.org) as a "Christian, nongovernment, humanitarian organization committed to providing food security in the developing world through sustainable small-scale agricultural production, thereby allowing hungry people to know the dignity and pride of feeding themselves."

According to Joan Fumetti, a member of Foods Resource Bank's Midwestern regional field staff in Dubuque, there are 41 growing projects like Corner of Hope in Iowa.

With 15 member organizations — including Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service — Foods Resource Bank is a grass-roots operation with little overhead, allowing for a more efficient

management of funds, Fumetti said. After the agency receives profits from community growing projects, the money is held until the growing project directs the funds to a specific member organization.

"FRB is not re-creating any services that are already out there," she said. "For example, if you're Catholic, you're already paying for CRS to exist. So FRB simply encourages groups to do a mission through CRS or other member organizations."

Each group — such as Corner of Hope and its sister project in Winneshiek County, Community of Hope — decides for itself which charitable groups to send its funds to, Fumetti said. The donations fund a range of agricultural training programs, including agricultural economics, basic agricultural skills, and water and soil improvement, she added.

According to project chairman John Prestemon, Corner of Hope has the double benefit of being both a faith-based and community-based project.

"We've found it one of the most exciting and charitable ventures we've been in and a pretty remarkable success," he said.

A member of Zion United Church of Christ in Waukon, Prestemon also points to the cooperation among different churches as an attractive part of the work.

"It's been such a wonderful ecumenical experience," he said, explaining that every monthly

meeting has at least 15 to 20 people showing up from Catholic, Lutheran, United Church of Christ, and other participating churches. "Everyone's excited about the project, everyone's enthused — so we don't have to twist arms to get things done — the whole group is willing to do their part, which makes it go that way without a lot of effort."

Dennis Byrnes, a parishioner at St. Mary's Parish in Hanover, with a 200-acre farm in the Hanover area, has been working with Corner of Hope since 2006. Each year, he said, he had donated some of his own land to the project.

"It so happened I rented a farm from my neighbor and told (the Corner of Hope organizers) I would give them seven acres" for the project, he said. Altogether, he said, Corner of Hope harvests close to 50 acres for world hunger.

With seven children and 19 grandchildren, Byrnes sees Corner of Hope as his response to an issue which hits home — world hunger.

"When my grandchildren visit and they're hungry, you feed them," he said. "So you see the satisfaction on their faces. These children are no different from children in Saudi Arabia or Guatemala, or anywhere else in the world. I think it's just terrible that a young child goes without food. This ... was the driving factor for me in joining Corner of Hope."

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11

15 minutes are based on someone else's glory.

Today, this day, I am proud of my article in that magazine, not because of its questionable quality, but because of whose it was near.

Today, this day, I also am extremely sad because the moments of sharing that coincidence are over, as is my proximity, yours and all of ours. It takes only seconds to lose someone forever, realizing that you had not fully appreciated the decades you had him — in your city, in your parish, or, if you were as lucky as me, on adjacent pages in your magazine.

Hearing about Fr. Bob Wilson these past days has been a privilege. There was so much I never knew about him, like his doctoral degree in psychological counseling. I got to see him regularly, but it was a quick smile around the edge of my camera, or a telephone conversation long enough for an interview. Most of our relationship, I know now, was based on stories.

At Father's funeral Mass, homilist Monsignor John F. Meyers, SAC, told stories of his own. Some were about his friend Bob, who he said probably never caught a fish in his life, but sponsored a yearly fish fry for seminarians. He learned to ski, then broke his wrist before his first ski trip. He would have skied with his friends this month; now they are missing the annual event — and him.

In his homily Msgr. Meyers also told the story of a

man who made caskets, built as works of art, adorned with symbols and mementos of the people they were built for.

"Then he decided to make a casket for himself," Msgr. Meyers said, "and people were curious — what kind and how beautiful would it be?" The artist worked for months and eventually had an unveiling and a lot of people showed up to see the design.

"When it was unveiled," he said, "they realized it was a simple cardboard box with yarn tied around it, tied at the top. Puzzled, the audience looked closer and saw there was a tag attached to the cord."

"The card said, 'return to sender.'

"So today," Msgr. Meyers said, "we celebrate the sending to his creator of our friend Fr. Bob Wilson."

Hearing those words made me indescribably sad, although I understood what the homilist said next:

"I know a number of people may be sad. Of course we've enjoyed having Bob with us for quite awhile — and it is not a surprise God would want Bob with him for eternity." He added, "I have to tell you it was Bob's desire that his death be a happy occasion."

Today, this day, I am happy about a few things: that I got to be acquainted with this man who did so much for so many people all around me; that I was there to witness his goodness and quality, and many times I was there to write about it.

Today I am proud that decades before I met him, we

shared pages in a magazine.

I heard one last story today, better than the one I wrote in 1971, maybe even better than his. It was told by Carolyn Pass, a member of the art and environment committee at Holy Redeemer.

Before his death, Fr. Wilson had all but finished directing the construction of the Aledo parish's new church building, and the committee was choosing art for the interior. They had selected a humble wood carver in Honduras to provide the tabernacle and Stations of the Cross, and were going to have their crucifix made in Italy.

"Father Bob pored over many, many pictures of Christ's face to use on the corpus," Carolyn said, "never finding the one he felt was just right. Two weeks ago we finally decided on the image of the face of Christ we would like to use."

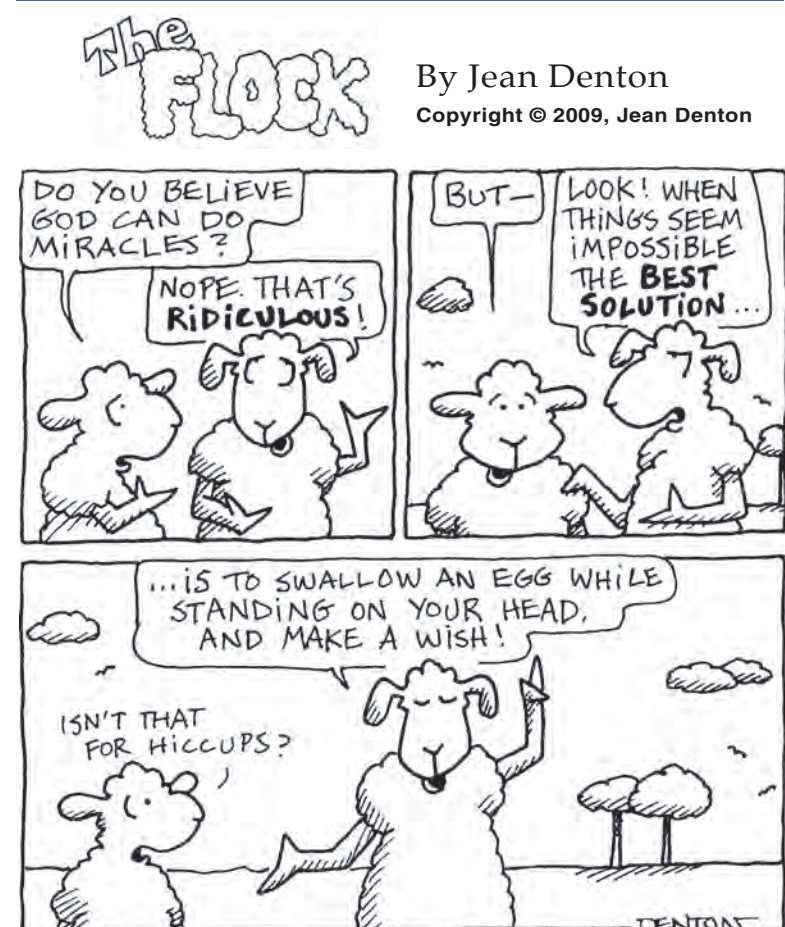
But it was on the day Fr. Wilson died, that something special had dawned on her.

"Now we can be sure that Fr. Bob will direct our woodcarver in Italy," Carolyn realized.

"Because now he really knows what the face of Christ looks like."



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May, her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy's column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.



By Jean Denton

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Calendar

RACHEL MINISTRIES

Rachel Ministries, a program that offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath, is expanding its outreach to include programs and services in Spanish. The expanded outreach program is currently seeking volunteers who can read and speak Spanish to help build the Spanish program. The ministry is also seeking Spanish-speaking licensed counselors to volunteer during the Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats. There are also opportunities for volunteers to be included on the referral list. Training will be provided to all volunteers. Anyone who is bilingual and is interested in this ministry is asked to contact Betsy Kopor at (817) 923-4757 or by e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

PASTORAL CARE TRAINING

St. Michael Church at 3713 Harwood Rd. in Bedford will offer a training session for new extraordinary ministers of holy Communion to the homebound, hospitalized, and nursing home residents. The training is divided in two sessions from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 31 and Feb. 7. Participants from outside St. Michael will be charged a fee of \$8 to cover cost of materials. Lunch will be provided. To RSVP, contact Martín Peña at (817) 283-8743. Deadline for registration is Jan. 19.

HOMESCHOOLING MEETING

Catholics interested in homeschooling their children are invited to an information meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 16 to learn about the different philosophies of homeschooling, the different Catholic curriculums available, and the legalities of homeschooling. Experienced homeschoolers will be available to answer questions as well as show materials. Catholics Teaching at Home (CATH), a homeschool group for Catholics in the Fort Worth Diocese, will sponsor the presentation. For more information, contact Diane Ashour at (972) 601-9751 or ashour_23@sbcbglobal.net.

CELEBRATE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The 22nd Annual Celebration of Catholic Schools will be held Saturday, Jan. 31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center. The Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation will receive the Diocesan Leadership Award. The evening will include a social hour followed by dinner. Sister Carol Cimino, a national consultant for the William H. Sadlier Company, will be guest speaker. Bishop Kevin Vann will also be in attendance. Reservations are \$75 per person. Everyone is invited to the celebration to show their support and commitment to Catholic schools. For more information and to secure reservations, please contact the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300, or email rspv@fwdioc.org.

EDUCATE THE CHILDREN

Bishop Kevin Vann will be the guest speaker at the Fifth Anniversary Gala for Friends of Educate the Children 6:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 13 at the Tarrant County College Northeast Campus at 828 Harwood Rd., in Hurst. The Gala will include a dinner and a silent auction. For more information contact Hilda Flores at (817) 560-3300 ext. 112 or hlflores@fwdioc.org.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL PILGRIMAGE IN THE SPRING

Msr. Charles King, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, is leading a group to Spain and Portugal departing DFW on April 13 and returning April 27. The group will enjoy the services of an English speaking escort and a private motor coach throughout the trip. Some of the highlights will include visits to Madrid, Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela, Porto, Lisbon and Fatima, just to name a few of the destinations. For more information and a copy of the itinerary call Bob Wolfe at (817) 788-9383.

To Report Misconduct

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may

- Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jl Locke@fwdioc.org
- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 102 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

To Report Abuse

Call the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services) at (800) 252-5400

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the chapel of Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth. Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing Eucharist, discussion, and fellowship. For more information, call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768 ext. 105.

ANNUAL ECUMENICAL SERVICE

The ninth annual Ecumenical Sunday Service for 2009 will feature Bishop Kevin Vann at 3:30 p.m., Jan. 18, at the West Side Baptist Church, at 900 Bellaire Blvd. in Lewisville. Seven churches from Lewisville and Flower Mound will participate in the prayer service, including First Presbyterian, Annunciation Episcopal, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic, St. Philip Catholic and West Side Baptist churches from Lewisville, and Flower Mound Methodist, and Trinity Presbyterian churches from Flower Mound. A collection will be taken to benefit Christian Community Action. The West Side Baptist choir will lead the singing. For more information, call ecumenical organizer Kathleen Easler at (817) 430-2454.

K OF C SCHOLARSHIPS

Three \$600 Knights of Columbus scholarships, for a Catholic college-bound senior from Lewisville, Marcus, and Flower Mound High Schools, will be awarded in May. Applicants must be Catholic. Two additional \$600 scholarships have been added this year for students attending any area high school, provided the student's father is a member of St. Philip the Apostle Parish, Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, or a member of Knights Council # 9884. Instructions and applications for the 19th annual Knights of Columbus Scholarship are now available from high school counselors at Lewisville, Flower Mound, and Marcus, as well as the St. Philip the Apostle Church office. Applications must be postmarked by Feb. 14. For more information, contact chairman Mike Crivello at macrivello@hotmail.com.

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CARDINAL NEWMAN COURSE

A study of the liturgy and sacraments begins and continues Jan. 17 for 10 weeks on Saturday mornings, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at St. Maria Goretti Church's Holy Family Life Center, at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington. Tuition is \$200 with full-time employees in select church ministries receiving half-tuition. Pre-registration is encouraged so participants may obtain books in time. For information on this course and to pre-register, leave a message at (817) 277-4859 or e-mail at cni.info@yahoo.com.

NTC DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

The North Texas Catholic is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published. Items for the Jan. 23 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 14. Items for the Feb. 6 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 28.

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller; at 1301 Paxton Ave. (Padre Pio House) in Arlington; and at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton at 2255 Bonnie Brae St. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampeg.com, or e-mail to Mark at seasmenspurity@yahoo.com.

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Sister Dorothy Jonaitis, OP, will present "The Left Behind Alternative: A Workshop on Apocalyptic Literature" from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31 at St. Bartholomew Church at 3601 Altamesa Blvd. in Fort Worth. She will present the Catholic teaching of apocalyptic texts, especially related to the rapture and imagery of the Book of Revelation. Sr. Jonaitis will sign copies of her book, which may be purchased at the workshop. For more information, call Marco Castellon at (817) 293-5589.

LAY CARMELITES

The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of a deeper relationship with Christ to join them on the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship. Those interested in participating are asked to gather at 2 p.m. in the chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lubbock St. in Fort Worth. Formation will take place in the college library from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.

MEMORIAL MASS FOR UNBORN

St. Andrew Church's Family Life department will offer a Memorial Mass for Unborn Babies at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23. The department invites everybody, especially those who have family members who have lost children because of miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion, to attend the memorial service. A naming ceremony, which allows families to name their unborn babies, will take place before the service in the Chapel at 6:30 p.m. Anybody who would like to participate in the ceremony is asked to RSVP at (817) 927-5383. A reception will follow in the parish hall. Childcare will be provided if reservations are made at least 48 hours in advance to (817) 924-6581. There is a \$5 fee per child. For more information, contact Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or via e-mail at acurran@standrewcc.org.

SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Sign Language classes will be offered this semester on Tuesday evenings at St. John the Apostle Church in North Richland Hills and sponsored by the Deaf Ministry Program. There will be a Beginning class offered at 7 p.m. and an Advanced Beginning class offered at 8 p.m. Adults and children ages 12 and older who have always wanted to learn more about the deaf community and the language they use, are encouraged to come learn American Sign Language. Both classes will meet in Room 'C' of the Formation Center at 4101 Frawley Rd. from Jan. 27 through March 10. Students will learn the manual alphabet and signs for basic vocabulary. Cultural aspects of the deaf community as well as basic grammatical rules will be taught through fun hands-on activities and games. Cost for the class will be \$50 per person, which includes the cost of the one book. There is no pre-registration. Those interested are asked to come the first night of class a few minutes early. For more information contact Mary Cinatl, director of Deaf Ministry at (817) 284-3019 or mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

MARTIN LUTHER KING MASS

Bishop Kevin Vann will celebrate a Mass for the 23rd Annual "Celebration of Life for Martin Luther King, Jr." at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17 at St. Joseph Church at 1927 SW Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington. A reception will follow the Mass. For more information, contact Deacon Len Sanchez at (817) 560-2452 ext. 305 or lsanchez@fwdioc.org.

RETRouvaille RETREAT

Retrouvaille, a program sponsored by the Fort Worth Catholic Family Life Office designed to heal and renew troubled or unhappy marriages, will hold its next weekend program Jan. 16-18. For more information or registration, call 1 (800) 470-2230 or visit the Web site at www.retrouvaille.org. All names and conversations will be kept confidential.

Classified Section

ACCOMPANIST

Accompanist with experience at three-manual pipe organ needed for three weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with up to two choirs weekly, holy day Masses; availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year is preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send a résumé to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth 76107 or e-mail to dkain@holymfamilyfw.org. For more information, call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104

LITURGY AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

A North Dallas Suburban Parish in transitional growth is seeking a full-time director of liturgy and music to lead the assembly in worship and song as a member of our pastoral team. A collaborative person is needed to initiate and grow a comprehensive liturgical music ministry; to guide parish liturgical ministries, plan and accompany weekend liturgies, holy days, weddings, funerals, special liturgical celebrations, direct and rehearse choir and cantors and interface with existing Spanish Choir. Requires close collaboration with staff and parishioners. Needs strong piano and conducting skills, good vocal skills, knowledge of Catholic liturgy and must be a practicing Catholic with a degree in liturgy or music, or equivalent years of experience. Salary and diocesan benefits commensurate with education or experience. Send letter, résumé, salary requirements and three current/verifiable references to: Search Committee Liturgy and Music, 352 Cascata Drive, Frisco, TX 75034.

PASTORAL ASSISTANT

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wichita Falls seeks a full-time Pastoral Assistant to assist the Pastor in meeting the temporal and pastoral needs of this active 1,300-family parish. Principal duties will include administrative and facilities management as well as serving as staff liaison to all parish ministries and committees. Qualifications include a Master's degree in Theology or other related field, or its equivalent in education and experience; prior experience in ministry; practicing Roman Catholic. For a full job description and application procedure, please visit www.sacredheartwf.org. Applications are accepted immediately.

FITNESS COACHES

Looking for 20 fitness coaches for revolutionary new home based business. For info call 817-249-3371.

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Local Catholic retirement facility is seeking a maintenance worker. Applicant must have a/c and electrical experience. Send résumé to deanah@saintfrancisvillage.com

LITURGY COORDINATOR

Large Vatican II parish with five weekend Masses is looking for an energetic, engaging person to coordinate liturgical celebrations with style and reverence. Responsibilities will include training and scheduling ministers, planning weddings, funerals, and sacramental rituals. The coordinator will also be responsible for all liturgical articles and vestments. This is a full-time position with weekends and offers competitive salary and benefits. Send a cover letter and résumé to LC Search, St. Philip the Apostle Church, 1897 W. Main St., Lewisville 75067; office@stphilipcc.org; fax (972) 219-5429. No phone calls. Job description may be viewed at www.stphilipcc.org/job_board.htm.

LITURGICAL MUSIC DIRECTOR

St. Patrick Cathedral seeks a full-time Director of Liturgical Music and Organist to assist the Rector by assuming responsibility for the musical life of the parish. The successful candidate will provide organ music for all 5 weekend Masses, Holy Days, and occasional diocesan events; will direct and rehearse the Adult choir and develop other ensembles; supervise and train Cantors; select hymns and find imaginative ways to broaden the musical and liturgical efforts of the Cathedral taking advantage of its location at the heart of downtown. Applicants must possess degrees in organ, choral or sacred music, strong organ and conducting skills, complete knowledge of Catholic liturgical traditions, and should be practicing Catholics living in full accord with the teachings of the Church. For a complete job description, compensation information and application procedure, please see the Cathedral website, www.stpatrickcathedral.org.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Topsoil, sand, gravel, washed materials, driveways, concrete, backhoe, and tractor services. Custom mowing lots and acres. Call (817) 732-4083.

CEMETERY SPACES

Three cemetery spaces for sale in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Plaza Garden. Must sacrifice at \$1,200 each. This area permits double interment if desired. For information, call (972) 242-3744.

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Good Newsmaker

Former chancellor and moderator of the curia and pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo

Father Robert Wilson dies at age 76

By Nicki Prevou / Editorial Assistant

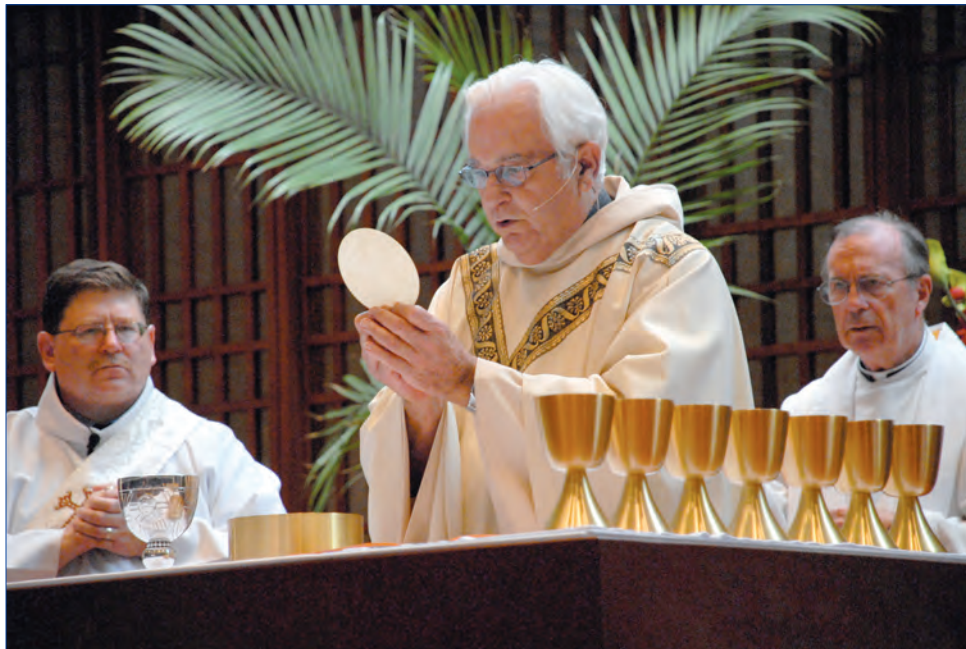
Father Robert Wilson 1932-2008

Father Robert Wayne Wilson, who served as chancellor and moderator of the curia for the Diocese of Fort Worth from 1986 to 2006, died on Dec. 25. Fr. Wilson, who celebrated his 51st anniversary of ordination on May 25, 2008, and served as pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Aledo for the past seven years, suffered a heart attack in his home Dec. 23. He was 76.

Born Oct. 23, 1932, in San Antonio, the son of Finis Alexander Wilson and Willie Fae Guthrie Wilson, Fr. Wilson was raised in Fort Worth and attended St. Mary of the Assumption School and Laneri High School. He graduated from St. John Seminary, now Assumption Seminary, in San Antonio, and was ordained by Bishop Thomas Gorman at St. Patrick Co-Cathedral in Fort Worth in 1957 to serve within the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.

Fr. Wilson's first assignment was at St. Monica Church in Dallas. He went on to serve at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls; as dean of students at the University of Dallas; and as diocesan director of Vocations for the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.

In 1967, Fr. Wilson was appointed to serve in parishes to the west of Fort Worth, including St. Rita in Ranger, St. John in Strawn, St. Francis in Eastland, and Holy Rosary in Cisco. After the Diocese of Fort Worth was established in 1969, he went on to serve as pastor of St. John the Apostle Church in North



Father Robert Wilson consecrates the Eucharist at a Jubilee Mass for the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in St. Andrew Church, Fort Worth in July, 2007. Deacon Don Warner assists at left and Msgr. Joe Schumacher concelebrates. (Photo by Kathy Cribari Hamer)

“He was a very good listener, and he was also very concerned with prayer. His training in psychology taught him to get along well with others, and he did a good job of helping other people to get along with each other.... We praise God, in faith, for the life that [Fr. Wilson] led and for bringing him home to heaven, for life in heaven is truly a gift from God.”

Msgr. Joseph Schumacher in comments at the Vigil Service for Fr. Wilson Dec. 28

Richland Hills; as diocesan director of pastoral planning, as superintendent of Catholic schools, and as pastor of St. John the Baptizer Church in Bridgeport and at St. Mary Church in Jacksboro. He was appointed chancellor and moderator of the curia for the diocese by Bishop Joseph Delaney in 1986, and also served as sacramental minister and canonical pastor for Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville.

A deeply respected spiritual leader, who served as a mentor, advisor, and close friend to many fellow priests and members of the laity, Fr. Wilson was lovingly remembered at a vigil service held at Aledo High School on Dec. 28. Monsignor Joseph Schumacher, for-

mer vicar general for the Diocese of Fort Worth and a longtime friend of Fr. Wilson's, presided at the service, which was attended by hundreds of family members, friends, colleagues in ministry, and by the parishioners whose lives the beloved priest touched during his years of pastoral ministry.

“There are many of you here who go a long, long way back with Fr. Wilson,” Msgr. Schumacher reflected in his introductory remarks. “He was a very good listener, and he was also very concerned with prayer. His training in psychology taught him to get along well with others, and he did a good job of helping other people to get along with each other.... We praise God, in faith, for the

life that [Fr. Wilson] led and for bringing him home to heaven, for life in heaven is truly a gift from God.”

Throughout his years of visionary leadership, Fr. Wilson played a significant role in developing the role of the laity within the diocese, said Charmaine Williams, who worked with Fr. Wilson following his appointment to St. John the Apostle Church in 1970 and who served as diocesan director of Pastoral Planning and Human Resources until her retirement in December 2006.

“His leadership in the development of the role of the laity in the post Vatican II Church in the parishes he pastored is legendary,” Williams told the assembled mourners. “... Many people who are here today can tell stories of how they were invited and then prepared for sharing in the life and ministry of the parish and larger church, thanks to Fr. Wilson.”

“Fr. Wilson possessed a particular talent for encouraging people — the young clergy, recently ordained, the laity — to realize their potential,” said Williams. “Oftentimes he called us to be more and/or better than we believed we could be. Much of this has to do with a core belief that Fr. Wilson brought to his relationships — the belief that each person, parishioner, lay minister, and brother priest has something to offer and that the person deserves to be heard and listened to. Oftentimes this belief and support helped to create opportunities that any one of us would not have been able to transcend by ourselves.”

“He brought blessings to many, many people,” agreed Monsignor Larry Steubben, a former seminary classmate of Fr. Wilson's and the retired vicar general for the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Fr. Wilson and Msgr. Steubben, as young priests, both served their respective dioceses as director of Vocations, and were instrumental in creating the vocation directors' department within the Texas Catholic Conference, he explained to the assembly. Recalling Fr. Wilson's years of church leadership at the diocesan, regional, and national levels, Msgr. Steubben added, “He loved God, he walked faithfully, and he walked joyfully. He truly enjoyed being a priest.”

Another longtime friend, Wayne Leighton, spoke eloquently of Fr.

SEE FR. WILSON, P.14

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Bishop Vann reminds us that the Season of Christmas extends even now and admonishes us to remember that Jesus and his parents were refugees and immigrants. **2**

A November pilgrimage to Rome with Bishop Vann will offer many of us a lifetime of memories to mark the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Fort Worth this August. **9**

Jeff Hedglen offers us two stories, one of his wife's conversion, likening it to St. Paul's (and our own ongoing need) and updates us on that New Year's resolution to 'stay positive.' **17**

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