



NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Pure Reality Rally

*offers a Christian vision for relationships between men and women
And the T-shirts offer a challenge*

"God has assigned
as a duty to every man
the dignity of every woman."
- Pope John Paul II

(NTC photo/Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Rally speakers offer a Christian take on the holiness of marital love, the integrity of body, mind, and spirit

Christine Aubert played a part of the pro-life movement before she was ever born. Her ultrasound image, taken at eight weeks gestation, became a pivotal moment in her father's conversion. As a young man, Chris Aubert believed abortion was a woman's choice and stood by as two former girlfriends terminated pregnancies.

His opinion quickly changed after viewing the grainy picture of a perfectly formed daughter *in utero*. The skeptic turned pro-life advocate and father shared his

testimony with 1,100 young people attending the Pure Reality Rally held Feb. 12 at the Metro Center in Arlington. Sponsored by the Youth for Life offices of the dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas, the event is an opportunity to help young people strengthen their moral convictions in regard to chastity and the Culture of Life.

The rally began with a praise and worship concert by Joe Languell and featured presentations by nationally-recognized chastity speaker Jason

Evert; Stephanie Balsler, a member of the Texas-based Theology of the Body Evangelization Team; Steve Pokorny, associate director of the Office of Family Life for the Archdiocese of San Antonio; and Aubert who lectures on the abortion issue from the male perspective. Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann and Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell concelebrated a closing Mass with the teens.

Fifteen-year-old Christine Aubert, who attended the rally with
SEE PURE, P. 20



(CNS photo/Lisa A. Johnston)

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, March 9

Msgr. John Shamleffer places ashes on the forehead of a child during Ash Wednesday Mass in 2010 at St. Joseph's Church in Clayton, Missouri. The Catholic Church observes the start of Lent by marking baptized Christians with a public and communal sign of penance. This year Ash Wednesday is March 9. (CNS photo/Lisa A. Johnston)

Our Shepherd Speaks

Growing closer to Christ during the season of Lent

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In these days, we find ourselves in the early Sundays of Ordinary Time between the end of the celebration of the Christmas season and the beginning of the season of Lent. This time is called Ordinary Time, not that there is something less important or less interesting than other times and seasons in the Liturgical Year, but because the season is governed by the Sundays that are counted by the ordinal numbers, that is the third, sixth, fourteenth Sunday, etc. It is during this time that we continue to journey with the Lord and ponder the mysteries of his life and saving mission, and work to allow the grace of Christ to illuminate our hearts and minds as we continue on our pilgrimage of faith as the Body of Christ, the Church. The color for Ordinary Time is green, which is the color of hope because we await in joyful hope the coming of the Lord and always live our lives with great hope in the promises of Christ.

In a few short weeks, we will once again begin the season of Lent which is quite a bit later this year due to the lateness of Easter. Lent is a time that is set aside by the Church to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's death and Resurrection during Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. Lent is given to us as a time to examine our lives, to seek a deeper and more profound conversion to Christ, and to make reparation for sin through prayer and almsgiving. As *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council states, "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent — the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance — should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer" (109).

The observance of the season of Lent goes back to the very early times of the Church when the early Christians recognized that there needed to be some sort of penance and preparation before celebrating the Paschal Mysteries at Easter. The earliest observances of this time of prayer, penance, and fasting in the second and third centuries varied in both the East and the West and in many places started only as two or three days, and even as 40 hours in preparation for Easter. Eventually, the practice transitioned into a preparation time of 40 days, mirroring the 40 days that Christ spent in the desert



Bishop Kevin Vann

in preparation for his public ministry. After the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire the 40 day penitential season of Lent became much more universal and is even mentioned in the disciplinary canons of the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Since this time, the 40 days of Lent and its penitential focus has been universally observed in the Church.

Ash Wednesday, celebrated on March 9 this year, begins the season of Lent with the sober reminder: Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." Ash Wednesday reminds all of us of two important things. First, it is a reminder that God created us "out of the dust of the ground" (*Genesis 2:7*) and that we were created by God and are called to live in the goodness and grace of Christ. We do not live this life for ourselves, but for others and are called to live a life of faith, hope, and love. Secondly, it reminds us that we will all at some point suffer death and will face our own particular judgment before Christ of how we lived our lives and cooperated with the graces that were given us. It is a call to a deeper and more profound conversion to Christ and to turn away from our sinfulness and vices.

The practice of Ash Wednesday actually developed from the practice of public penitence that was common in the earlier times in the Church when those who were practicing public penance would cover themselves with ashes and sackcloth as a way of doing penance for sin. Ash Wednesday is a little, but profound way at the very beginning of Lent that we profess that we are sinners and are in need of Christ's redeeming grace, and is a witness and a reminder to all that Christ is our Savior and the universal call to conversion and holiness.

There are many things that we can do during the season of Lent to bring about penance, conversion, and atonement for sin. One way is certainly through fasting and abstaining from meat. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are both days of fast and abstinence, and all Fridays during Lent are days of abstaining from meat. While these are days in which fasting and abstinence is an obligation, we can also fast during other days as a way of doing penance and mortification. Fasting is a powerful way of not only doing penance, but curbing the desires of the flesh and increasing in virtue and self-control.

Another way we can grow closer to Christ during the season of Lent is through an increase in prayer and in practicing the many rich devotions the Church has provided for us over the centuries. Prayer is the way we offer our hearts to God, and the more that we take the time to pray, the deeper our relationship with Christ will be. It is important to remember that ultimately prayer should be from the heart, and that even the shortest spontaneous prayer from the heart can be very powerful. In fact, our everyday lives can be filled with prayer, if we are open to the Holy Spirit and simply talk to God throughout our day. In the words of St. John Chrysostom: "It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop... while buying or selling...or even while cooking."

Finally, reading and praying with Sacred Scripture can be another very powerful and fruitful Lenten devotion that can significantly deepen our relationship with Christ. One way of praying with and contemplating with Scripture that has been a part of the Church's life for centuries is *lectio divina*. Pope Benedict XVI on his recent *Apostolic Exhortation on the Word of God* in the Mission of the Church, *Verbum Domini* highlighted and encouraged *lectio divina* as an efficacious way of encountering Christ through Scripture. Here the Holy Father teaches us this wonderful way of praying and meditating upon Sacred Scripture:

The documents produced before and during the Synod mentioned a number of methods for a faith-filled and fruitful approach to sacred Scripture. Yet the greatest attention was paid to lectio divina, which is truly "capable of opening up to the faithful the treasures of God's word, but also of bringing about an encounter with Christ, the living word of God". I would like here to review the basic steps of this procedure. It opens with the reading (lectio) of a text, which leads to a

desire to understand its true content: what does the biblical text say in itself? Without this, there is always a risk that the text will become a pretext for never moving beyond our own ideas. Next comes meditation (meditatio), which asks: what does the biblical text say to us? Here, each person, individually but also as a member of the community, must let himself or herself be moved and challenged. Following this comes prayer (oratio), which asks the question: what do we say to the Lord in response to his word? Prayer, as petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise, is the primary way by which the word transforms us. Finally, lectio divina concludes with contemplation (contemplatio), during which we take up, as a gift from God, his own way of seeing and judging reality, and ask ourselves what conversion of mind, heart and life is the Lord asking of us? In the Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul tells us: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (12:2). Contemplation aims at creating within us a truly wise and discerning vision of reality, as God sees it, and at forming within us "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). The word of God appears here as a criterion for discernment: it is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). We do well also to remember that the process of lectio divina is not concluded until it arrives at action (actio), which moves the believer to make his or her life a gift for others in charity (Verbum Domini, 86).

As we approach the season of Lent and enter into it, you will certainly be in my prayers, that your Lenten journey will be fruitful and help us all to grow in holiness.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+Bishop Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Diocese of Fort Worth



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NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

PUBLISHER: Bishop Kevin W. Vann

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS: Pat Svacina

EDITOR: Jeff Hensley

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Tony Gutiérrez

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Judy Russeau

WEB DESIGNER: Chris Kastner

CIRCULATION: Rita Garber

REGULAR COLUMNISTS:

Denise Bossert

Jean Denton

Kathy Cribari Hamer

Jeff Hedglen

Jeff Hensley

David Mills

Mary Regina Morrell

Sharon K. Perkins

Lucas Pollice

Father John Rausch

Father Kyle Walterscheid

Contributors:

Michele Baker

Jenara Kocks Burgess

John English

Juan Guajardo

Kathy Cribari Hamer

Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Donna Ryckaert

Kristin Zschiesche

Editorial Office: 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, (817) 560-3300; FAX (817) 244-8839.

Circulation Office: Rita Garber, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, (817) 560-3300.

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Bookmarked Bishop Vann yet?

If you haven't been reading Bishop Vann's blog, you've been missing a lot. I've always said our bishop gives a whole new dimension to the word peripatetic. It means always on the move. With 28 counties and more than 80 churches, it takes a lot of movement to tend to the needs of a far flung flock. And with responsibilities at the national level, as liaison of the U.S. bishops to the Catholic Health Association and as part of the committee dealing with how Anglicans are and will be coming into the Roman Catholic Church under the provisions of Pope Benedict's Anglican Personal Ordinariate, keeping up with Bishop Vann is an adventure. His blog tracks his travels in and outside the diocese, and he covers a lot of ground teaching and keeping us informed about feast days and church history. Like I said, if you're not reading him at least occasionally, you're missing out. You can simply click on [Bishop's Blog](http://www.fwdioc.org) on the diocese's home page: www.fwdioc.org.

And if this issue seems like it has a lot of pro-life emphases (even more than usual) that's because there's a lot going on. The center section begins with Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore outlining some of the challenges and opportunities we

face right now, beginning on **Page 13**.

Columnist David Mills gives us some of the arguments made to reinforce our belief that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the only truly authentic versions of Jesus' message. The other pretenders to that authority, he says, generally tend to make fewer demands of us. David is on **Page 8**.

If you're wondering what the Church is saying to those who are cutting many basic budget items, threatening the basic safety net for the poor and working and middle class people, the Catholic News Service article on **Page 21** will help answer your questions. The article leads off with creative thinking from the Texas Catholic Conference. How about that?

Thanks for reading us. Please visit us on the Web for updates and fresh news at www.fwdioc.org/ntc. (You could bookmark us too.)

Jeff Hensley
Editor

The Law of Fast and Abstinence in the Diocese of Fort Worth

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has determined that the following practices shall prevail in the United States: Fast and Abstinence are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all those who

have celebrated their 18th birthday until one has celebrated his/her 59th birthday. Abstinence from meat is to be observed on the Fridays of Lent by all who have celebrated their 14th birthday.

The Church recognizes that there

are chronically or seriously ill individuals who cannot fast or abstain. The Church still calls for these individuals to participate in acts of penance and works of charity. These can be performed throughout the week; however, it is

especially appropriate that these acts be performed on Fridays in place of the Friday fast.

No one can be dispensed from the necessity of doing penance. Catholics are strongly urged to practice voluntary

acts of mortification and works of charity. The bishops of the United States have urged Catholics to consider abstaining from meat on Fridays "as a tangible sign of our need and desire to do penance for the cause of peace."

Friday by all those who

Vatican officials express hopes for Egypt's future

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican's ambassador to Egypt said he hoped the country's future would include greater social justice and greater freedom for all of the country's people.

In an interview with Vatican Radio Feb. 11, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald said he hoped the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which is running Egypt, would follow the direction of constitutional reform and "will also respond to the other demands of the population with regard to social justice and with regard to political liberties as well."

Archbishop Fitzgerald, the Vatican nuncio in Cairo, said that even before President Hosni Mubarak resigned Feb. 11, the Egyptian leader had given his vice president the task of studying various articles of the constitution with a view of amending them in response to protesters' demands for greater democracy.

Mubarak's promises of reform were not enough for protesters, and he was forced to hand over power to the military and step down.

As Mubarak left the capital and the military took over, the nuncio told Vatican Radio, "We are still in an uncertain position, but the people are very happy — they are rejoicing — and we hope that this euphoria will produce a moment of solidarity for the people in this country."

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces announced Feb. 13 a series of steps needed for a democratic transition, including the dissolution of

Mubarak's parliament, a suspension of the constitution with the promise of establishing a committee to rewrite it, and the promise of elections in six months.

Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, told Vatican Radio Feb. 14 that he hoped the patient commitment to nonviolence and democracy that motivated the protesters would continue to inspire changes in Egypt for the good of all of its citizens, including the Christian minority.

"These changes could signal situations of difficulty, but they also can represent seeds of hope for a new situation," the cardinal said.

Egypt's 8 million to 10 million Coptic Orthodox and up to 250,000 Coptic Catholics have a right to express their opinions and hopes in the process of rewriting the nation's constitutions, he said.

"I certainly think they should be listened to, and I also hope that their opinions will be accepted. I also hope that in the constitution there are those fundamental principles that affirm the dignity of men and women, the freedom of all and civic coexistence with respect for others and respect for the law," Cardinal Sandri said.

"I really hope the wisdom that the Egyptians have and that they showed during the demonstrations, which were conducted in a peaceful way and in which they expressed their desire for change, will enlighten their future steps," he said.

Briefly

Nation, World, Church



(CNS photo/Karen Bonar, The Register)

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley accepts the apostolic mandate naming him head of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City during his Feb. 11 installation Mass at St. John the Baptist Church in Edmond, Oklahoma. Looking on at right is his father, John Coakley Jr., wearing a red tie. Archbishop Coakley, formerly bishop of Salina, Kansas, succeeds Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran.

Oklahoma City Catholics urged to become 'agents of new evangelization'

EDMOND, Oklahoma (CNS) — As chief teacher of the faithful, new Archbishop Paul S. Coakley didn't hesitate to begin instructing his people.

In his homily after being installed Feb. 11 as the fourth archbishop of Oklahoma City, Archbishop Coakley urged them "to become agents of a new evangelization."

"The call for a new evangelization is a challenge and an opportunity for the Church today to find effective ways of announcing Jesus Christ and making him known and loved at a moment in history and in the midst of a culture that no longer considers God relevant to its pursuits and concerns," he said.

"The word of God must be proclaimed to all the nations," he continued. "Jesus Christ is the good news, for which every human heart is searching, and we are its witnesses. But if we are to be credible witnesses, we ourselves have to be fully evangelized."

Archbishop Coakley's installation took place before more than 1,200 people at St. John the Baptist Church in Edmond, the largest Catholic church in the archdiocese, and aired

live on the Eternal Word Television Network. More than 30 archbishops and bishops attended, as well as more than 200 priests and deacons from the archdiocese and from the Kansas dioceses of Salina, where he served as bishop for six years, and Wichita, where he had been a diocesan priest.

The new evangelization "challenges us never to be satisfied with a superficial faith, a comfortable faith, a faith that has little to do with the way we live our lives between Sundays," Archbishop Coakley said. "It summons all of us to put out into the deep and cast our nets in obedience to Jesus Christ, to become his witnesses and to be amazed at the abundance of the catch that the Lord will provide," he said.

Archbishop Coakley drew laughter when he directed his comments to the youth of his archdiocese.

"Do not be afraid to let Jesus into your lives. Let Jesus 'friend' you," he said, referring to Facebook. "His friendship is so much deeper and more faithful than others who may 'friend' and then 'defriend' you just as quickly. Jesus will never 'defriend' you."

French Senate rejects euthanasia on demand

PARIS (CNS) — The French Senate has rejected legislation that would have permitted any adult to request a "quick and painless death."

Under the draft Bioethics Law amendment, French citizens would have been entitled to seek medical help to die when "in a terminal state, or with a serious and incurable illness causing physical or psychological pain."

The right would have applied when the pain "cannot be alleviated or is considered unbearable," enabling doctors to bring about the patient's death "as the outcome of a deliberate act."

During the Senate's Jan. 26 debate

on the amendment, Catholic pro-life groups conducted a vigil and protest, during which about 700 people pretended to be dead.

In a Jan. 25 letter to Senate members, the spokesman for the French bishops' conference, Monsignor Bernard Podvin, said the idea of "relentless therapy" for the dying repelled French people, but added that "things affecting the most intimate, ultimate, and sacred sphere and existential vulnerabilities" should not be legislated on.

Several bishops spoke against the legislation and urged Catholics to write to their senators.

Father John Harvey, OSFS, founder of Courage, group for celibate homosexuals, dies at 92

ELKTON, Maryland (CNS) — Oblate Father John F. Harvey, who founded an organization for celibate Catholic homosexuals that now has more than 100 chapters worldwide, died Dec. 27 at Union Hospital in Elkton. He was 92.

His funeral Mass was scheduled for Dec. 31 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Wilmington, Delaware, followed by interment in the Oblate Cemetery in Elkton.

An Oblate of St. Francis de Sales for 73 years, Fr. Harvey founded Courage, a spiritual support group for homosexual men and women, in 1980 at the request of Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York and served as its national director until his death.

Today, Courage has chapters in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Poland, Mexico, Slovakia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, the Philippines, and New Zealand.

"Fr. Harvey's commitment to pastoral care in the Church was tireless," said Oblate Father James J. Greenfield, provincial of the Oblates' Wilmington-Philadelphia province, in a statement. "Even in his later years, his travel would take him all over

the country and world to offer a voice of compassion."

Born in Philadelphia in 1918, Fr. Harvey entered the Oblate novitiate

after high school and made his first profession of vows on Sept. 8, 1937. He was ordained June 3, 1944, at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia by Auxiliary Bishop Hugh Lamb of Philadelphia.

Fr. Harvey had written more than 45 articles in professional theological and psychological journals on questions of human sexuality and counseling.

In addition to the members of his religious community, Fr. Harvey is survived by his sister, Margaret Smith, and many nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, the diocesan liaison for the DFW Courage group is Father Jim Gliotti. To find out about upcoming meetings, call (817) 963-6335.



Fr. Harvey

Bishops' Pro-Life Office hails House Committee move

WASHINGTON (USCCB) — The Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops welcomed the approval in committee of the Protect Life Act H.R. 358.

Sponsored by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-Pennsylvania) and Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-Illinois) and 123 co-sponsors, the Protect Life Act would apply longstanding federal policies on abortion funding, and conscience rights on abortion, to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) passed last March. On Feb. 15, the full House Energy and Commerce Committee approved H.R. 358 in a bipartisan vote (33 to 19), and rejected three amendments that would have weakened the bill.

"The committee's action is an important step toward authentic health care reform that respects the dignity of all, from conception onward," Deirdre McQuade, USCCB pro-life spokeswoman, said.

Helen Alvare, a former USCCB pro-life spokeswoman, spoke at a Feb. 9 hearing on the Protect Life Act before the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health.

Alvare focused her remarks on the conscience protection aspects of the legislation, saying that conscience protection should not be seen as "a zero-sum game between conscience-driven health care providers and the patients they serve, particularly the most vulnerable women."

"The nation can and should both respect conscience-driven health care providers, and deliver to the most vulnerable Americans the health care their human dignity requires," she told the subcommittee.

Catholic Pakistani cabinet minister not afraid of death threats

OTTAWA, Ontario (CNS) — Pakistan's minister for minorities refuses to stop speaking against his country's blasphemy law even though he is a primary target for assassination.

"I have been told by pro-Taliban religious extremists that if I will continue to speak against the blasphemy law, I will be beheaded," said Shahbaz Bhatti, the first Christian to hold a cabinet post in Pakistan.

Bhatti, a Roman Catholic, said he does not feel any fear.

"As a Christian, I believe Jesus is my strength," he said. "He has given me a power and wisdom and motivation to serve the suffering humanity."

"I follow the principles of my conscience, and I am ready to die and sacrifice my life for the principles I believe," he said.

Bhatti was in Ottawa Feb. 7, meeting with Canadian cabinet ministers to raise awareness of his campaign to reform the blasphemy law, which has been used to persecute Christians and other religious minorities.

Pakistan's blasphemy law was imposed in 1986 by General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, the former military dictator and president, who, Bhatti said, wanted to use religion as a "political tool to divide the Pakistani nation."

Bhatti is virtually the only public figure now speaking against the law since the Jan. 4 assassination of the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer. Taseer had protested the death sentence given to a Christian mother of five, Asia Bibi, who was found guilty of blasphemy.

Former Vatican Ambassador Glendon discusses making a difference in any vocation

PRINCETON, New Jersey (CNS) — When discerning the possibility of a vocation to political life, many question whether they will truly be able to make a difference in the world. But according to Mary Ann Glendon, focusing on one's immediate impact often misses the bigger picture.

Glendon, professor of law at Harvard University Law School and former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, spoke to a packed crowd of students, professors, and members of the surrounding community on the topic of politics as a vocation on the campus of Princeton University Feb. 7. The talk was sponsored by the Aquinas Institute, Princeton's Catholic campus chaplaincy.

Throughout her career, Glendon said, she has seen many promising students change their minds about a career in politics, often expressing concerns that they will either be forced to give in to political corruption to succeed or risk being ineffective if they stick to their values.

"Many wonder whether they would have to compromise their principles so much in order to get into a position where they could have some influence, that they might become a different kind of person, that they might lose their moral compass along the way," Glendon said. "And many

wonder whether even if they somehow survived with their principles intact whether ... things are so hopeless in the country or in the world that they won't be able to, as they say, 'make a difference.'"

Such concerns, she explained, are nothing new for those with political aspirations. Drawing upon the lives of Roman political philosopher Cicero and 18th-century statesman Edmund Burke as examples, Glendon demonstrated that the path to bringing about true change in the world is often bumpy.

At the time of each man's death, Glendon added, each may have considered himself a failure for his inability to achieve the political goals that he had set out to accomplish. Centuries later, however, history remembers both men as being greatly influential for the writings they left behind.

"I think the message here is that just because one doesn't see the results of one's own vocation in one's own lifetime, doesn't mean that those efforts were in vain," Glendon said.

Thus when discerning one's vocation, she concluded, the question of whether one can make a difference "is probably the wrong question." Instead, she said, "we shouldn't worry too much about whether we are going to see that difference."



Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC

Fr. Angel Infante, TOR, holds the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance as Alberto Serna, of St. Michael Parish in Bedford, reaches out.

Second annual Spanish-language men's retreat draws more than 350 to strengthen their faith

Approximately 360 men from around the diocese gathered at St. Bartholomew's Parish Jan. 22 for the second annual Spanish-language all-men's retreat, titled "*Hombres a Semejanza de Jesús*," (Men in the image of Christ), hosted by the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Although only a day long, the retreat featured a Mass celebrated by Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, praise and worship, three talks, and two plays.

Gustavo Muñoz, a speaker from St. Monica Parish in San Antonio, started with his talk on the importance of knowing oneself. He told the men that they were created by God in his image and likeness, and lovingly adopted as his children. He encouraged the

audience to realize that they were made uniquely (and well) by God and are cared for by the same God, even though people sometimes forget this because of the ways they are seen by others and the negative way they sometimes see themselves.

The second talk, presented by Father Ángel Infante, TOR, of All Saints Parish in Fort Worth, focused on the parable of the prodigal son in the Gospel of Luke.

After a Holy Hour in which the 360 men in attendance had time to meditate and pray before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, Muñoz finished the retreat with a final talk on the difficulty of forgetting one's past mistakes and moving forward in a new life in Christ. The retreat was a major blessing for all who attended, and their families at home.

Faith leaders bring personal testimony to dialogue on death penalty

HOUSTON (CNS) — Religious leaders, including Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, brought personal testimony and the beliefs common to their faiths to a recent dialogue on the death penalty.

Cardinal DiNardo said the care and support brought to families and communities victimized by murders is "an essential element and dimension of our religious convictions."

"The humanizing attitude we can bring to the manner of punishing crime and criminals requires now more thinking and action in our culture, particularly in this faith, toward the elimination of punishment by execution," he said.

The cardinal recalled leading a pro-life march in 2008, where 500 participants prayed at various sites through Huntsville. The mile-long walk ended with a vigil at the state penitentiary in Huntsville, which houses the state's execution chamber, and a meeting with prison authorities.

"It was a most sobering occasion," Cardinal DiNardo said. "The authorities were kind and clear in the explanation of what happens in the final days and hours of the prisoner who is to be executed. But in going into the death chamber and the surrounding rooms, there was an unmistakable aura and feeling of coldness, stark efficiency of everything that is opposed to the dignity of the human person, even

a guilty one. I found the occasion instructive and alarming."

Citing *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical indicating a preference for a "nonlethal means of punishment as more in keeping with the common good and dignity of the human person," the cardinal emphasized the need for catechesis on the death penalty with parishioners and seminarians.

Cardinal DiNardo, who is chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, also said that "sharing in the grief of those who lost a dear one by violence is a significant aspect of our humanity and of our Christian faith."

More than 500 people of various denominations attended the Jan. 18 symposium at the Hobby Center.

Joining Cardinal DiNardo in exploring the issue were representatives of the local Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Jewish, and Lutheran congregations and the group Pastors in Action.

Sponsors of the dialogue included Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty; Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; the Dominican Sisters of Houston; the archdiocesan Office of Justice and Peace; and the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

Briefly

Diocesan, State



Photo Courtesy of Leo Hanus

Leo Hanus, co-chair for the Denton Hike for Life, presents a check for \$8,500 to Randy Bollig, executive director for Loreto House, a crisis pregnancy center located in Denton.

Hike for Life in Denton raises \$8,500 for Loreto House crisis pregnancy center

The Denton Hike for Life, held Oct. 16, 2010, in South Lakes Park raised \$8,500 for Loreto House. According to its mission statement on its website, Loreto House is a "Catholic Life Center and a Sanctuary of Hope for any woman, of any faith, who is dealing with an unplanned pregnancy."

Approximately 100 hikers participated in the hike. Hike for Life Texas, which is organized and supported by the Knights of Columbus, raises money for crisis pregnancy centers throughout the state. Leo Hanus and his wife Lorraine served as chair couple for the event. Leo serves on Loreto House's board of directors, and is a past state deputy for the Knights of Columbus, and Lorraine volunteers at Holy Family Thrift Store which supports Loreto House.

This year's Hike for Life is scheduled for Oct. 15.

Texas Catholic Conference to sponsor Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day April 6 in Austin

The Catholic Faith in Action Advocacy Day, sponsored by the Texas Catholic Conference (TCC), the official association of the 15 Bishops of Texas, will be held April 6 this year at the state capitol in Austin.

A major function of the TCC is to be the public policy arm of the Bishops of Texas before the Texas Legislature, the Texas delegation in Congress, and state agencies. Catholics from around the state will be led by Bishop Kevin Vann, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio, Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin, Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, and Bishop Michael Mulvey of Corpus Christi.

"Legislative Advocacy Days are an opportunity for Catholics around the state of Texas to voice the priorities of the Texas Bishops and participate in the political process," said Catarina Torres, Missions and Social Concerns coordinator for Catholic Charities of Dallas in a promotional video on the TCC's website. "The Bishops outline a number of priorities according to our Catholic faith, and Advocacy Day is an opportunity to visit the capitol and voice issues that affect the life and dignity of the people in Texas."

Participants are invited to visit the state capitol and advocate for the Texas Bishops' legislative agenda. People can participate through prayers, phone calls, and by visiting the capitol on the advocacy day.

"State representatives and senators really appreciate regular Catholic voters coming and seeing them," said Rick Doucette, associate director of the Office of Life, Peace, and Justice for the Archdiocese of San Antonio, explaining how participation in the Advocacy Day impacts the legislature in the video. "Most of the time they tell us that they get visited by lobbyists that are paid by someone to advocate for a particular position and they very rarely see just regular down-to-earth voters. We bring a whole group of regular down-to-earth specifically Catholic voters that they really appreciate seeing."

The public policy issues addressed by the TCC include institutional concerns of the Catholic Church and issues related to Catholic moral and social teachings, according to the conference's website, www.txcatholic.org. As of right now, the public policy priorities of the TCC for the 82nd Legislative Session include:

The budget shortfall — "The TCC supports a balanced approach to solving the budget shortfall, including seeking revenue to adequately fund needed public services and prepare Texas for the future."

San Antonio executive Al Notzon appointed new chair of National Review Board

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has appointed Al J. Notzon III of the Archdiocese of San Antonio to chair the National Review Board.

He will succeed Diane Knight, the former director of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, at the close of the spring USCCB meeting in June and hold the post until June 2013. In making the appointment, Archbishop Dolan thanked Notzon "for graciously and generously agreeing to accept the responsibilities of chairing the National Review Board" and said he looks forward to working with him over the next two years.

Notzon retired after 35 years as executive director of the Alamo Area Council of Governments, a Texas association of local governments. He was appointed to the Archdiocese of San Antonio's review board in 2003 and currently serves as its chairman.

The National Review Board, which Notzon joined in 2008, was established in June 2002 as a consultative body that reviews the annual report of the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection on the implementation of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the recommendations that emerge from it. The National Review Board then offers its assessment to the president of the USCCB.

Archbishop Dolan thanked Knight, who was appointed to the NRB in 2007, for the "excellent and collaborative manner" in which she had led the

National Review Board since 2009 and "related that to the Committee on the Protection of Children and Youth and to the bishops as a whole." He also said he looked forward to working with Notzon over the next two years.

"The bishops of the United States greatly appreciate the prayers, advice and support of the NRB as we continue our efforts to fulfill our promises to reach out to victims/survivors, assure the safety of our children and young people, and foster the holiness of our clergy," he added.

Bishop Blase Cupich of Spokane, Washington, chairman of the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People, also welcomed the news of the appointment commenting, "I look forward to continuing our collaboration with the members of the NRB under Mr. Notzon's leadership. They make an enormous contribution to the Church in helping the U.S. bishops to foster a safe environment for children and outreach to victims."

Notzon holds a bachelor's degree in economics from St. Mary's University in San Antonio and has done graduate work in economics, law, and urban planning.

Details regarding the National Review Board, its functions and other members, can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/ocyp/nrb.shtml>.



Al Notzon

In Memory

Monsignor Hubert Neu, PA, (1927-2011), former rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, dies after nearly 60 years in priesthood

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

Monsignor Hubert J. Neu, PA, a retired priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth who served 15 of his almost 60 years in the priesthood at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth, died Jan. 28.

Family, friends, and fellow priests remembered Msgr. Neu as being a man of quiet integrity and strength with a deep faith.

Bishop Kevin Vann presided at the Mass of the Resurrection celebrated Feb. 2 at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth. He was joined on the altar by more than 20 priests and deacons of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

A memorial Mass was held at Sacred Heart Church in Muenster Feb. 3. Father Raymond McDaniel, pastor of St. Peter Church in Lindsay, Msgr. Neu's home parish, concelebrated the memorial Mass with Sacred Heart pastor Father Ken Robinson. Interment followed in St. Peter Church Cemetery in Lindsay next to the chapel donated by the Neu family.

Msgr. Neu was born May 28, 1927, in Lindsay, son of the late Joseph John and Ida Flusche Neu. He attended St. Mary's School in Gainesville, Lindsay High School, and graduated from St. John's Seminary in San Antonio.

"He left home when he was only 17 years old," said Msgr. Neu's sister, Ann Bayer of Lindsay. "Father Conrad Herda, OSB, was at St. Peter's before and after my brother left. I think he was instrumental in planting the seed. My brother was a Mass server, and then there were my parents. We come from people of faith," she said.

Ida Bindel, another of Msgr. Neu's sisters, also remembers that Fr. Herda and the faith that was encouraged by their home life, were great influences on Msgr. Neu.

"We used to pray the Rosary together, especially when the weather was bad. We would gather around and pray. When we were kids, we played the Mass," she said.

Msgr. Neu was ordained to the priesthood May 30, 1951.

His youngest sister, Cecilia Hoenig, said her family was looking forward to celebrating his 60th year as a priest this May.

"When he celebrated his first Mass as a priest, I was 11. I carried



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A young Father Hubert Neu in a portrait. Msgr. Neu was ordained to the priesthood in 1951. • A recent photo of Msgr. Neu, who served at various parishes throughout the diocese during his almost 60 years of priesthood. • Msgr. Neu presides over his parents' renewal of their wedding vows on their 50th anniversary at St. Peter Church in Lindsay. • Msgr. Neu wearing his purple cassock in 2008, signifying his honorary rank of "protonotary apostolic." He was nominated for the papal honor in late 2007, with his installation and blessing in 2008, at the request of Bishop Kevin Vann. • A young Fr. Neu with four of his five siblings and his parents. • A more recent photo of Msgr. Neu and his five siblings. • Fr. Neu discusses plans with a designer for St. Matthew Parish in Arlington. He was named pastor of the newly established parish in 1964.



his chalice, which was tied on a pillow," Hoenig remembered.

Msgr. Neu's brother Charles and all his sisters recalled that Msgr. Neu presided over many of their family members' weddings and children's baptisms over the years.

Msgr. Neu's first assignment was as associate pastor at St. Bernard Parish in Dallas (1951-1954). Other associate pastor assignments included St. Monica, Dallas (1954-1960), St. John, Ennis (1960-1962), and again at St. Bernard (1962-1964). In 1962, he was substitute pastor at Our Lady Queen of Peace in Wichita Falls.

In 1964, he was appointed as the founding pastor of St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, where he served until 1977. Other pastoral assignments included Our Lady Queen of Peace, Wichita Falls (1977-1981), Most Blessed Sacrament, Arlington (1981-1995), and St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth (1995-2008). During his priesthood, he had served on multiple diocesan committees both

before and after the Diocese of Fort Worth's establishment in 1969, and as dean of the Arlington Deanery.

Fr. Neu was granted the title of "Prelate of Honor" (Monsignor) by Pope Paul VI on Sept. 20, 1974, at the request of Bishop John J. Cassata, then bishop of Fort Worth.

Msgr. Charles King, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton and a very close friend of Msgr. Neu, said because Msgr. Neu was very deliberate and thoughtful in everything he did, he was a great asset to the diocese's building committee.

"You always knew he was a rock of stability. With Msgr. Neu on the building committee, you knew things would be taken care of solidly. He did not take things lightly," Msgr. King said.

Msgr. Neu was nominated as a Protonotary Apostolic by Pope Benedict XVI, on Nov. 10, 2007, with blessing and installation on June 15, 2008, at the request of Bishop Kevin Vann. The honor is the highest papal honor that can

be conferred on a member of the priesthood. He retired from full-time ministry on Aug. 1, 2008. He continued to work with the diocesan Building Committee, Pastoral Finance Committee, as a judge on the Marriage Tribunal, and as a member of the writing committee of the 2009 Meitler Study for Strategic Planning. He also served on the 2010 Campaign Leadership Team for the "All Things Possible" diocesan capital campaign.

Msgr. Neu is survived by his brother, Charles Neu and wife, Mary; sisters, Ida Bindel, Ann Bayer and husband, James, and Cecilia Hoenig and husband, Raymond; numerous nieces and nephews; and extended family members.

Bishop Kevin Vann thanked Msgr. Neu for his many years of service to the Dallas and Fort Worth dioceses in his Feb. 4 blog, at fwbishop.blogspot.com, titled, "Thank you, Hubert."

Bishop Vann pointed out that the Gospel reading for Msgr. Neu's funeral was the account of the

disciples on the road to Emmaus. In his homily at the funeral, Bishop Vann compared those two disciples' journey to every person's journey in life through death, pain into eternal life — including Msgr. Neu's — from growing up in Lindsay, being ordained a priest in San Antonio, and serving various parishes in the Dallas-Fort Worth Diocese and later the Fort Worth Diocese including St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth.

"He was a great administrator, one of the smartest businessmen whom I knew, and absolutely calm and 'unflappable' in situations that would have most of us rattled," Bishop Vann wrote in his blog. "Yet, most of all, he was a priest, and that was clear to all who knew and loved him over the years. His chief concern in any of his assignments was the people to whom he was assigned: He knew that God's flock was in his midst and he gave them a Shepherd's care, just as the letter to St. Peter proclaimed in the second reading for his Mass of the Resurrection," Bishop Vann wrote in his blog.

Bishop Vann said during Msgr. Neu's 15 years at St. Patrick, he supervised the interior and exterior repair and renovation of the cathedral, which was built in 1888.

"The presence of this parish in this neighborhood has seen many changes over the years, but it has always been a solid, faithful reminder of the abiding presence of Christ here in the city. The work done during Msgr. Neu's pastorate laid the foundation for this venerable edifice and very much alive parish to become the focal point both for the Diocese and the city of Fort Worth," Bishop Vann said in his blog.

After Bishop Vann heard of Msgr. Neu's death on Jan. 28, he went with Father Joseph Pemberton, rector of the Cathedral, to say the prayers of commendation for the deceased.

"When I had given him the final blessing, I noticed two things: His *Liturgy of the Hours* was at the head of the bed, and he had his walking shoes on! Just like the story of the two Disciples on the road to Emmaus, at the moment he was called, Msgr. Neu was having his conversation with the Lord, and he was walking with Him into eternal life!" Bishop Vann wrote in his blog.

Sister Rosalynn Nguyen, CSFN, from Christ the King professes first vows

By **Juan Guajardo**
Correspondent

For Sister M. Rosalynn Nguyen, an almost life-long interest in religious life recently became something much greater than that: a commitment. What started as an inkling of curiosity about the religious life of her priest uncle at age seven began building into a calling by the time she entered her confirmation class at Fort Worth's Christ the King Parish, and was solidified Feb. 12 when she took her first profession of vows to join the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (CSFNs).

Among those in attendance at the first profession ceremony at Jesus the Good Shepherd Convent Chapel in Grand Prairie, were dozens of sisters, five priests, three Dominican friars, and several friends and supporters of Sr. Rosalynn. Bishop Kevin Vann presided over the Mass assisted by Deacon Don Warner.

In the pews, Sr. Rosalynn's parents, younger sister, and older brother looked on proudly as she professed vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience before Bishop Vann and Sister Sally Marie Kiepora, CSFN provincial superior. Sr. Rosalynn was then presented with a black veil signifying that she belongs entirely to Christ. Then she was presented with a profession cross intended to serve as a reminder of her brokenness and that she, like all committed Christians, lives by the Father's strength within.

Being Sr. Rosalynn's first profession, her vows were for one year. She will have the opportunity to renew them next year.

"It's the first commitment," Sr. Rosalynn said. "It's kind of like I'm becoming a full member of the community of the sisters and that by making the vows, this is the commitment I made to live for Jesus.... This is like the first taste of what my life will be in the fullness of how the sisters live right now."

Bishop Vann gave the homily,



Sister Rosalynn Nguyen, CSFN, makes her first profession to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, at Jesus the Good Shepherd Convent in Grand Prairie. Sr. Rosalynn grew up at Christ the King Parish in Fort Worth. (Photo by Juan Guajardo / NTC)

telling Sr. Rosalynn that God is acting in her life in a caring way, and that is reflected in the faith of her family and the community of sisters, faith that is continually strengthened by the sacraments.

"Here in Texas, ice and snow and rain ... will always point to the hand of God, and why?" Bishop Vann asked. "Because winter rains

and snow will reveal the hand of God at work, and the magnificent colors of the wildflowers in the spring, the bluebonnets, the Indian paintbrush, the Indian blankets, the evening primrose, all of the rainbow of colors — it in fact is the hand of God ... I truly believe that same hand of God that paints that beautiful portrait in the spring for us here in Texas ... is at work in your life, bringing together many strands of color as it were, united together this day, as you profess your first vows to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth."

The bishop then encouraged her to go forth and give witness to the love and presence of Christ to a fractured world that is distant from God.

After the Mass, Sr. Rosalynn presented flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary as an act of gratefulness and as part of a Vietnamese tradition observed during important events.

Sr. Rosalynn then expressed her thanks to her formation directors: Sisters Margaret Langsett, Edyta Krawczyk, Marietta Osinska, and Barbara Jean Wojnicki. She also thanked Bishop Vann, and her friends and family in attendance.

"A wise Chinese proverb says

that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step," Sr. Rosalynn told all those in attendance.

"My journey to Nazareth and in Nazareth has been made up of many steps. And all of you here in person have walked with me, challenged me, and prayed for me. I am both humbled and grateful."

Since joining the CSFN's in 2005, Sr. Rosalynn has gone through six years of formation, first as an affiliate, then a postulant, and then a novice before taking her first vows. In four more years, she'll be given the opportunity to make perpetual vows to the congregation.

The Sisters of the Holy Family are an international congregation of religious women dedicated to spreading the Word of God to families by serving in ministry at schools, hospitals, parishes, and social service organizations. The Holy Family Province, based in the U.S., has about 350 sisters serving in various states.

In early March, Sr. Rosalynn will begin her ministry assignment helping teach middle school children at St. Adalbert Parish in Elmhurst, New York.

Sr. Barbara Jean Wojnicki who met Sr. Rosalynn a year and a half ago as her formation director during the novitiate said the first profession of vows was a particularly special achievement.

"It's a milestone for any particular person who has been in formation, something you look to as one of the goals," Sr. Wojnicki said. "Of course the next goal would be perpetual vows. A person who makes first vows has already made a commitment to the Church through this congregation and our way of life. And it's such a sign of hope to see somebody say 'yes' to that ... because our world doesn't see that too much anymore. So it's a sign of hope," she said, "and it's a great blessing to the congregation as well."

Lenten Vocation Awareness Program

Sponsored by Bishop Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD and the Serrans of the Diocese of Fort Worth



Men

**Monday evenings
March 14 to April 18**

Single Men and Women Discerning Between Single, Married, and Religious Life



Women

**Tuesday evenings
March 15 to April 19**

St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth

- 6:00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
Exposition and Reflection on Christ**
- 6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer**
- 7:00 p.m. Closing Benediction**
- 8:30 p.m. Free evening meal**
- 9:00 p.m. Closing Prayer and dismissal**



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<http://gettag.mobi>

With the gift of the Holy Spirit, this program is designed to assist participants in answering discernment questions such as: "What is my purpose in life?" - "How do I realize my calling from God?" with a comparative look at single, married and religious life. For more information, please visit the Fort Worth diocesan website on vocations at www.fwdioc.org; or contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300, ext. 105 or vocations@fwdioc.org. There is no cost to attend.



BUSINESS LEADERS - AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

Legatus, the international organization for Catholic business leaders and spouses, is rapidly growing its membership in the Ft. Worth area. Legatus members are committed to study, live, and spread the faith in their business, professional, and personal lives. If you are, or were, a business owner, CEO, President, Managing Director or Managing Partner, Legatus would like to invite you and your spouse to one of its meetings. Legatus meets the 2nd Thursday evening of each month. We start at 5:45 PM at St. Patrick Cathedral with Confession, Rosary, and Mass. Reception, dinner, and listen to internationally known speakers at the Ft. Worth Club. For more information contact Jack Sheedy at 214-959-5454 or jsheedy@gucl.com. Legatus website: www.legatus.org.

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Buck up contemplatives lamps aren't set under baskets

By Denise Bossert

Itell people that I'm a contemplative by nature. And there's actually some truth to that. It is also true that I am a bit agoraphobic. I am more comfortable at home than I am anywhere else.

One of the hardest things about being Catholic is the simple fact that we do not have a private faith. We may have a private prayer life. Conversion may begin as a quiet, hidden movement of the Spirit. But when we receive the Eucharist, we are sent out to do something about it. Our faith gets turned inside out.

We cannot hide from our neighbors. We cannot hide from work. We cannot hide from making friends and trying new things.

As much as I would like to receive our eucharistic Lord and then head home until next Sunday, I can't do it.

I grew up in a pastor's home, and for a couple of years I was even a pastor's wife. For a reason I never quite understood, the parishioners enjoyed getting the inside scoop on life in the parsonage (Protestant equivalent of the rectory). Those years in the pastor's fishbowl had an impact on me. The once-outgoing-girl is now a slightly anti-social grown-up.

There's no place like home. Indeed! Reclusive writer. Sign me up!

I'm not great at chit-chat. I'd rather take an on-line class than become part of a Bible study. One of the best inventions was the telephone answering machine. I just don't do crowds, shopping, or socializing.

Some people thrive on meeting and greeting the world. I'm just not one of them.

Like it or not, as a Catholic, I'm under the microscope even more than I was as a preacher's daughter or preacher's wife. The laity doesn't have an eye on me any more. But the non-Catholic world is watching – and the world is watching you. The world wants to know whether or not Catholics really live what they profess. They are fascinated by our weaknesses, though they often ignore our strengths. We're under a microscope, and that complicates things.

I don't know about you, but that makes me want to hide. If I keep to myself, I can control what gets judged. And I like it that way.

The saints set the record straight. We are meant to engage the world. Clothe yourself in Christ and get out there. The saints are like the friendly coach who pats his JV kid on the back and says go get 'em. The coach watches from the sidelines, knowing all too well that the kid is afraid of the ball, afraid he might miss a shot or afraid of getting creamed by some oversized opponent.

If I could have a chat with my guardian

If I could have a chat with my guardian angel, I suppose he would have a bit of wisdom for me. He'd probably say what angels have always said when they greet someone. "Don't be afraid."

angel, I suppose he would have a bit of wisdom for me. He'd probably say what angels have always said when they greet someone. "Don't be afraid."

I'm glad my little phobia is just that – little. It is something I can wrestle with and overcome through the gift of God's grace. It only has the upper hand if I let it. When I manage to set aside the fear of looking like a weak specimen of the faith, then it's not so overwhelming.

That's when I get out there and strike up conversations and let those conversations touch on the things that matter most.

Oh, I'd still prefer the life of a reclusive writer to that of an active Christian. I'd still prefer to be on my knees after receiving the Eucharist rather than out in that very challenging world where anger and fear and pride hit me at every turn. But this faith isn't an either/or kind of faith. It is a both/and faith. Eucharist and society. Contemplation and action. Prayer and participation.

I'd still rather call myself a contemplative than admit that I have social anxiety.

Sure, I could spin it. I could even deceive myself and keep the world at arm's length. And then I might miss the opportunity to share the Gospel in word or deed. I might miss the chance to connect with someone who might teach me a thing or two about this journey to God.

So, I listen to the wisdom of the saints and my guardian angel. I leave the fear on the bench, and I go get 'em.

Denise Bossert is a convert to the Catholic Church. Her column Catholic by Grace has appeared in 43 diocesan newspapers. She lives in the Archdiocese of St. Louis and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in New Melle, Missouri.

The True Story...

Yes these 4 really are the Gospel Truth

By David Mills

"As you, and anyone remotely familiar with ancient history know, Christian history was written and re-written during the 2nd through the 4th centuries C.E., to fit both the known and the desired facts of Jesus' life and the objectives of an emerging orthodox Christian theocracy." So declared one respondent in an online discussion of an article I'd written.

He was criticizing other respondents who had said that they had good reasons for believing in Christ, including the witness of the Scriptures and the early Church.

To be fair, he does summarize the broad scholarly consensus. Most scholars of the ancient world and many of the historians of early Christianity would say what he said. But they begin with the assumption that intellectual disagreements are always driven by self-interest and marked by struggles for power over others. That is the way they read history, and there's obviously something to it, people being sinners.

Something, but not everything. Sometimes people fight for ideas because they think them true. The traditional Christian story is that the Church protected the truth and had to fight continuing attempts to distort or corrupt it. Some were well-intended, some probably not so well-intended.

Many scholars say that this requires a naïve view of history. What we think of as orthodox Christianity was, they say, only the theology of the group that beat the other groups. They won, so they got to claim that they were the real Christians who had guarded the true story of Jesus.

A lot of these scholars also believe that the other groups had better theologies. Mostly they argue that their theologies are a lot more liberating than the Church's. The main dissenting group was a loose collection called the Gnostics, who might seem at first glance more "spiritual" because they thought the material world a bad thing, which means they hated the idea of God becoming man.

One version of this scholarly view claims that in the early Church "gospels 'multiplied like rabbits' ... and that it was only very late that the Church somehow selected the Four in preference to other widely-known and equally-valid claimants." I am quoting from a review by Jeff Mirus of a useful book called *Who Chose the Gospels?* by a Protestant scholar named C. E. Hill.

Hill shows by reading all the early Christian writers that at least as far back as the early second century, not long after the last gospel (John's) was written, the four gospels "were universally regarded

Hill, writes Mirus, looked "at the known fragments of papyrus which contain texts either from the four canonical gospels or from other claimants. He finds that the papyri attest to the Four being enormously more widespread than the relatively few others, with fragments running nearly 40 to 1."

Fragment of 2,100-year-old Isaiah Scroll, at the Israel Museum of Jerusalem's Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem. (ICNS photo/Israel Museum in Jerusalem)

as exclusively authoritative." Note that "universally" and "exclusively."

He also, writes Mirus, looked "at the known fragments of papyrus which contain texts either from the four canonical gospels or from other claimants. He finds that the papyri attest to the Four being enormously more widespread than the relatively few others, with fragments running nearly 40 to 1."

Every example we have of other works using the gospels, like those that combined the gospels into a single story or set out the stories side by side, includes only the four gospels, and none of the others. Finally, only the four gospels were used in the liturgy, as good a sign as any you can imagine of which books the early Christians believed crucial to their faith.

You'd think that if these other gospels were serious contenders for the allegiance of the early Christians, some early writers would have treated them as gospels, and that we'd find more fragments of them, and that at least a few other works would include them, and that some churches somewhere would have read them in the liturgy. But we don't.

There is more to be said, even for the scholarly view. They would say, for example, that the evidence tilts one way because the Church didn't preserve the other groups' writing, which does make sense.

But even granting the possibility that the evidence for the Church's teaching may not be as great as it appears, it is great enough to disprove the idea that we have the gospel story we have, only because some early Christians simply imposed their version on everyone else. Maybe we have it because people who had known the Son of God passed it on to people who wanted to know him too.

David Mills is deputy editor of FIRST THINGS and author of DISCOVERING MARY. Jeff Mirus's article can be found at www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=477.

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Supporting Immigration Reform

It's time to get Washington to fix the broken system

By Fr. Stephen Jasso, TOR

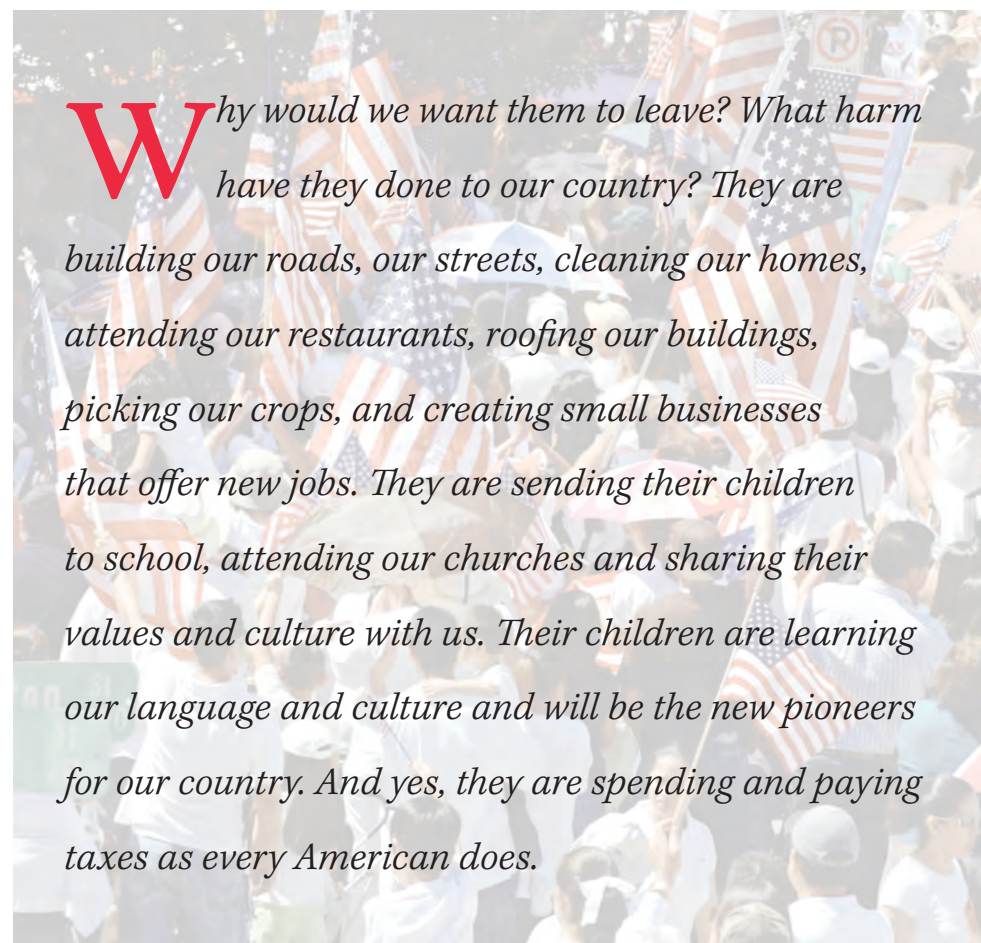
Since my arrival in Fort Worth, almost 18 years ago, I have heard our leaders in Washington tell us that we have an immigration system that is broken. I believe it's time for them to take action and fix it. The greatest nation in the world with a broken system, that is responsible for the accountability of those who want to come here to be part of the American dream, is not acceptable. A leadership in Washington, that is not willing to fix our immigration system, is not acceptable. Not solving the issue by our leadership in Washington will only complicate things for the local state leadership which will take actions on their own, and that should not happen. We have polarized the broken system on the undocumented immigrants, and we want to punish them for it, instead of fixing a system that is not working.

In his speech on immigration reform on July 1, 2010, President Barack Obama said he is ready and the majority of the Americans are ready to move forward with the immigration reform. Why is our leadership in Congress and the Senate not ready?

In the 1980s the Catholic bishops of America said, with faith and conviction, that the immigrants are "a blessing for the country and a gift to the Church." Why would we want them to leave? What harm have they done to our country? They are building our roads, our streets, cleaning our homes, attending our restaurants, roofing our buildings, picking our crops, and creating small businesses that offer new jobs. They are sending their children to school, attending our churches and sharing their values and culture with us. Their children are learning our language and culture and will be the new pioneers for our country. And yes, they are spending and paying taxes as every American does.

The undocumented are not taking jobs away from our citizens; they are doing the jobs we left behind. The number of unemployed people we have is not due to the undocumented. That level of unemployed workers is waiting for new jobs to be created for them; they will never do the job the undocumented are performing now.

The world looks at America as a role model of Human Rights. Therefore, we have to be sensitive to the many families and their children who live with the daily psychological pressure that at any time they may be deported; children who know no other life, than life here in America, children who live with the idea that maybe when they come home from school Mom and Dad may



Why would we want them to leave? What harm have they done to our country? They are building our roads, our streets, cleaning our homes, attending our restaurants, roofing our buildings, picking our crops, and creating small businesses that offer new jobs. They are sending their children to school, attending our churches and sharing their values and culture with us. Their children are learning our language and culture and will be the new pioneers for our country. And yes, they are spending and paying taxes as every American does.

not be there for them. It is easier to create and implement punitive laws than to reform a system that is not working. Let us not take the easy road that only hurts innocent children and families.

Deportation is not the solution to an immigration system that is broken and not working. This would hurt our country in more ways than one. President Barack Obama said in his immigration speech July 1, 2010 that "a program of mass deportation would disrupt our economy and communities in ways that most Americans would find intolerable. Such an effort would be logistically impossible and wildly expensive." The President also said: "Moreover, it would tear at the very fabric of this nation – because immigrants who are here illegally are now intricately woven into that fabric."

From reliable sources (like the Immigration Policy Center: www.immigrationpolicy.org) we know that the immigration reform would be a boost for the economy of the nation. It has been said the documentation of the immigrants "would translate into at least a cumulative \$1.5 trillion in added GDP (Gross Domestic Product) over 10 years, which includes \$1.2 trillion in consumption and \$256 billion in investment." Our nation needs them here.

I understand that an immigration reform goes beyond the issue of the undocumented and requires collaboration

from all political leaders involved and information on the issue from other countries, especially our neighbors to the south. I am confident that we have the experts who know how to do this job. As we seek and pray for a reform of our immigration system, do not let fear be the guide, but truth. Our nation should always be guided by truth. If we let other principles guide us, we will lose the battle.

The immigration reform was a presidential campaign promise, topic of a major speech in 2010 and addressed in the State of the Union message in 2011. I urge our leaders in Washington not to ignore this issue and roll-up their sleeves and start working on it. The reform of our immigration system will be a blessing for our country in more ways than one.

Let us pray that soon our leaders in Washington may start to reform our immigration system that is not working and give to our nation and to the world an immigration system that is just and human and that works.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

—Matthew 25, 35

Fr. Stephen Jasso, TOR is the pastor of All Saints Church on Fort Worth's North Side.

Let's make surgical cuts, not chain saw the budget

By Jeff Hensley
Editor, North Texas Catholic

This isn't the first time Washington and our state capitols have been under siege by those intent of cutting budgets. Only a decade and more ago, conservative victories resulted in panicky thinking and actions among those who supported government funding for all things having to do with the support of the poor.

During that particular time, I observed despair that cutbacks would be severe, that budget cuts would be wholesale, taking out whole programs rather than doing belt tightening and trimming of bloated or overfunded or unneeded programs.

And the cuts will definitely be more drastic during this crisis.

But there are signs to encourage us that cuts will not be draconian.

It sounds at the current moment as if Congress will defund a two-billion dollar project providing for "back up" jet engines for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter being produced at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth. It seems none of the military personnel involved in planning was in favor of it, and now that the pressure is on, they're finally being listened to.

And the congressional district benefiting the most from the project was that of John Boehner, Republican Speaker of the House. Imagine that.

Perhaps because the discussion is being done in such an open version of horse trading on the floor of the House, the outcome will be better. Perhaps getting some of the tradeoffs out of smoke-filled committee rooms and out where the discussion can be heard by the general public will introduce more common sense.

Perhaps, and this would be the best outcome of all, Congress will look at the Common Good rather than the Pork Barrel as the highest good.

One last observation: one of the criteria that were used in the last crisis was the measured effectiveness of the programs being considered. If only that which is not effective is cut, the harm will be that much less.

It could happen.

Vocations

Responding to God's call

Do you live for God?

Do you get the feeling sometimes that we as Christians are not on the path we are supposed to be on? Do you sense that we are too wrapped up in the world today?

Can we not say that Christianity has lost its direction because it has taken its eyes off of Christ, and, instead, it has been looking and listening more to the world? Are we not upside down because we have chosen to align ourselves with the world rather than with God?

I am not talking about the many advances in science, medicine and technology. All of these are good things if used properly. Rather, I am speaking of the world that has rejected religion, ethics, or a higher power. So, how are justice, laws, and civility advanced when everything becomes subjective? Answer: They can't be.

I personally did not mind the recent uproar in Fort Worth with regard to the local buses having signs stating, "Millions of people are good without God." It shocked many people and religious leaders. But, why should we be surprised? Besides, some group paid for those ads, and I support the people's freedom of religion or non-religion to do so. At the same time, I also know the many historical events in time and their atrocities

when mankind has chosen to deny freedom of religion or, likewise, when people have used religion to justify the unjustifiable.

Directly applicable to this problem is a phenomenon occurring in our culture today that is attacking our Christian community, especially our teenagers and young adults. Today, the promotion of non-religion, secularism, and atheism is gaining ground in our country (those claiming no religion has nearly doubled from 8.2 percent to 15.0 percent, and atheism has doubled from 0.7 percent to 1.6 percent between 1990 and 2008 — The American Religious Identification Survey), but worse is the effect it has had in our schools, universities, and neighborhoods, by pulling our children away from their faith and salvation in Christ. We must respond to this crisis, and let us not delay.

If we want to get to the root of the problem, we need not investigate atheism, because nothing exists there — pun intended. Rather, we need to look at our faith and try to determine what is missing in the Christian life that is clearly making many of our children vulnerable to this secular world and distracting them away from Christ. I have spent several months pondering this question and asked many priests and lay leaders this question too. In addition, I pored over Sacred Scripture seeking answers. The dominating response that I received, which reverberated and grew stronger and stronger, was that many families do not pray together. They have not experienced the saving power of Christ in prayer or through regular reception of the

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, following his ordination in May 2002 at Sacred Heart Church in Muenster. Even then he appeared to be inviting people to ask if they were called to a vocation.



By Father Kyle Walterscheid,
Director of the Office of Vocations

Sacrament of Reconciliation or attendance at Mass and the Holy Eucharist. Our faith is not being passed on from parents to children, and teenagers and young adults do not even know what sin is anymore.

Yes, it's true. What we take for granted as older adults in our faith, teenagers and young adults have a tough time understanding. We must go back and teach the basics of our faith, as well as return to a meaningful and consistent prayer life with our children.

In the classroom, we need more men and women teaching and volunteering who know our faith and are able to be good listeners and responders to real questions that teenagers have about the faith and its teachings, while praying with them and communicating with God in using devotions, Liturgy of the Hours, and time before the Blessed Sacrament.

I firmly believe that the true message of Jesus Christ as Savior and triumphant over evil is not being communicated and taught in our classrooms. Hence, combined with a lack of communion with Christ through daily prayer and knowing their faith, our young Catholics are vulnerable and easily tempted into the hands of secularism, materialism, hedonism, and sinful paths of perdition without realizing the cost of jeopardizing their salvation given to them at baptism through the blood of Jesus on the cross.

As we encounter Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew leading up to Lent, let us be reminded that John the Baptist came proclaiming, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." Repent from what?: "their

sins" states *Matthew 3:6*. Jesus repeats this proclamation and then begins to explain the roots of sin that pass beyond the law, as well as the good that we ought to do, which obeys no human law at all but is the path that leads to eternal life as defined in *Matthew 7:21*, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." Let us welcome Christ in our midst and make our faith alive, so that it is embraced by our children as well.

My last question as a litmus test of our faith is as follows: Do you live for God? If we live for God, then our life will be immersed in things and people that are holy, helping others while assenting to Christ through prayer and the Church in all things. If not, then we have made some concessions toward secularism and atheism which are a direct cause of children's lack of faith.

That being said, we do have many excellent young men and women who understand the importance of our Catholic faith, as well as those who do not understand as much but who, nevertheless, know they are called to help bring Christ to the world in concrete ways.

I ask that you help the Vocations Office in promoting our Lenten Vocation Awareness Program that is designed to help like-minded young men and women see their purpose in life more clearly while having a setting that supports them as they discern God's will for them. Please see our additional ad and help spread the word of these events. Christ has given us momentum, so let's add to it with our prayers and encouragement.

Church must offer more encouragement, support for vocations, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholics must be more courageous in highlighting and fostering vocations, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Every Christian community, every member of the Church needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations," especially in an era when God's voice "seems to be drowned out by 'other voices' and his invitation to follow Him by the gift of one's own life may seem too difficult," he said in his message for the World Day of Prayer for

Vocations.

Those who experience a clear call to priestly or consecrated life need encouragement, support and the possibility of feeling "the warmth of the whole community as they respond 'yes' to God and the Church," he said.

The papal message for the day of prayer, which will be observed May 15, was released Feb. 10 at the Vatican. The 2011 theme is "Proposing Vocations in the Local Church."

In his message, Pope Benedict said proposing vocations on the local level means

"having the courage, through an attentive and suitable concern for vocations, to point out this challenging way of following Christ which, because it is so rich in meaning, is capable of engaging the whole of one's life."

The local Church needs to become "more sensitive and attentive" to helping children and young people grow in their relationship with Christ through prayer and the sacraments, become more familiar with Sacred Scriptures, be generous and loving toward others, and "understand that entering into God's will does not crush or destroy a

person, but instead leads to the discovery of the deepest truth about ourselves," he said.

The pope underlined the importance of having quality staff in every diocesan vocations office, and he also called on bishops to help maintain "an equitable distribution of priests in the world."

"Your openness to the needs of dioceses experiencing a dearth of vocations will become a blessing from God for your communities and a sign to the faithful of a priestly service that generously considers the needs of the entire Church," he told bishops.

Catechesis

The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ

By Lucas Pollice



The second of the two sacraments of healing is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. For many centuries it was considered to be a final preparation for death and was only administered to those who were gravely ill. While it is certainly still appropriate and crucial to those who are dying, the Second Vatican Council restored the sacrament to be made available to those who are not in immediate danger of death but are sick, be that physically, mentally, or even emotionally.

This great sacrament of healing imparts upon us a grace of healing and also the grace to accept and embrace our suffering with faith, hope, and love. Suffering is an inescapable part of human life, and the Anointing of the Sick joins our suffering with the suffering of Christ so that we may more fully share in his strength and love.

ORIGIN OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has always been a part of the sacramental life of the Church and its origins can clearly be seen in Scripture in the Letter of James:

Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

James 5:14-15

This reference very explicitly shows that the sacrament was already developed and being practiced in the New Testament Church. It also gives a remarkably simple but clear theology of the sacrament. We will use James' description of Anointing of the Sick to explore more deeply this powerful sacrament of Christ's healing grace.

VATICAN II OPENS THE SACRAMENT TO ALL WHO ARE SICK

As Vatican II rightly stated, the Anointing of the Sick is not just for the dying. As St. James asks, "Is anyone among you sick?" This sacrament is for any baptized person who is suffering in any way, which includes physically, mentally, or even emotionally. It is for the healing of the whole person. Illness and suffering are not limited to the physical realm; even physical illness affects us mentally and emotionally.

Any baptized person who is ill or suffering is eligible to receive the Anointing of the Sick. Of course there are those times in which it is without question appropriate and ought to be received, such as right before surgery or in the case of serious illness. Many parishes offer it after Mass, especially on the first Friday when we celebrate the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It can also be received by simply meeting with a priest, and ordinarily priests make the sacrament available regularly at hospitals and health care centers.

Anointing of the Sick should always be given when one is in danger of death. This is also known as "Last Rites" which not only includes the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, but also includes Penance and Eucharist. When one is in danger of death, they first celebrate the sacrament of Penance which forgives them of all sin. This is followed by the Anointing of the Sick which gives them the healing grace of Christ to prepare them for death. Then the last sacrament given is the Eucharist, called *viaticum* which unites the dying person to Christ and is the spiritual food for one's "passing over" into eternal life.

In the case that a dying person is unconscious and cannot make a confession of sins, the Anointing of the Sick also grants a grace of absolution of sin. Ordinary reception of this sacrament does not grant absolution; one would still need to receive the sacrament of Penance.

In discussing the Anointing of the Sick, it is very important to understand what is meant by healing. Oftentimes when we hear the word "healing" we immediately associate it with physical healing. But it can happen in many ways, even without the presence of physical healing. Receiving the sacrament does not necessarily mean we are going

to have a miraculous cure of our illness. Certainly that is possible, or many times physical suffering may be lessened or the illness departs more quickly than expected. The reality is that God knows what healing we need most. The grace we receive in the Anointing of the Sick may bring a healing and peace to help us to embrace our suffering with peace and love. It may be a deeper spiritual healing that frees us from sin and helps us to see God's plan and purpose to our suffering. Sometimes God's ultimate healing is death and the passing into eternal life.

The point is that the Anointing of the Sick goes a lot deeper than physical healing, and that is the real grace of the sacrament. Peace and healing do not always bring about the absence of suffering. In fact, suffering often calls us to greater love, greater faith, and greater sacrifice. The Anointing of the Sick gives the healing grace of the Holy Spirit that can heal us in ways we may not even expect.

EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The Anointing of the Sick, like all the other sacraments, is efficacious; it gives us grace and transforms us to be like Christ. It unites us to the suffering Christ, so like Him, we may entrust ourselves into the hands of the Father and more perfectly do his will, even in our suffering.

Imparts a Special Gift of the Holy Spirit

This gift of the Holy Spirit is a gift of strengthening, peace, and courage to overcome the difficulties that come with our suffering and illness. It strengthens us against the temptations of despair, and deepens our faith in Christ. It is a gift of the healing of the soul that may lead to the healing of the body if it is God's will.

Unites Us More Fully to the Passion of Christ

The grace of the Anointing of the Sick enables us in a unique and mysterious way to unite our suffering with the Passion of Christ. By being sacramentally united to Christ's Passion, we not only receive his strength, but by offering our suffering to be united with his, we also participate in his saving mission. Suffering presents us with a unique and powerful opportunity to love. Thus, we are given a special grace to offer our suffering with Christ to the Father for our own salvation and the salvation of others.

Unites Us More Closely to the Church

Through the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick we are not only more closely

united to the suffering Christ, but also to his body, the Church. The sacrament calls for the intercession of the communion of saints to pray for the sick person to receive the consoling grace of the Spirit. In turn, the suffering of the sick person is offered for the sanctification and holiness of all the Church.

Gives Us the Grace of Final Preparation

For those who are dying, the Anointing of the Sick gives us the grace of final preparation for the passing into eternal life. It marvelously brings to completion within us all the fruits and graces of the sacramental life received in our lifetime. Along with Penance and the Eucharist, the Anointing of the Sick completes our transformation into Christ and participation in his death and Resurrection. The *Catechism* beautifully states:

The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life. This last anointing fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.

CCC, 1523

The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is truly a great sacrament of healing and mercy that reminds us that Christ is the Good Shepherd, who in the words of the psalmist, shepherds and protects us even in times of great suffering and even death: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (*Psalms* 23:4).



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.

Features

It may seem odd, but Lent teaches us about true love

By Jeff Hedglen

Today I encountered two separate scenarios that perfectly display what passes for love in sappy love songs, so-sweet-you-get-a-cavity romance novels and too good to be true romantic comedy movies, and it occurred to me that these are actually just a façade of what real love is. Real love is not a walk in the park with music playing as flashbacks of scenes of your relationship fade in and out. True love is not an all or nothing, one time total gift of self. Real, true, actual love has very little to do with how you feel at any given moment.

In the first scenario a young man who is engaged to be married walked into my office and said “Jeff, you’ve been married for 16 years; how did you know Monika was the one?” I could tell by the sour look on his face he was trying to decide if the woman he had proposed to was ceasing to be “the one” for him.

We talked for a while, and it became clear, that at least from his point of view, the amount of giving being done was very one sided. The issues at hand were pretty serious ones, the kind that are deal breakers. It seems as if his fiancée was not open to the idea of trying things his way. I encouraged him to take a hard look at these issues, and if she was not willing to budge on them, he might need to reconsider the engagement. You see, if she really loves him, she would at least try things his way.

Anyone who is married knows that we do not always do things the way we might like. We most certainly do things we do not feel like doing, but we do them out of love, not some butterfly in the stomach feeling, but real love.

The second scenario that brought to mind the false depiction of love we see regularly in the media came on a TV show. A person was awarded a prestigious grant that

meant moving out of the country for three years. The person they were dating didn’t want to go out of the country, but was committed to the relationship and agreed to go along, though it was clear that it was not this person’s first choice.

At the airport, as they were about to leave the person who won the grant finally had had enough of the half-hearted effort and said they would rather go alone. Well as you might imagine, a fight ensued. The half-hearted one said they were willing to go for three years, even though they were not excited about the trip, because of the love between them. The other person said they would rather go alone, if going on the trip made the other person unhappy.

At this point I paused the television program and turned to my wife and said: “Do you love me?” She said: “Yes.” I said, “Are you happy with my work schedule?” She said: “No.” I said: “Does this make you not want to be with me?” She said: “No.”

Love is not about how we feel about something; it is about what we do about something.

Love is not about how we feel about something; it is about what we do about something. Valentine’s Day is supposed to be a day to celebrate love. Yet all too often it is used as a materialistic measuring stick for the façade of love. If the only day of the year we express our love is Feb. 14, then we really do not love.

If candy, flowers, and a nice dinner are the measure of love, then love is pretty cheap.

True love really is measured in sacrifice. In a few weeks we will be starting one of the most important seasons of the year, Lent. These 40 days are a time to contemplate the supreme act of love. Our contemplation of Jesus’ sacrifice for us should compel us to sacrifice something too. This is the purpose behind the fasting, abstaining, giving up, and doing extra during Lent.

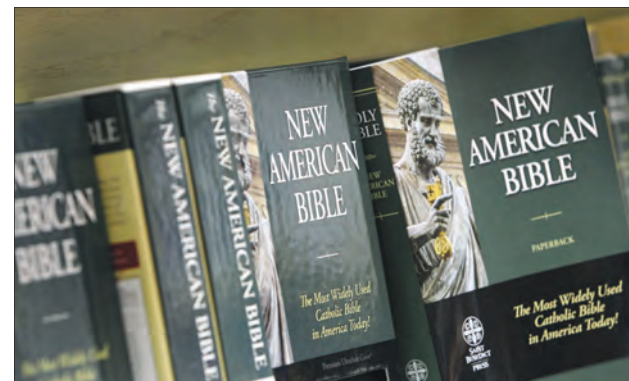
To be sure falling in love is magical, but staying in love, living in love, is a lot of work. This might not be as romantic as candy and flowers, but it lasts a whole lot longer.

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.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

A kangaroo and emu are seen on a wall in the chapel of the soon-to-be-completed Domus Australia in Rome Feb. 8. The new guesthouse will offer pilgrims not only modern accommodations but also daily Mass in English and an information center. It is slated to open July 1.



(CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Copies of the New American Bible, a Catholic Bible in English first published in 1970, are pictured in the book store at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Feb. 2. Revisions were published in 1986 and now this Bible has undergone its first major update since then, with a revised edition to be released March 9, Ash Wednesday, and made in available various print, electronic and audio formats.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Members of religious orders hold candles as Pope Benedict XVI celebrates vespers in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Feb. 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord and the World Day for Consecrated Life. The pope recited a special prayer to entrust members of religious orders and institutes to the protection of Mary.

Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

1. Land adjacent to Jerusalem
2. Topple
3. O _____, where is thy sting?
4. Spanish for “go into”
5. Impromptu

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi

I DON'T GET IT.

ADULT STEM CELL RESEARCH IS PROVIDING MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS WITHOUT HARMING HUMAN EMBRYOS.

YET PEOPLE IN HOLLYWOOD DEMAND THE GOVERNMENT FUND FRUITLESS EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH.

IT FIGURES...THE SAME PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE SCIENCE FICTION SUPPORT FICTIONAL SCIENCE!

The FLOCK by Jean Denton

WE'RE VERY BUSY RIGHT NOW TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES.

BUT IF WE DO A GOOD JOB, WE'LL HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA TO GIVE TO YOU!

JUST BE PATIENT.

I'LL TRY.

Me, too.

Remembering Roe



Marchers push empty carriages labeled with years representing every year since abortion has been legal in the United States at the Roe Memorial March in Dallas Jan. 22. (PHOTO BY DONNA RYCKAERT / NTC)

A Call to Action

Editor's Note: This reflection was written by Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, the director of the Catholics Respect Life Office for the Diocese of Fort Worth. The North Texas Catholic decided to put her reflection and call to action at the front of this four-page pullout section to inform our readers of the role they can play in the effort to end abortion.

Last year at the annual Respect Life Mass with Bishop Vann, we were one person short for the candlelight procession — one candle for each million lives lost to abortion. So, I held a candle and stood in line. As I stood, waiting for my turn to process forward and set the candle on the altar, I tried to focus my attention on the procession in front of me. My mind was a flurry of activity — is everyone moving forward at a steady pace? Please, Lord, let no one fall or burn themselves... All was going smoothly, then, I looked down into the little red votive and watched the tiny flame flicker. The heat from that small flame seemed to hit my face like a furnace and wash over me. I thought I was going to faint; my knees literally wobbled and almost buckled. All I could think was, *is this really it? Is this all I can do, all I can offer for one million lives lost?* I could feel the tears welling up.

This year for the thirty-eighth anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, issued a press release on their website in which she stated that, "...this landmark ruling [*Roe v. Wade*] is facing an unprecedented attack ... and we have to do whatever it takes to protect the gains we have made" This kind of language greatly troubled me. We, as defenders of the sanctity and dignity of all human life, will NOT do "whatever." Rather we will move forward with prayer and conviction, reaching out in charity while continuing to stand firm in the knowledge that every life has an innate value and purpose from the very moment of conception to that of natural death.

The truth is that the value of an individual life is not limited to the fact a mother chose this one particular child at a specific point most convenient in her life, but rather that life is always a gift from the Creator meant for society as a whole. Anything less, in our actions or ideologies, devalues who we are, both as Christians and as human beings, and turns our words and deeds into hollow and meaningless gestures. This truth, however, is commonly set aside in the name of convenience or rights or fear. Therefore, action is required.

John Paul II, in a January 1999 homily at the Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis called us all to action when he said, "America first proclaimed its independence on the basis of self-evident moral truths. America will remain a beacon of freedom for the world as long as it stands by those moral truths which are the very heart of its historical experience. And so America: If you want peace, work for justice. If you want justice, defend life. If you want life, embrace the truth — the truth revealed

by God."

Some of the things that can be done are actually as simple as a phone call, note, or even an e-mail to your elected representatives here in Texas and in Washington, D.C., about the importance of proposed legislation.

Some proposed legislation in Texas:

- House Bill — HB 85: This bill would prohibit governmental entities in Texas from providing support to a person or facility that performs abortions.
- House Bill — HB 201: This legislation would require a physician to review a woman's ultrasound with her prior to her having an abortion. The woman, however, is not required to view the ultrasound. Companion: Senate Bill — SB 130
- House Bill — HB 238: This legislation would allow for the "Choose Life" license plates. A portion of the funds from every plate purchased would be placed in an account from which grants would be distributed to charitable organizations that help pregnant women place their children for adoption. Organizations that provide abortions, abortion-related services or make referrals to abortion providers would be excluded from this funding. Companion: Senate Bill — SB 257

These are just a few of the proposed pieces of legislation that directly affect abortion and/or abortion funding here in Texas. For more information and a detailed look at all the proposed legislation that pertains to the life issues visit the Texas Catholic Conference's website at www.txcatholic.org and go to the "Public Policy: Current Legislation — Bill Reports" section. Please, take a few moments to educate yourself on the various pieces of proposed legislation and then contact your

state representatives and be a voice for the unborn. At the state level 100 to 150 phone calls to a representative's office on a specific piece of legislation is often considered "a flood" of activity, and in some of the smaller districts as little as a few dozen phone calls can make a considerable impact.

At the federal level there is the potential for significant gains via proposed legislation as well:

- No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act — H.R. 3: This would establish a permanent law prohibiting the use of federal tax dollars for elective abortions.
- Abortion Non-Discrimination Act — H.R. 361: This would protect the civil rights of health care professionals and other health care entities by strengthening existing federal conscience protection laws.
- Protect Life Act — H.R. 35: This bill seeks to correct serious flaws in the health care reform law — the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) — which was signed into law in 2010 and is flawed in its treatment of abortion, conscience rights, and fairness to immigrants.

For more information on these pieces of proposed federal legislation you can visit the website of the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, an arm of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, at www.NCHLA.org and click on their New Action Alerts link at the top right.

I should note that at this year's Respect Life Mass, as I remembered that moment from the Mass last year, holding that tiny little light, I made a conscious effort to recall a few lines from the Gospel of St. Matthew, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (*Matthew 5:14-16*). As I reflected upon these words I realized that while these candles are lit to memorialize those whom we have lost, they are also meant as a reminder to us — to be a light amid the darkness. We must be who we are, Christians. We must be the light we are called to be, united to and illuminated by Christ for it is through Him alone that we will finally dispel this darkness.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (*John 1:1-5*).

Chanacee Ruth-Killgore
Director, Catholics Respect Life Office

Remembering Roe

Bishop Vann offers the Word as an instruction manual for pro-lifers in crusade to end abortion at diocese's annual Respect Life Mass

Story and Photos by
Kristin Zschiesche
Correspondent

At the annual diocesan Respect Life Mass, about 300 of the faithful gathered in St. Patrick Cathedral on Friday, Jan. 21, watching prayerfully as 51 candles were placed on the altar in memory of the 51 million deaths that have occurred since the U.S. Supreme Court upheld *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that legalized abortion 38 years ago.

The liturgy, observed each January to mark the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, featured an honor guard by Fourth Degree members of the Knights of Columbus, a somber candlelight procession, the Book of the Innocents containing the names of aborted babies, and encouragement to call upon the Word of God for direction in the crusade to end abortion.

Bishop Kevin Vann asserted that the Word of God is the “instruction book” to follow as Catholics uphold their conviction that all life is sacred from conception to natural death. He likened the set of instructions given to us in God’s Word to the instructions accompanying model airplanes he received as a child at Christmas.

The bishop described how each year his models became more complex. After some unsuccessful attempts, he learned to first examine the whole project along with its parts and consider the finished product prior to following the instructions step by step. He found this process ensured success, giving him a sense of accomplishment and pride.

“I mention this as an analogy to why we are here this evening,” said Bishop Vann. “Above all we have a set of instructions that are written by the hand of God. They are instructions of faith.”

The bishop described how the Word of God “reminds us again and again where life comes from, that we are the bearers of the image of the life of God, and that the gift of life is not ours to decide but is a gift from God.”

Saying these instructions show how to live out our respect life and pro-life ministry, he said, “We never meet evil with evil or hate with hate, but above all, meet it with love that comes from God who is stronger than all.”

Upon the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, Bishop Vann offered a reminder of the need to value all human life especially the lives of those who are vulnerable, saying of them, “No matter who they are, no matter how old they are,



ABOVE: Fifty-one Catholics processed to the altar at St. Patrick Cathedral with candles in remembrance of the 51 million lives lost to abortion since 1973 when *Roe v. Wade* legalized the practice.

RIGHT: Bishop Kevin Vann exhorts the congregation to rely on the Word of God as an instruction manual in the effort to end abortion.



no matter how far along they are in the cycle of life, no matter how far along they are before birth, they depend on us to carry the message (for life). They depend on us to carry the message to those who don’t believe it, to those who don’t want it, but who must hear it again and again and again. We carry that message with confidence and courage and strength.”

Following Bishop Vann’s homily, the faithful processed in pairs to the altar, with each of the 51 Catholics carrying a lit candle in remembrance of the 51 million abortions that have occurred since *Roe v. Wade* was upheld.

“It’s significant how many lives have been lost since 1973,” said Debra Heron, a St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioner and the diocesan Gabriel Project coordinator, referring to the millions and millions of innocent babies lost to legalized abortion.

The Mass concluded with Bishop Vann offering a blessing for those who work in Respect Life ministries.

The Catholics Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth, which organizes the annual Mass, strives to protect the most vulnerable — the unborn, the disabled, the chronically ill, and the elderly through education, pastoral care, prayer, and worship. The Catholics Respect Life Office, led by Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, works in union with parishes and families to minister to those in need of support during their pregnancies, those suffering from post-abortion trauma, and to change public policy and legislation in an effort to restore the dignity due every human life from conception to natural death.



National March for Life draws

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Laura Strietmann, the director of a Cincinnati crisis pregnancy center, calls abortion “the issue that is shaping our country,” and said the challenge for pro-lifers is to get everyone “to respect life again.”

In her work, she hears the stories of women’s pain and sees pregnant women in need who “are hungry for the truth about abortion,” she said. “When they come in the door, we need to love them and tell them the truth,” that abortion is taking a life, she added.

Strietmann, a member of St. Rose Parish in Cincinnati who is enrolled in a lay pastoral program at the archdiocesan seminary, believes no woman really wants to have an abortion, but many feel they have no

other choice.

She spoke to Catholic News Service at the National March for Life rally on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C., toward the Supreme Court building in Washington Jan. 24, where thousands gathered to mark the 38th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that handed down *Roe v. Wade*.

The National March for Life had not released an estimate for the number of participants. Catholic News Agency and the National Catholic Network said there were hundreds of thousands.

Bundled up against the cold, many were hovering in the mid-20s, peering through the rally site from various points of view. Many signs, many of them homemade, were visible.

Among the messages were “Unborn babies are people”; “Abortion kills a person”; “I was born because my mother did”; “Unborn babies are people”; “Defund Planned Parenthood.”

One couple waiting for their child to be born held up two identical signs that read: “Thank you for the child you adopted: Thank you for the child you adopted.”

◀ March for Life participants make their way up Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court building in Washington Jan. 24. The annual pro-life demonstration marks the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion across the nation. (CNS photo/Jason Reed, Reuters)

Remembering Roe

Teen reflects on her pilgrimage to Washington for March for Life



Members of the diocese's Youth for Life group met with Representative Kenny Marchant, whose district includes portions of the Northeast part of the diocese.



Bishop Kevin Vann leads a delegation from the Diocese of Fort Worth in Night Prayer in the crypt of the National Basilica, following the Vigil Mass.



Members of the delegation from the Diocese of Fort Worth stand in front of the Supreme Court building following the March for Life.

Editor's Note: The NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC asked one of the students who attended the March for Life in Washington to write a first-person account of the events surrounding the March and what she took from it. Photos are courtesy of adult chaperone Joe Jordan.

"Exhilarating!" This is how I feel about my pilgrimage to the National March for Life in Washington D.C. My experience there is now a cherished memory that I will never forget. Frank and Sue Laux were the leaders of our group, along with several other awesome chaperones. One of the best parts of the trip was attending Mass at 6:45 a.m. Saturday, in the little chapel at the DFW airport. Celebrated by Father Raymond McDaniel from Lindsay, Mass was definitely the best way to begin our journey....

My favorite event in D.C. besides the March itself was the Mass for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. We arrived there around three hours early, and the church was already packed. Luckily, we found seats on the floor here and there, though it was a very tight squeeze. Although the wait was long and at times uncomfortable, it was completely worth it. There were countless deacons and seminarians, over 300 priests, and more than 45 bishops and cardinals! The procession alone was 45 minutes long! Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, was the principal celebrant and homilist. At one point, when I listened to 20,000 voices singing the "Our Father," I could feel the Holy Spirit resonating in my heart.

After Mass, our group gathered in the [basilica's] crypt to pray Night Prayer with Bishop Kevin Vann. I thought it was so cool to have our very own bishop with us on our pilgrimage, and I was thrilled to find out he would also be marching with

us the next day. All of the youth agreed that having Bishop Vann there with us was a true blessing.

The next morning, our group rose early to attend the Youth Mass in the Armory. Along with 10,000 other pro-lifers, my friends and I sang to the awesome praise and worship music performed by Bob Rice and Sarah Hart. His Eminence Cardinal DiNardo was again the celebrant, and the homilist was Father Patrick Riffle. Fr. Riffle told us that we are all called to proclaim Christ, and as the youth of the Church, we can truly be witnesses to the Gospel of Life by living chastely.

Finally, the event came that we had all been waiting for: the March for Life. Joining some 400,000 other pro-lifers that Monday afternoon, we marched (and sometimes trudged), up the hill to the Supreme Court. The best part was turning around and surveying the masses of people behind me shouting protests and waving banners. I also loved arriving at the Supreme Court and seeing a minuscule little clump of pro-abortionists, surrounded and smothered by the message of life.

On Tuesday morning, the last day of our pilgrimage, we headed to Planned Parenthood. Though we were tired and cold while praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, we were certainly proud to be there defending life. Once, I saw three different people peek out at us through the clinic's blinds. Even though I knew we were not there to be observed by the clinic workers, it felt good to be noticed, and I could not help grinning.

Lastly, we visited a couple of the Smithsonian museums and then the Holocaust Museum. The Holocaust Museum was incredible. As I walked through those dark halls, the images and facts presented before me were baffling, [not to mention] depressing. The fact that moved me the most



Students, chaperones, young adults, and seminarians from the diocese pray a Rosary across the street from the Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington D.C.

was not portrayed in the museum, but I knew it was true. The Holocaust during World War II shockingly took 11 million lives, but the holocaust of abortion today has claimed over 50 million lives [in the United States alone], which is heartbreaking.

The pilgrimage was exhilarating to me because even though sometimes I feel like just a girl in a pro-life T-shirt amidst an anti-life society, I know that I'm not the only one battling the fatality of abortion. Having marched with 400,000 other soldiers for Christ, I know the culture of death we live in will not last. Someday love and justice will prevail, and I firmly intend to see that day.

Rachel Cox is a 15-year-old parishioner from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.

Thousands of participants from across the country

News Service as she headed to the rally site on the National Mall. Hundreds of pro-lifers were gathered there since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalizing abortion. The National March for Life website posted on its website the names of participants, but the diocese did not have a list. Eternal Word Television reported that hundreds of thousands of people streamed toward the rally, carrying all manner of signs. One sign read: "Choose life: Your children feel pain"; Face it: "Abortion is a regret lost fatherhood"; and "I'm here." The rally to begin held the mother of our 4 children for their lives."

Along a block of Pennsylvania Avenue, not too far from the rally site, Deborah Mischenko of Mineville, New York, had put up a simple display of nine poster-size images — starting with an image of an embryo and the words "I'm here," and going through the development of a fetus in the womb. The final image was of a newborn and the words "I'm here."

Mischenko, who is with Mountain Meadows Christian Center, told CNS she had received pretty positive reaction from passers-by. "The whole point is you don't have to argue with these," or even say "abortion," she said.

Before the March for Life rally started, Stephen Kosciesza of Wheaton, Maryland, walked through the crowd with a sign that read, "Abortion — a neat, quick easy way out for men." He said it described the "selfishness of men who stand to benefit" from abortion.

Kosciesza said he comes every year, adding that it is important the march take place in the "epicenter" of government and will keep coming back until abortion is ended.

Max Potts, 22, was with a group from the pro-life group at De Sales University in Center Valley, Pennsylvania. Asked why he was there, he replied, "I have four words for you: because babies are awesome."

Archpriest Chad Hatfield, chancellor of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, New York, came with a group of priests and their wives and families and seminarians. He told CNS "the right" to life is a judicial term and stressed that what he and other pro-lifers are standing up for is the belief that "life is a gift from God and we're here to make that witness." The evening before the March for Life, some of the teens who were gathered on the campus of The Catholic University of America to attend the all-night life vigil spoke to CNS about the importance of the events marking the *Roe* anniversary.

"It is a terrible sin," Charity Jamison said about abortion. The 15-year-old was with a group from St. Edmund Campion Academy in Cincinnati. "For me, it is terrible to think of all the friends who weren't born because of abortion."

"We are here to protest against stuff we know is wrong," said her schoolmate Naomi Fredette, 16.

"We can't kill innocent children. I have seven siblings and I can't imagine not having them or not wanting them," she continued. "It's important that we pray about it. The experience is spiritually strengthening, and a big group allows your voice to be heard."

Fredette believes in the power that comes with numbers, not only strengthening an individual's spirituality but also sending a message that can change minds.

"What can you do?" asked Jenifer Readnour, 18, of Kentucky. "You can pray or volunteer at pregnancy help centers. But the march is also good because it allows us to gather together and be heard."

Joe Finke, 17, who also was from Kentucky, said he participates with his friends but that he would protest even if he were the only one. "Some come here because

(SEE 'NATIONAL MARCH' ON P. 16)

Remembering Roe

Dallas Bishop Farrell reminds pro-lifers that Jesus stands with them before march

By Donna Ryckaert
Correspondent

“This day cannot go unmarked; it is our obligation as a People of Life to remember the lives lost and stand up in prayer and witness for the lives to come, until the tragedy ends.”

An invitation from Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas, to join him Jan. 22 in the annual Roe Memorial Mass and ecumenical Dallas March for Life carried that message. The Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Dallas and concelebrated with Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann, Dallas Auxiliary Bishops Mark Seitz and J. Douglas Deshotel, and priests of the dioceses of Dallas and Fort Worth.

The day, which commemorated the 38th anniversary of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, began with a memorial Rosary at the Routh Street abortion facility. Mass started at 10 a.m. to a capacity crowd in the Cathedral’s

sanctuary. Shoulder-to-shoulder overflow crowds in the Cathedral’s Grand Salon and in an outside tent located near the cathedral watched the Mass from a live video feed. All three were filled by 9:15, 45 minutes before the Mass was scheduled to begin.

Bishop Farrell welcomed and thanked all attending for making the pilgrimage. His homily referred to the gospel of *Mark 3:20-21*, “When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him for they said, ‘He is out of his mind.’” The bishop stated that “this nation thinks that we are out of our minds” in the heated national debate over abortion. He reminded the congregation that they are in good company. “We have Jesus on our side.” He asked the congregation to continue to pray and witness for a “Culture of Life” and challenged all to follow the example of the Apostles.

One by one we are called to change the minds of those who do not believe, Bishop Farrell said, and he reminded the

congregation of what Jesus did with just 12 Apostles.

A representative born each year from 1973-2010 carried one rose to the altar during a procession of roses in memory of the 51 million babies who have died by abortion in the U.S. in the past 38 years. A pregnant mother, representing the babies who will die in 2011, carried the final rose.

After Mass, Bishops Vann and Farrell along with the accompanying bishops and clergy led participants outside to start the ecumenical 2011 Dallas March for Life. Thousands had already gathered in the street to join the 1.7 mile walk, which ended at the Earle Cabell Federal Courthouse where *Roe v. Wade* was first filed in 1970. Along the way, thousands more, many from First Baptist Church of Dallas, joined in.

A Dallas police officer estimated the count to be nearly 10,000, up from the 6,000 people who attended last year. The March ended with a Rally for Life in the parking lot across the courthouse.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A young boy holds up a pro-life sign in front of the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe during the march. • Bishop Kevin Vann (left), and Dallas Auxiliary Bishops J. Douglas Deshotel (center), and Mark Seitz, lead the procession into the Cathedral Shrine to concelebrate the annual Roe Memorial Mass. • Overflow crowds stand outside the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe during Mass. • Crowds of Mass-goers flowed to the outside of the Cathedral Shrine and past an outdoor overflow tent. All those outside the church were able to watch the Mass on live video feed. • An estimated 10,000 people marched in the 2011 Dallas March for Life, which began at the Cathedral Shrine and ended at the Earle Cabell Federal Building. • A nun walks up to the altar with a rose during a procession of roses in memory of the 51 million unborn babies killed by abortion. A representative born each year from 1973 forward carried a rose to the altar. • Thousands of people walk away from the Earle Cabell Federal Building, the end point of the ecumenical Dallas March for Life, and the location where *Roe v. Wade* was first filed in 1970. • A pro-life sign sits in front of the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. (Photos by Donna Ryckaert / NTC)



National March

(CONTINUED FROM P. 14)

they ‘have to’ or because their friends are here. Those reasons help, but I would come here no matter what,” said Joe Finke, 17, of Kentucky

He added: “I think the march is also good because it has started to make people see how many are pro-life and not pro-choice.”

Early in the morning on the day of the march and rally, on the other side of the Capitol, volunteers in the parish hall at St.

Peter’s on Capitol Hill began their day at 4 a.m., preparing a warm welcome for pro-life marchers who came by bus overnight. By day’s end, they expected to have handed out 175 dozen doughnuts, served gallons of hot coffee and hot water for tea and hot chocolate, and given out numerous small containers of juice.

Chartered buses started arriving around 4:30 a.m. Pro-lifers came in waves throughout the morning and then headed down to the Mall. St. Peter’s also offered four Masses before noon.

Why do it? “Because the parish is always pro-life” and shows solidarity with the marchers, said volunteer Dr. Anthony Martinez, a physician who just returned from a volunteer medical mission to Haiti. He said he has seen the enthusiasm for the pro-life cause build “like a crescendo” over the years, especially among young people.

But laws on abortion won’t turn around “until the powers that be, the leaders of this country make logical decisions,” Martinez said, adding, “I believe in my heart it (*Roe*) will be overturned. And prayer is the key.”

Just like when he was a child, he recalled, and Catholics prayed for “for the conversion of Russia. It happened.”

“It’s a full expression of our faith,” said coordinator Suzanne O’Connor about the parish’s support for the pro-life marchers. She said the parish has provided hospitality since the first anniversary of *Roe*. But, she noted, it doesn’t happen without dozens of volunteers working throughout the day and helping with preparations in the days before.

Contributing to this story was Becket Adams.

Operation Rice Bowl, national CRS program that raises awareness of global hunger, poverty, begins Ash Wednesday, March 9

Every year, millions of Catholics in the United States participate in Operation Rice Bowl, Catholic Relief Services' annual Lenten program that starts on Ash Wednesday, March 9. Each Lent, Catholic parishes and schools from more than 12,000 communities use symbolic rice bowls as the focal point for their prayer, fasting, and learning. Getting involved in the program is a tangible way to help people living in poverty around the world.

Participants in Operation Rice Bowl make the small sacrifice of preparing simple, meatless recipes each week and putting the money they otherwise would have spent on a big meal into symbolic rice bowls. That money goes to support CRS' mission to fight global hunger and poverty.

"Participating in Operation Rice Bowl provides Catholics with 40 days of making a real difference in the lives of people struggling with hunger and poverty," says Beth Martin, program manager for Operation Rice Bowl. "Learning about our brothers and sisters in developing countries and following the call to sacrifice helps thousands of people onto a path out of poverty

every year."

An Operation Rice Bowl calendar provides daily reflections and learning opportunities — told through the eyes of people helped by the program — that reinforce ORB's message and mission. To help families, schools and parishes participate in Operation Rice Bowl, CRS also makes a number of resources available, including an "Educator's Guide" containing lesson plans and a "Coordinator's Guide" to help Catholics participate as a group.

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, Rice Bowl containers will be distributed at the school level, and at the parish level through religious education and other programs, allowing children an opportunity to participate in the program, said Deacon Len Sanchez, diocesan chancellor and director of Pastoral Ministries.

"The children learn about charity, giving and receiving, and at the same time, they gain an understanding of what it is to extend their help to the underprivileged," Dcn. Sanchez said.

Last year, Catholics raised more than \$6 million through Operation

Rice Bowl, 75 percent of which is used to fund hunger and poverty projects in 40 countries. The remaining 25 percent stays in U.S. dioceses to support food pantries and soup kitchens.

"Not only does it help the individuals that give, it also gives a portion back to the diocese, so we can give to the families that are in need in our diocese," Dcn. Sanchez said.

Since its beginning in 1975, ORB has raised more than \$191 million to fund CRS' development projects. With active participation in almost every diocese in the U.S., many communities and families have adopted Operation Rice Bowl as a way to observe Lent.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to help others through the Rice Bowl," Dcn. Sanchez said.

Catholic Relief Services is the international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency provides assistance to people in more than 100 countries and territories based on need, regardless of race, nationality, or creed. For more information, visit www.crs.org or www.crsespanol.org.

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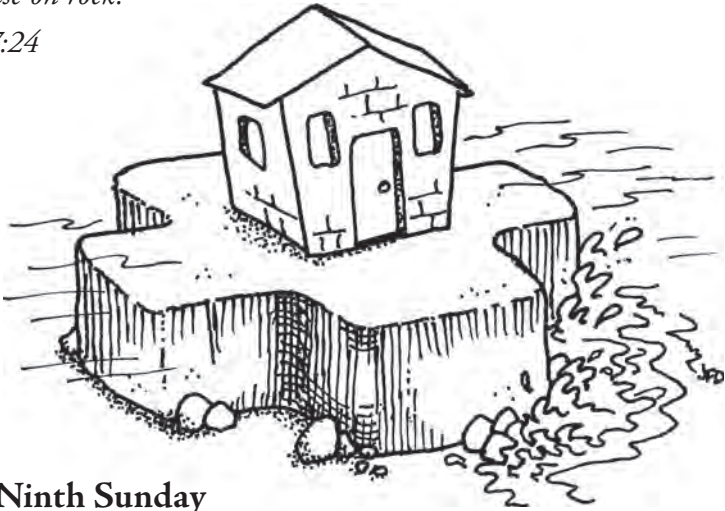
Marie Claude Calixte and the transitional shelter that CRS built for her. Photo by Benjamin Depp for CRS

Word = Life

Readings Reflections

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”

—Matthew 7:24



March 6, Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28, 32
Psalm 31: 2-4, 17, 25
- 2) Romans 3:21-25, 28
Gospel) Matthew 7:21-27

By Jeff Hensley

It is interesting that Jesus uses the example of some so-called disciples who would claim to have done mighty deeds, prophesy, and drive out demons in his name as those who will not enter the kingdom of heaven. The reason isn't that he is against such actions, but that these who are proclaiming their "mighty deeds" have not done the Father's will or obeyed Jesus' teachings.

We know that love of God and love of neighbor are the Father's will and the foundational stones of all of Jesus' teaching. So it is more than guessing to say that deeds falling outside that teaching, no matter what they are called, are the disobedience that Jesus is talking about.

Those who fail to heed that teaching, Jesus promises, will see the collapse of the "house" they've chosen to build on sand rather than on the rock of God's word.

In East Texas many years ago, a good friend of my family attended a funeral presided over by the pastor of a local charismatic church. A baby had died after much prayer for its healing, and now came the child's burial. At a critical point in the service, the pastor lifted the tiny frame from the casket and in an accusing tone said, "Look. This is lack of faith."

You have to wonder how many of the people present ever attended his – or any other – church again.

The story, as distressing as it is, is not a testimony against prayer for the sick, but shows what lack of obedience to the law of love looks like when clothed in spiritual pride.

One can well imagine that those who act in such a way would ultimately hear Jesus' reproach: "I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers."

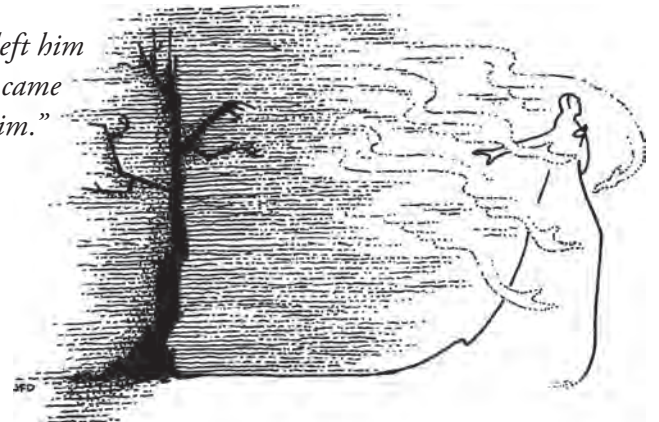
Meanwhile, many others who have prayed earnestly (and often effectively) for the healing of others, acting in love, would receive Jesus' welcome and walk into his outstretched arms.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever seen religious faith used to shame others? What can each of us do to assure that the sharing of our faith with others springs from genuine love?

“Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.”

—Matthew 4:11



March 13, First Sunday of Lent. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7
Psalm 51:3-6, 12-13, 17
- 2) Romans 5:12-19
Gospel) Matthew 4:1-11

By Jean Denton

In the early days of our family life, my husband was let go from his job – two weeks after our third child was born.

It was a stressful time. For three months, he interviewed for several promising positions and finally decided to accept a job with the Fort Worth newspaper. He was pretty excited about it. But, frankly, I was a little disappointed and confided as much to my friend and cousin, Jack.

The other possibilities all offered much higher salaries, I told him.

The downside, I admitted, was that those high-paying jobs were not in my husband's field, nor did they involve work that even interested him. But we'd both been impressed by the pay scale that was beyond anything we'd ever imagined for ourselves.

Still, it appeared he was going to opt for journalism, a pursuit for which he was gifted and for which he'd had a passion since he was in high school.

Fortunately, I only whined to Jack instead of actually revealing my dismay to my husband.

A successful accountant, Jack spoke to me gently. "The problem with those high-paying positions is that once you're in them, you get so used to the money that it's difficult to ever get out," he explained. "Then if you're stuck, doing something you don't believe in, you'll regret it the rest of your life. It's better not even to go into that situation."

His words ended my brief slide into temptation.

Jack's wisdom followed the Gospel for this first Sunday of Lent: entreating us not to abandon our loving Father's care for the transitory promises of this world.

Despite the temptation to seek more money, my husband chose a job he believed to be worthwhile and went on to a long, fulfilling newspaper career – that, incidentally, wasn't without some lean financial periods.

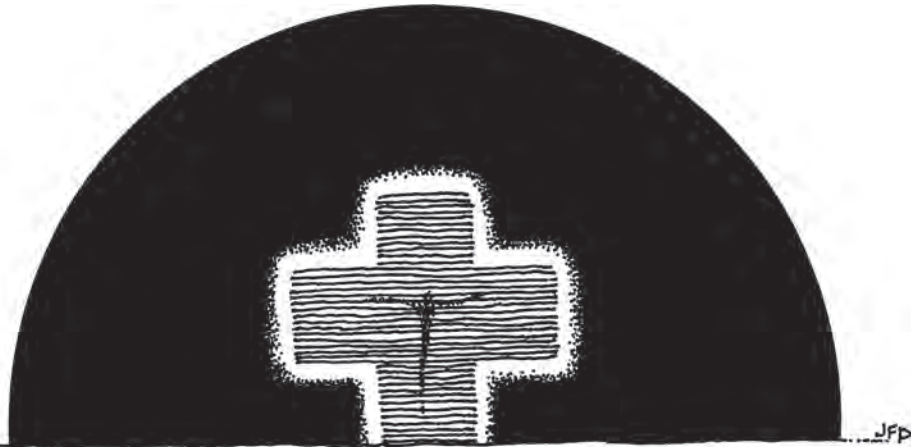
But we grew. Our marriage grew, our family grew, and we never once had to question whether God was in our lives. My husband chose to be true to who God created him to be: a loving model for his children, a man who wouldn't forsake his fundamental ideals for something of fleeting value, someone who does not live on bread alone but for God's purpose. God was always with us.

QUESTIONS:

What are the promises of the world that most often tempt you? What reminders of God's lasting care and protection help you overcome such temptations?

Word = Life

Readings Reflections



March 20, Second Sunday of Lent. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22
- 2) 2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Gospel) Matthew 17:1-9

“Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.”
— Psalm 33:22

By Jeff Hedglen

It is not very often that you read a line from Scripture and experience déjà vu. It happened to me when I read this week’s first reading. “The Lord said to Abram: ‘Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.’”

The passage vividly recalled for me moving from Michigan to Texas when I was 16 years old. Similar to Abram, I went forth from the land of my kinsfolk and from my childhood house to a land that God showed to my dad.

I was not a happy camper. I left behind all my childhood friends, my first girlfriend, the only neighborhood I ever knew and my dream of graduating from Holt High School.

My first year in Texas was filled with depression and a lot of loneliness. My dad made us attend “one of everything” at our new church, whether we wanted to or not, and that set the course for a huge change in my life.

The move to Texas and my involvement in youth ministry as a teen led me to change career paths. I am now in my 25th year as youth minister in the parish I moved to at age 16. The blessings that have come from that initially hated move simply blow my mind.

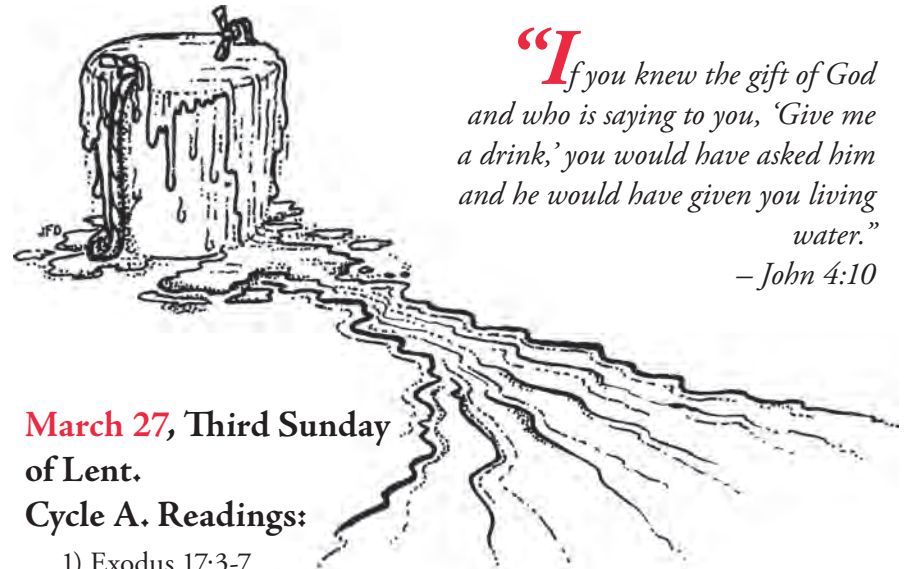
Life will throw us many challenges, everything from moves to job changes, college choices to tough friendships, loss of a family member to serious illness, dealing with children to dealing with parents. Each of these challenges is an opportunity for growth and change, and for God to blow our minds.

One way to get through these challenges is to lean on this week’s psalm response: “Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.”

Sometimes, after all our efforts are exhausted, the only thing left to do is simply trust and lean on the mercy of God. As hard as this can be, it is important to remember that God’s faithfulness can overcome our weariness. In the words of Blessed Mother Teresa, “I know God will not give me anything I can’t handle. I just wish that he didn’t trust me so much.”

QUESTIONS:

What was an experience that you thought you would never make it through, but in looking back, you now see the hand of God? What are some ways we can place our trust in Jesus?



“If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”
— John 4:10

March 27, Third Sunday of Lent.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Exodus 17:3-7
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9
- 2) Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
Gospel) John 4:5-42

By Sharon K. Perkins

I grew up on a farm in Texas in the 1960s and was able to experience some things that few young people do today. One of these was spending the better part of my summer days walking seemingly endless rows of cotton or corn with a hoe in hand, rooting out weeds and grasses that could take over a field crop.

It was hot, dirty and often monotonous work – at least until we got to the end of a row and stopped to drink from the burlap-wrapped jug of cold water that was kept under the pickup truck. Not only was I able to satisfy my thirst, but that waiting water jug gave me a good excuse to rest from my labors. I stretched those water breaks as long as humanly possible!

Imagine the children of Israel sojourning in the desert for 40 years, their wandering punctuated by infrequent stops for water. As the reading from Exodus indicates, they grumbled about their thirst and wondered whether God was in their midst or not.

In response, God provided not only water from a rock to ease their physical thirst but also spiritual refreshment – the opportunity to renew their trust in the one who, as the psalmist says, was the rock of their salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus is tired from his journey and stops at a Samaritan well to rest. He is also thirsty, but not as thirsty as the woman who comes to draw water. She, too, is in need of rest: from her difficult past, from her burdensome reputation and from her spiritual emptiness.

She encounters a “water break” that she never could have expected: a road-weary prophet offering not only frank conversation but “living water,” a gift of refreshment and renewal that comes from worshiping God “in spirit and in truth.”

The challenges of human life provide many temptations to grumble about our “thirst” and to want quick fixes for our problems so that we can be on our way. The church’s season of Lent invites us to stop awhile, to have an honest conversation about our lives, and to rest our tired souls at the well of “living water” that is Jesus. Only then are we refreshed and able to resume our journey.

QUESTIONS:

In what aspect of your life are you weary and thirsty for renewal? If you were having a conversation with Jesus at the well, what would you say to each other?

Respect Life

At all stages

Pure Reality Rally draws more than 1,100 youth

FROM PAGE 1

members of the St. Francis of Assisi youth group from Grapevine, listened intently to her father's story. The son of a Jewish Holocaust survivor, the elder Aubert now considers abortion the "American Holocaust — not unlike the one my father survived, or the one he feared would come again."

"His story is very powerful and it definitely ties into the Church's message about chastity. If you're not engaging in premarital sex, you won't be in a situation where you need an abortion," the Faustina Academy sophomore reasons.

Chastity isn't just about saving sex for marriage.

"It's about keeping it holy and not degrading it," she adds. "That's a message all young people need to hear."

Keynote speaker Jason Evert told his listeners they're part of a growing trend in America.

According to the latest statistics, 46 percent of current high school students have never had sex and the sexual activity of high school boys is going down twice as fast as the girls.

"You don't know that because people don't gossip about chastity," he points out. "Nobody talks about the good couples. Think everyone's having sex? They aren't. That's changing."

The author of the recently published *How to Find Your Soul Mate without Losing Your Soul* cited quarterback Phil Rivers as an example. The San Diego Chargers player met his wife, Tiffany, in grade school, and the couple began dating as high school upperclassmen. Early in their relationship, they decided to remain pure until marriage.

"Having the same standards helped them stay pure," Evert explains. "Purity is a gift from Jesus Christ, and He will give it to you if you ask for it."

Eighty teens from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller listened to Evert's presentation with special interest. The youth group is currently studying his book, *Theology of His/Her Body*, a paperback for

teens that explores Pope John Paul II's integrated vision of the human person's body, soul, and spirit.

"To actually see and hear the author helped them connect," said high school youth minister Gabe Gutiérrez. "I think a lot of good fruit will come from this."

Twenty-nine parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth sent teens to the rally. Some, like Randi Baird and Matthew Hunter of Holy Family Parish in Fort Worth, attended as part of a confirmation program.

"It was a good opportunity to hear great speakers talk about the message of the Theology of the Body," says Hunter, a 15-year-old Nolan Catholic High School sophomore. "I don't date yet, but what I learned will help me cope with peer pressure, especially after I start driving and can go to parties."

Baird didn't know what to expect.

"I thought it was going to be about making Jesus a reality in your life," said the 15-year-old who liked the "girls only" talk given by Stephanie Balsar. "She used herself as an example of someone who once wore suggestive clothing and did other bad stuff before turning her life around for Jesus."

Balsar talked about peer pressure and told her young female audience they were created to be open to love and life.

"All you have to do is open up your heart and let God love you," she urged. "And when you do that, life will naturally pour forth from you."

Women bring life into the world by caring for others and affirming or encouraging people.

"And we bring life into the world when our love is made incarnate in a baby," she said. "So embrace your femininity."

During his "boys only" presentation, Steve Pokorny tried to clear the confusion of what it means to be a man today. The director of TOB Ministries said there is a misunderstanding of what the body and sexuality are all about. Pornography



'Think everyone's having sex? They aren't. That's changing.'
— Jason Evert
Chastity Speaker



Top: Students from 29 parishes in the diocese listen as chastity speaker Jason Evert makes the case for moving toward a more Pure Reality.



Above: Worship leader Joe Languell asks for a little louder response.

Above: Speaker Jason Evert finds a Scripture reference that makes a point. Evert says he's presented his chastity message to more than a million young people in both secular and religious settings, and he's never been met with disrespect.

often steers men away from sexual integrity.

"It keeps men from realizing what true beauty is and what it is not," Pokorny explained.

Reality is more exciting than fantasy, he told the crowd.

"You have to live in the real world to get real love," he says.

Speaking at Nolan, Evert says laughter gives him an opening for his message

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

"Love can wait to give, but lust can't wait to get."

That's the message chastity speaker Jason Evert gave Nolan Catholic High School students during a fast-paced 75-minute talk sponsored by the diocesan Catholics Respect Life Office and the school.

The author of *Pure Love* and *If You Really Loved Me* used humor, personal anecdotes, and pop culture references to hold the attention of his teenage audience as he broached sensitive topics ranging from peer pressure and pornography to birth control and sexually-transmitted disease. Rooted in the Catholic faith, the information encouraged abstinence, purity, and self-respect. It's a pep talk most young people are eager to hear, he says.

The question most frequently asked by high schoolers about sex is "how far can we go?"

Evert answers the query with another question: "Are you willing to love your future spouse before you meet him or her?"

"One high school kid from Chicago wanted to know if it was okay to do a specific sexual act with his girlfriend. So I asked if he was planning to marry someday," remembers the speaker who received an enthusiastic "yes" from the teen. "Well, how far do you want some guy you'll never meet to go with your future spouse tonight?"

He advises young listeners not to adopt a double standard when it comes to dating and sex.

"Why expect such a high standard of innocence from a future spouse and yet, for yourself, have a totally different standard?" he asked.

To find the answer to "how far is too far?" look inside your own heart and, "practice the purity you would want your future spouse to practice for you," Evert suggests.

An apologist for the California-based

organization Catholic Answers, the 35-year-old husband and father speaks at Catholic, Christian, and secular venues to 100,000 teens a year. Some audience members arrive at his chastity talks snickering, but they rarely leave with the same jaded attitude.

"I've spoken to more than a million young people, and no one has responded disrespectfully," says Evert, who gave his first ever all-school chastity presentation at Nolan in November 1999. "They're always open and enthusiastic."

Many teenagers today are growing up in broken families and long for parameters and guidance.

"Some don't want to get married and fear marriage because all they've seen is chaos at home," the chastity advocate explains. "It helps to have someone come in from the outside who isn't a parent, teacher, or peer to give them another perspective."

The advice he offers is blunt but communicated with humor. Hard core statistics about STD rates and divorce are

slipped in with lighthearted banter.

Evert calls his approach "spiritual surgery." Laughter is the anesthesia relaxing the audience as he tries to extract bad things from their life like porn and hurtful relationships.

"A lot of the stuff I say I couldn't get away with, if they weren't in a good mood from laughing," he admits.

After the presentation, students lingered seeking advice from the trained counselor.

For Nolan sophomore Brad Rutherford, the chastity program cemented his thoughts on purity.

"I loved it. I've never heard a talk like this before," the 15-year-old explains. "You never get this information in the media."

Meeri Kangas saw Evert at a National Catholic Youth Conference two years ago and was familiar with his views.

"It's a message young people definitely need to hear," the high school senior said. "It gives you another perspective about what's going on with sex and makes you think."

Abortion clinic videos show need for changes, pro-life official says

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The recent undercover videos showing a Planned Parenthood worker advising clients how to skirt age restrictions on abortion and mandatory reporting laws came as no surprise to Jennifer A. Ruggiero, director of the Office of Respect for Life in the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey.

"We've made an ongoing effort to raise awareness of some of the myths about Planned Parenthood," Ruggiero told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview Feb. 4.

The video "sting" conducted by the group Live Action at the Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey clinic in Perth Amboy showed the clinic's office manager — who has since been fired — talking to a young man and woman posing as a pimp and an underage sex worker. She urges them not to reveal that the sex worker is 14 because state law would require clinic personnel to report it as a case of statutory rape and child abuse.

Other undercover videos released by Live Action have shown Planned Parenthood personnel in 10 states offering advice that would help hide the sexual exploitation of minors or sex trafficking of foreign-born women.

Although Ruggiero said she found it "very disturbing" that the Planned Parenthood abuses were taking place "in our backyard," she said it was "not surprising" for an organization that has long targeted minorities and young women.

"It's been a concern for years" that abortion clinics "need to be investigated and regulated," she said, adding that the new revelations have "caught the attention of legislators" in New Jersey, making improvements in abortion laws in the state more likely.

Also in the works is a new "statewide action plan" being drawn up by pro-life directors in dioceses throughout the state to address abortion in a coordinated way, Ruggiero said.

The undercover videos also have prompted a move in Congress to defund Planned Parenthood.

"To say it is an outrage is an understatement," said Rep. Mike Pence, R-Indiana, during a Feb. 3 webcast co-hosted by Family Research Council Action and Live Action. "The time has come to deny any and all federal funding to Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in America and also the largest recipient of federal funds under Title X," the federal grant program for

family planning.

Pence's Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, H.R. 217, would "prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions." As of Feb. 7, it had 154 co-sponsors in the House.

Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director in Bryan, Texas, who also appeared on the webcast, said the types of information given in the videos were "a common occurrence, unfortunately" at the clinic where she had worked.

"Many women are subjected to the cover-ups of Planned Parenthood and the tweaking of information," she said. "They will do anything, coerce anyone into having an abortion. ... We're all good salespeople at Planned Parenthood; that is our job."

Johnson called Planned Parenthood "a safe haven for people who are trying to exploit young girls."

Stuart Schear, vice president for communications at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said in a statement that the organization's "top priority is the health and safety of our patients and the health and well-being of women and teens across the country."

"When Planned Parenthood learns of an operation that exploits young women,



This screen shot was taken from the undercover video that members of Live Action took at the Planned Parenthood of Central New Jersey. (PHOTO COURTESY OF LIVE ACTION)

we vigilantly work with law enforcement authorities to uncover and stop this abhorrent activity," Schear said.

Live Action describes itself as a "youth-led movement" that uses new media and investigative journalism "to expose threats against the vulnerable and defenseless."

Don't balance budgets on backs of poor, bishops tell state legislators

Texas Catholic Conference tells legislature to use state's Rainy Day Fund before cutting services

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic bishops and their representatives around the country are reminding state legislatures and their fellow citizens that the nation's budgetary problems are not over and must not be resolved on the backs of the poor. Many echoed the message delivered by Jennifer Allmon, associate director of the Texas Catholic Conference, in Feb. 2 testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on behalf of the state's 15 active Catholic bishops: "The charitable community in Texas does not have the capacity to absorb the needs created by these [state budget] cuts."

She said the conference, which represents the state's bishops on public policy matters, "supports a balanced approach to solving the revenue shortfall, including seeking new revenue to adequately fund needed public services and to prepare Texas for the future."

Before reducing public services, Allmon said, Texas officials should use all of the state's Rainy Day Fund, "maximize use of available

federal funding without extending funding for immoral medical procedures or research," and create new revenue sources "that are equitable and can grow along with the growth in need for public services."

"Our position on addressing the state budget is shaped by the Church's extensive teaching on exercising the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable," Allmon continued. "The state has a responsibility to provide for the common good, including access to basic needs for all."

The bishops of Massachusetts issued a similar petition.

"In the devastation of shrinking city and state budgets across the country, all face excruciating choices," said the Massachusetts bishops in one of the most recent statements, issued Feb. 9. "But we caution that while the temptation to turn away from the growing social needs confronting our cities and towns may seem attractive ... our capacity to move beyond the many complex problems we face today depends on our willingness to overcome that temptation."

The heads of Massachusetts' four Catholic dioceses said their statement, titled "Standing in Solidarity With All," involved a pledge and a plea.

"Our pledge is that we will do all we can as bishops to enable institutions — parishes, Catholic

"The charitable community in Texas does not have the capacity to absorb the needs created by these cuts."

— Jennifer Allmon, associate director,
Texas Catholic Conference

Charities, health care facilities, and schools — to continue to do their best in extending help to our neighbors in need," they said. "Our plea is that in the decisions facing our elected officials, and in the discussions and actions of all citizens, there be preserved, for the sake of human dignity, a special place and regard for the vulnerable."

In Michigan, Paul A. Long, president and CEO of the Michigan Catholic Conference, spoke out Feb. 9 against proposed legislation that would eliminate the state's Earned Income Tax Credit, which he called "a pro-family, pro-work policy that reduces poverty, increases workforce participation among low-income families, and makes the state tax system fairer by offsetting disproportionate payroll taxes."

"While not unexpected, it is terribly unfortunate and alarming that the first target of this year's budget deficit may be low-income working families living paycheck to paycheck," Long said. "Michigan's low-income workers should not bear the burden of setting straight the state's fiscal house."

In California, Catholic Charities agencies across the state joined in marking Feb. 3 as the start of a month of poverty awareness and education activities under the umbrella of Step Up California, a campaign challenging Californians to help those in need through volunteerism and charitable giving to service organizations such as food banks, homeless shelters, and job development organizations.

Catholic Charities San Bernardino, a founder of Step Up California, staged a community poverty simulation to educate participants about the day-to-day realities of life with a shortage of money and a variety of life challenges and barriers to resources. Other Step Up California activities included a forum on the Earned Income Tax Credit at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento and tours for legislators of nonprofit direct service agencies.

"California has been a promised land for those seeking gold, good jobs, a better life for their children, and freedom from oppression in other parts of the

world," said a news release about the campaign. "Agencies providing services to those in poverty have been overwhelmed with an increase in demand for basic services such as food, shelter, and help in finding jobs. Not since the Great Depression have we witnessed so many Californians suffering, struggling, and desperate."

The policy positions outlined by the Maryland Catholic Conference for the 2011 legislative session offered a similar perspective.

"Greater charity is needed for the vulnerable who often struggle through no fault of their own," the conference said.

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Nuestro Pastor Habla

La Cuaresma nos llama a la introspección, el sacrificio y la caridad

En estos días, nos encontramos en los primeros domingos del Tiempo Ordinario. Tiempo entre el final de la celebración de la Navidad y el comienzo de la temporada de la Cuaresma. Esta época se le llama Tiempo Ordinario, no por ser algo menos importante o menos interesante que otras temporadas en el año litúrgico, sino por ser la temporada que se rige por los domingos contados por sus números ordinales, por ejemplo, el domingo tercero, sexto, decimocuarto, etc.

Durante este tiempo seguimos caminando con el Señor y reflexionamos sobre los misterios de su vida, su misión y obra salvífica para permitir que la gracia de Cristo ilumine nuestros corazones y nuestras mentes, mientras que continuamos nuestra peregrinación de la fe como el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia. El color del Tiempo Ordinario es el verde, color de la esperanza, pues nos aguarda la gozosa esperanza de la venida del Señor, además de siempre vivir nuestras vidas con gran esperanza en las promesas de Cristo.

Dentro de unas pocas semanas, comenzaremos una vez más la temporada de Cuaresma, que es un poco más tarde este año, debido a lo avanzado de la Pascua. La Cuaresma es un tiempo destinado por la Iglesia como preparación para la celebración de los misterios de la Pasión, Muerte y Resurrección de Cristo durante la Semana Santa y el *Triduo Pascual*, que comienza el Jueves Santo, el Viernes Santo y terminando al finalizar la Vigilia Pascual. La Cuaresma nos dadan como un tiempo para examinar nuestras vidas, buscar una más profunda conversión a Cristo y hacer reparaciones por nuestros pecados a través de la oración y la limosna.

Como nos dice la *Constitución sobre la Sagrada Liturgia* del Concilio Vaticano II, "Puesto que el tiempo cuaresmal prepara a los fieles, entregados más intensamente a oír la palabra de Dios y a la oración, para que celebren el misterio pascual, sobre todo mediante el recuerdo o la preparación del bautismo y mediante la penitencia, dese particular relieve en la Liturgia y en la catequesis litúrgica al doble carácter de dicho tiempo. Por consiguiente:

a) *Usense con mayor abundancia los elementos bautismales propios de la Liturgia cuaresmal y, según las circunstancias, restáurense ciertos elementos de la tradición anterior.*

b) *Dígase lo mismo de los elementos penitenciales. Y en cuanto a la catequesis, incúlquese a los fieles, junto con las consecuencias sociales del pecado, la naturaleza propia de la penitencia, que lo detesta en cuanto es ofensa de Dios; no se olvide tampoco la participación de la Iglesia en la acción penitencial y encarécense la oración por los pecadores" (109).*

La observancia de la temporada de Cuaresma se remonta a los primeros tiempos de la Iglesia cuando los primeros cristianos



Monseñor Kevin Vann

reconocieron que era necesario hacer algún tipo de penitencia y de preparación antes de la celebración de los Misterios de la Pascua en la Semana Santa. Las primeras celebraciones de este tiempo de oración, penitencia y ayuno, en los siglos segundos y terceros, variaron en el Oriente y el Occidente. En muchos lugares, la Cuaresma era de sólo dos o tres días, e incluso, como cuarenta horas en preparación para la Pascua. Finalmente, la práctica se convirtió en un tiempo de preparación de cuarenta días, reflejando los cuarenta días que pasó Cristo en el desierto, en preparación para su ministerio público. Después de la legalización del cristianismo en el Imperio Romano, la temporada penitencial de cuarenta días de la Cuaresma se convirtió en algo mucho más universal, y es mencionada en los cánones disciplinarios del *Concilio de Nicea* en 325 a.c. Desde entonces, los cuarenta días de la Cuaresma y su enfoque penitencial se han observado universalmente en la Iglesia.

El *Miércoles de ceniza*, que será celebrado el 9 de marzo de este año, comienza la temporada de la Cuaresma con el sobrio recordatorio: recuerda que eres polvo y al polvo volverás. El *Miércoles de ceniza* nos recuerda a todos dos cosas importantes. En primer lugar, es un recordatorio que Dios nos creó "del polvo de la tierra" (Gen 2: 7) y que fuimos creados por Dios y estamos llamados a vivir en la bondad y la gracia de Cristo. No vivimos en esta vida para nosotros mismos, pero para los demás, y estamos llamados a vivir una vida de fe, esperanza y amor. En segundo lugar, nos recuerda que sufriremos todos en algún momento la muerte, y seremos sometidos a nuestro propio juicio particular ante Cristo, — cómo vivió El en nuestras vidas y cómo cooperamos con las gracias que nos han dado. Es una llamada a una más profunda conversión a Cristo para alejarnos del pecado y los vicios.

La práctica del *Miércoles de ceniza*, realmente se desarrolló a partir de la práctica de la penitencia pública, que era común en los primeros tiempos en la Iglesia cuando quienes estaban practicando la penitencia pública se cubrían con cenizas y cilicio, como una manera

de hacer penitencia por el pecado. El *Miércoles de ceniza* es una pequeña pero profunda oportunidad en el comienzo de la Cuaresma para que profesemos que somos pecadores y que necesitamos la redención de Cristo. Necesitamos ser testigos de su gracia, convirtiéndonos en recordatorio vivo para los demás que Cristo es nuestro Salvador. Tenemos una llamada universal a la conversión y la santidad.

Hay muchas cosas que podemos hacer durante la temporada de Cuaresma para traer la expiación por los pecados, conversión y penitencia. Una forma es, sin duda, a través del ayuno y absteniéndose de carne. El *Miércoles de ceniza* y el *Viernes Santo* son ambos días de ayuno y abstinencia, y todos los viernes durante la Cuaresma son días de abstenerse de carne. Mientras estos son días que el ayuno y la abstinencia son una obligación, también podemos ayudar durante los otros días como manera de penitencia y mortificación. Ayuno es una poderosa manera de no sólo hacer penitencia, pero poner freno a los deseos de la carne y aumentar en la virtud y el autocontrol.

Otra forma de acercarnos más a Cristo durante la Cuaresma es a través de un aumento en la oración y de la práctica de las ricas devociones que la Iglesia nos ha proporcionado durante siglos. La oración es la manera de ofrecer nuestros corazones a Dios. Mientras más tiempo tomemos para orar, más profunda será nuestra relación con Cristo. Es importante recordar que, en última instancia, la oración debe ser desde el corazón, y que incluso, la oración espontánea más corta del corazón puede ser muy poderosa. De hecho, nuestra vida cotidiana puede rellenarse con la oración, si estamos abiertos al Espíritu Santo y simplemente hablamos con Dios a lo largo de nuestro día. En las palabras de San Juan Crisóstomo: "Es posible ofrecer la oración ferviente, incluso al caminar en público o paseando por sí solo, o sentados en su tienda... al comprar o vender... o incluso, mientras cocinas."

Finalmente, leer y orar con la Sagrada Escritura puede ser otra devoción cuaresmal muy potente y fructífera que puede profundizar significativamente nuestra relación con Cristo. Una manera de orar y contemplar con las Escrituras que ha sido parte de la vida de la Iglesia durante siglos es la *lectio divina*. El Papa Benedicto XVI, en su reciente *Exhortación Apostólica sobre la Palabra de Dios en la Vida y Misión de la Iglesia*, *VERBUM DOMINI*, destacó y alentó a la *lectio divina*, como una manera eficaz de encontrar a Cristo a través de las Escrituras. Aquí, el Santo Padre nos enseña esta maravillosa forma de orar y meditar sobre la Sagrada Escritura:

En los documentos que han preparado y acompañado el Sínodo, se ha hablado de muchos métodos para acercarse a las Sagradas Escrituras con fruto y en la fe. Sin embargo, se ha prestado una mayor atención

a la lectio divina, que es verdaderamente «capaz de abrir al fiel no sólo el tesoro de la Palabra de Dios sino también de crear el encuentro con Cristo, Palabra divina y viviente». Quisiera recordar aquí brevemente cuáles son los pasos fundamentales: se comienza con la lectura (lectio) del texto, que suscita la cuestión sobre el conocimiento de su contenido auténtico: ¿Qué dice el texto bíblico en sí mismo? Sin este momento, se corre el riesgo de que el texto se convierta sólo en un pretexto para no salir nunca de nuestros pensamientos. Sigue después la meditación (meditatio) en la que la cuestión es: ¿Qué nos dice el texto bíblico a nosotros? Aquí, cada uno personalmente, pero también comunitariamente, debe dejarse interpelar y examinar, pues no se trata ya de considerar palabras pronunciadas en el pasado, sino en el presente. Se llega sucesivamente al momento de la oración (oratio), que supone la pregunta: ¿Qué decimos nosotros al Señor como respuesta a su Palabra? La oración como petición, intercesión, agradecimiento y alabanza, es el primer modo con el que la Palabra nos cambia. Por último, la lectio divina concluye con la contemplación (contemplatio), durante la cual aceptamos como don de Dios su propia mirada al juzgar la realidad, y nos preguntamos: ¿Qué conversión de la mente, del corazón y de la vida nos pide el Señor? San Pablo, en la Carta a los Romanos, dice: «No os ajustéis a este mundo, sino transformaos por la renovación de la mente, para que sepáis discernir lo que es la voluntad de Dios, lo bueno, lo que agrada, lo perfecto» (12,2). En efecto, la contemplación tiende a crear en nosotros una visión sapiencial, según Dios, de la realidad y a formar en nosotros «la mente de Cristo» (1 Co 2,16). La Palabra de Dios se presenta aquí como criterio de discernimiento, «es viva y eficaz, más tajante que la espada de doble filo, penetrante hasta el punto donde se dividen alma y espíritu, coyunturas y tuétanos. Juzga los deseos e intenciones del corazón» (Hb 4,12). Conviene recordar, además, que la lectio divina no termina su proceso hasta que no se llega a la acción (actio), que mueve la vida del creyente a convertirse en don para los demás por la caridad (Verbum Domini, 87).

Al acercarnos a la Cuaresma, y al entrar en ella, sin duda estarán en mis oraciones de que su peregrinación cuaresmal sea fructífera y nos ayude a crecer en la santidad.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+ Obispo Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Diócesis de Fort Worth

Segundo retiro anual para hombres une a más de 350 para fortalecer su fe y sus vínculos a Jesús

Artículo y fotos por Juan Guajardo

Durante un sábado de mucho frío, una fila de aproximadamente 70 hombres ya se iba formando fuera del edificio a las 7:30 de la mañana. Hombres seguían llegando desde tan lejos como Comanche, Stephenville y Weatherford, y se iban reuniendo en la entrada. Era casi una hora antes del comienzo del segundo retiro anual en español, organizado por la Diócesis de Fort Worth, y titulado Hombres a semejanza de Jesús, solo para hombres.

Aproximadamente 360 hombres asistieron al retiro de este año y, a pesar de que el retiro era de un sólo día, se les ofreció a los participantes una misa celebrada por el padre Héctor Medina, párroco de la Iglesia de San Mateo en Arlington, al igual que la adoración del Santísimo Sacramento, momentos de alabanza y adoración, tres charlas por dos oradores principales y dos dramatizaciones relativas a las presentaciones.

Gustavo Muñoz, conferencista de la Parroquia de Santa Mónica de la Arquidiócesis de San Antonio, arrancó con su primera charla sobre la importancia de conocerse a sí mismo, preguntándoles a los hombres presentes, “¿Quién eres tú? ¿Te lo has preguntado alguna vez?”

Muñoz pasó a compartir una historia de un joven que sufría burlas por ser un niño adoptado. El joven le preguntó a Muñoz si las palabras hirientes que le decían sus compañeros eran verdad.

“Yo le dije, ‘mira Oscar, un hijo natural nace de padres biológicos’”, recordaba Muñoz. “Un hijo adoptivo no nace de padres biológicos; un hijo adoptivo nace del corazón. Y tú naciste del corazón de tus padres, y

por eso te adoptaron”.

Muñoz le dijo a los hombres que eso mismo se aplicaba a ellos — habían sido creados por Dios a su imagen y semejanza, y amorosamente adoptados por Él como sus hijos. Muñoz alentó a la audiencia de jóvenes, hombres de media edad y ancianos a darse cuenta de que fueron creados — cada uno de ellos — como seres únicos por Dios, y eran cuidados por Dios mismo.

“Tú eres imagen de Dios”, dijo Muñoz. “Nuestro Señor nos invita a aceptar el ‘yo’. Acéptate, tal y como eres. Tú te puedes encontrar miles de defectos; tú te puedes encontrar miles de excusas y miles de situaciones en ti mismo. Yo solamente estoy aquí hoy para compartir una verdad, que tú — papá, abuelo, hermano, tío, primo — tú eres hijo de Dios y naciste, no solo de forma biológica, sino naciste del mismo corazón de Dios, que es la vida”.

La segunda charla, presentada por el padre Ángel Infante de la Parroquia de Todos los Santos en Fort Worth, se centró en la Parábola del hijo pródigo, del Evangelio de Lucas. Les habló de que, así como le pasó al hijo pródigo — que deseaba la libertad de vivir su vida en la forma que quería — esta actitud lo llevó a tomar una serie de decisiones terribles, pero tomó conciencia de sus errores. El padre Infante les dijo que la decisión del hijo pródigo de volver al padre era el mismo reto que se les presentaba a muchos individuos en algún momento de sus vidas. Y añadió que Dios siempre estaría allí, como el buen padre de la parábola, a la espera de aquellos que dicen ‘sí’ y que deciden volver.

Después de una hora santa, en la cual los 360 hombres que asistían

al retiro tuvieron tiempo de meditar y orar ante Cristo en el Santísimo Sacramento, Muñoz terminó el retiro con una charla final sobre la dificultad de olvidar los pasados errores y avanzar en una nueva vida en Cristo.

“Unos de los retos más difíciles para ustedes será el tomar la decisión de dejar las cosas viejas”, dijo Muñoz, agregando que Dios los trajo al mundo y tiene un plan glorioso para ellos; sólo hay que aceptarlo y ser digno de tal plan.

“¿Cuándo llegaremos a ser dignos de esta bendita gloria de Dios?” preguntó Muñoz. “Cuando decidas tú”.

Continuó, “Decídate en el nombre de Jesús, y levántate en el nombre de Jesús, y dile a Cristo: ‘He decidido seguirte, Señor. Acepto tu salvación, acepto tu vida; hoy la quiero poner en práctica’. Cuando te decidas por Cristo, tu vida estará bendecida desde ese mismo minuto. Pase lo que pase — escúchame bien — y vengan las tormentas que vengan. Si te decides hoy, no vas a ser un hombre fracasado. No vas a ser un hombre derrotado. Vienen los problemas; sí vienen. Y no se acaban, pero no estás solo, porque hay poder en tu interior, y cuando no puedes y cuando tus manos se doblan y tus fuerzas se acaban, entonces entra Cristo y te dice, ‘No te agites... Si tú me aceptas, yo te acepto y, desde este momento, juntos caminaremos. Cuando tú no puedas, yo sí puedo’”.

A continuación, gritos de alabanza llenaban el salón, mientras Muñoz y los cientos de hombres alegremente gritaban, “¡Viva Cristo! ¡Viva!; ¡Viva la Virgen María! ¡Viva!; ¡Vivan los hombres de valor! ¡Vivan!”



Arriba a la derecha: El Padre Ángel Infante detiene el Santísimo durante la Hora Santa en el retiro de "Hombres a Semejanza de Jesús." Más de 350 hombres atendieron el retiro en la parroquia de St. Bartholomew en Fort Worth en enero 22.

Arriba: Manuel Hernández, de la parroquia St. Michael en Bedford, reza ante el Santísimo Sacramento durante la Hora Santa. Hernández vino con un grupo de 13 hombres de St. Michael.

A la derecha: Adán Solís, de la parroquia Holy Redeemer en Aledo, reza en silencio después de la plática de presentador Gustavo Muñoz.

A la izquierda: En la última plática del retiro, presentador Gustavo Muñoz exhorta a los hombres a que no tengan temor a seguir a Cristo, hasta en los tiempos difíciles.



Noticias

de la Iglesia

Apoyando a la reforma migratoria

por el padre Stephen Jasso, TOR
Párroco de la iglesia de Todos
LOS SANTOS en Fort Worth

Desde mi arribo a Fort Worth hace casi 18 años, he escuchado a nuestros líderes en Washington decirnos que tenemos un sistema migratorio que está roto y no funciona. Yo creo que ya es tiempo que lo arreglen. La nación más importante del mundo, con un sistema migratorio roto, que es responsable de admisión y registro de los que desean venir a este país en busca del sueño americano, no es aceptable. Un liderazgo en Washington, que no está dispuesto a componer el sistema roto, no es aceptable. El no solucionar el sistema migratorio por el liderazgo en Washington, complicaría más la situación, pues el liderazgo estatal tomaría acciones por su cuenta, y esto no debería suceder. Han polarizado el problema del sistema migratorio roto con el de los indocumentados, y los quieren castigar por ello, en vez de arreglar un sistema migratorio que no está funcionando.

En su discurso a la nación sobre la reforma migratoria el 1 de Julio, 2010, el Presidente Barack Obama dijo: "Yo estoy listo y la mayoría de los Americanos están listos para movernos" con la

reforma migratoria. ¿Por qué no están listos los líderes del Congreso y del Senado?

Los obispos de EE.UU. dijeron que "los inmigrantes son una bendición para la nación y un regalo para la Iglesia". ¿Por qué quieren que se vayan? ¿Qué mal nos han hecho? Están construyendo nuestras carreteras, nuestras calles, limpiando nuestras casas, ayudando en los restaurantes, levantando nuestras cosechas, creando pequeños negocios que dan empleo a muchos. Están mandando a sus hijos a la escuela, asistiendo a las Iglesias locales y compartiendo sus valores y cultura con nosotros. Y, claro, gastando y pagando impuestos como lo hacen todos los americanos.

Los indocumentados no le quitan el trabajo a los ciudadanos; están haciendo el trabajo que ellos dejaron atrás. El alto desempleo que tenemos no se debe a los indocumentados. Ese nivel de empleo está esperando nuevos empleos que se acomoden a su nivel de vida; ellos nunca harán el trabajo que los inmigrantes hacen hoy.

El mundo mira a los EE.UU. como un modelo de *Derechos humanos*. Por lo tanto, debemos pensar en las muchas familias y sus hijos que viven bajo el impacto psicológico de que en cualquier

momento pueden ser deportados; los niños viven diariamente bajo la presión de que — cuando regresen a casa de la escuela, pueda suceder el caso — que sus papás no estén esperándolos. Es más fácil crear e implementar leyes punitivas que reformar un sistema que no funciona. No tomemos el camino fácil que daña a familias y niños inocentes. Sigamos siendo modelo de respeto a los *Derechos humanos* para todo el mundo.

La deportación no es solución para un sistema migratorio que no funciona. Dañaría a la nación en vez de ayudarla. El presidente Barack Obama en su mensaje sobre la reforma migratoria dijo: "una deportación masiva trastornaría nuestra economía y comunidades, que sería intolerable para la mayoría de los americanos. Tal esfuerzo sería logísticamente imposible e insensatamente costoso." Además, dijo el presidente, la deportación masiva "rompería el tejido estructural de esta nación — pues los inmigrantes que están aquí ilegalmente están ahora embrollados en el tejido telar de la nación."

De buenas fuentes (*Immigration Policy Center*: www.immigrationpolicy.org, por ejemplo) nos dicen que la reforma migratoria daría a la economía de la nación un gran empuje. Se

ha dicho que la documentación de los inmigrantes se "traduce al menos acumulativamente en \$1.5 trillones USD en incremento del GDP (Gross Domestic Product) en 10 años, que incluye \$1,2 trillones USD en consumo y \$256 billones USD en inversión". ¡Nuestra nación necesita a los inmigrantes!

Comprendo que la reforma migratoria va más allá de los indocumentados y requiere la colaboración de todos los líderes políticos involucrados y la información de otras naciones para esta reforma migratoria, principalmente de nuestros vecinos del Sur. Estoy convencido de que tenemos los expertos para lograr una buena reforma. Al emprender esta tarea de la reforma migratoria, no dejemos que el miedo sea el guía, sino la verdad. Nuestra nación siempre se ha dejado guiar por la verdad; si dejamos que otros principios nos guíen, perdemos la batalla.

No podemos olvidar que la reforma migratoria fue una promesa en campaña presidencial, tema de un mensaje del presidente en 2010 y tema que mencionó en su discurso a la nación en 2011. Urgimos a todos los líderes en Washington a que no ignoren este tema, se enrollen las mangas de la camisa, y se pongan a trabajar en la reforma. La reforma migratoria traerá bendiciones para muchos y sobre todo para la nación.

Oremos todos para que muy pronto nuestros líderes en Washington empiecen la reforma del sistema migratorio, que no está funcionando, y den a la nación y al mundo una reforma migratoria justa y humana que funcione.

Porque tuve hambre y ustedes me dieron que comer; tuve sed y me dieron de beber. Fui forastero y ustedes me recibieron en su casa.

—Mateo 25,35.

¡Invitados Todos al Retiro de Cuaresma 2011!

El domingo 13 de marzo, de 8 a.m. hasta las 5 p.m. se celebrará un Retiro Cuaresmal, en español, para adultos en el *Centro de Cursillos de Fort Worth*.

El Centro está localizado en el 2221 NW 26th St. en Fort Worth.

Cualquier adulto — hombres y mujeres — solteros y casados, pueden participar de esta oportunidad de mayor acercamiento a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo.

Habrán charlas, meditaciones, actos devocionales como el *Via Crucis*, oportunidades para la oración y el diálogo sobre la Palabra de Dios y aspectos importantes de nuestra fe y, sobre todo, la celebración de la Santa Misa.

Se pide un donativo de \$15 para cubrir los gastos del Centro y el de las comidas y materiales que se les entregará durante el retiro; sin embargo, de no poder dar este donativo no se les negará la entrada al retiro y se les buscará ayuda para cubrir el donativo.

Para más información pueden llamar al *Centro de Cursillos* al 817.624.9411 o a Norma Cerritos al 817.343.7573. No es esencial al registrarse de antemano.

Aprovechen esta oportunidad para vivir en este año una Cuaresma súper especial, pasando una mañana y tarde con Jesús, y también con tus hermanos y hermanas en la fe. ¡Los esperamos!

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Infórmate y/o regístrate con: Paula Macias (682) 502-4237

Clase 1	Domingo 13 de Marzo	2:30-5:00 pm
Clase 2	Domingo 27 de Marzo	2:30-5:00 pm
Clase 3	Domingo 17 de Abril	2:30-6:00 pm
Clase 4	Domingo 15 de Mayo	2:30-6:00 pm

Costo: \$55 por pareja

Lugar:

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
2016 Willis Lane
Keller, TX 76248

El cupo es limitado, favor de registrarte antes del 4 de Marzo, 2011

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 Stephen Berg.

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

Youth & School

NEWS

Speaker praises Catholic school workers and supporters as 'heroes'

Story and Photos by
Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

The Olivetan Benedictine Sisters were honored at the 24th annual Catholic Schools Banquet for teaching children at Muenster's Sacred Heart School for more than 100 years. But for Sister Georgia Felderhoff, the highlight of the evening was seeing a former student receive the Diocesan Leadership Award from Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann.

Chuck Johnson was a youngster attending Our Lady of Holy Souls in Little Rock, Arkansas, when Sr. Georgia was the school's principal. Owner of Big Bad Wolf Creative Group, Johnson, a video production specialist, was recognized for his creative energy and generous support of projects promoting Catholic education.

"I'm thrilled," said Sr. Georgia as people gathered inside the Fort Worth Convention Center ballroom for the Jan. 22 event kicking-off National Catholic Schools Week. "It's a wonderful coincidence to honor our sisters at the same time Chuck is getting his award. I remember him very well."

The Olivetan sisters helped Johnson's struggling family afford the tuition payments and guided the young boy through a difficult time

academically.

"It's a proud moment when you see someone you taught do well," the former school administrator said.

Traveling from their motherhouse in Jonesboro, Arkansas, the contingent of six sisters was among the more than 500 guests attending the annual fundraiser. The banquet supports the Bishop's Scholars Fund and acknowledges exceptional individuals from each one of the diocese's 19 schools. Cited for their service and dedication to Catholic education were Hilda Raga, All Saints School in Fort Worth; Phil Record, (posthumously) Cassata High School in Fort Worth; Doug and Beth Parks, Holy Family School in Fort Worth; Cathy Hollingsworth, Holy Rosary School in Arlington; Maureen Ramirez, Holy Trinity School in Grapevine; Mitch and Jill Borowski, Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Denton; Brother Al Kuntemeier, SM, Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth; Mary Cluley, Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls; Elaine Sluiter, Our Lady of Victory School in Fort Worth; Frank Norvel, Our Mother of Mercy School in Fort Worth; Olivetan Benedictine Sisters, Sacred Heart School in Muenster; Brynn Lonquist, St. Andrew School in Fort Worth; Therese Wingert, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in



ABOVE: Karen Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association, gives the keynote speech, telling supporters and donors that through their help Catholic schools are making a difference in the lives of children.

LEFT: Chuck Johnson, co-owner of Big Bad Wolf, poses with Sr. Georgia Felderhoff, OSB, at the Catholic Schools Banquet. Johnson, who has produced videos for the diocese and diocesan schools, was presented the Diocesan Leadership Award.

BELOW: Catholic school students participate in a performance the night of the 24th Annual Catholic Schools Banquet.

Keller; Arlene Sanchez, St. George School in Fort Worth; Pat Asher, St. John the Apostle School in North Richland Hills; Linda Hoffer, St. Maria Goretti School in Arlington; Mickey Spaeth, St. Mary's School in Gainesville; Daphne Gomez, St. Peter the Apostle School in White Settlement; and Diane Hutto, St. Rita School in Fort Worth.

The impact each honoree makes on his or her school community was detailed in a photo-filled tribute presented on a large projection screen. Audience members also viewed a video of the All Schools Mass celebrated in the Fort Worth Convention Center Arena last September.

Instead of focusing on the challenges facing today's Catholic schools, guest speaker Karen Ristau told the audience there's plenty of "good news" to report about Catholic education.

"I've visited schools across the country that are doing amazing things," said the president of the National Catholic Educational Association.

A frequent lecturer and former dean of the faculty at St. Mary's College at Notre Dame, Ristau recalled seeing rugged football players reading to kindergartners and classrooms where "a United Nations of faces were all studying in the same classroom." She also described the stacks of food and clothing collected for the poor and programs that paired wealthy schools with an inner city campus.

"Our schools are filled with poor and underserved children who are succeeding in their education beyond what anyone might hope



for," the speaker pointed out. "They are in these schools because others have helped with scholarship money, gifts of books, and gifts of people who will sit with youngsters and help them read."

According to Ristau, Catholic education sees the world through the eyes of faith.

"Our schools are places where we speak of Jesus; where we pray, have liturgical celebrations, and learn the message of Scripture and try to live it," she added.

To illustrate her observation, the NCEA president remembered visiting a Catholic school shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. She told the audience how she watched teachers whose homes were destroyed in the disaster, prepare their classrooms and try to restore normalcy for their young charges.

Ristau praised the administrator and staff as heroes and was surprised by their reaction to her compliment.

"Heroes are in Marvel comic books. We're just doing what Jesus asked us to do — care for one another," the principal responded

matter-of-factly.

The generosity of Catholic schools supporters in the Diocese of Fort Worth exemplifies a similar spirit, Ristau suggested, adding, "Please accept my congratulations on your good works."

Superintendent of Schools Don Miller called the evening an opportunity to celebrate the mission of Catholic schools. Evangelization, he said, is a shared responsibility.

"To those of us blessed to serve in Catholic schools, there comes a more formal mission of actively supporting parents in their roles as primary educators and dedicating ourselves to passing on the faith to the next generation," Miller added.

Each school in the diocese is very different, yet the same. "They share and thrive in the goal and mission of transmission of the faith," the superintendent continued, before stating the profound message delivered in every Catholic school experience.

"God loves us, wants us, and demands us to share his love with all we encounter," he said. "Tonight is one way we demonstrate our commitment to that love."



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Events Calendar

Around the Diocese and region

March Dates

1

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ORIENTATION MEETING

6:30 p.m.
University Christian Church, 2720 South University Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann marie Brannan at a.brannan@sbcglobal.net.

2

AN EVENING OF MUSIC, MEDITATION, AND PRAYER WITH JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

7 p.m.
St. Joseph Parish, Rhineland. For information, contact the rectory office at (940) 422-4994.

4

AN EVENING OF PRAYER & SHARING WITH THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR

4 - 7:30 p.m.
Single women, within the approximate ages of 18 to 45. Our Lady of Victory Center, 909 West Shaw St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, at (817)-923-3091 or by e-mail at ycruz@fwdioc.org.

4-6

SINGLES ROAD TRIP - SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio Missions. For information, contact Tony at (817) 703-4312.

5

GABRIEL PROJECT ANGEL TRAINING

Noon to 6 p.m.
St. Francis of Assisi Church, 861 Wildwood Ln., Grapevine. For information, contact Mary Stroupe at (940) 464-3224.

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

10 a.m.
A monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery. Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. For information, contact Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 431-5369.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ORIENTATION MEETING

9:30 a.m..
University Christian Church, 2720 South University Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann marie Brannan at a.brannan@sbcglobal.net.

5-6

IWBS 'COME AND SEE'

Women high school through 50 years of age. Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria. For information, visit www.iwbsvictoria.org, call (361) 575-7111, or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com or iwbsvoc2@yahoo.com.

6

PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP: THE LAY CARMELITES

2 - 4:30 p.m.
Chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lubbock St. in Fort Worth. For information, contact Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.

7 / 8

LENTEN VOCATION AWARENESS PROGRAM

6 to 9 p.m.
Single men and women ages 18-30
Men - Monday evenings March 7 - April 18.
Women - Tuesday evenings March 8 - April 19
St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 106 or vocations@fwdioc.org, or visit the vocation website at www.fwdioc.org.

11

SAN MATEO LENTEN DINNER

11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
San Mateo church, 2930 Pulido St., Fort Worth. For information, call (817) 994-6228.

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 jlocke@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 moderator of the curia, Father Stephen J. Berg

TO REPORT ABUSE

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

12

THE NATIONAL CHAPTER OF PASTORAL MUSICIANS REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AND CHORAL PHILHARMONICA

10:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth; and St. Andrew Episcopal Church, 917 Lamar St., Fort Worth. Registration deadline is Feb. 28. For more information, contact Joanne Werner at (817) 283-8746.

SINGLES MASS AND COUNCIL MEETING

5 p.m.
Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. Meeting at Spring Creek Barbecue, Las Vegas Trail. For more information, contact Susan at (817) 346-8023.

13-16

HOLY FAMILY PARISH - LENTEN MISSION 2011

7 to 8:30 p.m.
Holy Family Parish, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 737-6768.

15

DEAF MINISTRY SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

7 to 8:15 p.m. each Tuesday evening through April 26
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 2016 Willis Lane, Keller. For information, contact Connie Martin at (817) 560-2452 ext. 305 or cmartin@fwdioc.org.

16

AUXILIARY TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS' LENTEN DAY OF QUIET

10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Carmelite Chapel, 5801 Mt. Carmel Dr., Arlington. Bring a sack lunch. For information, contact Jean Mallick at (817) 738-7123.

20

ST. JOSEPH PARISH, RHINELAND, SAUSAGE AND FRIED CHICKEN DINNER

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Knights of Columbus Hall, Rhineland. For more information or to order bulk, uncooked sausage, call Billie at (940) 422-2993.

24

MINISTRY FOR PEOPLE WITH SAME SEX ATTRACTION

7 p.m.
Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or (817) 329-7370.

26

ST. GEORGE SCHOOL'S SPRING CHARITY EVENT

6:30 to 11 p.m.
Norris Conference Center, Red Oak Ballroom located next to Uno's Pizzeria in Downtown Fort Worth Sundance Square. Tickets are \$35 per person. For information, contact the school office at (817) 222-1221.

April Dates

2

THE AUXILIARY TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS - A DIVINE AFFAIR FUND RAISER.

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Colonial Country Club, 3735 Country Club Circle, Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann Carminati at (817) 099-2573.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ORIENTATION MEETING

9:30 p.m.
University Christian Church, 2720 South University Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann marie Brannan at a.brannan@sbcglobal.net.

3

STEPHEN BREEN SPIRIT GAMES

Registration -10 a.m.; Mass - 11 a.m.
Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information, visit www.stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org.

5

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ORIENTATION MEETING

6:30 p.m.
University Christian Church, 2720 South University Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann marie Brannan at a.brannan@sbcglobal.net.

8-10

YOUTH 2000 EUCHARISTIC CENTERED RETREAT

Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. For information and to register, call (817) 244-7733 or (817) 560-2452, ext. 255; or visit www.youthretreat.org.

24

THE COUPLE TO COUPLE LEAGUE NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

the next class will be offered at St. Mary the Virgin Church, 1408 N. Davis Dr., Arlington. For more information or to register, contact Kevin and Michele Vina at (940) 433-5664.

29

ANNUAL EAGLE CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT BENEFITING ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE SCHOOL

Iron Hourse Golf Course, 6200 Skylark Circle, North Richland Hills. Visit www.stjs.org/golf.htm for registration, or contact Sandra Gonzalez at golf@stjs.org.

SINGLES SPRING RETREAT

April 29 to May 1
Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information and to register, contact Susan at (817) 346-8023.

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FULLNESS OF TRUTH SEMINAR - UNLOCKING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Saturday and Sunday
Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington. For information, and to register, visit www.FullnessOfTruth.org or call (877)-21-TRUTH.

Official Assignments

The following assignments have been made by Bishop Kevin Vann:

Rev. Victor Cruz, HGN, has been assigned as parochial administrator of St. Mary Parish, Gainesville, effective January 28, 2011.

Rev. Ouseph I Thekkumthala has been assigned as parochial vicar of Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton, effective January 27, 2011.

Good Newsmaker

Participants in Feb. 7 Healing Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral receive sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and experience Christ as the

Divine Physician & Healer

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

Gerald Long prayed for his continuing recovery after brain surgery. Bethony Keller wants peace for a family troubled by addiction. One young husband, who heard about the evening service on local Catholic radio, brought his wife hoping the ritual would make her feel better.

The frail, the sick, the elderly, and their caregivers gathered inside St. Patrick Cathedral Feb. 7 to pray for healing and celebrate the sacraments of Anointing and Eucharist during a Mass observing the 19th annual World Day of the Sick. Two hospital chaplains and several parish priests joined Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann in concelebrating the liturgy attended by 400 people.

Promoted by Pope John Paul II, the World Day of the Sick provides an opportunity to explore the mystery of suffering and make society more sensitive to the needs of people struggling with old age, chronic illness, and impending surgery. The special day of prayer is observed each year on Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

After watching Bishop Vann offer a prayer of thanksgiving over the blessed oil, more than 200 worshippers walked up the center aisle to have their forehead and palm anointed by a priest.

“Christ is always present when

we gather in his name. Today we welcome Him as physician and healer,” Bishop Vann said, greeting the congregation. “We pray that the sick are restored to health by the gift of his mercy and made whole in his fullness.”

During the homily, the bishop shared memories of his 1976 trip to visit the Catholic shrines of Europe. He was 25 years old and struggling with a decision to enter the seminary when he arrived in Lourdes for a three-day visit.

“It was a turning point in my faith journey,” the bishop said, remembering the nightly



ABOVE: Father Joe Pemberton, rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, anoints members of the congregation during the diocese's Healing Mass held Feb. 7.

candlelight processions, Rosary recitations, and baths visited by ailing pilgrims. “There I encountered all sorts of people who were sick, praying for healing, and looking for peace.”

Bishop Vann said the experience was a living representation of Christ as healer — an image found in many Gospel stories.

“My experience in Lourdes wasn't just a play or memory of something that happened long ago,” he explained. “It was the Lord walking among his people in another land where his mother had led us. And there I found peace.”

In a similar way, Christ helps people through the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the bishop continued. He urged the gathering to surrender control and let the healing power of God guide them.

“The darkness, doubts, and discouragement of illness are gone, and the light of God and his healing power will bring peace, hope, newness, and reconciliation,”

BELOW: Bishop Vann prays over the healing oils held reverently by Deacon Don Warner at the liturgy.



the bishop promised.

Gerald Long, a St. Thomas parishioner who suffered a brain infection three years ago, said illness has made his faith stronger. Receiving a special anointing for the sick and attending Sunday Mass

gives him the spiritual strength to move forward in life.

“I've experienced things since I had my surgery that I never knew,” he explained thoughtfully. “Without a doubt, I know there's a God because He let me know.”