

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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SOCIAL MINISTRY PROGRAM RECOGNIZED — At Dolores Mission Parish in Los Angeles, children who once walked in fear of gang violence after school now laugh and chatter on their way home. Rita Chairez and Rosa Campos of the Los Angeles-based Comunidad en Movimiento received the 2007 Sister Margaret Cafferty Development of People Award during the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington Feb. 11. Comunidad en Movimiento, an organization of Latina women at Dolores Mission Parish, received the award from the U.S. bishops' Catholic Campaign for Human Development. (CNS photo/Peter Howard, CCHD)

Social ministry central to church life, John Carr tells social ministry leaders

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The church's social justice mission is an integral part of its life, and "this is a time for mission," John Carr, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' secretary for social development and world peace, told a national gathering of Catholic social ministry leaders Feb. 12.

Carr noted that several national figures in Catholic social

ministry will be leaving the USCCB staff in coming months as a result of the bishops' recent decision to downsize their national offices.

Among them are Timothy Collins, executive director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; Thomas Quigley, veteran head of the Latin America desk of the Office for International Justice and Peace; and Walter Grazer, head of the environmen-

tal justice and Europe desks of the Office for International Justice and Peace.

"The USCCB is not broken, but frankly it is a little shaken," Carr said. But he added, "Even if there are fewer of us, the mission hasn't changed.... The question is not who occupies the boxes, the question is how the mission gets done."

He said the mission remains
SEE MEASURE OF..., P. 12

Fetal pain legislation just one of life-related bills before Congress

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The last pro-life bill to be considered by the 109th Congress became one of the first introduced in the 110th Congress when Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kansas, reintroduced the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act.

The legislation, which died in the House of Representatives Dec. 6 when it failed to receive

the two-thirds majority needed to break a procedural impasse, would require that women undergoing an abortion at least 20 weeks into their pregnancy be informed that an abortion causes pain to the fetus.

"It's a scientific, medical fact that unborn children feel pain," said Brownback as he reintroduced the bill Jan. 22. "We know that unborn children can experi-

ence pain based upon anatomical, functional, psychological, and behavioral indicators that are correlated with pain in children and adults. Mothers seeking an abortion have the right to know that their unborn children can feel pain."

The bill also would give women the option of choosing anesthesia for their unborn child
SEE LIFE-RELATED..., P. 13

In Lenten message, pope says crucified Christ is reminder to protect human dignity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Contemplating Christ nailed to the cross should stimulate people to protect human dignity and "to fight every form of contempt for life," said Pope Benedict XVI in his 2007 message for Lent.

"May Lent be for every Christian a renewed experience of God's love given to us in Christ, a love that each day we, in turn, must 'regive' to our neighbor, especially to the one who suffers most and is in need," said the message.

The message was released at the Vatican Feb. 13. The theme of the message is "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Lent began Ash Wednesday, which this year fell on Feb. 21. Easter is April 8.

Using the Greek words "agape" and "eros," the papal message said that love has two fundamental forms.

Agape "indicates the self-giving love of one who looks exclusively for the good of the other," it said.

Eros "denotes the love of one who desires to possess what he or she lacks and [eros] yearns for union with the beloved," it said.

While agape better describes God's love for humanity "God's
SEE IN CONTEMPLATING..., P. 2

Catholics must ensure affection, spiritual support for the sick, says pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Catholics must ensure that people who are sick, especially the terminally ill, receive affection, spiritual support, and medical care to keep them comfortable, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Marking the World Day of the Sick Feb. 11 during his midday

Angelus address and an evening meeting with a Rome pilgrimage for the sick in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope offered his prayers and his encouragement to the suffering and to those who care for them.

During the Angelus, the pope called on physicians and
SEE POPE CALLS..., P. 2



WORLD DAY OF SICK — Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, New York, chats with Andrew Curran following a Mass marking the World Day of the Sick at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre Feb. 11. World Day of the Sick, instituted by Pope John Paul II in 1992 and celebrated annually on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, affirms the church's duty to remember and minister to the sick and the suffering. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC)

In contemplating Christ crucified, we are moved to open our hearts to others, says pope



SEASON OF LENT — A cloudy evening sky provides the backdrop for a cross outside St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Lake Ronkonkoma, New York, during Lent last April. The penitential season, which began Feb 21 on Ash Wednesday, calls Christians to prayer, fasting, repentance, and charity. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC)

FROM PAGE 1

love is also eros," the papal message said.

"The prophet Hosea expresses this divine passion with daring images such as the love of a man for an adulterous woman," said the papal message.

This and other Bible texts "indicate that eros is part of God's very heart: The Almighty awaits the 'yes' of his creatures as a young bridegroom [awaits the 'yes'] of his bride," it said.

Christ on the cross shows "a love in which eros and agape, far from being opposed, enlighten each other," it said.

"One could rightly say that the revelation of God's eros toward man is, in reality, the supreme expression of his agape," it said.

"Only the love that unites the free gift of oneself with the impassioned desire for reciprocity instills a joy, which eases the heaviest of burdens," it said.

Lent is a time when Christians should welcome the love of Christ and "spread it around us with every word and deed," it said.

"Contemplating 'him whom they have pierced' moves us in this way to open our hearts to others, recognizing the wounds inflicted upon the dignity of the human person," it said.

"It moves us in particular, to fight every form of contempt for life and human exploitation and to alleviate the tragedies of loneliness and abandonment of so many people," said the papal message.

Acts of charity flow from love of God, reminds Archbishop Cordes

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While calling Catholics to perform concrete acts of charity during Lent, Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 Lenten message focuses not on social problems, but on an individual's relationship with God, said Archbishop Paul Cordes.

Presenting the Lenten message at a Feb. 13 press conference, Archbishop Cordes, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, said the pope departed from the customary social focus of papal Lenten messages in order to emphasize that Christian charity must have a religious motivation.

The 2007 message, a meditation on the crucified Christ as the fullest sign of God's love, called on Christians to contemplate Christ's suffering and then work to alleviate situations in

which human life and dignity are threatened by poverty, oppression, exploitation, loneliness, and abandonment.

Archbishop Cordes said Christians must be pleased that "the biblical commandment of love for one's neighbor" is being followed by a variety of foundations and philanthropic agencies that have no religious motivation.

But at the same time, he said, they must ensure their own acts of charity flow from and witness to the love of God.

"We are not talking about ignoring service to people in order to serve God, but rather of making it clear that precisely by serving others we are serving God," said the archbishop, whose office promotes Catholic charitable giving and distributes aid in the pope's name.

The archbishop was joined at the press conference by Italian

"If I simply give the poor some 'thing,' I have given little. But if I give them Jesus, I have given them everything."

— Father Oreste Benzi

Father Oreste Benzi, famous in Italy for establishing the John XXIII Foundation and its network of communities for recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, for women freed from prostitution, and for the severely handi-

capped.

"If I simply give the poor some 'thing,' I have given little," Fr. Benzi said. "But if I give them Jesus, I have given them everything."

Archbishop Cordes said that without faith, Christian charity may alleviate some suffering, but it will not be able to give people the new life and sure hope that come from a personal relationship with Jesus.

"The absence of God is worse than material poverty, because it kills every firm hope and leaves the person alone with his pain," he said.

The archbishop said that fight-

ing secularism has been the main thrust of Pope Benedict's first two years as head of the church, and that when he calls on Catholic charities to be more explicitly Christian, it is part of his overall effort to counter "a forgetfulness of God."

Even Christians, the archbishop said, "forget God, not formally, but concretely in their daily actions."

The papal Lenten message is a reminder that "faith requires me to work for good and for justice for those who suffer; I cannot be Christian looking only at myself," Archbishop Cordes said.

Pope calls on Christians to help sick, ensure no one feels abandoned

FROM PAGE 1

researchers to do more to develop palliative care for those with incurable illnesses, ensuring them pain relief, loving attention, and spiritual care.

In his evening address, the pope focused on the day's feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and why so many sick people have found comfort in Mary.

Appearing in 1858 to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, Mary reminded believers of God's special love for the poor and sick, and she demonstrated the value of serene trust in God,

even in situations of extreme suffering, the pope said.

Quoting Pope Paul VI, Pope Benedict said the life of Mary and her presence now with God in heaven are a testimony of "the victory of hope over anguish, communion over solitude, peace over agitation, [and] joy and beauty over tedium and nausea."


The pope said his predecessor's words should "enlighten our path, even when it seems that hope and the certainty of healing seem to vanish; they are words that I hope would be a comfort, especially for those stricken by

serious and painful diseases."

And, he said, they are words that seem to come to life at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes where thousands of sick people go each year to pray for strength and healing.

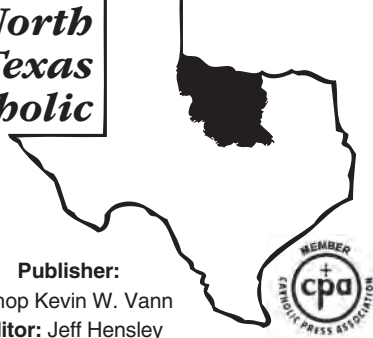
The shrine is a place "where human pain and hope, fear and trust intertwine," he said.


Pope Benedict called on all Christians to do what they can to help people who are sick and suffering and to ensure that "no one ever feels alone and abandoned, particularly in a situation of harsh suffering."



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Baltimore group tries to fill Catholic churches with more men

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Having noticed that men have become a vast minority in Catholic parishes in northeast Baltimore, St. Anthony of Padua parishioner Paul Gerhardt and a group of his friends decided to unite with a mission to lure members of their gender back to church.

So was born the Northeast Catholic Brotherhood a little more than a year ago, and with about 25 men from three area faith communities participating, the group has ignited a movement that inspires religious and community involvement.

"We're a pretty informal group, but we're serious about getting men back in the church and contributing to the community at large," said Gerhardt, 50, of Baltimore's Gardenville neighborhood. "I'm really enthused by what we've accomplished in the last year, and I think our outreach efforts are only going to grow."

Each month the group meets in the rectory kitchen at St. Anthony of Padua for a casual dinner and to plan its outreach programs, ministries, and how to get male Catholics — especially younger men — involved with area parishes.

Represented in the group are parishioners from St. Anthony of Padua, Most Precious Blood, and St. Francis of Assisi, all in Baltimore. This year they hope to attract Catholics from other area churches.

On a recent Tuesday night over beef stew, about 15 members of the brotherhood reflected on the past year and agreed there is hope for their gender's participation in church activities.

With the group having hosted prayer meetings, liturgy discussions, and several service projects, its progress is steady but sure, said Ken Gray, a 40-year-old father and St. Anthony of Padua parishioner.

"We started a really positive partnership with Archbishop Curley High School this year," Gray told *The Catholic Review*, newspaper of the Baltimore Archdiocese. "Their students

are required to perform service projects, and we've gotten them involved in some of our projects. It helps them out as it helps us out."

Those projects include the continuing renovation of an unused building on the St. Anthony of Padua/Mother Mary Lange Catholic School campus that they are transforming into a youth center and the Good Samaritan Car Wash, he said.

The carwash was an impromptu enterprise last summer when they learned a fellow parishioner had lost her father and couldn't afford the marker for his grave.

"Within an afternoon, we pulled together, planned the carwash, and then we raised the money for the marker," Gray said. "We discovered we could mobilize on short notice. Now, we want to make this an annual event to support a worthy cause."

Last October the brotherhood organized a living rosary at St. Anthony of Padua, with a group of 49 Catholics holding rosary beads the size of a softball that lit up as each participant began reciting his Hail Mary, said Joe Wehberg, 47, of the Belair Edison neighborhood and a parishioner at Most Precious Blood.

"That's a tradition I think we'll continue for years to come," Wehberg said. "You know, it was fun, and it showed everyone how enjoyable [religious involvement] can be."

The group still has no officers and their monthly meetings remain informal, but their commitment to a male population boom in Northeast Baltimore parishes is fierce.

When Gray's truck was stolen several months ago, the brotherhood collectively prayed for a positive outcome. A few days later Baltimore City Police recovered the vehicle and charged a suspect.

"We prayed that truck back into your driveway," Gerhardt told Gray. "God is behind us. I'm sure we men have a future in our faith."

*Responding
to God's Call*

Vocation awareness— Center your family in Christ

By Fr. Kyle Walterscheid

As we prepare for Lent let us recall what a great gift God has given to the Church in this holy season.

Lent helps us to reach back to our roots, to walk in the ways of Christ in the desert for 40 days and nights. What a wonderful opportunity Lent offers for the whole family to renew their spirit in Christ, to become stronger and more Christ-centered families. People ask me all the time how they can support their children's vocation. When we make the choice to enter into any of the many rich prayer traditions the Church offers during Lent, we are already supporting our children's vocations, creating the time and space for prayer and reflection on the mysteries of Christ.

A family that prays together stays together because each member in the family is being nurtured in their vocation by both God and by their family's support. Today we balk at the mere suggestion of sacrificing the simplest of things for 40 days and nights, like TV, video games,

the iPod, or our favorite food. But dare I suggest a change like this is just what Christ, the doctor of souls, orders. If as responsible Christian parents we aren't sowing the seeds of prayer and the Spirit in our children's souls, then the media will be sowing our children's mind with seeds of corruption.

While it is true that there is much about this world and the workplace that we cannot control, it is our duty as Christians to take control of our households. When someone comes to your house, what do you suppose goes through their mind? Maybe an, "Oh my God, how dysfunctional; how can they live like that?" or maybe they think "Is this a family living here or strangers?" Now, what if Jesus was to knock on your door and step into your home? Would Jesus be impressed? Would he commend you for creating a prayerful and peaceful house? Would he see you as a parent living out your vocation with well-disciplined, Christ-centered children?

Lent is the time for us to get reordered, to discipline ourselves to a right order again. Prayer and peace should fill every room and hallway of the home. We can pray the Stations of the Cross, pray the rosary, pray the Divine Mercy chaplet, read a chapter each day in the Bible, go to church for a holy hour each week or each day. Or

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

we can choose to clean up our house, throwing out things that dishonor Christ, and create a positive environment for the family as well as friends and visitors. We can reach out to our spouse, children, or friends to truly support their vocation in life. We should never be embarrassed to talk about Christ! "...Whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father" (*Matthew 10:33*). We should even dare to let Lent be a time to get outside the house into the neighborhood or parish to help others in service "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve..." (*Mark 10:45*).

Our vocation is the call from God to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow in the footsteps of the Passion of Jesus. May Christ nourish each of our vocations this Lenten season with fervent prayer and sacrifice, fasting and almsgiving, along with the reordering of our households to the greater glory of Christ.

Along similar lines, I am working with more than 50 men in our diocese this Lent between the ages of 18 and 55 who are discerning a radically different path, the path of the religious life and priesthood. This is a difficult choice to make and more difficult to follow. Please keep them in prayer that they too will discern God's will for their lives and say YES to their vocational call from God.

Caritas India plans to include women in all decision-making bodies

MUMBAI, India (CNS) — The Catholic Church's social service and aid organization in India finalized a proposal to include women in all its decision-making bodies.

Caritas India made the proposal during its national assembly in Mumbai in early February. The decision still will need to be consid-

ered by the standing committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency.

Women hold about 30 percent of the positions in Caritas India's national governing body. The percentage of women would increase to 50 percent within a year if the

proposal is adopted. The proposal also calls for women to constitute at least 25 percent of other bodies, such as finance and appointment committees as well as administrative bodies of diocesan and regional branches.

"We need to work toward gender equality in decision-making

bodies," said Archbishop Stanislaus Fernandes of Gandhinagar, secretary-general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. "We need to respect and give due dignity to women in all fields."

Rita Noronha, a member of the Caritas India governing body, said that although more women are

involved in the social, educational and health works of the church they are not represented in positions of authority.

Shimray Mungreiphy, who heads Caritas India's department for promoting gender sensitivity, said Caritas India will apply gender sensitivity in all its projects.

Ministry Formation Day to take place in Mineral Wells March 3

The diocesan Ministry Formation Day, with the theme "Who Do You Say That I Am?" will be held Saturday, March 3, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 108 N.W. 4th Avenue in Mineral Wells. The day will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m.; opening prayer will be held at 9:15 a.m. Final workshops will conclude at 2:30 p.m.

The day will feature keynote addresses, a wide variety of exhibitors and vendors, and three rounds of interactive workshops. Workshop topics for the day include "Summer Programs that Jump Start the Year," "Listening to the Voice of the Hispanic Youth," "About Annulments," "Whole Community Catechesis," and "Empowering Parish Leaders."

Keynote speakers will include three members of the Sisters of Divine Providence religious congregation: — Sister Virginia Husey, Sister Elsa E. Garcia, and Sister Bernadette Bezner. The sisters will offer presentations in Spanish and in English, and will also offer a display of their Mobile Ministry project in the exhibitors' area. The Mobile Ministry's mission is to offer spiritual and educational services to Catholic parishes, especially in rural areas.

The cost for the day is \$20 per person for early registration or \$25 at the door. Scholarships are available. For more information visit the diocesan Web site and click on the Ministry Formation Day logo, or contact Joe Rodriguez via e-mail to jrodriguez@fwdioc.org or call (817) 560-3300 ext. 115.

'Gather Up the Fragments' to be theme of Lenten retreat at CRC

Sister Margarita Armendariz, ASC, a certified spiritual director who has served in the dioceses of El Paso and Las Cruces, will return to the Catholic Renewal Center of North Texas to lead a Lenten retreat, "Gather Up the Fragments." The retreat will begin Friday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m. and conclude Saturday, March 17, at 5 p.m.

"Through prayer, teachings, and dynamics, we will walk through a four-step process in which we allow Jesus to transform the broken pieces of our lives into bread for a hungry world..." CRC materials explain.

CRC is located at 4503 Bridge Street, next to Nolan Catholic High School, in East Fort Worth. An overnight room and meals are included in the \$55 fee. For more information or to make a reservation by the March 12 deadline, call CRC at (817) 429-2920.

North Texas Catholic announces change in schedule for March

As announced in the last *North Texas Catholic* newspaper, an upcoming renovation of the NTC offices has resulted in the canceling of the March 9 issue. The issue of March 23 will be the only NTC published in March; items to be submitted for that issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, March 14.

The rest of the production schedule is expected to remain the same.

We apologize for any inconvenience this change in the production schedule may cause.

Lenten Quiet Day to be held at Carmelite Monastery Feb. 27

The Carmelite Auxiliary invites all to attend a Lenten Quiet Day Tuesday, Feb. 27, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., at the Carmelite Monastery, located at 5801 Mount Carmel Drive in Arlington. Father James Mormon, TOR, will lead the day of quiet reflection with prayer, meditation, and the sacrament of reconciliation for participants.

Those attending are asked to bring a sack lunch for the retreat; drinks will be provided. For more information, call Kay Fuhrman at (817) 763-8981.

Youth 2000 retreat to be held April 13-15 at Nolan Catholic

A Youth 2000 eucharistic-centered retreat will be held at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth, April 13-15. Led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and sponsored by St. Patrick Cathedral Parish in Fort Worth, the retreat is open to youth and young adults ages 13 to 30.

"The Youth 2000 retreat is a weekend of fellowship, music, personal testimonies, sharing faith and more, while focusing on the eucharistic presence of our Lord..." according to an event flyer. Several speakers, including retreat master Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR, will offer talks on living an authentic Christian life.

In a letter welcoming young people of the diocese to the Youth 2000 retreat, Bishop Kevin Vann says, "I know that Youth 2000 ... has been a powerful experience of the Lord in the Eucharist and how you can come to know his love in this manner and then be sent out to proclaim and live that love." Due to a scheduling conflict, Bishop Vann will not be able to be present at the retreat, but adds that "...I will count on your prayers.... God bless you for your example of faith and faithfulness to Our Lord and his mission."

Retreat organizers encourage young people to "come celebrate the feast of Divine Mercy" and "pray for peace in our hearts and in the world with over a thousand young people."

The "early bird" registration fee, if mailed by March 30, is \$40 per person, which includes lunch and dinner on Saturday, but does not include housing. The cost is \$50 after March 30. For more information, call (817) 558-9805 or e-mail to information@stpatrickcathedral2000.com. To register for the event, call (817) 244-7733; e-mail to registration@stpatrickcathedral2000.com; or visit the Web site at www.stpatrickcathedral2000.com.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



MARCH FOR LIFE — Bishop Kevin Vann and several Catholics from the Diocese of Fort Worth, including members of Youth for Life, were in Washington, D.C., Jan. 22 for the 34th annual March for Life. Holding signs encouraging people to "Defend Life" and advocating "Justice for All," the participants were among tens of thousands of people protesting against the legalization of abortion who gathered for a rally on the National Mall and then proceeded in a peaceful march around the Capitol to the steps of the Supreme Court building.

Relationship series for couples to be offered at Most Blessed Sacrament

The Most Blessed Sacrament Adult Formation Committee, the parish Knights of Columbus, and MBS Families Group will co-sponsor a two-part series, the "MBS Lenten Relationship Series for Couples," on two consecutive Saturday evenings, March 17 and 24 from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Each session will be preceded by a light meal served at 6:15 p.m. for pre-registered participants and children.

The series will be presented by Everett and Trudy Costa, longtime parish directors of family and adult ministry in the Diocese of Dallas. Trudy Costa is the author of *128 Powerful Tips for Couples*.

Participants are asked to donate \$15 per couple per session, or \$25 per couple for both sessions. Arrangements may be made for those who are unable to donate the full suggested amount. Childcare is available by reservation; pre-registration for the program is required. For more information about the series, call Trudy Costa at (817) 652-0041.

Courage group meets twice monthly

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

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

Marcellino D'Ambrosio to speak at St. Vincent's March 7

Marcellino D'Ambrosio, an internationally best-selling author and a radio and television personality, will speak Wednesday, March 7, at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Road in Arlington, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the church's main sanctuary.

In his dynamic presentation, "Making Lent Count," D'Ambrosio will encourage participants to think about Lent as more than a time to give up junk food, but to consider the Lenten season an opportunity to improve one's own spiritual nutrition.

For more information, contact Marilyn Dietrich at (817) 478-8206 ext. 204.

Marriage Encounter of North Texas gathering set for March 4

The National Marriage Encounter of North Texas will hold its annual gathering Sunday, March 4, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

The evening will begin with a potluck dinner, followed by a program and a brief annual meeting. Drinks and the main dish will be provided; participants are asked to bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Those planning to attend are also asked to bring a "white elephant" gift for exchange.

For reservations or for more information, call (817) 451-6005.

Faith and Fiction group to meet March 15

"Faith and Fiction: Conversations on Spirituality and Imagination," a venue for discussing novels and films with themes that shed light on the journey of faith, will meet Thursday, March 15, at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in Fort Worth. The topic of discussion will be *Kalahari Typing School for Men* by Alexander McCall Smith.

Those planning to participate are asked to read the book, reflect on it in light of personal experiences, and come to the session with questions, insights, or observations to share. A potluck supper will be served at 6:15 p.m., and the discussion will take place from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

To ensure good conversation, space will be limited. To reserve a spot or for more information, contact Dan Luby at (817) 560-2452 ext. 259, or by e-mail to dluby@fwdioc.org.

Additional Pre-Cana session planned for March

In anticipation of the increased number of summer weddings, the Family Life Office recently announced that it has scheduled a second Pre-Cana marriage preparation day in March. There will now be Pre-Cana sessions offered March 4 and 18 at the Green Oaks Park Hotel and Conference Center, 6901 West I-30 Freeway in West Fort Worth.

Pre-Cana is a one-day experience for engaged couples to begin their formal marriage preparation process. The day includes a series of talks and activities on topics such as: "Marriage as a Sacrament," "Personality Styles," "Communication," "Sexuality," "Budgeting and Finance," "Natural Family Planning," and more.

A donation of \$60 per couple is requested to cover the cost of materials, brochures, books, facilities, and refreshments. Lunch is included. For registration information, contact the Family Life Office at (817) 560-3300.

Holy Trinity Seminary auxiliary to host Lenten reflection

The Holy Trinity Seminary auxiliary will host a Lenten reflection Sunday, March 25, at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive in Irving. The program will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the seminary chapel.

Msgr. Michael Duca, rector of the seminary, will present the mini-retreat, entitled "Christ Behind Me, Christ Beside Me, Christ in Front of Me." The reflection will be followed by a reception in the student lounge.

The program is sponsored by the Trinitarian Auxiliary, an organization which supports and encourages seminarians through prayer, sacrifice, and service.

There is no charge for the event, but space is limited. For reservations, call Rita Backus, auxiliary president, at (972) 438-2212 ext. 500. For more information about Holy Trinity Seminary, visit online at www.holytrinityseminary.com.

Rachel's Vineyard retreat to offer post-abortion healing

A Rachel's Vineyard retreat, designed to offer healing for women and men struggling with the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion, will be held March 9-11 in Fort Worth.

Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath. The retreat team provides the confidential support needed to help participants work through feelings of anger, shame, guilt, and grief, so that they may be open to experiencing the healing love and mercy of God.

Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and former participants in the abortion industry — anyone who has been hurt by abortion — are welcome to attend.

For more information or to register, call the confidential help line at (817) 923-4757 or e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

'Sensible Scripture Study' to begin March 11 in Grapevine

"Would you like to get more out of Mass? Would you like to know where Catholic doctrine is found in the Bible?" ask organizers of "Sensible Scripture Study" at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine. A four-week course, designed to give participants specific techniques for reading and understanding Scripture, will be held March 11 through April 4 in the parish hall, located at 861 Wildwood Lane in Grapevine.

The sessions will be held from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on consecutive Sundays, beginning March 11 and continuing on March 18 and 25, and April 1. The sessions will be repeated on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. beginning Wednesday, March 14, and continuing on March 21 and 28, and April 4.

Program materials encourage all to attend, saying, "Watch Mass come alive as you apply the same techniques to the liturgy!"

To reserve childcare, call Carol at (817) 481-2685. For more information, call Steve Kellmeyer at (817) 481-2685 or e-mail to skellmeyer@stfrancisgrapevine.org.

Most Blessed Sacrament Parish announces Lenten video series

The Adult Formation Committee of Most Blessed Sacrament Parish has announced that a four-session video series, "I Believe — We Believe" from the "Echoes of Faith" modular program, will be offered for viewing at the church, located at 2100 N. Davis Drive in Arlington, on consecutive Monday evenings: Feb. 26 and March 5, 19, and 26. All sessions will be held from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and will include small group discussion following the video presentation.

For more information about the series, contact the parish office at (817) 460-2751.

People and Events

Youth of St. Philip's to host Vendor / Craft Fair March 17

The Youth Group at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville will sponsor a Vendor/Craft Fair Saturday, March 17, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parish Community Life Center, located at 1897 W. Main Street in Lewisville.

Approximately 40 booths and a silent auction will be featured at the fair; vendors will include Mary Kay Cosmetics, Home Interiors, Tupperware, Pampered Chef, and Creative Memories. Booths may be rented by businesses or individuals at a cost of \$50 each.

Proceeds from the event will help to defray the expense of the youth group's summer mission trip, a week-long work camp to assist with cleanup and restoration efforts in the New Orleans area.

For more information, to donate silent auction items, or to reserve a booth, contact Sandy Peterson at (972) 571-5905.

Eucharistic adoration to be offered at St. John's March 23

The Stewardship Council of St. John the Apostle Church will sponsor 40 hours of eucharistic adoration at the parish, located at 7341 Glenview Drive in North Richland Hills.

The devotion will begin Friday, March 23, with a 2 p.m. Mass; eucharistic adoration will begin immediately after Mass and will continue until the 5 p.m. Saturday evening Mass. After Mass, the adoration will resume, continuing until the 8 a.m. Mass on Sunday, March 25.

Participants may sign up at the parish March 17-18. For more information, call Mary Anne Lemmon at (817) 427-0953.

Nolan Catholic High School to present spring musical in March

Nolan Catholic High School will present its annual spring musical, "The Little Shop of Horrors," on two consecutive weekends in March. The program will be offered Friday and Saturday evenings, March 2, 3, 9, and 10, beginning at 7 p.m.

St. Maria Goretti Parish to host Lenten Fish Fry March 23

A Lenten Friday Fish Fry will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 23, in the St. Maria Goretti School Cafetorium, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington.

Tickets may be purchased for \$6 per adult or \$4 for each child 11 years of age and under, and are only available prior to the event. No tickets will be sold at the door. Tickets may be purchased in the parish office or from any parish choir member. Take-out meals will be available.

For more information, call the parish office at (817) 274-0643.

Carmelite Auxiliary to present 'Tribute to the USO' March 31

"A Tribute to the USO," an afternoon of musical performance sponsored by the Carmelite Auxiliary, is scheduled for Saturday, March 31, at 1 p.m. at the Woman's Club of Fort Worth, 1302 Pennsylvania Avenue, Fort Worth. Vocalists and musicians from throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth will perform favorite hits from the '40s, '50s, and '60s. Bishop Kevin Vann is scheduled to give a special guest performance.

Light refreshments will be served. The event will also include a silent auction and a live auction. Items included in the auction include vacation condominium rentals, original art work, and more. The auction preview will begin at 12:15 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 per person; no tickets will be sold at the door. All proceeds will benefit the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Arlington. For more information or to purchase tickets, call LaVerne Henry at (817) 924-5505.

Workshops, concert co-sponsored by St. Maria Goretti Parish

Paul Salamunovich, director emeritus of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, will serve as conductor at the Choral Festival Concert, to be held Saturday, March 3, at 2 p.m. at the Irons Recital Hall on the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) campus. The recital hall is located at 502 South Cooper Street in Arlington.

The concert will feature the St. Maria Goretti Church Adult Choir under the direction of Freda Breed. The concert will also include performances by the UTA Chamber Singers and the UTA A Cappella Choir and the Brookhaven Choral Society. The concert repertoire will feature works by Palestrina, Handel, Tschernokoff, and Mulholland. Admission is \$5.

The March 3 concert will be the culmination of a week-long choral symposium given by Salamunovich, who currently serves as director of music at St. Charles Borromeo Church in North Hollywood, California. The conductor will present workshops and clinics at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington; Brookhaven College, Dallas; UTA; First Presbyterian Church of Arlington; and Highland Park High School in Dallas.

Workshops to be held at St. Maria Goretti Church include "Chant: The Foundation for the Interpretation of Music in Many Styles," "Chant as an Influence in Expressive Singing," and "Teaching Healthy Vocal Techniques in a Choral Setting."

For more information about the workshops or concert, contact Jing Ling Tam by e-mail to jltam@uta.edu or call (817) 272-2482.

Hispanic Ministry Workshop to be offered at Montserrat

A Hispanic Ministry Workshop, designed especially for pastors and parish and diocesan staff, will be presented at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, Lake Dallas. The workshop will be held Monday evening, May 7, though lunch on Thursday, May 10, and will be presented primarily in the English language by a wide variety of presenters representing several universities, Catholic Relief Services, parishes, and other social service agencies.

According to Father Nathan Stone, SJ, coordinator of the workshop, "The objective is to promote growth in cultural awareness among people responsible for the Hispanic ministry in the church. Using the criteria of compassion, participants will consider the history of the migrant experience and work toward discernment of our call to respond and serve. Come to think, pray, and share your experience."

The cost for the workshop is \$360 for a single room, or \$300 for those sharing a double room. The cost includes all conference materials, lodging at Montserrat, and all meals. To register or for more information, visit the retreat house's Web site at www.montserratretreat.org, or call (940) 321-6020.



OLV HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTEES — Seventh graders (l. to r.) Devin Gillen, Bailey Lensmire, and Riina Pinto from Our Lady of Victory School in South Fort Worth were inducted Feb. 14 into the Knapke Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society. They are pictured with the organization's advisor Mary Jeanes. The National Junior Honor Society was established in order to recognize outstanding middle school students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and citizenship. (photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Natural Family Planning classes to begin March 15

An introductory class on the Billings Ovulation Method, a highly effective and modern method of Natural Family Planning (NFP), will be offered March 15 at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish, 1927 S.W. Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington.

The Billings Ovulation Method teaches a woman to interpret her natural signs of fertility. Depending upon the observations of sensation, guidelines within the woman's cycle are applied depending on the couple's desire to achieve or postpone pregnancy.

The Billings Method is taught in a classroom setting, once a month for four months. To complete a class, participants must attend all four sessions.

For more information or to register, call Julie Feldhake at (817) 741-1587 or e-mail to fw.nfp@verizon.net.

Young adults invited to participate in 'Adventure' retreat May 17-20

"The Adventure: An Ignatian Experience," a retreat program based on St. Ignatius' *The Spiritual Exercises*, will be offered May 17-20 for participants between the ages of 19 and 25. The retreat will take place at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, Lake Dallas.

The Spiritual Exercises, according to a retreat flyer, "can be successfully made at almost any stage, but they are specially designed for that proud, bold time in your life when virtually all life-determining options, and life-derailing mistakes, are made." The cost is \$35.

For more information or to register, call Montserrat at (940) 321-6020 or e-mail to Carol Ackels at montcarol@centurytel.net. Questions may be directed to Father Nathan Stone, SJ, by e-mail to nstonesj@yahoo.com.

Catholic Schools Office to host Teacher Job Fair March 31

The diocesan Catholic Schools Office will hold a Teacher Job Fair Saturday, March 31, from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. Prospective teachers (Pre-K through 12th grade) will have the opportunity to visit with principals and representatives from the diocesan schools. Applications and benefits information for the coming school year will be available.

For more information about teaching opportunities or the upcoming Teacher Job Fair, contact the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300 or visit online at www.fwdioc.org.

Single women invited to gather for weekly fellowship at St. Michael's

All single women, including single mothers, are invited to gather each Wednesday evening at St. Michael Church, 3713 Harwood Road in Bedford, for prayer time, fellowship, Bible study, and support. Each meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Formation Room, located on the west side of the parish complex. All participants are asked to bring a Bible, a notebook, and a pen.

Upcoming sessions will address particular areas of interest, including "Where Do I Start Financially?" Feb. 28; "Parenting Heartache Help," March 7; and "The Annulment Process," March 14.

Childcare will be provided at no additional cost by contacting Rosemary Keeley at (817) 283-8746 ext. 3, or via e-mail to rkeeley@smcchurch.org.

For more information, contact Jennifer Terbeek at (214) 679-8598 or via e-mail to jenniferchevier@yahoo.com, or contact Jocelyn Toores (817) 637-0295 or via e-mail to jocelyn_bartum@yahoo.com.

St. Mary's, Windthorst, to host annual sausage meal March 4

The Catholic community of St. Mary Parish in Windthorst will be hosting their annual spring German sausage meal Sunday, March 4, at the parish hall. The meal, consisting of 100 percent pork sausage, spare ribs, and sauerkraut with all the trimmings, including dessert and drink, will be served from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The cost of the all-you-can-eat dine-in meal is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children under 12 years of age. The event, sponsored by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, will benefit the Windthorst Volunteer Fire Department and Knights' charitable and fraternal activities.

Home-baked goods provided by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas will also be available. Take-out orders of sausage are welcome; uncooked sausage will be available for \$2.50 per pound.

The community invites all to come out to Windthorst, located at the corners of highways 281, 25, and 74 in Archer County, to partake of this annual sensory feast. For more information, call (940) 423-6788 or (940) 423-6444.

Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth to offer vocation retreat March 17

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth will host a Come and See Vocation Retreat for single Catholic women, ages 16 to 35, who are discerning a vocation to the religious life. The retreat will take place Saturday, March 17, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the sisters' provincialate convent, located at 1814 Egyptian Way in Grand Prairie.

For more information or to register, call Sister Mary Paul Haase, CSFN, at (972) 642-5191 or e-mail to smpaul@icgrandprairie.org.



NOTRE DAME STUDENTS PERFORM — Second graders (l. to r.) Sydney Chapa, Samantha McGee, Keeley Johnston, and Garrison Tucker were among several students from Notre Dame Elementary School in Wichita Falls who performed during half-time at the Midwestern State University men's basketball game Feb. 3. Students from grades 5K through third dressed up as cartoon characters and performed to the Chris Rice's praise and worship song, "Cartoons."



Spirit Games '07 are infused with spirit of courageous teen

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, Correspondent

Like most 14-year-old boys who love watching ESPN, Stephen Breen considered Lance Armstrong a hero. He read the Tour de France winner's book, watched him race, and marveled at the world champion's physical stamina and focused attitude.

A burgeoning athlete himself, Stephen had something else in common with the fellow Texan — cancer. Diagnosed in 1996 with advanced testicular cancer, Armstrong battled his way back from the disease to win the Tour de France three years later.

His young fan wasn't so fortunate. Stephen had just graduated from St. Andrew School in Fort Worth in 2003, when he began waging his war against Ewing's Sarcoma, a rare bone cancer that strikes about 150 U.S. adolescents a year.

As his chemotherapy treatments continued throughout the summer and fall, the new Nolan High School freshman proudly sported a LIVESTRONG wristband merchandised by Armstrong's foundation to raise money for cancer research. The yellow, rubber bracelet symbolized hope for the newly diagnosed patient and paid tribute to the famous cancer survivor.

And then, one day, Stephen took off the bracelet and never put it on again. His parents, Jim and Kathy Breen, noticed it missing from his wrist shortly after their son saw Armstrong featured on a television program.

"During the interview, Lance credited Bristol-Myers, the drugs, and his method of staying in shape, but he never mentioned that God had anything to do with him getting better," remembers Jim Breen. "Stephen was unimpressed by that."

A year into his own battle with cancer, and a firm believer in God's healing power, the sick teenager put away his LIVESTRONG wristband.

"A lot of his classmates knew why Stephen stopped wearing the bracelet," adds Kathy Breen, "and on the day of his funeral, many of them put their bracelets in his casket."



Above: Stephen Breen is shown relaxing at an early 16th birthday party with friends. At Stephen's request, a foundation was established in his name benefiting Catholic school children and children battling cancer.

Faced with a tragedy or serious illness, some teenagers become angry, isolated victims. For Stephen, the opposite was true.

"He was truly, truly faithful, and his illness only made him more spiritual," his mom says. "He believed he was going to heaven and that God was taking care of him."

Stephen's biggest fear wasn't death.

"He didn't want people to forget him," Kathy Breen continues, recalling how her son sat down with his parents and quietly made a request. "He wanted us to start a foundation to aid Catholic school kids and help teenagers with cancer at [Cook Children's Medical Center]."

The weekend before he died on Oct. 4, 2004, Stephen jotted down a reminder of his wishes on the family's message board.

"We knew what we had to do, and we got going," says Jim Breen, who started laying the groundwork for the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation within a month of his son's funeral. Stephen's personal philosophy, "Live Strong, No Regrets," became the organization's motto.

A little more than two years since its inception, the foundation has raised a quarter of a million dollars and has given away \$75,000 in tuition assistance to Catholic school youngsters.

"We've sent checks to 18 of the 19 schools in the diocese," Jim Breen says, detailing the organization's outreach. "We've helped 100 kids from 70 different families."

The Candlelighters, a childhood cancer advocacy group at Cook's, received \$5,000 to fund private patient needs and pay for a family excursion to NRH2O for sick teens and their parents.

The foundation's success is due largely to the efforts of a dedicated board of directors, more than 100 volunteers, and ongoing fundraising activities. A steak dinner, hosted by the Knights of Columbus at St. Andrew Church last fall, raised \$3,000, and a Swing "Fore" Stephen Golf Tournament is planned by the foundation for Sunday, April 29, at the Whitestone Golf Club in Benbrook.

Shortly after his death, Nolan students sold "Live for Stephen" bracelets and organized a "Hats Off to Stephen Day," donating the proceeds from the out-of-uniform privilege to the foundation. Another friend of Stephen's raised \$10,000 at a benefit concert that featured local high school bands.

"His friends were very gracious and kind to us," Jim Breen says, remembering the flurry of sympathy cards and letters sent to the family after the funeral. "I think he impacted their lives very positively. We still hear stories from parents about how their kids think about Stephen in some way."

Justin Stradley, a friend of Stephen's since the first grade, remembers his pal as an optimist who never got down about his illness or his numerous hospital stays.

"He actually had fun with it



Above: Stephen Breen (center), who had an interest in a variety of sports, is seen on the golf course in Grand Cayman with his dad, Jim (left), and Nolan classmate Andrew Rich.

Left: Stephen rests by the waters of the Caribbean on a family vacation to Grand Cayman in September 2004. He died one month later.

and would ask people to rub his bald head for luck," Justin remembers. "He never gave up hope."

Even on days when he couldn't attend class, the hairless teenager would don a baseball cap, put on his uniform, and drive with his father to Nolan so he could eat lunch with his buddies.

"His faith and determination throughout those months will never leave me," Stradley says emotionally. "He never stopped making friends, and I'm glad his family is using his memory to touch the lives of other people."

And this year, as members of Stephen's class, now seniors, prepare to graduate from Nolan Catholic High School, the foun-

dation is adding a new dimension to its ongoing philanthropy. A diocesan-wide youth day, hosted by the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation and endorsed by the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, is set for Saturday, March 31, at the Nolan campus. Labeled the Spirit Games '07, the daylong schedule includes a festival for children in kindergarten through fourth grades, an academic decathlon, track and field events, athletic games, a food court, and music by the Ben Walther Band. The festivities will begin with an 11:30 a.m. outdoor Mass, celebrated by Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann, on the Nolan football field.

The youth day gathering

SEE NEXT PAGE

Spirit Games '07

Saturday, March 31, 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Nolan Catholic High School
4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth

Open to all Catholic youth, grades K-12, within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Highlights:

- 11:30 a.m. Mass, celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann
- 6 p.m. concert by the Ben Walther Band
- Motivational talk offered by Steve Allgeyer of Life Teen
- Athletic and academic competitions

Tickets are \$10 per person; food may be purchased at the event. Families with five or more students will pay a maximum of \$50 per family for admission; parents may attend free of charge. All participants will receive a Youth Day T-shirt.

For more information, visit the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation Web site at www.stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org, or call the foundation at (817) 846-6887.

Diocesan

Partners program provides beneficial resources for those charged with the upkeep of . . .

Sacred Places

By Nicki Prevou

Father David Bristow considers his parish, St. Mary of the Assumption Church near downtown Fort Worth, to be a “precious jewel” that requires — and deserves — constant maintenance and care.

His dedication to the parish reaches beyond his service as pastor to the worshipping community; Fr. Bristow also pours hours into addressing the many long-term needs of the actual church structure, an elegant, intricately designed building that is now more than 80 years old.

“I’ve been here [at St. Mary’s] just over five years,” explained Fr. Bristow. “In that time, among other tasks, we have refinished the original hardwood floors and installed a new sound system, a completely new heating and air conditioning system, and a new organ.” Volunteers, including Fr. Bristow and members of his family, worked tirelessly to retrieve art pieces and stone work from the recently-demolished St. Joseph School of Nursing and student nurses’ residence in order to create a new outdoor gathering space at the church.

Not content to rest upon his laurels, Fr. Bristow continues to work on new restoration and improvement projects, includ-

ing one major task that is especially close to his heart. “We have completed several expert studies in order to determine what needs to be done for the beautiful old windows we have here at St. Mary’s,” he said. “The windows, we know, are in need of major restoration. We need to raise funds in order to undertake that work.”

Fortunately for St. Mary of the Assumption parishioners and the many Fort Worth area residents who cherish the beautiful old church, Fr. Bristow and a small team of his staff members have been participants in the New Dollars/New Partners for Your Sacred Space training program since last year, an opportunity provided by



At left, one of the many stained-glass windows at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in South Fort Worth depicts the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary foretelling Christ’s birth. In smaller windows (above) positioned below each biblical scene, the names of the benefactors who donated windows to the church more than 80 years ago appear in stained glass. According to Father David Bristow, St. Mary’s pastor, many of the windows are in need of major restoration. (Photos by Mary Martin)

the Partners for Sacred Spaces organization.

Partners, a non-sectarian, non-profit organization based in Philadelphia, opened its Fort Worth office in October 2006. The agency, established in 1989, provides training and technical assistance to communities seeking to preserve historic religious properties. Specifically, the agency assists congregations in the tasks associated with restoring, financing, and renewing their churches, synagogues, and mosques.

These buildings, according to Partners’ executive director, local architect James Nader, are increasingly at risk. “Over 93 percent of our congregations with older buildings open their doors to host community service programs every year,” explained Nader. “Research shows that many of these same buildings are dealing with se-

vere repair bills. Without a major infusion of funding, these aging buildings, which we call ‘sacred places,’ may have to be demolished. In the Fort Worth area alone, the value of the resources that these congregations provide to the outreach programs they house is approximately \$30 million each year,” he pointed out.

St. Mary’s Church is one of 13 local congregations that has been participating in — and, on several occasions, hosting — the regularly scheduled training modules.

“Fr. David and his team have been enthusiastic, fully-engaged participants in the program,” said Nader. “What a blessing it was for members of the Protestant congregations to get to tour the sanctuary at St. Mary’s. It has also been inspiring to watch the way the St. Mary’s team has operated together, with great efficiency and very focused energy.”

“The Partners program is kind of a think tank,” reflected Fr. Bristow. “Among other services, they teach churches how to apply for grants for assistance to maintain or restore religious spaces. They have given us very practical aid in getting a clear view of how to help our church, and creating a plan for doing that.”

Fr. Bristow hopes that more Catholic congregations in the Fort Worth Diocese will become interested in learning how to preserve their own “sacred places.”

“I hope that others will want to take advantage of the Partners program,” he said. “They are good at what they do, and, for us at St. Mary’s, it has definitely been worth the time we have invested.”

For more information about the Partners for Sacred Places organization, visit the Web site at www.sacredplaces.org, or contact the Texas Regional Office at (817) 965-5072 or via e-mail to jnader@sacredplaces.org.

Spirit Games '07 to commence March 31

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE has a different purpose from the foundation’s primary mission to raise money for Catholic school financial aid and teens with cancer.

“That’s the money component. With [the] youth day, the greater mission is to evangelize our faith to the youth of our diocese,” Jim Breen says. “The All-School Mass last year had a surprising impact on kids, and we’re trying to do something similar with this event.”

Several events will bring the

day to a close, including a talk by motivational speaker Steve Allgeyer; a Christian Fear Factor challenge; and a concert. The cost of participating in the Spirit Games 2007 is \$10 per child with a maximum fee of \$50 per family. Parents may attend free of charge.

Kathy and Jim Breen hope the youth day celebration brings the Catholic community together and helps its young participants understand their faith a little more. Their son would have enjoyed the mix of spirituality,

athletics, achievement, and camaraderie.

“I want Stephen to be remembered for his strength of character, his faith in God, and his ability to pull friends together and be a positive influence on them,” his mother explains.

By helping others, the foundation fulfills that objective and keeps alive the memory of a boy who possessed a wisdom beyond his age.

“It’s a way of turning a horrible negative into something positive almost daily,” his father adds.



Left: The Breen family — (l. to r.) parents, Jim and Kathy, and sisters Cortni, (following not pictured) Amber, and Kristi — helps to create a brighter future for many young people through the Stephen Breen Foundation.

“Stephen was caring, quick-witted, loving boy and a good student. Through his foundation,

we’re creating a brighter tomorrow for other remarkable young people.”

Diocesan / International



CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES PROJECT — A fourth-grade Afghan girl attends school in a village in Paghman, Afghanistan, Nov. 21. Catholic Relief Services is supporting primary education for children in mainly rural areas of Afghanistan. (CNS photo/courtesy of Catholic Relief Services)

Dallas Catholic Charities to hold adoption orientation Feb. 28

Catholic Charities of Dallas will host an adoption orientation information session Feb. 28 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., in the conference room at the Catholic Charities offices, located at 3725 Blackburn in Dallas.

According to material from Catholic Charities, this orientation "is a wonderful opportunity to gain additional information

regarding the practices and philosophies of adoption through Professional Counseling and Children Services" (Catholic Counseling Services).

People of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and members of all Christian faiths are welcome to attend. For more information, call Linda Christianson at (214) 526-2772 or 1-800-CARE-002.

Operation Rice Bowl: A Lenten opportunity to show solidarity with those in need

Several parishes within the Diocese of Fort Worth are participating during the Lenten season in Operation Rice Bowl (ORB), the official Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services (CRS). ORB, which began in 1975, provides resources on combating poverty. More than 15,000 American parishes, schools, and community groups will take part this year in the program, which helps Catholics to pray, fast, learn, and give in solidarity with those in need.

ORB will offer a focus during Lent 2007 upon the countries of Mexico, Pakistan, Angola, Niger, and Cambodia. ORB's resource materials offer information about these and other countries, enabling families and parish and school groups to learn about the suffering experienced by the poor within these areas of the world.

The Operation Rice Bowl Web site (www.crs.org/orb) provides meatless recipes, prayers, virtual tours, and an interactive global



map that explains about Operation Rice Bowl-funded programs. A new feature on the Web site offers the opportunity for participants in ORB to sign up to receive an e-mail reflection during each week of Lent.

Annually, approximately \$8 million are contributed through ORB. Seventy-five percent of Operation Rice Bowl contribu-

tions come to Catholic Relief Services to fund development projects overseas and Lenten education projects in the United States. Twenty-five percent of Operation Rice Bowl contributions remain within dioceses in the United States to help fund local hunger and poverty alleviation projects.

A quarter of the funds collected through ORB within the Diocese of Fort Worth are used to assist local food banks and other agencies, according to Ralph McCloud, diocesan director of the Office of Peace and Justice, who also serves as director of the Operation Rice Bowl program for the diocese. Individuals, parishes, and schools may obtain ORB resources by contacting his office, he said.

For more information about Operation Rice Bowl, visit online at www.crs.org/orb, or contact Ralph McCloud at (817) 560-3300 ext. 305.



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LOW MASS FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS

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Prices - per person double, breakfast/dinner daily + airfare from DFW

+++++

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Sociologists see strong identity, less commitment in young Catholics

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Young adult Catholics have a strong Catholic identity but do not feel much of a commitment to the institutional church or its moral teachings, two sociologists said Feb. 6 in Washington.

The seemingly paradoxical assessment came from James A. Davidson of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and Dean R. Hoge of The Catholic University of America in Washington at a Woodstock Forum on the campus of Georgetown University.

Davidson and Hoge are co-authors, along with William V. D'Antonio of Catholic University and Mary L. Gautier of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown, of *American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church*, to be published in late March by Rowman & Littlefield.

The book analyzes Gallup surveys from 1987, 1993, 1999, and 2005, and finds that Catholics born after 1979, in what the authors call the "millennial generation," have deep differences from previous generations of Catholics — differences that are unlikely to disappear when they marry and have children.

"There's a disconnect be-

tween them and the institutional church," said Davidson. "And when they get older, they are not going to be like the Catholics of previous generations. They are going to be the Catholics they are now."

Hoge said the disconnect might be exacerbated by the fact that the young diocesan priests who will serve the millennial generation are moving in the opposite direction, becoming more strict about some church teachings and more likely to adhere to the "cultic" model of priesthood as a man set apart than to the "servant-leader model" favored by the majority of older priests.

For example, while 94 percent of priests 35 or younger said they believe ordination confers "a permanent character making [the priest] essentially different from the laity," only 70 percent of priests ages 56-65 said that. Asked whether the church "needs to move faster in empowering laypeople in ministry," 86 percent of the priests ages 56-65 and 54 percent of the youngest priests agreed.

For the purposes of their book, the sociologists divided the entire adult Catholic population into four groups — pre-Second Vatican Council, those over 65, who

make up about 17 percent of U.S. Catholics; the Vatican II generation, ages 45-64, 35 percent; the post-Vatican II generation, ages 27-44, 40 percent; and the millennials, ages 18-26, 9 percent.

On abortion, 58 percent of the pre-Vatican II generation said opposition to abortion was a core Catholic teaching, but only 7 percent of the millennials did. Sixty-nine percent of the oldest group said homosexual behavior is always wrong, while only 37 percent of the young adult Catholics agreed.

On the question of premarital sex, there was a sharp drop in those who believe it is "always wrong" from the pre-Vatican II generation (62 percent) to the Vatican II generation (26 percent). The figure was only slightly lower for the post-Vatican II generation (22 percent) and the millennial generation (21 percent).

The margin of error was plus or minus 9 percentage points.

Referring to the forum's theme, "Young Adult Catholics: Believing, Belonging, and Serving," Davidson said, "Belonging is not a problem; they feel comfortable calling the church home. And I don't think serving is a problem. It's the believing that's the problem."

Young adult Catholics see the church as having "no credibility, no plausibility, no authority," he added. "They practice their faith by caring for other people."

Responding to the sociologists' talks, two women who work with young Catholics found signs of hope for the church in the next generation.

Catherine Heinhold, a campus minister and director of the Catholic retreat program at Georgetown, said many students believe "it is more important to serve the poor than to go to Mass" but they also feel "a very real, deep desire to grow in their faith and spirituality."

"They respond well to outreach," she said, "and they are really hungry for God."

Sister Mary Carroll Kemp, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary who is a ninth-grade religion teacher at Gonzaga College High School in Washington, said that although community service and retreat programs at the Jesuit-run school are not obligatory, "everyone wants to do them."

But she said the most important element of the service programs and retreats is the time spent in faith-sharing and reflection each day, "talking the talk about Jesus, the Gospel, and God."



NEW YORK SNOWFALL — St. Mary Star of the Sea Church in Mexico, New York, is seen Feb. 9 after snow coming off Lake Ontario dumped more than 100 inches over five days. Father John Canorro, pastor at St. Mary and a volunteer chaplain/fireman, went out on several emergency calls with the local Mexico Volunteer Fire Department. (CNS photo/Paul Finch, CATHOLIC SUN)

Pope encourages young people to become 'witnesses of charity'

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI urged young people to express love in unselfish ways, looking past social goals of competition and productivity in order to become "witnesses of charity" in the world.

He spoke of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta as an example of a Christian who translated love into concrete action to help the poorest of the poor.

The pope made the comments in a message marking World Youth Day, which will be celebrated in many dioceses April 1, Palm Sunday. The text was released at the Vatican Feb. 5.

The theme of the papal message was love, and he began by telling young people that despite emotional disappointments and lack of affection in their own lives, they should know that "love is possible."

"The purpose of my message is to help reawaken in each one of you — you who are the future and hope of humanity — trust in a love that is true, faithful, and strong; a love that generates peace and joy; a love that binds people together and allows them to feel free in respect for one another," he said.

He emphasized that God is the source of true love and that Christ's suffering and death on the cross form the perfect expression of this divine love.

The pope focused on three areas where young people are called to demonstrate love of God: in the church, in marriage, and in society.

In the church, which he described as a "spiritual family," the pope said young people should be willing to help stimulate parish and other activities, even if it means giving up some of their entertainments. They should "cheerfully accept the necessary sacrifices" and testify to their love

for Jesus among people their own age, he said.

The pope said marriage is a "project of love" between a man and a woman that fits into a divine design.

"Learning to love each other as a couple is a wonderful journey, yet it requires a demanding 'apprenticeship,'" he said. When couples get engaged, he said, it's a period of preparation that needs to be lived "in purity of gesture and words."

Engagement allows couples to practice self-control and develop respect for each other, he said. This is true love, which does not place an emphasis on seeking one's own satisfaction, he said.

When it comes to the daily routine of family, studies, work, and free time, the pope asked young people to look beyond the cultivation of talents needed to obtain a social position.

"Develop your capacities, not only in order to become more competitive and productive, but to be witnesses of charity," he said.

He encouraged young people to study the social doctrine of the church and use it to guide their actions in the world. Love is a powerful social force, the only force capable of changing human hearts, he said.

The pope said Blessed Mother Teresa responded to the search for love by society's weakest members by taking in and caring for the people who were dying on the streets of Calcutta.

The lives of the saints are full of such lessons, and young people should try to know them better, he said.

The pope also encouraged young people to attend Mass regularly, telling them that the Eucharist is "the great school of love." He said the sharing of the eucharistic bread kindles a desire to give generous service to others.



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Viewpoints

Yes, 'Repent' but don't forget to 'Believe'

By Dan Luby

Repent." It is often the first word of Lent, spoken over the sandpappy sound of crosses being marked on our foreheads with ashes in one of the traditional formulas of Ash Wednesday: "Repent and believe the Good News."

It captures, as well as any other word, the spirit and tradition of Lenten renewal. It crystallizes the task of Lent, our long communal journey from winter darkness to Easter light. It speaks of conversion and transformation, of opening ourselves to the power of grace.

Though Catholics of a certain age, especially those who grew up in the Bible Belt, may still think of "repent" as a distinctly "non-Catholic" word, something you might see in lights on a church marquee (until quite recently, an entirely Protestant communications medium), or painted on the sides of barns out in the country or shouted passionately by a perspiring TV evangelist, most of us are used to hearing it as part of the sound track of Lent.

Precisely because we have grown used to it, the word "repent," and the

May we turn away from all that impedes our communion with God and with one another, and turn toward the One whose life, death, and resurrection open up for us the very life of God.

idea behind it, have grown less powerful with increasing familiarity. It might be useful to reflect on what this central Lenten virtue calls us to.

The biblical word that usually gets translated as "repentance" is "metanoia." It has the connotation of reversing one's direction, of "turning around." It implies not only giving up wrongdoing and falsehood, but embracing more fully and faithfully all that is good, virtuous, true.

In the context of Lent, and in the preaching of Jesus, the call to "repent" is paired with the corresponding command to "believe."

If we are to believe the truth of Christ's Gospel, of God's inexhaustible love and mercy, what are some of the lies, half truths, deliberate misconceptions which repentance and the Gospel of Christ call us to reject? What are some of the frequently practiced behaviors, the widely embraced attitudes, the commonly adopted habits of which we

might profitably repent in order to make room in our hearts and minds and spirits for the ever-expanding grace of God?

Here is a Lenten "starter kit" of a few ways of thinking and acting which might be appropriate targets for the Lenten tradition of "giving up."

WE MIGHT FRUITFULLY REPENT of the conviction that life is a zero sum game, a contest in which for every winner there has to be a loser, for every enrichment of one person, another person has to be impoverished. It would help us to prize friendship more than victory; communion more than being proven right.

WE COULD GIVE UP believing the worst about people, yearning for the downfall of our enemies, relishing their failures and losses as a false source of encouragement for ourselves. It could open our eyes to the reality of each person's permanent endowment of human dignity — including our own.

WE CAN STOP ASSUMING that people

who see things differently from us, who may even disagree vehemently with our most cherished convictions, do so out of willful ignorance and malice. It can help us imagine common ground between ourselves and even our most challenging opponents.

WE CAN ABSTAIN FROM attitudes which justify belittling others or dismissing their hopes and aspirations and concerns because "those kind of people" (fill in your own prejudice here) are OK to despise or demean, are not included in Christ's call to love, are somehow beyond the power of God's mercy. It might expand our too-limited vision of how much God longs to include all his daughters and sons in his Kingdom.

May the Spirit of true repentance move within us during this new Lenten season. May we give ourselves over to the work of repentance and belief as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of the great Easter mysteries. May we turn away from all that impedes our communion with God and with one another, and turn toward the One whose life, death, and resurrection open up for us the very life of God.



Dan Luby is the director of Christian Formation for the diocese. In May, for the third time, his column received first place honors among regular columns on spiritual life in the Catholic press of the U.S. and Canada. Dan's column earned the same recognition in 2001 and again in 2003. Dan and his wife, Theresa, have two children, Kate and Peter.

Stop by anytime; we'll leave the light on for you

By Mary Morrell

"For I was . . . a stranger and you welcomed me . . ."

— Matthew 25:35

At every change of season, I like to change the welcome sign on my front porch. This year, as I changed from fall to winter on what seemed more like a balmy summer night, my son turned on the porch light overhead. The warm yellow glow reflecting off the new sign brought back memories of a similar night several years ago.

My husband and I and a few of our children had made ourselves comfortable in the living room to watch a movie. It was around 10 p.m. and some of us, including the dogs, had begun to doze. The night was warm so the front door was open to let fresh air in through the screen.

Without warning the screen door opened and a young, attractive woman stepped into the living room. "Is this the country club?" she queried enthusiastically. Within seconds she realized her mistake.

Half asleep and without moving a

muscle from my chair I said with a smile, "I wish."

Startled, everyone began laughing, astounded at the late night visitor, but not concerned enough to move from their spots — sort of like that watchdog we put so much faith in who opened one eye at the intruder and offered a half-hearted yawn.

"I'm so sorry," she stuttered embarrassedly as she backed out onto the porch, "but you have a welcome sign and everything."

Escorting her back to her friends who waited in a running taxi, my husband directed them to the nearby Elks Club assuming by their dress that is where they intended to go. When he got back to the house we continued to laugh, not just at the ridiculousness of the situation, but at our reactions.

In this day and age it is expected that we be at least cautious, if not fearful, of strangers, and I suppose there is wisdom in that. But we have become so accustomed to "drop-in" visitors that we would be more likely to invite them in for coffee than lock the door between us.

It must be the corner location, or maybe

it's the charisma of the large, rambling house, if there is such a thing, but without fail we have unexpected visitors every month. Some need to use the phone, report an accident, borrow a gas can — hopefully with some gas in it — ask directions, inquire about lost pets, wait out a storm, get a drink of water, ask for a ride, or even borrow money.

In this age of cynicism, we are repeatedly touched when strangers repay such small acts of neighborliness with bags of pre-worn clothes for our children, jars of peanut butter and bricks of cheese, fresh pumpkins and cut flowers, or simply a hand-jotted note tucked in our door.

There is no substitute for an experience of welcome, of being wanted and cared for.

Coming home from school on a dark winter's night and making the long walk down my street from the bus stop, I had those warm feelings of welcome, of comfort, whenever I saw the amber glow of the living room lamp through the frosted windows. I guess that's why I got hooked by the Motel Six commercial, "We'll leave the light on for you."

That motel served as our place of wel-

come as we traveled across the country in the worst of weather and, believe me, I was glad to see that light burning when hurricane force winds threatened to blow us into the next state.

Over the years I have come to see these experiences in the light of what it means to be Church.

Jesus extended the invitation, saying, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men... Come, all you who are weary and I will give you rest... Come, follow me."

He hung out a welcome sign and never shut the door in anyone's face. He taught us how to be hospitable, to be a people of welcome, to open our doors and our hearts to those who would seek entrance.

What I learned from my parents was to always leave the light on. You never know who might need a place of welcome. What I learned as a Christian is that the light needs to shine through the eyes of the soul, as well.

So if you're ever in the neighborhood, stop in. With a house full of people there's always a light — or two or three — burning in the window.

Texas Catholic Conference

Texas Bishops statement on the HPV Vaccine

On Friday, February 5, Governor Perry issued an executive order requiring the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to adopt rules requiring the new Gardasil vaccine for girls entering sixth grade as of September 2008. The vaccine is designed to protect girls against some strains of the human papillomavirus, or HPV, that cause most forms of cervical cancer.

The Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas appreciate the seriousness of this healthcare issue; HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world and in the United States. The HPV vaccine is currently recommended by the CDC Committee on Immuniza-

tion Practices and the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) considers HPV vaccination to be a morally acceptable method of protecting against this disease.

However, we find the Governor's executive order to be problematic in several ways. Although the NCBC considers HPV vaccination to be morally acceptable, it has also recommended that civil authorities should leave this decision to parents and not to make such immunization mandatory at this time. Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics has judged that school-based mandatory HPV vaccination is premature and should await several years

of practice before mandates are considered. The HPV vaccine is a new vaccine that has only been tested among girls 16 and older. While results from those tests have been encouraging, clinicians have very little experience administering the vaccine to 12-year-old girls, and the general public has very little knowledge of any of the possible negative side effects.

While the HPV vaccine offers hope for reducing the number of women developing cervical cancer, it is not a magic bullet and is only one avenue for disease prevention.

HPV is primarily spread through sexual contact which includes, but is limited to, sexual intercourse. The prevalence of

HPV among those of reproductive age makes exposure to the virus possible, even in a monogamous marriage, due to the possibility of a spouse's exposure prior to marriage. Furthermore, we live in a society where non-consensual sex remains a threat to young women who deserve to be protected from the effects of exposure to HPV. Consequently, the Church recognizes that the most effective way to avoid contracting the virus is for men and women to abstain from sexual relations before marriage and to remain faithful within marriage.

In light of these realities, we the Catholic Bishops of Texas, call on the Governor to rescind his executive order and allow the

public debate to go forward on this important healthcare issue.

Approved by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas: Archbishop José H. Gomez, San Antonio; Archbishop Daniel H. DiNardo, Galveston-Houston; Bishop Gregory Aymond, Austin; Bishop Edmond Carmody, Corpus Christi; Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio, SJ, Tyler; Bishop David E. Felhauer, Victoria; Bishop Charles V. Grahmann, Dallas; Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, SVD, Beaumont; Bishop Armando X. Ochoa, El Paso; Bishop Raymundo Peña, Brownsville; Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, San Angelo; Bishop Placido Rodriguez, Lubbock; Bishop James A. Tamayo, Laredo; Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Fort Worth; and Bishop John W. Yanta, Amarillo.

Texas Bishops statement on Coal-fired Plants

The Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas seek to offer a constructive contribution to the current and important state debate regarding coal-fired plants. We participate neither as climate experts nor as scientists, but rather as pastors and teachers who are concerned that the moral and human dimensions of these decisions could be overwhelmed by the political, economic, or ideological pressures.

As the population of Texas increases and our reliance on energy grows, it is becoming increasingly clear that our state may need to reduce total energy consumption while adopting alternative energy sources and technologies that are more environmentally sound. Texas is already home to five of the 10 top mercury-emitting power plants in the country, and the current debate over the proposals to build multiple coal-fired plants in our state has heightened awareness to the human and environmental impact of such plants.

We hope this will be a time for our state to come together across partisan, ideological, and interest groups lines to address the moral, human, and environmental challenges facing our entire community. We ask Texas leaders to adopt policy measures that reflect a framework of principles drawn from four major themes of Catholic Social Teaching and our pastoral experience:

Upholding the Right to Life:

It is clear that no overall energy strategy is free from risk to human life. The proposed coal plants, however, could pose significant health problems such as increased susceptibility to bacte-

rial infection and increased cases of asthma. The Church is deeply committed to the protection of human life and the advancement of the common good in the approach to energy. Mercury levels in the air and water pose a particular risk to unborn life, which is of deep concern to the Church. Energy planners and those in authority must do all in their power to safeguard human life.

A Priority for the Poor:

We are deeply concerned that the poor and vulnerable in our community will have little or no voice in this vital discussion. Their needs and burdens are likely to be ignored or overwhelmed by more powerful interests. The plants will release sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxides — pollutants which are a particular problem for poor families and children, vulnerable workers, and farmers. They are more likely to be in jobs where they work outside performing physically active tasks in the outdoors, and it is often harder for them to obtain asthma treatments.

Currently, because of their costs, energy efficiency programs are disproportionately available only to people who can afford them. Low-income and middle-income households would actually benefit the most from the reductions in their utility bills through these energy efficiency programs. Every effort should therefore be made to ensure that poor and middle-income families have access to the same energy efficiency strategies as wealthier families. Furthermore, we should ensure that programs designed to assist low-income families with heating and cooling bills are adequately funded.

The Pursuit of the Common Good:

The challenge of seeking new sources of energy is a pre-eminent example of how our civic debate and decisions should reflect the pursuit of the common good, rather than the narrow search for economic or political advantage. Our obligation to pass on the gift of God's creation to future generations without doing irreversible harm is but one aspect of the demands of the common good. Equally important is the need for all Texans to have access to clean air, land, and water. We urge our leaders to resist and restrain predictable interest group pressures and narrow appeals. Instead we urge them to help build up common ground for reasonable and effective initiatives for energy conservation and the development of alternate renewable and clean energy resources.

The Practice of Prudence:

The traditional virtue of prudence calls for caution in accepting a more prominent role for coal in Texas' future. The Church cannot ignore the economic benefits that coal may offer, but neither can the Church ignore coal's attendant dangers to human health and environment. If a commitment to coal is made, it should be balanced by a simultaneous commitment to reduce emissions, improve mine safety, and adopt and enforce strict ecological and community protection standards. The review process of the state should ensure that a margin of error is provided to protect human health. Additionally, where significant uncertainty exists on pollution impacts of a facility, the most cautionary approach should be adopted.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

We believe that the moral measure of the decision on coal plants will be determined by how we act to protect God's creation, advance the "common good," and alleviate the ways in which our energy policies burden the poor and the vulnerable. We conclude our statement with three recommendations:

1. Lawmakers should commit to a clean, affordable, and reliable energy future for Texas by increasing electric generation from clean, safe, renewable sources and by committing to develop the necessary infrastructure to ensure that energy from our state's abundant wind and solar resources is available to residents throughout the state.

2. Legislators should enact legislation that directs the responsible state agencies to adopt a measured and deliberate approach for consideration of all permit applications for the construction of new generating facilities, and to ensure that the permit process includes a full review of the health, environmental, and global warming implications of the technologies proposed along with comprehensive analyses of alternative strategies and their comparative costs and benefits. A slower review process should also include more time for public input and examination of permits.

3. We call on energy leaders to balance the needs and burdens of the poor with the demands for cleaner energy alternatives. One option to achieve this is to ensure that tax policies and other incentives are structured so that clean energy alternatives can be

priced competitively with fossil fuel generation.

The Texas Catholic Conference will work with legislative leaders to address environmental justice within this framework and on these principles. We do so with modesty and respect. While no one has easy answers, we ask you to help define and refine what prudence and the pursuit of the common good require. We seek your help in lifting up and focusing on how our sources of energy production will affect the "least among us" — the poor, the vulnerable, and the voiceless in our community and around the world. We particularly call for leadership in shaping responses that respect and protect the lives and the dignity of poor families and children.

Approved by the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas: Archbishop José H. Gomez, San Antonio; Archbishop Daniel H. DiNardo, Galveston-Houston; Bishop Gregory Aymond, Austin; Bishop Edmond Carmody, Corpus Christi; Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio, SJ, Tyler; Bishop David E. Felhauer, Victoria; Bishop Charles V. Grahmann, Dallas; Bishop Curtis J. Guillory, SVD, Beaumont; Bishop Armando X. Ochoa, El Paso; Bishop Raymundo Peña, Brownsville; Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, OMI, San Angelo; Bishop Placido Rodriguez, Lubbock; Bishop James A. Tamayo, Laredo; Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Fort Worth; and Bishop John W. Yanta, Amarillo.

Editor's Note: *The above position statements were sent out from the Texas Catholic Conference Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2007.*



JOHN CARR SPEAKS — John Carr, secretary of the Department of Social Development and World Peace at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, addresses the 2007 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington Feb. 12. The annual meeting tackled a range of issues from poverty at home to war and human rights abroad. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Measure of society is its treatment of the least among us, says John Carr

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— to “bring good news to the poor” and to “set the downtrodden free.”

“That mission is our life’s work,” he said.

Carr quoted from Pope Benedict XVI’s encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (*God Is Love*), in which the pope says the church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice” and “charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as ‘social charity.’”

The pope’s message, he said, is that Catholics working for social justice “are not inspired by ideologies” but are acting as “persons moved by Christ’s love. Faith shapes our politics.”

“Jesus made it absolutely clear that the measure of our society is its treatment of the least among us,” Carr said.

About 600 people, representing diocesan social ministry programs and Catholic organizations engaged in social ministry across the country, attended the Feb. 11-14 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering. The annual meeting features wide-ranging discussions on social justice and public policy issues and an afternoon on Capitol Hill, lobbying members of Congress on immigration reform, poverty, and a variety of other domestic and international issues.

Carr reminded the group that when they go to the Hill “we’re a community of faith. We don’t bring junkets or campaign contributions.”

“In adding our voices and

values and votes, we’re not threatening democracy; we’re expressing it,” he said, adding that they were bringing their values into the public square “to build up the common good.”

Carr said addressing public policy issues from a faith perspective is “a lot more complicated than ‘What would Jesus do?’”

Catholic social teaching “offers hard questions, not easy answers,” he said.

He said their message is characterized by a series of “ands” — human life and human dignity, rights and responsibilities, charity and justice, solidarity and subsidiarity, personal values and social values.

He listed a sampling of some of the issues the gathering would be addressing over the next couple of days, including the right to life, immigration reform, environmental responsibility, agricultural policy, the war in Iraq, and the bishops’ call for a policy of responsible transition, peace and justice in the Middle East, the global fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria, and poverty.

Carr reminded the group that much of what they do involves building relationships — in Congress the next day, but also in their parishes when they return home.

He said welcoming and encouraging diversity is part of that. “Look around the room,” he said, his eyes sweeping across an almost entirely white audience. “We do not reflect the church we serve.... We’ve come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.”

Remember social justice roots are ancient, Fr. Ronald Rolheiser tells activists

By Patricia Zapor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — For people doing Catholic social justice work who may have a sense of fatigue, it’s important to recognize that the entire movement is relatively new, yet is supported by theology dating to the time of the Old Testament prophets, said the plenary speaker at an annual social ministry gathering.

Oblate Father Ronald Rolheiser, author of numerous books on spirituality and president of Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, urged people to be heartened by their scriptural mandate as they work to improve the lot of the world’s poor and needy.

Some critics of the church’s social justice emphasis point to its relatively short 35-year history to say the movement is not based upon theological tradition.

But Fr. Rolheiser said the fact is that until about that time, “Roman Catholics were the poor.” It’s only recently that enough of the Catholic population, especially in the United States, was well-educated and affluent enough to start asking questions about poverty, treatment of laborers and immigrants, the environment, and other social issues, he said.

He spoke Feb. 11 at the opening session of the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering.

He quoted the late Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe, superior general of the Society of Jesus, who answered a question about why the church was so focused on social justice when it had not been considered important in the past.

“Today we know more,” he said Fr. Arrupe responded.

Fr. Rolheiser traced the scriptural basis for social responsibility through the admonitions of the prophets that mankind would be judged by “the quality of justice in the land,” as in, how widows, orphans, and strangers were treated.

And while Jesus at times affirmed the traditions and rules of the Jewish faith, his most powerful teachings were about bringing justice through compassion, Fr. Rolheiser said.

The parable of the prodigal son, the story of God dividing the “sheep” and the “goats” at the gates of heaven, and even the recounting of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet the night before he died were all proclamations about the need to be compassionate toward others, he said.

Fr. Rolheiser noted that John’s



AWARD WINNERS — Rita Chairez and Rosa Campos of the Los Angeles-based *Comunidad en Movimiento* smile to applause after receiving the 2007 Sister Margaret Cafferty Development of People Award during the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington Feb. 11. The women, who work with the Latina organization to keep neighborhoods safe from violence, accepted the award from the U.S. bishops’ Catholic Campaign for Human Development. *Comunidad en Movimiento* began in 1996 with parishioners from Dolores Mission Catholic Church. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Gospel, which tells the foot-washing story, is believed to have been written 65 years after Jesus died. The church at the time was in turmoil.

“They were fighting about everything, especially the Eucharist,” he said, including who could perform the sacrament, who could receive it, and how often.

With its emphasis on the gathering of the apostles that night and Jesus’ act of washing their feet, John’s Gospel “takes the position that sometimes it’s more important to be together than to be right,” Fr. Rolheiser said.

He said such acts of compassion toward others are the direction that might help resolve some of the world’s contentious problems.

As the Rev. Jim Wallis, executive director of Sojourners and convener of Call to Renewal, a network of churches working to overcome poverty, puts it, the way to live Gospel values is not to be liberal, conservative, or even somewhere in the middle, Fr. Rolheiser explained, but “be a person of compassion and faith.”

Jesus was neither consistently liberal or conservative, the priest explained. “He went where compassion took him.”

Before Fr. Rolheiser addressed the gathering, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development

presented its 2007 Sister Margaret Cafferty Development of People Award to *Comunidad en Movimiento*, an organization of Latina women at Dolores Mission Parish in Los Angeles.

The award is given annually by CCHD, the U.S. bishops’ domestic anti-poverty program, to honor an individual or a group who exemplifies a commitment to the development of people and the elimination of poverty.

Comunidad en Movimiento was started in 1996 by a group of Dolores Mission parishioners to respond to problems in the low-income Latino community of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles. The Latina women who lead the group have organized fellow residents to discuss issues that affect them and get involved in actions to create change.

One project is a neighborhood safety campaign involving 50 trained community volunteers who help children walking home from school arrive safely. *Comunidad en Movimiento* has worked on a community policing program and organizes an annual conference on women’s health and well-being.

The award is named for the late Presentation sister who was director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and a member of the U.S. bishops’ CCHD committee.

Vatican paper condemns death penalty as affront to human dignity

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The death penalty “is not only a refusal of the right to life, but it also is an affront to human dignity,” the Vatican said in a position paper.

The paper was prepared for the Feb. 1-3 World Congress Against the Death Penalty in Paris and was released Feb. 7 by the Vatican press office.

“The Holy See takes this occasion to welcome and affirm again its support for all initiatives aimed at defending the inherent and inviolable value of all human life from conception to natural death,” it said.

Echoing the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the paper recognized the obligation of governments to protect their citizens, but it also said that “today it truly is difficult to justify” using the death penalty when other means of protection, including life imprisonment for murderers, are possible.

Citing appeals made by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI for clemency for people condemned to die, the paper said the Vatican supported international campaigns to proclaim a universal moratorium on the use of capital punishment and the abolition of the death penalty worldwide.

It also noted concerns raised in many parts of the world over “recent executions,” obviously referring to the hanging of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and other former officials of Iraq.

“Consciences have been awakened by the need for a greater recognition of the inalienable dignity of human beings and by the universality and integrity of human rights, beginning with the right to life,” it said.

The paper said every decision to use the death penalty carries “numerous risks,” including “the danger of punishing innocent persons” and the possibility of “promoting violent forms of revenge rather than a true sense of social justice.”

A capital execution, it said, is “a clear offense against the inviolability of human life” and can contribute to “a culture of violence and death.”

“For Christians,” the Vatican said, “it also shows contempt for the Gospel teaching on forgiveness.”

While an execution “temporarily may alleviate an appetite for revenge,” it said, taking the life of the criminal makes it impossible to fulfill the obligation of justice, which calls for penalties that punish and may help rehabilitate an offender.



POPE MEETS SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT — Pope Benedict XVI talks with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun during a meeting at the Vatican Feb. 15. The pope told the South Korean leader that he shares that nation's concerns about a nuclear arms race in the region. (CNS photo/Catholic Press Photo)

Pope tells South Korean president of concern over nuclear arms in region

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI told South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun that he shares that nation's concerns about a nuclear arms race in the region.

With the aid of interpreters, the pope and president spoke privately for 25 minutes Feb. 15 before Pope Benedict handed the president a letter expressing his concerns about North Korea's nuclear program and about the continued separation of families on either side of the border.

Roh's visit to the Vatican came just two days after North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States reached a tentative agreement to put a stop to the development of new nuclear weapons by North Korea.

The agreement requires North Korea to close its main nuclear reactor, allow international inspectors into the country, and begin reporting on its nuclear-related activities.

The nations involved in the talks promised to give major aid, particularly fuel oil, to North Korea in return for its compliance.

In his letter to Roh, the pope said, “the risk of a nuclear arms race in the region” is “a source of concern fully shared by the Holy See.”

He urged the countries involved in the so-called Six-Party Talks “to make every effort to resolve the present tensions through peaceful means and to refrain from any gesture or initiative that might endanger the negotiations.”

The pope also repeated a point he had made several times in the past: Countries must not withhold or threaten to withhold humanitarian aid to North Korea's poorest citizens as part of the negotiating process.

Pope Benedict told the president that he understood the pain people on both sides of the border have experienced over the past 50 years because of the political division of the two Koreas.

“Families have been split, close relatives have been separated from one another,” he said. “Please let them know that I am spiritually close to them in their suffering. On compassionate grounds, I pray for a speedy solution to the problem, which impedes so many from communicating with one another,” he said.

Life-related legislation is proposed in first weeks of 110th Congress

FROM PAGE 1

to lessen his or her pain during the abortion.

In the 109th Congress, Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, had sponsored the House version of the legislation, called the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. The U.S. bishops had remained neutral on the bills, but they will work for passage of the latest legislation, said Deirdre McQuade, director of planning and information in the bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

The fetal pain legislation was far from the only life-related legislation proposed in the first weeks of the 110th Congress, however.

McQuade said the pro-life secretariat will be working for passage of legislation that would make “truly constructive changes in the lives of women and their unborn children.”

One such proposal is the Pregnant Women's Support Act, to be introduced sometime soon by Rep. Lincoln Davis, D-Tennessee. The legislation will provide resources “to help women

make life-affirming choices for themselves and their children,” McQuade said.

Among its many provisions, the bill will expand eligibility for the State Children's Health Insurance Program and for the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition program, and provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. Pregnant and postpartum women are among those most likely to experience domestic violence, studies have found.

The legislation also includes provisions that will require medical professionals to provide information about abortion and alternatives to abortion that lead to truly “informed consent,” McQuade said.

Also receiving the bishops' support in the 110th Congress will be the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Support Act, introduced in the 109th Congress by Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-North Carolina, and Rep. Melissa A. Hart, R-Pennsylvania, who is no longer in Congress.

By offering housing, day care,

and academic accommodations to those who are “pregnant or parenting while pursuing their education,” the bill will give students choices beyond the usual “abort or drop out of school,” McQuade said.

The USCCB also supports the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, which “came awfully close to passing last year,” McQuade said. It would make it illegal for an adult who is not a minor's parent or legal guardian to take the minor across state lines for an abortion in order to avoid her own state's parental notification or consent laws.

The legislation is called the Child Custody Protection Act in the House.

McQuade said the pro-life secretariat also would continue to work for passage of the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act, which would guarantee the conscience rights of individuals or institutions who choose not to participate in abortions, and will work to keep in place several provisions that prevent federal tax money from being used to

pay for abortion.

The USCCB will oppose efforts to expand federal funding of stem-cell research involving human embryos and will support the Alternative Pluripotent Stem-Cell Therapies Enhancement Act, which would fund “lots of kinds of legitimate stem-cell research” that does not destroy embryos, she said.

Another goal will be approval of the RU-486 Suspension and Review Act, also known as Holly's Law, which will remove the abortion pill from the market until its safety can be reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration. Holly Patterson, 18, died in California in 2003 after taking RU-486.

Some other bills before the 110th Congress might sound pro-life or pro-woman but are deceptively named, according to McQuade.

For example, the Prevention First Act says its goal is to “expand access to preventive health care and education programs to help protect women's reproductive health, reduce unintended

pregnancies, prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and provide women with the tools they need to make the best decisions possible for themselves.”

But that bill puts a “heavy emphasis on contraceptive mandates” and does not support pregnant women at all, McQuade said, adding that the USCCB will actively work for its defeat.

She also called the legislation unethical, because it would force pharmacists and hospitals to offer emergency contraception in violation of their conscience rights.

Also touted as a compromise bill by both supporters of keeping abortion legal and those who oppose abortion in Congress is the Abortion Reduction and Pregnant Women Support Act.

“They believe that to reduce abortions you need to increase access to contraception,” McQuade said. “But that doesn't work. Study after study has shown that abortions actually go up, not down, when there is more contraception.”



CLIMATE CONCERNS

— Smoke rises from a chemical company's stacks in Hamilton, Ontario, Feb. 1. Climate change as an issue holds appeal for Catholics in the U.S. and abroad, and the church's social teaching backs up advocacy on it. In Canada, the House of Commons passed a bill Feb. 14 that gives the federal government 60 days to detail measures to meet its Kyoto Protocol obligations. (CNS photo/J.P. Moczulski, Reuters)

Protect poor, common good in acting on global warming, bishop says

By Patricia Zapor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Congress should heed the warnings of a recent report on global warming, with priority given to how climate change will affect the poor, the chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy urged.

In a Feb. 7 letter to congressional leaders, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Florida, said the recently released report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has clearly and compellingly outlined the case for urgent action to address the potential consequences of climate change.

The letter urged the U.S. government to base responses to global warming on the common good "rather than the demands of narrow interests," and to place priority on the poor "who will bear the greatest burdens and pay the greatest price for the consequences and costs of climate change."

In a June 2001 statement, "Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good," Bishop Wenski noted, the bishops said climate change "is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest-group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family."

On Feb. 2, the intergovernmental panel, an international working group established by two U.N. agencies, approved a summary report for policymakers, "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis," which "assesses current scientific knowledge of the natural and human drivers of climate change, observed changes in climate,

the ability of science to attribute changes to different causes, and projections for future climate change."

Among its details, the report said, "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level."

Bishop Wenski noted that the report makes clear that "continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20th century."

The report predicted that at the current rate of change, the following will occur:

— Snow cover and sea ice will contract, with increased thawing in the permafrost and arctic summer sea ice almost disappearing by late in the 21st century.

— Heat waves and heavy precipitation will become more frequent.

— Typhoons and hurricanes will become more intense, more frequent and more common farther north and south than has been normal.

— Precipitation will likely increase in high latitudes and decrease in subtropical regions, leading to more flooding in some regions and droughts elsewhere.

Bishop Wenski said, "The traditional virtue of prudence suggests that we do not have to

know with absolute certainty everything that is happening with climate change to know that something seriously harmful is occurring. Therefore it is better to act now than wait until the problem gets worse and the remedies more costly.

"This precautionary principle leads us to act now to avoid the worst consequences of waiting," he continued. "Prudence sometimes keeps us from acting precipitously. In this case, it requires us to act with urgency and seriousness."

Bishop Wenski offered the help of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in working to address global climate change on the basis of making the poor a priority, pursuing the common good, and practicing prudence.

"While no one has easy answers," he said, "we ask you to help define and refine what prudence and the pursuit of the common good require. We seek your help in lifting up and focusing on how climate change will affect the 'least among us' — the poor, the vulnerable, and the voiceless in our country and around the world."

The USCCB wants to offer its voice to the national debate on climate change, Bishop Wenski said.

"We participate not as climate experts or as scientists, but rather as pastors and teachers who fear that the moral and human dimensions of these decisions will be overwhelmed by political, economic, or ideological pressures," he wrote.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Catholic agencies ask rich countries to prove they will increase aid

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Two international Catholic organizations have asked the world's richest countries to prove they are serious about the promise to increase development aid and halve world poverty by 2015. Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based umbrella organization for national Catholic charities, and the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, or CIDSE, an alliance of 15 Catholic development organizations from Europe and North America, launched their campaign Feb. 8 at the Vatican. The campaign, "Make Aid Work: The World Can't Wait," is aimed at reminding the world's richest nations that they made concrete commitments and that the citizens who voted for their governments expect them to act, said Duncan MacLaren, secretary general of Caritas. The campaign consists of sending postcards to government leaders before the June G-8 summit meeting of the leaders of the world's eight richest nations and having cardinals and bishops meet government officials before the summit to remind the politicians of their commitments.

Church stance on technology affirms human dignity, cardinal says

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishops must give lay Catholics the tools they need to be convinced and to convince others about why the church takes the ethical stands it does on some scientific and technological advances, the Vatican's top doctrinal official said. "The attitude is widespread, even sadly among many Catholics who believe and practice their faith, that the magisterium of the church is overly negative, that 'the old men in the Vatican' are against progress even when it is designed to help people who are sick, or infertile, or the like," said Cardinal William J. Levada, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in a Feb. 7 talk in Dallas. "It should be emphasized that the church's 'no' to certain practices is not a negative reaction to modernity, but rather is a positive 'yes' to the dignity of every single human being," he said. Cardinal Levada, the former archbishop of San Francisco, spoke on "The Role of the Magisterium in Bioethics" at the National Catholic Bioethics Center's 21st workshop for bishops, funded by the Knights of Columbus. More than 150 bishops from the U.S., Canada, Latin America, and elsewhere attended the Feb. 5-7 workshop.

Archbishop Wuerl says social justice work builds kingdom of God

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl Feb. 11 encouraged Catholic social ministry activists meeting in Washington to continue building the kingdom of God on earth. He celebrated the opening liturgy for the Feb. 11-14 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, organized under the theme "Bringing Good News to a Broken World: Overcoming Fear with God's Love." Some people view their work as only a job, or a way to earn a living, Archbishop Wuerl told participants. Instead, by looking through the eyes of faith, Catholics who work for social justice are "not only changing the world, but helping God's kingdom break through this world," the archbishop said. "It just depends on your perspective." Working for peace and justice, he continued, is mandated by Gospel teachings, "a ministry of bringing about a realization in our world of those values Christ proclaimed."

In Lebanon, children urge political leaders to unite for peace

BEIRUT, Lebanon (CNS) — Eleven-year-old Najib Nihna's voice was clear and authoritative as he addressed Lebanon's leaders in an urgent call for peace. "Put away all your private interests and your personal accounts; let forgiveness triumph over pride," Najib said Feb. 4 on the steps of Beirut's National Museum. "Be humble and wield your power as wise men do, that we may see the works of goodness rather than fiery speeches. Unity is our freedom," said the Catholic schoolboy from Mkalles, outside Beirut. As he spoke, heads nodded in silent agreement amid the crowd gathered outside the museum, carefully selected as the venue for the ceremony due to its position straddling the "green line" that divided east and west Beirut during Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. Najib spoke on behalf of hundreds of Sunni, Shiite, Druze, and Christian schoolchildren gathered from all over Lebanon. Some stood behind Najib with head scarves, while others wore crucifixes; all wore a white T-shirt bearing the symbol of a dove and the Lebanese cedar.

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Consecrated to Christ

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

When Claire Therese Heyne was a little girl growing up in Southlake, she liked to cuddle up next to her brothers and sisters at bedtime as their mother read to them from the *Lives of the Saints*. Stories about virtuous martyrs like St. Lucy and St. Agnes, who were mere adolescents when they left their mark on the world, filled her with awe. Now the 29-year-old is following in their footsteps in a very special way.

On Jan. 1, Claire Therese committed herself to Christ as a consecrated virgin, during a liturgical rite conducted by Bishop Kevin Vann in St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth. The vocation betroths her mystically to the Son of God and dedicates her to the service of his church.

The order of virgins dates back to apostolic times but was "phased out" with the growth of religious communities for women. Today, the church is experiencing a resurgence of the vocation, due partially to a 1996 apostolic exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, issued by the late Pope John Paul II.

Although raised in an "exceptional and truly Catholic home by saintly parents," the theology student says she was unfamiliar with this form of consecrated life until introduced to the rite by a fellow University of Dallas graduate.

"I remember her telling me, 'the Holy Spirit is nagging me to give you something,' and she handed me a pamphlet," says Claire Therese, who later learned that her friend is a consecrated virgin. "After reading what she had given me, I knew so certainly this is how God was calling me."

She continued to discern the vocation while studying for her master's of divinity degree at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, also known as the Angelicum. Two spiritual directors, Msgr. James Conley, who gave her direction while she studied in Rome, and Father Andrew Youman, who currently offers her spiritual guidance, helped her through the process.

Claire Therese announced her decision on Christmas Eve 2004. It's a Heyne family tradition to sing Christmas carols at an outdoor manger scene set up in the barn on her family's property, where they have raised a variety of animals across the years.



Above: Members of the Heyne family surround Claire Therese with support on her special day.

"I put a ring on the baby Jesus statue," the young woman says, recalling the symbolic gesture she attached to the announcement. "My sisters and grandmother were crying. They were very happy for me. I'm blessed to have a supportive family."

While finishing her studies for her degree in Rome, Heyne made a private consecration under the guidance of her spiritual director and former bishop. The public ceremony was held after returning to Fort Worth and meeting with Bishop Vann, who deemed her suitably prepared. As friends and family watched, Bishop Vann presented the young woman with the insignias of her vocation during the Jan. 1 ceremony — a ring, veil, and the book of the Liturgy of the Hours.

"The consecrated virgin is called to serve Christ by serving her bishop and diocese according to the spiritual and practical gifts God has given her," Claire Therese explains. "Since my return from Rome, my main active service has been teaching."

A faculty member at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Keller, she teaches English to 137 students. At the beginning of the school year, Claire Therese wrote a letter to the parents of her pupils informing them of her vocation and its significance.

"It's been a really neat experience for the kids," she says, adding that she has received only positive feedback from the school community. "They (the kids) seem to pick up on the deep mystery of my vocation more easily and readily than adults."

The consecrated virgin, who dresses

in white and keeps her hair tucked under a scarf, has gotten used to fielding questions from older people. Those who notice her unusual appearance gently ask, "What are you?" Many well-intentioned Catholics often pose an additional query and want to know, "Why didn't you just become a nun?"

Claire Therese tries to keep her answer simple.

"I tell them that's just not how God called me," she says. "The Holy Spirit knows the best path for our souls, and this is the one God has chosen for me."

A self-supporting woman who manages her own bills and household, the teacher feels she best serves the church by living independently in the world. In a society fraught with materialism and violence, "people are in desperate need of reminders of heaven," she observes. "They also need to be reminded of God's infinite love for them. This is the message the consecrated virgin is especially called to radiate."

Although she loves working with children and would like to teach religion someday, contemplative prayer is the main focus of her life. As part of the discipline she has set for herself, Claire Therese attends Mass daily and spends at least three hours a day in prayer in front of the tabernacle in her home. She also prays the Divine Office seven times a day.

"Some might think this makes me extra holy or that I pray too much, but neither is true," she says. "I need to grow in holiness, and it's because my soul needs so much structure and help that I pray as I do!"



Above: Bishop Kevin Vann prays over Claire Therese Heyne at the liturgy in which she committed herself to Christ as a consecrated virgin.

Left: Claire Therese Heyne processes out of St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth Jan. 1 following her consecration.

Below: Claire Therese Heyne (center) looks over the list of workshops being offered at the Ministry Formation Day, held Jan. 6 at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)



But prayer was a central part of the young woman's life long before adulthood. As a youngster and teenager, the day started with 6:30 a.m. Mass before school and ended each evening with a family rosary.

While other children collected baseball cards or hung up posters of rock stars or celebrities in their bedrooms or lockers, "Christ was (and is) my hero," she explains. "My role models were the saints, and my rookie cards were holy cards. It was so helpful and nourishing for me as a youth to be surrounded with images and reminders of the holy men and women who best followed Christ."

Now the consecrated virgin hopes to serve as a role model for others. When asked whether living her vocation and discussing it freely might inspire others, she responds thoughtfully, "I hope as many women as Christ calls to this vocation respond generously."

Life as a consecrated virgin is not lonely or without responsibility, she adds, and the strong maternal instinct that helped her nurture younger brothers and sisters is not wasted. The second oldest of eight children, Claire Therese changed her first diaper at age two and was always seen carrying younger siblings. Family members assumed she would grow up to become the mother of a large brood.

"God doesn't give you a talent and then not put it into service," she explains. "I'm asked to be a spiritual mother for the whole church. It's about giving my life to God and my prayers and penance for the whole church."

Scripture Readings



March 4, Second Sunday of Lent.
Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm 27:1, 7-9, 13-14
- 2) Philippians 3:17 to 4:1
Gospel) Luke 9:28b-36

By Jeff Hensley

Lent is right where I want to be. My prayer life is a mess. My time spent in quiet listening is all but nonexistent, and I long to long for the Lord.

And I know from the readings for this weekend that that is just where God wants me, hungry for his presence and making plans to put myself there where his love can reach me.

Two of the passages point in that direction: The end of the Psalm says, "Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted and wait for the Lord." Then Paul writes to the members of the Philippi community "to stand firm in the Lord."

The other thing in these readings that makes me feel confident about my own feeble attempts

to come closer to God is the evidence offered that all that is required of me is a willing heart and obedient response to God's invitation.

In Genesis we see Abraham entering into the covenant with God, having obeyed God's requirements of him, but passing out at the time when God consummates the agreement. Hmmm. It sounds like God's participation was the more important part of the equation.

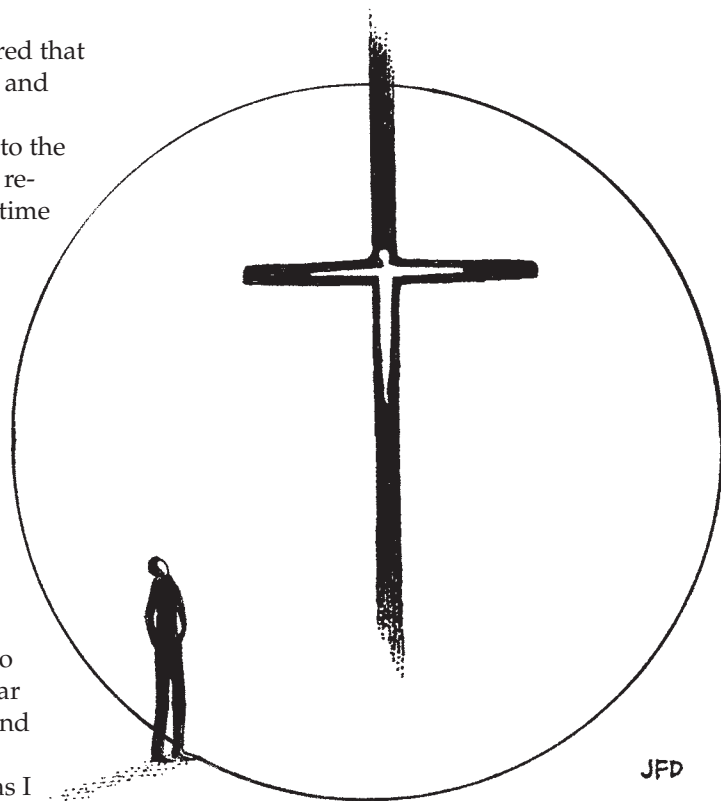
Then we find Peter with Jesus (and James and John) at the Transfiguration coming out of the experience offering to build three shelters from tree limbs, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. It's sort of a silly response, but one that is passed over lightly with Luke's aside that "he did not really know what he was saying."

The two requirements of us to enter into a deeper, more glorious relationship appear to be obedience to what God has told us and simply being present.

I think I know two places I want to be as I enter this holy season of seeking and emptying of self so that God may enter in. I want to spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament and some time alone in the out-of-doors, asking for God's loving presence. I truly believe that if I show up, he will already be there waiting for me.

QUESTIONS:

How is your prayer life these days? What are some specific plans you can make for spending time with God, seeking him in Scripture, the sacraments, and solitude?



"Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks; your presence O Lord, I seek."
— Psalm 27:8

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Pope says church could not have grown without women's contributions

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Highlighting the fidelity and responsibility of women in the early Christian community, Pope Benedict XVI said the church could not have grown and developed as it has without the contribution of women.

"The history of Christianity would have had a very different development if it had not been for the generous support of many women," he said Feb. 14 at his weekly general audience.

Pope Benedict said that as he neared the end of his audience series on the apostles and early church leaders, he wanted to focus on "the many female figures who played an effective and precious role in spreading the Gospel. Their witness cannot be forgotten."

The pope said the women who helped spread the Gospel and ensure the growth of Christianity — such as Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha, Joanna, Susanna, Priscilla, and Phoebe — should be known, honored, and remembered.

Going through New Testament references to women in the life of Jesus and the early Christian community, Pope Benedict did not get into questions such as



Pope Benedict XVI greets a child during his weekly general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Feb. 14. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters)

the ordination of women to the priesthood and diaconate.

Instead, he said Jesus freely chose only men to be among the Twelve Apostles, "fathers of the new Israel" — the church — and he said the New Testament reference to Phoebe as a "deacon" was an indication of her important responsibility in

the community at a time before the title took on a "hierarchical" meaning, implying ordination.

Still, the pope said, it must be recognized that "unlike the Twelve, the women did not abandon Jesus at the hour of his passion," and, in fact, it was a woman — Mary Magdalene — who announced to the apostles the fact that Jesus had

risen from the dead.

Of course, the pope said, among the women who played "an active role" in the life of Jesus and the early church, the most important was Mary, "who with her faith and her maternity, collaborated in a unique way in our redemption."

Pope Benedict said that St. Paul, in his New Testament let-

ters, makes clear that women were essential in the life of the early church and that they are called to use their gifts for the good of the community.

St. Paul explained "the fundamental principle according to which, among the baptized, not only is there no longer (a distinction between) Jew or Greek, slave or free, but not even male or female," the pope said.

"The reason is that we are all one in Jesus Christ," he said. "All of us share the same basic dignity, although each with his or her specific function."

The pope told the estimated 8,000 people at the audience, "We thank the Lord because he leads his church generation after generation, relying without distinction on men and women who make their faith and baptism fruitful for the good of the entire body of the church community."

Before his main audience, the pope met in St. Peter's Basilica with 12,000 pilgrims and their bishops from 13 dioceses in central Italy. The bishops were at the Vatican for their "ad limina" visits, which bishops make every five years to report on the status of their dioceses.

Scripture Readings



March 11, Third Sunday of Lent.
Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
Psalm 103:1-4, 6-8, 11
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Gospel) Luke 13:1-9

By Beverly Corzine

Occasionally, the Lord has a way of placing a person or situation in our lives that provides us with a new perspective or sends us in a new direction.

At the Easter Vigil we watch women, men, and teenagers drenched in the waters of baptism. Who or what gave the nudge that brought them to our church, we might wonder. Perhaps a Catholic friend said, "How about coming to church with me next Sunday?"

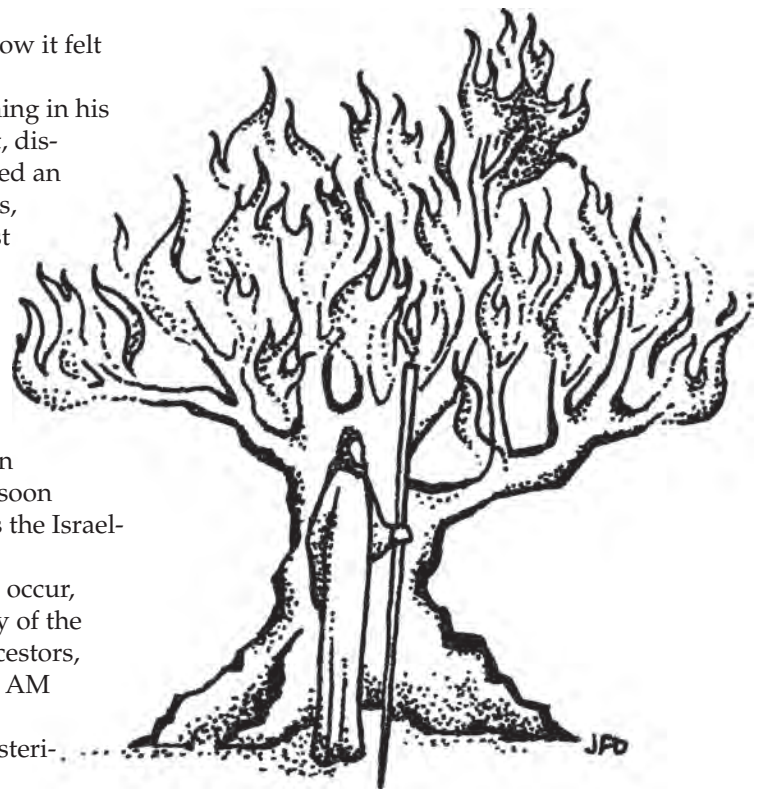
I've known other stories too: At funerals a tearful adult grandchild reveals to close family and relative strangers what a talented loving person her aged grandparent really was. The person who had just passed left an indelible mark on the speaker's heart. A man I know obviously has been enormously successful in business, but what I did not know until I had an unexpected conversation with him, is how hard his childhood was. I now understand his devotion to

volunteering. He has never forgotten how it felt to be sad and alone.

Before he investigates the bush burning in his path, Moses has been a prince of Egypt, discovered he is the son of slaves, murdered an Egyptian, escaped his would-be captors, become a shepherd for Jethro, the priest of Midian, and married his daughter. In the grand scheme of his life, Moses' heroic adventures are just beginning as he leads his father-in-law's flock across the desert toward Horeb. The task of safely shepherding animals across unyielding desert terrain pales in comparison to the role he will soon play in salvation history when he leads the Israelites out of Egypt.

However, before any of these events occur, Moses will be enveloped in the mystery of the God of Creation, the God of Moses' ancestors, the God who says, "Tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you."

The ancient one who reveals the mysterious name I AM to Moses so many millennia ago still speaks to the human heart. The opportunities for encountering the holy are innumerable. My grandfather used to say, "Beverly, there are burning bushes everywhere. All you have to do is take the time to investigate."



"Is the Lord in our midst or not?"

— Exodus 17:7d

QUESTIONS:

Who or what, recently, has directed your consciousness to God's presence? What new perspectives in your faith life have you gained from these encounters?

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The Lenten Challenge: Two Well-lived Lives

By Jeff Hedglen

The fasting and sacrifices we engage in during Lent are meant to cause us to gaze inward and look for ways to live the life of Christ more completely. It is in this spirit that the funeral of a friend and a book about the rock band U2 challenged me to step it up a bit.

My friend Neil died suddenly of a heart attack the day after Thanksgiving. Everyone who knew him was shocked by the news. He was in his mid-40s and left behind a wife and 5-year-old son. He worked in one of the high-rise buildings in Fort Worth for more than 20 years and thus was a fixture in the downtown community.

At the vigil service and funeral there was understandable sadness, but alongside this were memories of how Neil had put hands and feet to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One person shared about a time he met Neil for lunch. They went walking outside his building when they were

Both of these lives have inspired me to do everything I can, to be all I can, to those who cross my path.

approached by a man who appeared to be homeless. Without saying a word Neil reached into his pocket pulled out a \$20 bill and a pack of cigarettes and handed them to the man. The friend asked Neil, "Who was that?" Neil replied "I don't

know; we just do that every month or so."

Another person shared that Neil loved to read Scripture, and when he found a verse he liked, he wrote it down and took it to work. Over time the area in and around his work station became wallpapered with testimony to any and all who walked by.

Story after story came of lunches he purchased for those in need, simple kindnesses he showed to the people he worked with, prayers he said he would (and did) pray for other people in need, and that Neil was always ready to tell anyone who would listen, who Jesus was to him.

While I was still processing this loss and source of inspiration, I was given a book called *Walk On: The Spiritual Journey of U2* by Steve Stockman. I have followed this band since the release of their album "The Joshua Tree" in 1987, but I did not know that most of the band met as teenagers in a charismatic youth group. In the years since, the band has soared to

the top of the charts, all while fighting to remain true to the faith they had as teens.

To be sure, not every moment in their journey is spotless, and the band is quick to admit that they are sinners like everyone else, but this is not what impressed me about what I read.

I was floored by the many ways Bono and the band are active politically, like working to persuade rich countries to forgive debt of the poorest countries, how Bono often leads prayer and praise in their concerts, making these events possibly the closest thing to a Church many of the concert goers have experienced in a while, and how the "Red Campaign" Bono is spearheading is linking businesses, consumers, and the issue of AIDS in Africa. There are "Red" products like cell phones, clothing, and iPods with significant amounts of their profits going to buy medicine for people in Africa with AIDS.

Upon reflection I realized that the lives of these two very different men have achieved

very similar results. The results are similar because both of them have worked in the vineyard God has given them and both have produced a tremendous amount of fruit.

Both of these lives have inspired me to do everything I can, to be all I can, to those who cross my path. Neil challenged me to give to people who ask with love not judgment; Bono challenged me to think big. OK, maybe not U2 big, but bigger than I usually dream.

Both of these stories taught me that what makes a difference in this life we live is making a difference with the life we have. The reality is this: Someone needs to be the light of Christ in your school, job, home, neighborhood, church, grocery store, etc. Neil has done his part, and Bono is busy, so it's up to you — and me. 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.

Cristo crucificado es recordatorio de proteger la dignidad humana, dice el Papa

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Contemplar al Cristo clavado a la cruz debería estimular a la gente a proteger la dignidad humana y “luchar contra toda forma de desprecio por la vida”, dijo el papa Benedicto XVI en su mensaje de Cuaresma del 2007.

“Que la Cuaresma sea para cada cristiano una experiencia renovada del amor de Dios dado a nosotros en Cristo, un amor que cada día nosotros, a su vez, ‘redamos’ a nuestro vecino, especialmente al que más sufre y está en necesidad”, dice el mensaje.

El mensaje fue emitido en el Vaticano el 13 de febrero. El tema del mensaje es “Ellos mirarán al que han perforado”. La cuaresma comienza el Miércoles de Ceniza, que este año es el 21 de febrero. La Pascua es el 8 de abril.

Usando las palabras griegas “ágape” y “eros” el mensaje papal dice que el amor tienen dos formas fundamentales.

Ágape “indica el amor que se da por sí mismo de uno que

busca exclusivamente el bien de los demás”, dice.

Eros “denota el amor de uno que desea poseer lo que él o ella carece y (eros) ansía la unión con la persona amada”, dice.

Aunque ágape describe mejor el amor de Dios por la humanidad, “el amor de Dios también es eros”, dice el mensaje papal.

“El profeta Oseas expresa esta pasión divina con imágenes atrevidas, tales como el amor de un hombre por una mujer adúltera”, dice el mensaje papal.

Este y otros pasajes bíblicos “indican que eros es parte del propio corazón de Dios: el Todopoderoso espera el ‘sí’ de sus criaturas como un novio joven lo hace de su novia”, dice.

Cristo en la cruz demuestra “un amor en el cual eros y ágape, lejos de estar opuestos, iluminan el uno al otro”, dice.

La Cuaresma es tiempo en que los cristianos deben acoger el amor de Cristo y “diseminarlo con toda palabra y obra”, dice.



NIÑOS CAMINAN A CASA DESDE PARROQUIA CATÓLICA MISIÓN DOLORES EN LOS ÁNGELES —

En la parroquia Misión Dolores, en Los Ángeles, los niños que antes caminaban temerosos de violencia pandillera después de la escuela ahora ríen y conversan camino a casa. Rita Cháirez y Rosa Campos, de Comunidad en Movimiento, con base en Los Ángeles, recibieron el Premio Hermana Margaret Cafferty por Desarrollo de la Gente de 2007 durante la Reunión del Ministerio Social Católico, realizada en Washington el 11 de febrero. Comunidad en Movimiento es una organización de mujeres latinas en la parroquia Misión Dolores y recibió el premio de la Campaña Católica Para el Desarrollo Humano, de los obispos estadounidenses. (Foto CNS/Peter Howard, CCHD)

El Papa exhorta a la juventud a que exprese amor desinteresado en forma altruista

Por John Thavis
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El papa Benedicto XVI exhortó a la juventud a que exprese amor desinteresado en forma altruista, pasando por alto metas sociales de competencia y productividad para que lleguen a ser “testigos de caridad” en el mundo.

Y presentó a la bendita Madre Teresa de Calcuta como ejemplo de cristiana que supo traducir el amor a acciones concretas que ayudaron a los más pobres entre los pobres.

El papa hizo sus comentarios en un mensaje a propósito de la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud, que se ha celebrado en la mayoría de las diócesis el 1º de abril, Domingo de Ramos. El texto se dio a conocer en el Vaticano el 5 de febrero.

El tema del mensaje del papa fue el amor; y empezó por decirles a los jóvenes que a pesar de desilusiones emocionales y falta de afecto en su propia vida, deben saber que “el amor es posible”.

El papa enfatizó que Dios es la fuente del verdadero amor y que los sufrimientos de Cristo y su muerte en la cruz forman la perfecta expresión de este divino amor.

Desarrollen toda su capacidad; no solamente para poder ser mejores competidores y personas productivas, sino también para presentar testimonio de caridad.

—El papa Benedicto XVI

En la iglesia, que el papa describió como “una familia espiritual”, dijo que los jóvenes deben estar dispuestos a ayudar a que se estimulen las actividades de la parroquia y otras concomitantes; incluso, si eso requería privarse de algunas diversiones. Los jóvenes deben “aceptar con gusto los sacrificios que sean necesarios” y presentar testimonio de su amor por Jesús en medio de personas de su misma edad, dijo.

El papa dijo que el matrimonio es “un proyecto de amor” entre

un hombre y una mujer que se encuadra en el designio divino.

“Aprender el amor mutuo entre las dos personas que forman la pareja es una jornada maravillosa; sin embargo, se requiere de un exigente proceso de aprendizaje” dijo. Cuando una pareja se compromete, dijo, inicia un periodo de preparación que se necesita vivir “con pureza de gesto y palabra”.

El compromiso les permite a los miembros de la pareja que practiquen control propio y desarrollen respeto mutuo, dijo. Este es el verdadero amor, que no pone énfasis en la búsqueda de la satisfacción personal, dijo.

Y cuando se trate de la rutina diaria de familia, estudio, trabajo y tiempo libre, el papa les pidió a los jóvenes que vean más allá del cultivo del talento necesario para conseguir una posición social.

“Desarrollen toda su capacidad; no solamente para poder ser mejores competidores y personas productivas, sino también para presentar testimonio de caridad”, dijo.

El papa animó a los jóvenes a que estudien la doctrina social de la iglesia y la usen para guiar sus acciones en el mundo. El amor es una fuerza social poderosa; es la única fuerza capaz de cambiar el corazón humano, dijo.

La postura de la iglesia con respecto a la tecnología es la de afirmar la dignidad humana, dice cardenal

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Los obispos les deben de dar a los católicos laicos las herramientas necesarias para convenirse y convencer a otras personas del porqué

la iglesia toma la postura ética que toma con respecto a los avances científicos y tecnológicos, dijo el funcionario más prominente de doctrina católica del Vaticano.

“La actitud se ha extendido, incluso, se dice con tristeza, entre muchos católicos que creen y practican su fe, que el magisterio de la iglesia es extremadamente negativo, que ‘esos ancianos del Vaticano’ están contra el progreso incluso cuando se dirige a ayudar a la gente que está enferma, o es infértil o algo semejante”, dijo el cardenal William J. Levada, prefecto de la Congregación de la Doctrina y de la Fe del Vaticano en una plática que dio el 7 de febrero en la ciudad de Dallas.

Se debe de enfatizar que el ‘no’ de la iglesia para ciertas prácticas no constituye una reacción negativa a la modernidad; sino, antes bien, es un ‘sí’ positivo a la dignidad de cada único sér humano”

— el cardenal William Levada

El cardenal Levada, arzobispo que fue de San Francisco, habló sobre “El Papel del Magisterio en Bioética” en el taller de trabajo número 21 para obispos en el Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética, fundado por los Caballeros de Colón. Más de 150 obispos procedentes de los Estados Unidos, Canadá, Latinoamérica y otras partes, asistieron al taller de trabajo que se llevó a cabo del 5 al 7 de febrero, siguiendo el tema “Apremiados por Cristo: el Cuidado Católico de la Salud en Tensión con la Cultura Contemporánea”.

“Se debe de enfatizar que el ‘no’ de la iglesia para ciertas prácticas no constituye una reacción negativa a la modernidad; sino, antes bien, es un ‘sí’ positivo a la dignidad de cada único sér humano”, dijo. “Y es, sobretodo, una defensa a favor de los que no tienen voz, de los que son más vulnerables y de los que no tienen a nadie que los defienda”.

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¡Quien resiste arrepentirse, al infierno puede irse!

Busquemos el perdón de Dios y nos encontraremos en el cielo

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OPL
Director, Instituto Luz de Cristo

Somos pecadores y pecamos más frecuentemente de lo que queremos admitir. Pecado, además de ser una transgresión a la ley, es no amar a Dios sobre todas las cosas y desinterés en mantener una relación con Él. Dios no desea nuestra condenación eterna, por no habernos arrepentido de nuestros pecados, pero tampoco nos va a imponer el cielo. El remedio a la condenación eterna, el aceptar la salvación que nos ofrece Cristo con su sacrificio en el Calvario, comienza con un sincero arrepentimiento de nuestra parte.

Arrepentimiento, el prerrequisito para buscar el perdón, es aceptar responsabilidad por haber actuado mal y el dolor de haber ofendido a Dios. Unido a este dolor está la intención de no volver a actuar del mismo modo y el compromiso de evitar las situaciones y lugares que sirvan como oportunidades para volver a caer en el mismo pecado por más pequeño o grande que sea. Si ignoramos los pecados más pequeños, serán después difíciles de remediar.

No podemos dejar de luchar, con la gracia de Dios, por vencer el dominio del pecado en nuestras vidas. Dios, por el derramamiento de la sangre de su hijo Jesucristo en la cruz, nos da todo lo necesario para poder vivir libres de toda esclavitud del pecado y vivir en comunión con Él.

Aquellos que viven esclavizados a los pecados tienen en común la falta de un verdadero arrepentimiento y, como consecuencia de esto, no le piden perdón a Dios. Estas personas tienden a caer en algunos de los siguientes errores:

- Negar la realidad del pecado en su vida
- Reconocer la realidad del pecado pero no importarle
- Pensar que los pecados son de tal magnitud que son imperdonables
- Pensar que es posible esconder sus pecados de Dios
- Pensar que los pecados son tan pequeños que no hace falta pedir perdón por ellos
- No reconocer cómo nuestros pecados hieren y hacen daño
- Preferir vivir con el pecado y engañarse en pensar que no se pierde la cercanía con Dios

Si no hay arrepentimiento y no se busca el perdón de Dios por los pecados de pensamiento, palabra, obra y omisión, el final será el infierno. Si pensar en el infierno nos da temor, magnífico. Más vale ir al cielo asustadito, que al infierno seguro.

Esto es contrición imperfecta donde la motivación del arrepentimiento es el miedo al castigo que nos merecemos en esta vida y en la próxima. No es la mejor manera ni la más preferida de arrepentirse pero a falta de pan, queso.

Lo mejor es reconocer que nuestros pecados han herido y ofendido a un ser que nos ama y que amamos y esto nos mueve a arrepentirnos y pedir perdón, contrición perfecta. Muchas veces el arrepentimiento es una combinación de ambos. No olviden... ¡Quien resiste arrepentirse, al infierno puede irse!



Pedro Moreno es director diocesano del Instituto Luz de Cristo. Sus escritos espirituales han recibido múltiples premios de la Asociación de Periodismo Católico de los Estados Unidos y Canadá. Vive en el noroeste de Fort Worth con su esposa Maria Mirta y sus tres hijas Maria, Patricia y Mirangela. Pedro es Laico Dominicano.

Documento del Vaticano condena pena capital como afrenta a dignidad humana

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — La pena de muerte “no es sólo una denegación del derecho a la vida, sino que también es una afrenta a la dignidad humana”, dijo el Vaticano en un documento de posición.

El documento fue preparado para el Congreso Mundial Contra la Pena Capital, llevado a cabo en París del 1 al 3 de febrero, y emitido el 7 de febrero por la oficina de prensa del Vaticano.

“La Santa Sede toma esta

oportunidad para acoger y afirmar otra vez su apoyo a todas las iniciativas orientadas a defender el valor inherente e inviolable de toda la vida humana desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural”, dice.

Haciendo eco del Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, el documento reconoce la obligación de los gobiernos de proteger a sus ciudadanos, pero también dice que “hoy es verdaderamente difícil justificar” el uso de la pena capital cuando otros me-

dios de protección, incluyendo el encarcelamiento de cadena perpetua para los asesinos, son posibles.

Citando las súplicas hechas por el papa Juan Pablo II y por el papa Benedicto XVI de clemencia para la gente condenada a morir, el documento dice que el Vaticano apoya las campañas internacionales para proclamar una moratoria universal en el uso de la pena capital y la abolición de la pena capital mundialmente.

Agencias católicas les piden a los países ricos que den pruebas de aumento de ayuda

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Dos organizaciones católicas internacionales les han pedido a los países más ricos que presenten pruebas de su seriedad con respecto a la promesa de aumentar la ayuda para el desarrollo, a fin de que se reduzca a la mitad la pobreza mundial para el año 2015.

“Caritas Internationalis” (Caridad Internacional), organización con sede en el Vaticano que cubre caridades católicas nacionales, y la Cooperación Internacional para Desarrollo y Solidaridad que se conoce por CIDSE, según sus siglas en inglés, y que es una alianza de 15 organizaciones católicas de desarrollo, tanto de Europa como de Norteamérica, lanzaron su campaña el 8 de febrero en el Vaticano.

La campaña: “Que Funcione la Ayuda: El Mundo no Puede Esperar”, dirigida a las naciones más ricas del mundo a fin de que recuerden que han contraído compromisos concretos y que los ciudadanos que votaron a favor de su respectivo gobierno esperan que actúen, dijo Duncan MacLaren, secretario general de Caritas.

La campaña consiste en el envío de tarjetas postales a los dirigentes de gobierno de las ocho naciones más ricas del mundo antes de la junta en la cima del grupo de países conocido como el G-8 (los Grandes Ocho) que se llevará a cabo en junio; también lograr que los cardenales y obispos se entrevisten con funcionarios de su respectivo gobierno antes de la

junta cimera para que los representantes políticos recuerden su compromiso.

MacLaren dijo que las organizaciones católicas quieren que los países miembros del grupo G-8 rindan informe durante su junta cimera de los logros que han hecho y de sus respectivos planes específicos para lograr las metas.

Al mismo tiempo, mediante la campaña, se les recordará a los respectivos gobiernos de los países más pobres la promesa hecha de canalizar el dinero liberado de su respectiva deuda externa y la promesa de aumentar la ayuda para fondos destinados a proyectos de salud, educación y desarrollo, dijo Paul Samangassou, próximo secretario ejecutivo de “Caritas África”.

Funcionario del Vaticano dice que el mundo debe equilibrar la justicia social y el desarrollo

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Un funcionario del Vaticano instó a la comunidad internacional a que examine los obstáculos morales creados por la economía de globalización, incluyendo la vulnerabilidad creciente de trabajadores inmigrantes y de los pobres en extremo.

El arzobispo Celestino Migliore, nuncio papal ante las Naciones Unidas, dijo que la globalización presenta nuevas demandas para una responsabilidad tradicional: equilibrar la justicia social con el desarrollo económico.

El arzobispo hizo sus declaraciones el 8 de febrero ante las Naciones Unidas en una reunión de la Comisión para Desarrollo Social del Consejo Social y de Economía de las Naciones

Unidas. El representante del Vaticano dijo que los inmigrantes han llegado a ser una fuente importante de trabajo en el mundo y merecen “igualdad de pago e igualdad de protección bajo la ley; y no menos porque el trabajo que realizan es con frecuencia el trabajo que nadie quiere”.

Muchos trabajadores inmigrantes se ven forzados a estar lejos de su familia respectiva, y se deben de hacer los arreglos necesarios para permitirles a las familias que se reúnan, dijo.

“Con demasiada frecuencia la falta de una vida normal de familia trae males como el tráfico con personas y prostitución, en vecindad con comunidades de inmigrantes. El mercado de tal esclavitud moderna se podría ver disminuido si se les permi-

tier a las familias que vivieran reunidas en el país receptor”, dijo.

El arzobispo Migliore dijo que la comisión de las Naciones Unidas debe también darles atención a los que viven en un estado paupérrimo y que son rutinariamente excluidos de los derechos del trabajador y rehuídos por los que sí tienen trabajo.

Las personas paupérrimas están presentes en todos los países sin excepción, dijo. Ellos también necesitan el acceso a un trabajo decente, seguro y satisfactorio, dijo.

“El mundo es demasiado rico como para dejar que el escándalo de la pobreza extrema continúe debido a falta de imaginación o a acciones políticas de negligencia”, dijo.



Monseñor David R. Choby, Obispo de Nashville, Tennessee, extrema izquierda, fija su mirada con alrededor de una docena los líderes cívicos el 12 de febrero el 12 cuando el Alcalde Bill Purcell anuncia al público que él vetará la legislación aprobada por el Consejo Metropolitano que requeriría que toda comunicación oficial fuera conducida en inglés, a menos que las leyes federales lo requieran para proteger la salud y seguridad pública. La medida fue vista por la comunidad como una falta de respeto a los inmigrantes ilegales y habría tenido poco efecto práctico. (CNS Foto/Theresa Laurence, Tennessee Register)

Protejan el bien común al actuar sobre el calentamiento global, dice obispo

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El Congreso debe hacerle caso a las advertencias de un informe reciente sobre el calentamiento global, con la prioridad dada a cómo el cambio de clima afectará a los pobres, pidió el director del Comité de Política Internacional de los obispos estadounidenses.

En una carta del 7 de febrero a líderes congresistas el obispo Thomas G. Wenski, de Orlando, Florida, dijo que el informe recién publicado del Panel Internacional Sobre el Cambio de Clima ha esbozado clara y persuasivamente el caso a favor de acción urgente para atender las consecuencias

potenciales del cambio de clima.

La carta pidió al gobierno estadounidense que base sus reacciones ante el calentamiento global en el bien común "en vez de en las exigencias de los intereses estrechos" y poner prioridad en los pobres, "que llevarán la carga mayor y pagarán el mayor precio por las consecuencias y los costos del cambio de clima".

El panel intergubernamental, grupo internacional de trabajo establecido por dos agencias de la ONU, aprobó el 2 de febrero un informe resumido para los legisladores, "Cambio de Clima 2007: Base de la Ciencia Material", el

cual "evalúa el conocimiento científico actual de los impulsores naturales y humanos del cambio de clima, los cambios observados en el clima, la capacidad de la ciencia para atribuir los cambios a diferentes causas y proyecciones para el cambio de clima futuro".

Entre sus detalles el informe dijo: "El calentamiento del sistema climatológico es inequívoco, ya que es ahora evidente por observaciones de aumentos en el aire promedio global y en las temperaturas oceánicas, el amplio derretimiento de nieve e hielo y el promedio ascendente del nivel del mar".

Católicos impedidos usan su propio sufrimiento para ministrar a otros

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Hombres y mujeres de todo el país miembros de una comunidad poco conocida abierta a personas con o sin impedimentos, están imitando al Cristo crucificado al usar su propio sufrimiento para ministrar a otros.

"Las personas impedidas no son carentes de valor", dijo Maria Burke, de 53 años de edad, feligresa de St. Catherine of Siena, en Horsham, que tiene esclerosis múltiple. "Tenemos algo que dar al mundo. Todavía podemos contribuir".

Burke es una de 24 mujeres y seis hombres que se han convertido en miembros de los Misioneros Franciscanos de Jesús Crucificado, instituto secular para laicos, muchos de los cuales

tienen incapacidades.

Los miembros se consagran a Dios profesando votos perpetuos de pobreza, castidad y obediencia en el espíritu San Francisco. Ellos son llamados a vivir vidas cristianas ejemplares en las circunstancias ordinarias de sus familias, parroquias, trabajos y ambientes cívicos y sociales.

Para Burke el instituto es una respuesta a una oración de toda su vida.

"Mucho antes de que yo fuera diagnosticada con MS, yo simplemente sentía dentro de mí esta necesidad de vida religiosa", dijo Burke.

En 1987, después que ella se enteró que tenía esclerosis múltiple, ella se rindió en cuanto a buscar una vocación a la vida religiosa. Ella perdió su

independencia y depende de un ayudante que la ayuda.

"No era tan malo al principio", dijo Burke sobre su condición. "Pasé de usar un bastón a un andador a una silla de ruedas y luché contra eso en cada paso del camino".

Un día padre Lawrence Gleason, vicario parroquial de St. Catherine en ese entonces, le trajo información sobre los Misioneros Franciscanos de Jesús Crucificado, basados en Albany, Nueva York.

Ser una parte del instituto le ha dado a ella "un nuevo modo de ver las cosas", dijo ella.

"No estoy enojada como lo estaba. Estoy en paz con todo. Es una sensación maravillosa. Esto me ha traído real y verdaderamente paz", añadió ella.

Cardenal acoge acuerdo de Corea del Norte de desarmar programa nuclear

ROMA (CNS) — El principal eclesiástico católico de Corea del Sur acogió las noticias que Corea del Norte había acordado apagar su programa nuclear a cambio de ayuda con combustible de parte de países exteriores.

El cardenal Nicholas Cheong Jinsuk, de Seúl dijo que el acuerdo, anunciado en Beijing el 13 de febrero, había "evitado una catástrofe de consecuencias inimaginables".

"Si las cosas hubiesen ido diferentemente, habríamos visto un conflicto nuclear que nos habría destruido", dijo el cardenal a AsiaNews, agencia misionera basada en Roma.

El acuerdo le siguió a tres años de conversaciones entre seis países, incluyendo Estados Unidos. Corea del Norte prometió cerrar sus principales instalaciones nucleares dentro de un plazo de 60 días y comenzar el proceso de desarme nuclear con inspecciones internacionales. A cambio el país recibiría 1 millón de toneladas de petróleo para combustible.

El acuerdo también puso en movimiento conversaciones sobre una amplia gama de asuntos relacionados, incluyendo la normali-

zación de relaciones norcoreanas-estadounidenses.

El cardenal Cheong, quien es también administrador apostólico de la capital norcoreana de Pyongyang, dijo que la Iglesia Católica de Corea acogió el anuncio con "alegría y satisfacción".

Desagradadamente, él dijo, el combustible entregado a Corea del Norte irá probablemente "primero que nada a los tanques de la milicia", pero él dijo que la gente también se beneficiaría en cierto grado.

El cardenal dijo que el programa nuclear del líder norcoreano Kim Jong-il había puesto en riesgo la península coreana y el resto del mundo. En octubre pasado, a pesar de advertencias internacionales, Corea del Norte probó un arma nuclear.

Si hubiese comenzado una guerra, dijo el cardenal Cheong, refugiados del norte habrían inundado Corea del Sur.

"Queremos darle la bienvenida a nuestros hermanos que sufren, pero no estamos listos para hacerlo. Sus condiciones económicas son desastrosas y un éxodo masivo se transformaría en una catástrofe recíproca", dijo él.

Estadísticas del Vaticano confirman crecimiento de iglesia

Por John Thavis
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Las estadísticas más recientes del Vaticano confirman que la población y la fuerza laboral eclesiásticas continúan cambiando en los países en vías de desarrollo, especialmente aquellos en África y Asia.

Las cifras emitidas el 12 de febrero mostraron que en general el número de católicos aumentó a casi 1,120 millones para finales del 2005, un aumento al 17.2 por ciento de la población total, dijo el Vaticano.

Las estadísticas fueron emitidas conjuntamente con la presentación de la edición del 2007 del anuario vaticano, conocido como Anuario Pontificio, que cataloga la presencia de la iglesia en cada diócesis.

La población eclesiástica creció más rápidamente en África, donde el número de católicos aumentó por un 3.1 por ciento en el 2005, aproximadamente la mitad

de un punto porcentual más alto que el crecimiento de la población general del continente.

En Asia el número de católicos aumentó por un 2.7 por ciento y en las Américas aumentó por un 1.2 por ciento. En Europa hubo un leve aumento en el número de católicos, dijo el Vaticano.

Varias diferencias geográficas similares se reflejaron en el número de sacerdotes y seminaristas.

El número de sacerdotes católicos en todo el mundo era 406,411 al final del 2005. Eso fue un aumento de 520, o aproximadamente un 0.1 por ciento más que el año anterior.

Separado por continentes el aumento fue de un 3.8 por ciento en Asia y un 3.6 por ciento en África. Europa y las Américas mostraron un descenso de aproximadamente medio punto porcentual en el número de sacerdotes, mientras que el número descendió por un 1.8 por ciento en Oceanía.

La población eclesiástica creció más rápidamente en África, donde el número de católicos aumentó por un 3.1 por ciento en el 2005....

Diocesan / International

Special Collection: National Collection for Retired Religious

Parish Name	Parish Location	Retired Religious Dec 2005	Retired Religious Dec 2006
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Abbott	230.00	211.00
Jesus of Nazareth	Albany	1,099.00	0.00
Holy Redeemer	Aledo	1,923.41	1,419.75
Most Blessed Sacrament	Arlington	6,116.67	6,336.25
St. Joseph	Arlington	3,809.03	5,020.30
St. Maria Goretti	Arlington	5,210.75	3,895.00
St. Mary the Virgin	Arlington	436.00	0.00
St. Matthew	Arlington	800.00	708.25
St. Vincent de Paul	Arlington	1,805.00	1,642.00
Vietnamese Martyrs	Arlington	2,179.00	1,889.00
Holy Trinity	Azle	983.00	965.00
St. Michael	Bedford	3,873.00	32.00
St. Jerome	Bowie	70.00	0.00
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Breckenridge	426.55	0.00
St. John the Baptizer	Bridgeport	305.96	405.35
St. Jude Thaddeus	Burkburnett	415.00	285.00
St. Ann	Burleson	2,069.00	2,054.00
St. Catherine of Siena	Carrollton	3,223.00	2,101.00
Holy Rosary	Cisco	190.00	0.00
St. Joseph	Cleburne	925.94	631.96
Holy Angels	Clifton	493.00	1,001.95
Good Shepherd	Colleyville	2,091.00	1,617.00
Holy Cross	The Colony	1,896.70	787.00
Sacred Heart	Comanche	60.00	115.00
St. Joseph	Crowell	70.00	7.00
Assumption/Blessed Virgin Mary	Decatur	551.56	858.81
Our Lady of Guadalupe	De Leon	60.00	147.71
Immaculate Conception	Denton	1,987.00	2,085.07
St. Mark	Denton	5,304.89	3,674.95
St. Mary	Dublin	437.00	635.00
St. Francis Xavier	Eastland	70.00	0.00
St. Paul	Electra	35.00	155.00
All Saints	Fort Worth	416.00	0.00
Christ the King	Fort Worth	0.00	856.00
Holy Family	Fort Worth	4,653.00	0.00
Holy Name of Jesus	Fort Worth	185.00	149.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Fort Worth	3,086.85	1,272.75
Our Lady of Fatima	Fort Worth	0.00	793.65
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Fort Worth	2,599.50	2,764.50
Our Mother of Mercy	Fort Worth	401.00	182.00
San Mateo	Fort Worth	257.00	352.60
St. Andrew	Fort Worth	6,817.40	9,051.11
St. Bartholomew	Fort Worth	9,060.26	10,839.54
St. George	Fort Worth	0.00	0.00
St. John the Apostle	Fort Worth	709.00	2,122.00
St. Mary of the Assumption	Fort Worth	499.50	525.00
St. Patrick Cathedral	Fort Worth	8,098.50	4,362.00
St. Paul	Fort Worth	892.75	939.55
St. Peter the Apostle	Fort Worth	1,019.00	0.00
St. Rita	Fort Worth	863.00	1,182.00
St. Thomas the Apostle	Fort Worth	2,180.00	2,243.35
St. Mary	Gainesville	638.00	0.00
St. Rose of Lima	Glen Rose	222.21	260.95
St. Francis of Assisi	Graford	50.00	32.00
St. Mary	Graham	866.26	1,148.00
St. Frances Cabrini	Granbury	2,185.00	2,442.00
St. Francis of Assisi	Grapevine	2,599.00	5,568.00
St. Mary	Henrietta	205.00	185.00
Our Lady of Mercy	Hillsboro	712.86	1,200.00
Korean Catholic Community	Hurst	0.00	0.00
Christ the King	Iowa Park	25.00	175.00
St. Mary	Jacksboro	102.80	74.71
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Keller	6,234.00	7,054.00
Santa Rosa	Knox City	87.69	0.00
St. Philip the Apostle	Lewisville	3,709.08	0.00
St. Peter	Lindsay	2,103.38	3,493.25
St. Jude	Mansfield	1,758.00	1,849.46
St. Mary of the Assumption	Megargel	45.00	0.00
Our Lady of Lourdes	Mineral Wells	436.09	620.96
St. William	Montague	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Morgan	118.30	200.55
Sacred Heart	Muenster	1,902.35	2,302.35
St. Joseph	Nocona	145.00	85.00
St. Theresa	Olney	307.00	95.00
Nativity/Blessed Virgin Mary	Penelope	268.00	207.10
St. Thomas Aquinas	Pilot Point	287.00	690.00
St. Mary	Quanah	151.00	143.00
St. Rita	Ranger	41.00	0.00
St. Joseph	Rhineland	253.00	304.00
St. Boniface	Scotland	119.00	91.00
Sacred Heart	Seymour	58.00	0.00
St. Brendan	Stephenville	504.04	236.00
St. John	Strawn	157.00	0.00
St. John	Valley View	35.00	0.00
Holy Family of Nazareth	Vernon	367.00	298.00
St. Stephen	Weatherford	6,608.00	7,283.00
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Wichita Falls	704.00	563.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Wichita Falls	315.50	1,196.06
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Wichita Falls	2,483.81	1,617.00
Sacred Heart	Wichita Falls	1,815.50	1,674.00
St. Mary	Windthorst	1,182.25	956.50

130,665.14 118,360.29

Prepared by the Accounting Dept for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth.
Please forward all questions and comments to Debbie Lankford.



MIGRANT WORKERS

— Workers tend to a lettuce field near Salinas, California, in this file photo from April 2006. The Vatican's representative at the U.N. recently said that migrant workers around the globe deserve "equal pay and equal protection under the law." Archbishop Celestino Migliore made his remarks Feb. 8 during a meeting at the United Nations. (CNS photo/Robert Galbraith, Reuters)

World must balance social justice, development, says Vatican official

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Vatican official urged the international community to examine moral challenges raised by the globalized economy, including the increasing vulnerability of migrant workers and the extreme poor.

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the papal nuncio to the United Nations, said globalization places new demands on a traditional responsibility: balancing social justice with economic development.

He made the remarks Feb. 8 at a meeting of the Commission for Social Development of the U.N. Economics and Social Council at

the United Nations. His text was made available the following day at the Vatican.

The Vatican representative said migrants have become an important source of labor around the world and deserve "equal pay and equal protection under the law, not least because the jobs they do are often the ones that no one else wants."

Many migrant workers are forced to work away from their families, and legal arrangements should be made to allow families to reunite, he said.

"Too often a lack of normal family life leads to evils such as human trafficking and prostitution on the margins of migrant

communities. The market for such modern slavery could be undermined by allowing families to live together in the receiving country," he said.

Archbishop Migliore said the U.N. commission should also give attention to the very poor, who are routinely excluded from the right to work and shunned by those with work.

The extreme poor are present in every country without exception, he said. They need access to decent, safe, and fulfilling jobs, he said.

"The world is far too rich to let the scandal of extreme poverty continue due to lack of imagination or politics of neglect," he said.

Archbishop Migliore said that given the dramatic shifts in the population pyramid in many countries, governments would be well-advised to encourage older people to remain in the job market, for example through greater flexibility in pension systems.

Women in the workforce continue to be overlooked or undervalued, he said, leading to discrimination against them in rich and poor countries.

Working parents may need special assistance protected by law so that essential child-raising responsibilities are not neglected, he said. They also need fair wages, which will eliminate the necessity sometimes forced upon the very poor to require their children to work too, he said.

The archbishop said it is now common to outsource production to poorer countries far from where goods are consumed. The practice, often motivated by pressure for higher profits, has brought work to many in the developing world, but has inevitably disturbed job sectors in richer countries, he said.

Nearly half the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day.

For Catholics, these are not just statistics. They are sisters and brothers who need our help.

The Catholic Relief Services Collection gives us an opportunity to help.

Through The Catholic Relief Services Collection, Catholics in the United States can support Church agencies that provide emergency relief in times of crisis, support long-term development programs, offer assistance to immigrants and refugees, and advocate for a more just and peaceful world.

"THROUGH THE EYES OF FAITH, THE STARVING CHILD, THE BELIEVER IN JAIL, AND THE WOMAN WITHOUT CLEAN WATER OR HEALTH CARE, ARE NOT ISSUES, BUT

Jesus in disguise."

— Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes

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NATIONAL COLLECTION DATE: Weekend of March 17-18, 2007

The Catholic Relief Services Collection supports Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, the USCCB Office of Migration and Refugee Services and Department of Social Development and World Peace, and the Holy Father's Relief Fund.

Embracing his Catholic faith changed pop music star Dion's life

BOCARATON, Florida (CNS) — Fame brought drugs and the fast life for many pop stars decades ago, but for the singer known as Dion it also came with an emptiness and a voracious hunger for more.

"I was always seeking," said Dion DiMucci, now 67 years old and a member of St. Jude Parish in Boca Raton.

"In the '60s, I used to pray, 'God, I want to know the truth. Why am I here? I am open and I am ready,'" he told the *Florida Catholic*, newspaper of the Palm Beach Diocese. "I had a powerful religious experience," he said. "It changed my life and I have never been the same since."

DiMucci believes that experi-

ence has given him the secret to peaceful living and a good life, and he wants to share his insights with men and teen boys.

So the artist, up for a Grammy for his latest album, "Bronx in Blue," does so at events in the Palm Beach Diocese, such as a Spiritual Rally for Men planned for March.

DiMucci tells the story of how he began to reap great rewards along with career success when he slowed down and began to pray and study the teaching of the church and Christ.

"To know Christ is very freeing and empowering," he said. "In my case, it has kept my family together."

DiMucci is a lifelong Catholic from a big Italian family in



the Bronx. He began his music career in the 1950s with Dion & the Belmonts, racking up hits including "I Wonder Why" and "A Teenager in Love."

DiMucci went solo in the early 1960s rising to the top with hits such as "Runaround Sue" and "The Wanderer." He landed a spot on the album cover of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in 1967.

Once he embraced his Catholicism, his love of the faith

Dion DiMucci, star of the 1950s pop group Dion & the Belmonts. DiMucci, a parishioner of St. Jude Church in Boca Raton, Florida, says his faith has changed his life. (CNS photo/courtesy of Dion DiMucci)

led him into Christian music and five gospel albums. He was inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1989 and last year cut his blues and country release now up for awards.

DiMucci describes his wife, Susan, as "very Catholic" and the heart of the family. Today, he pursues prison ministry and reaches out to men going through addiction recovery.

"I love working with men," he said. "They are in search for truth, but coming to accept it and living by it is a whole different thing."

"Faith helps you focus, and prayer is the substance of my life. It is what keeps me on track. It keeps me hopeful and centered, and it gives me wisdom," he said.

Dialogue with their Muslim hosts was one of the main goals of the pilgrimage

From page 24

our three tour guides and the families we met."

Traveling a mere month after Pope Benedict XVI, the group not only visited many of the Pope's original destinations, but also met with Muslim educators, professionals, families, and religious leaders committed to promoting interfaith dialogue.

The depth of passion for living out their Muslim faith, explained Romo, "resonated so closely to my own [journey] and took me by surprise. I was amazed by their deep commitment and conviction for living a life of faith."

The tour was funded and hosted by representatives from the San Antonio Institute of Interfaith Dialog (IID), www.interfaithdialog.org, working in cooperation with St. Mary's Fund for Judeo Christian Studies.

Inspired by the teachings of Turkish educator and spiritual leader M. Fethullah Gülen, the IID's mission is to promote peace and dialogue among people of different faiths.

One of the basic hopes of interfaith efforts, noted Cemal Usak, secretary general of Istanbul's Intercultural Dialogue Platform, is "to change the average person's image of the 'Other,' so that 'Desper-

ate Housewives' or 'Sex in the City' do not represent the United States, and El Qaida and suicide bombers do not represent Turkey or Islam."

As people of faith, "we have a number of common grounds as monotheistic believers, and we can focus on those commonalities, at least for the time being," Usak emphasized in his welcome to the Texas group. "We are already working together with Catholics... It's a humble idea to promote this kind of dialogue."

In addition to its ancient archeological history and its New Testament theological importance as a place where St. Paul traveled, Turkey is important "as a possible practical bridge into the Muslim world, especially the former Soviet states with large Muslim populations and Turkic culture/languages," explains Father Charles H. Miller, St. Mary's professor of theology and archeology, and director of the St. Mary's University Travel Service, also known as the "Roamin' Rattlers."

During his visit to Istanbul, Pope Benedict went out of his way to express respect for Muslims and their faith, reiterating that Christians and Muslims can build on their mutual belief in the "sacred character and

dignity of the person." This is, added the pope, "the basis of our mutual respect and esteem ... the basis for cooperation in the service of peace between nations and people, the dearest wish of all believers and all people of good will."

Fr. Miller agrees. "When we realize that 'the Other' is as human as we are, and has many of the same values — family integrity, respect for persons, concern to bring up children in loving and positive environment, value of having children, deep faith in God — then we can start dialoguing about how to better understand each other's core beliefs, which will not always coincide nice and neatly. Personal acceptance and the building of personal trust come first," explained Fr. Miller, who has 42 years of experience in the Middle East, including 31 in Turkey.

The Texas group began their Turkey tour in Istanbul, formerly Constantinople, and the ancient capital of both the Roman and the Byzantine empires. Over the next 10 days, the group visited Ephesus, Izmir, Anatalya, Urfa, and Turkey's capital city of Ankara.

Imam Emrullah Hatipogla, who greeted Pope Benedict

during his visit to Istanbul's famed Blue Mosque last month, also welcomed the St. Mary's group to the mosque personally, inviting them across the carpeted prayer hall into his office, where he informally answered questions. "I should thank YOU for coming here, for traveling so far," he smiled, bringing his right hand to his heart. "I thank you for your vision and for your role in this important work [of interfaith dialogue]."

For the Imam (or teacher), nothing in interfaith dialogue compares to a personal encounter. "If you've never met a Muslim, you don't know them as 'persons.' You decide what you believe based on what you

hear. But if you see and meet people first hand, you begin to know each other as human."

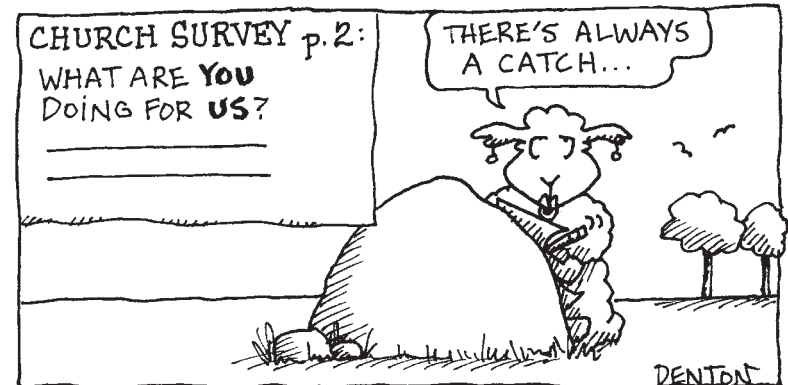
During his visit, the Pope explained "authentic" dialogue as "based on truth and inspired by a sincere wish to know one another better, respecting differences and recognizing what we have in common."

Elijah Akhahenda, professor of communication studies at St. Mary's, echoes the pope's vision. Seeing firsthand and "listening to stories of how Muslim and Christian communities have been getting along in Anatolia, former Galatia, changed my view about Muslims and the prospect of the two faiths sharing the same physical or psychological space."

The FLOCK

By Jean Denton

Copyright © 2007, Jean Denton



Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



Calendar

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Rachel's Vineyard in Fort Worth is holding a weekend retreat March 9-11 for those who need healing following an abortion. This retreat helps those who struggle with grief, guilt, and pain after abortion to find healing and hope. The retreat is open to all who feel the pain of post-abortion trauma. For more information or registration, call the confidential help line at (817) 923-4757, e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

LENTE RETREAT

Sister Margarita Armendariz, ASC, a certified spiritual director who has served in the dioceses of El Paso and Las Cruces, will return to the Catholic Renewal Center to lead a Lenten retreat, "Gather Up the Fragments." The retreat will begin Friday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m. and will conclude Saturday, March 17, at 5 p.m. "Through prayer, teachings, and dynamics, we will walk through a four-step process in which we allow Jesus to transform the broken pieces of our lives into bread for a hungry world..." CRC materials explain. CRC is located at 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. An overnight room and meals are included in the \$55 fee. For more information or to make a reservation by the March 12 deadline, call CRC at (817) 429-2920.

COUPLES LENTEN SERIES

The Most Blessed Sacrament Adult Formation Committee, the parish Knights of Columbus, and MBS Families Group will co-sponsor a two-part series, the "MBS Lenten Relationship Series for Couples," March 17 and 24 from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Each session will be preceded by a light meal served at 6:15 p.m. for pre-registered participants and children. The series will be presented by Everett and Trudy Costa. Participants are asked to donate \$15 per couple per session, or \$25 per couple for both sessions. Childcare is available by reservation; pre-registration for the program is required. For more information, call Trudy Costa at (817) 652-0041.

40 HOURS ADORATION

The stewardship council of St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills, will be sponsoring 40 hours of eucharistic adoration. The devotion will begin March 23 with Mass celebrated at 2 p.m. Eucharistic adoration will begin immediately after Mass and continue, non-stop, (except for the Saturday 5 p.m. Mass) until the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass, March 25. Sign-ups will be held the weekend of March 17 and 18. For more information, call Mary Anne Lemmon at (817) 427-0953.

LENTE REFLECTION

A Lenten Reflection will be held March 25 at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive, Irving, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Seminary Chapel. Msgr. Michael G. Duca will present the mini-retreat, entitled "Christ Behind Me, Christ Beside Me, Christ in Front of Me." The retreat is sponsored by the Trinitarian Auxiliary, an organization that supports and encourages seminarians through prayer, sacrifice, and service. The reflection will be followed by a reception in the student lounge. There is no charge for the event, but space is limited. Anyone interested in making reservations should call Rita Backus at (972) 438-2212 ext. 500. For additional information and a map for directions, visit the Web site at www.holytrinityseminary.com.

BILLINGS NFP

A Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning class will begin March 15 at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church, 1927 S.W. Green Oaks Blvd., Arlington. To register for this class, contact Julie at (817) 741-1587 or e-mail to fw.nfp@verizon.net.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S GROUP

St. Augustine's Men's Purity Group, a ministry for men who struggle with sexual impurity issues on the Internet and other sources, meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller, and Sundays at 7 p.m., at 1301 Paxton (Padre Pio House) in Arlington. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.org, or e-mail to Mark at seasmenspurity@yahoo.com.

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. 107 and ask for the vicar general, Father Michael Olson.

To Report Abuse

Call the **Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services)**
1 (800) 252-5400

SCRIPTURE STUDY

A four-week course offering specific techniques for reading and understanding Scripture will be offered Sundays, March 11 through April 1, from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and repeated Wednesdays, March 14 through April 4, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 861 Wildwood Lane, Grapevine. Learn how to read Scripture the same way the earliest Christians did using the four senses of Scripture described in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Reservations for childcare may be made by calling Carol at (817) 481-2685. For more information, call Steve Kellmeyer at (817) 481-2685 or e-mail to skellmeyer@stfrancisgrapevine.org.

'MAKING LENT COUNT'

Marcellino D'Ambrosio, an internationally best-selling author, and a radio and television personality, will speak March 7 at St. Vincent de Paul Church, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Road in Arlington, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the church's main sanctuary. In his presentation, "Making Lent Count," D'Ambrosio will encourage participants to think about Lent as more than a time to give up junk food, but to consider the Lenten season as an opportunity to improve spiritual nutrition. For more information, contact Marilyn Dietrich at (817) 478-8206 ext. 204.

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MINISTRY FORMATION DAY

The next Ministry Formation Day will be held March 3 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 108 N.W. 4th Ave., Mineral Wells. This event, sponsored by the diocesan offices of Children's Catechesis, Media Library, Adult Formation, Hispanic Pastoral Services, Young Adult Ministry, Youth Ministry, Worship, Catholic Schools, Peace and Justice, Marriage and Family Life, Light of Christ Institute, Marriage Tribunal, Pastoral Planning, Stewardship and Development, and Finance, offers a day of enrichment that includes (English and Spanish) workshop sessions, exhibits, networking opportunities, and keynote speakers. The cost is \$20 for advance purchase tickets and \$25 at the door. Scholarships are available. For more information, contact Joe Rodriguez at jrodriguez@fwdioc.org or (817) 560-2452, ext. 115.

CARMELITE AUXILIARY

"A Tribute to the USO," an afternoon of musical performance sponsored by the Carmelite Auxiliary, is scheduled for March 31, at 1 p.m. at the Woman's Club of Fort Worth, 1302 Pennsylvania Ave., Fort Worth. Vocalists and musicians from the diocese will perform favorite hits from the '40s, '50s and '60s. Special guest performer will be Bishop Kevin Vann. Light refreshments will be served. The event will also include a silent and live auction. Featured in the auction are vacation condominium rentals, original artwork, and more. Auction preview opens at 12:15 p.m. All proceeds benefit the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Arlington. For additional information or to purchase tickets, call Betsy Kalina at (817) 275-0787.

NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC SCHEDULE CHANGE

The *North Texas Catholic* will not be published March 9 due to office renovations. Items to be considered for publication in the March 23 issue must be received by March 14.

MARRIAGE VALIDATION

"Today ... Tomorrow ... Forever," a preparation day for married couples planning to have their marriage validated or sanated in the church, will be held March 10. Topics will include "Marriage as a Sacrament," "Commitment," "Communication," "Conflict Resolution," and "Intimacy." There will be time for couples to focus on their individual relationship, as well as to develop new techniques to strengthen their relationship in these areas. For registration or information, contact the Family Life Office at (817) 560-3300.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

The National Marriage Encounter of North Texas will hold its annual gathering March 4, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner, followed by a program and a brief annual meeting. Drinks and the main dish will be provided; participants are asked to bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Those planning to attend are also asked to bring a "white elephant" gift for exchange. For more information or reservations, call (817) 451-6005.

SINGLE MOTHERS GROUP

All single mothers/single women are invited for prayer time, fellowship, Bible study time, and support. The group meets every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the Formation Room at St. Michael Church, 3713 Harwood Road, Bedford. Childcare is provided at no additional cost. RSVP to Rosemary Keeley at (817) 283-8746 ext. 31 or e-mail to rkeeley@smcchurch.org to make childcare reservations. Bring a Bible, a journal/notebook, and a pen.

SMG LENTEN FISH FRY

A Lenten Friday Fish Fry will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. March 23, in the St. Maria Goretti School Cafeterium, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington. Tickets may be purchased for \$6 per adult or \$4 for each child 11 years of age and under, and are only available prior to the event. Tickets may be purchased in the parish office or from any parish choir member. Take-out meals will be available. For more information, call the parish office at (817) 274-0643.

LENTE QUIET DAY

All are invited to a Lenten Quiet Day sponsored by the Carmelite Auxiliary. The retreat will be held Feb. 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Carmelite Monastery, 5801 Mt. Carmel Drive, Arlington. Father James Morman, TOR, will lead the day of quiet reflection with prayer, meditation, and confessions. Those attending are asked to bring a sack lunch; drinks will be provided. For additional information, contact Kay Fuhrman at (817) 763-8981.

YOUTH 2000 RETREAT

The Youth 2000 eucharistic-centered retreat for people ages 13 to 30 will take place April 13, 14, and 15. The retreat, sponsored by St. Patrick Cathedral and led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, will be held at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. The weekend will include lively music, eucharistic adoration, inspiring talks, faith sharing, and personal testimonies, according to brochure information. To register for the retreat, call (817) 244-7733 or e-mail to registration@stpatrickcathedral2000.com. For more information, call (817) 558-9805 or visit the Web site at stpatrickcathedral2000.com.

SINGLES SPRING RETREAT

The Diocesan Singles Spring Retreat will be held April 20-22 at Riverbend Retreat Center in Glen Rose. The theme "We Are The Body of Christ" will encourage each to strengthen their participation in God's world. Small group and large group discussions as well as personal time for thought and prayer are planned. The retreat will begin Friday at 8 p.m. and will end Sunday by noon. For more information, contact Elizabeth at (817) 294-5989 or Brenda at The Catholic Center at (817) 560-3300. Reservations are requested by April 8.

TEACHERS JOB FAIR

The Office of Catholic Schools will hold a Teacher Job Fair March 31 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. Prospective teachers (Pre-K through 12th grade) will have the opportunity to visit with principals and representatives from the local diocesan schools. Application and benefits information for the coming school year will be available. For more information, contact the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300, or visit the Web site at www.fwdioc.org.

NOLAN MUSICAL

Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth, will present its spring musical "Little Shop of Horrors" March 2, 3, 9, and 10. The performances will be held at 7 p.m., and tickets are \$5 for students and \$8 for adults. For more information, contact the school office at (817) 457-2920.

VENDOR / CRAFT SHOW

St. Philip Church, 1897 W. Main St., Lewisville, will host a Spring Vendor/Craft Show March 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The day, sponsored by St. Philip's youth, will include items from local artisans, vendors, and a silent auction. There will be no admission charge. For booth information, contact Sandy Peterson at (972) 571-5905.

'COME AND SEE' RETREAT

A Come and See Vocation Retreat will be offered for women interested in discerning their vocation. Single Catholic women, ages 16-35, are invited by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth of the provincial-ate convent at 1814 Egyptian Way in Grand Prairie March 17 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call Sister Mary Paul Haase, CSFN, at (972) 642-5191 or e-mail to smppaul@icgrandprairie.org.

Classified Section

DRE

St. Catherine of Siena Church in Carrollton is in need of a director of religious education for kindergarten through sixth grade and adult education. Candidates for this position should have a degree in religious education or related fields, and have an interest in Whole Community Catechesis. The ability to converse in Spanish would be a plus. If interested in this position, mail a résumé to Deacon Philip Webb, St. Catherine of Siena Church, 1705 E. Peters Colony Rd., Carrollton 75007 or fax to (972) 394-0676.

PRINCIPAL

Trinity Junior High, a seventh through ninth grade school with over 20 years of academic excellence in Catholic education located in Fort Smith, Arkansas, is seeking a principal. Candidate must be a practicing Catholic with a master's degree in school administration desirable. The applicant should possess proven leadership and strong human relation skills and an energy and passion for education. Inquiries may be e-mailed to the Search Committee, Trinity Junior High School at ctkpastor@christking.org.

ACCOMPANIST

An accompanist experienced at three-manual pipe organ is needed for four weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with two choirs weekly, holy day Masses, availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send résumés to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Avenue, Fort Worth 76107 or call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104, to apply.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

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

CAMPUS MINISTER

St. Mary's Catholic Center at Texas A&M University, College Station, is seeking a full-time campus minister, to serve on a team which also includes two full-time diocesan priests, three part-time permanent deacons, three other lay campus ministers, and two interns. The position is expected to be filled by the summer of 2007 and is open until filled, with review of applications beginning immediately. St. Mary's is a Campus Ministry Center serving Texas A&M University, which has 45,000 students, about 11,000 of whom are Catholic. Responsibilities of the position include directing a large RCIA program, young adult catechesis, advising student groups, retreats, coordinating volunteers, campus outreach, some pastoral care and other ministry duties within the pastoral team. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience. Requirements: Practicing Catholic with a master's degree in theology or pastoral ministry; prior ministry and RCIA/catechesis experience; willingness to work on a team and work flexible hours. Bilingual and campus ministry experience are pluses. Send résumé, along with date of availability to start, by March 31, to: Marcel LeJeune, St. Mary's Catholic Center, 603 Church Ave., College Station 77840; e-mail to mlejeune@aggieatholic.org; (979) 846-5717; Fax (979) 846-4493; Web site: www.aggieatholic.org.

HOME CAREGIVERS

Visiting Angels, a non-medical home-care service, is seeking experienced caregivers for on-call positions, PT to live-in. Great supplemental income. Call (817) 224-9701.

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Good Newsmakers

In the footsteps of Pope Benedict XVI, Texas pilgrims engage in dialogue with Muslims in

TURKEY

Stories and Photos by
María de Lourdes Ruiz Scaperlanda
Special Correspondent

Former Texas Catholic Press Correspondent



The Texas group in front of the Roman library at Ephesus

'THE OTHER HOLY LAND'

Former St. Paul parishioner Wayne Romo finds common ground with dialogue partners



From left to right, Wayne Romo; IID representative and tour guide Fatih Ozcan, and Father Charles H. Miller, St. Mary's professor of Theology and Archeology, at Harran, where Abraham married Sarah and lived for many years (*Genesis*) — only miles from the border between Turkey and Syria.



Pope Benedict XVI as he visits the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30. Imam Hatipogla, among the Muslim clerics who greeted him, is at the pope's right. (CNS photo/Patrick Hertzog, Pool via Reuters)

The group dialogues with Blue Mosque Imam Emrullah Hatipogla in his office. (L to R), Father Charles H. Miller, Freddie Komar (from Bryan), Imam Hatipogla, and Patricia Mejia, assistant director of St. Mary's University's Leadership Center.

Right: A detail of a mosaic of Jesus in the Hagia Sophia Museum in Istanbul. Hagia Sophia was first built as a Christian church. It served as a mosque during the Ottoman Empire. Pope Benedict visited it in November; the Texas pilgrims in January. (CNS photo/Fatih Saribas, Reuters)



The Hagia Sophia Museum in Istanbul



Like an overused kitchen rag, the word tolerance has lost its energy, its ability to convey meaning.

Perhaps nowhere is this truer than in the question of interfaith dialogue.

Seeking more than a mere brush with the concept, a group of 12 Texas pilgrims, the majority faculty and staff from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, traveled to Turkey in January on a 10-day interfaith tour.

For Fort Worth-native Wayne E. Romo, the most powerful part of the experience came not from the ancient ruins or the striking buildings, but from "the faith of

See *DIALOGUE*, p. 22

Turkey is a long way away in culture and geography from Castleberry High School and St. Paul's Church, where Wayne E. Romo grew up as the second oldest of six children, and where his parents Willie and Henrietta Romo still worship.

But for Romo, director of University Ministry at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, it was precisely this new and unknown environment that "enhanced my own Catholic faith in profound ways."

The interfaith tour provided an "opportunity of walking in the footsteps of Muslims' faith, to see through their eyes, to experience their passion and conviction, and the joy that faith brings to

them," Romo said, adding, "I was blessed to be able to pray with each of our three Muslim guides at varying times of the trip." Through that experience, "I found a common place, a unique charism the three guides exuded — the depth of conviction for their faith practices. I see a close resemblance of this charism surfacing in many contemporary Christian Catholics, and it was awe inspiring."

In ministry talk, Romo explained, "we speak of learning to walk in someone else's footsteps," as a way of gaining insight into how God is manifested in peoples' lives. This is what happened to me," Romo added, smiling. "I see God with different eyes, and I feel enlightened."

Inside... This issue of the NTC

The Stephen Breen Foundation is sponsoring the first ever Spirit Games '07 to bring families and youth together to celebrate the gifts of faith, life, and spirit that Stephen exemplified. **6**

The Texas Catholic Bishops have issued statements on the new state-mandated HPV vaccinations for all 6th grade girls and on the building of coal-fired power plants. See what they counsel. **11**

Its a little-known rite initiating a young woman into a little-known state of life. Claire Therese Heyne became a consecrated virgin in a ceremony at St. Patrick's. on the first day of the year. **15**

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