

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Pope, at homeless shelter, says acts of charity are essential to Christian faith



Pope Benedict XVI greets people as he arrives to visit the Caritas homeless center in Rome Feb. 14. (CNS photo/Gregorio Borgia, pool via Reuters)

**By John Thavis
Catholic News Service**

ROME—Pope Benedict XVI paid a visit to a church-run shelter for the homeless and said concrete acts of charity were essential expressions of the Christian faith.

“Know that the church loves you deeply and will not abandon you, because it recognizes in each of you the face of Christ,”

the pope said at a Caritas hostel and medical center near Rome’s main train station Feb. 14.

The doctors, nurses, and some 300 volunteers at the center applauded the German pontiff as he toured the complex during a 90-minute visit.

In a speech, the pope noted that the tough economic times had made church-

run social services even more necessary. Over the last two years, the Caritas center has seen a 20 percent increase in the number of people seeking help.

The pope said the center was “a place where love is not only a word or a sentiment, but a concrete reality that allows the light of God to enter into the life of people

SEE POPE, P. 22

Advocates push Congress to reform volatile food commodity markets

**By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service**

WASHINGTON — Two years ago riots erupted in at least 15 developing countries over the rising cost of basic foods. Frustrated that rapidly rising prices were outstripping their ability to buy much-needed food, angry demonstrators torched vehicles and clashed with police in a series of violent confrontations across Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean.

The rioting came as prices peaked at the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008.

The timing of the price increases coincided with a period of what one hedge-fund manager called excessive speculation — when a limited number of investors dominate a specific commodity market.

Michael Masters, portfolio manager for Masters Capital Management, said excessive speculation can happen where huge sums of money from a relatively small number of sources dominate a specific commodity market. It can happen with food, energy, precious metals, or any of numerous other commodities. When that happens, Masters explained, the prices consumers pay can double or triple in a matter of months.

SEE COMMODITIES, P. 15

Catholic Charities expands services to cover all of the diocese

Stella Centeno offers access to services of St. Joseph Health Care Trust in Northwest and North deaneries, as Catholic Charities expands its reach

**By Nicki Prevou
Correspondent**

“Lisa,” age 30, a parishioner at St. John Church in Bridgeport, was “ecstatic” to learn that she and her husband, “Juan,” 34, were to become parents for the second time this April.

“I never thought we would be able to have another child, so to have another baby seemed like a real surprise and a blessing,” said Lisa, whose older son is 13 years old.

That blessing is coming after a year of great hardship, Lisa admitted. Juan, a welder and construction worker, has been unable to find work for several months. Lisa’s pregnancy has been filled with complications, and she has been unable to seek employment.

“Our families have helped us

buy groceries and pay our bills, but we had a big bill at the clinic where I was getting prenatal care,” said Lisa. “I couldn’t believe it when one of my friends from church told me that Catholic Charities could help us. The church gave me Stella’s phone number.”

Stella Centeno, who serves as the community health facilitator for St. Joseph Health Care Trust, which is managed by Catholic Charities throughout the 28 counties of the Diocese of Fort Worth, was “absolutely wonderful,” said Lisa. “I started talking to her in November, and she went to work to help us right away. She called our clinic in Decatur and worked with them to get our bill lowered. Then, I had to get a lot of blood work done, and that was going to cost over \$300. Stella was able to get

the blood work paid for [through the trust], and it was a good thing I had it done, because we found that my sugar was a little high, and so now I’ve been checking it every day, and eating healthier, so I can keep it under control.”

Centeno works from an office located at Holy Family Church in Vernon, putting her skills as a bilingual social worker to use in serving eligible individuals of all denominations living within the Northwest Deanery. She is employed by Catholic Charities to help offer the services that are available through the St. Joseph Health Care Trust—services such as prescription assistance, hearing aids, counseling, eye glasses, vision care, and dental services. Primary health care services such

SEE CENTENO, P. 8



St. Joseph Health Care Trust community health facilitator Stella Centeno and Fr. Jack McKone, pastor of four Northwest Deanery churches, visit in Centeno’s office at Holy Family Church in Vernon, 30 miles northwest of Wichita Falls.

Lenten practice of visiting Stational Churches is a reminder that the call to holiness applies to all of us

Dear Friends in the
Diocese of Fort Worth,

Some of you may have noticed that Pope Benedict



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

XVI, on Ash Wednesday, preached, distributed ashes, and celebrated Mass not at St. Peter's Basilica, but rather at a church called Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill in Rome.

This custom dates back to the early centuries in the life of the Church in Rome, when the season of Lent was truly penitential and marked by a daily pilgrimage to a different church each day in Lent. These churches came to be known as the "Stational Churches" and the custom of visiting a different Church each day became a profound way to walk through the city of Rome to mark the season of Lent.

In fact, this custom dates back to the earliest centuries of the Church, when, during the season of Lent, the Pope would celebrate Mass in one after another of each of the four greater and three minor basilicas in Rome, also known as the seven churches or Sette Chiese (St. John Lateran, St. Peter, St. Paul Outside the Walls, St. Mary Major, the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, St. Lawrence, and St. Sebastian).

Over the centuries, other churches were gradually added to the list of Stational Churches to be visited on a particular day in Lent, two, Santa Agatha and Santa Maria Nuova, added by Pope Pius XI in 1934, brought the list to more than 40. On a day of a particular station, the faithful of Rome would gather at one church (called the church of collecta or gathering) and then process while singing the Litany of Saints to the church where Mass was to be celebrated by the Pope and his clergy. This was called "making a station" and the Mass celebrated was the communal Mass of the city

It was always a profound experience praying in these churches because I knew I was praying with Christians of every century!

—Bishop Kevin Vann
Diocese of Fort Worth

Priests and seminarians from the Pontifical North American College arrive for an early morning Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome in Feb. 17, part of a tradition Bishop Vann participated in during his four years as a graduate student in Rome.
(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

and the world or *Urbi et Orbi*, since the gathered faithful not only represented the gathered Church in Rome, but also the invisible universal Church which also gathered in union with the Pope. This ancient custom reminds us that Rome is the center of all Christian worship, and is the visible communion of the universal Church.

The church of Santa Sabina is of significance, because it became the first Stational Church, to be visited on the first day of Lent, or Ash Wednesday. Therefore, to this day, the Pope still traditionally celebrates Mass and distributes ashes in this beautiful and ancient Church.

Like so many customs, the practice of the Stational Churches gradually fell out of use. However, they were revived in the late 1970s by a group of seminarians from the North American College in Rome. This more recent practice would be the celebration of Mass in English at 6 or 7 a.m., followed by the German Mass, with the Italian or Latin Mass being in the evening. Some of the churches are open only on the day of the Stational Mass, such as the church of San Giorgio in Velabro, whose station is celebrated on the Thursday after Ash Wednesday and is a significant church since it was Cardinal Newman's titular church. There is a complete list of the Stational Churches in the Tridentine Missal which we used to carry to Mass.

As a graduate student in Rome for four years, I had the wonderful experience of making the complete Stational Churches twice. It was always a profound experience praying in these churches because I knew I was praying with Christians of every century! In fact, the word "station" connotes a stopping or resting point, often for refreshment or rest. The practice of the Stational Churches teaches all of us that Lent is a time to stop, rest, and reflect from the journey of our lives with its



many demands and be restored and renewed. And, as the Stational Churches bear witness to their history, they remind us that the call to conversion of Lent, with all of its penitential practices, is not just a contemporary moment, but has been a part of the lives of Faith of all the followers of Christ of every time and place. They remind us that living a holy life is not only possible, but that each of us, no matter our state and vocation in life is called to be holy and to bear witness to Christ through the practice of charity in our lives.

Lent is the time in which we strive most especially in this call to holiness and work to root out sin in our lives, so that we may all the more grow in our communion with Christ. May we all during this holy season of Lent apply in our own lives the great teaching of the Fathers of Vatican II who so stressed and emphasized this universal call to holiness:

"Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive. Let all then have care that they guide aright their own deepest sentiments of soul. Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder them in their quest for perfect love ... Let them not come to terms with this world; for this world, as we see it, is passing away."

— Lumen Gentium, 42

May the Lord bless you all in these days of penance and grace.

Kevin W. Vann

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



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Diocesan

National deaf ministry leader speaks at diocesan Deaf Community Lenten retreat



The Deaf Community poses for a picture during their Lenten retreat held at St. Michael Church in Bedford with their chaplain, Fr. Ken Robinson (back, center), and guest speaker Sr. Maureen Langton, CSJ (back row, second from right in tan coat).

Sister Maureen Langton, CSJ, was the guest speaker at the Deaf Ministry 2010 Lenten Retreat in February held at St. Michael Church in Bedford.

Sr. Maureen, now retired, founded the Ministry Formation Program for the Deaf in Chicago. She also worked with Father Thomas Coughlin, the first deaf-born priest in the United States, to establish Camp Mark 7, a summer camp for Catholic deaf youth in New York in 1981.

Sr. Maureen spoke on Jesus' Lenten Journey and compared it to participants' Lenten journeys today. Sr. Maureen took 27 deaf participants on a walk through Lent, concentrating on the Gospel readings and how the characters in each reading represented Catholics today.

Their situations, feelings, motives, etc., were explored and discussed in small groups. Father Ken Robinson, chaplain to the Deaf Ministry Program celebrated Mass and Reconciliation with the community, as well.

The Deaf Community will celebrate Holy Week at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine. Both Holy Thursday and Good Friday Services will begin at 7 p.m. in the main church.

A Lenten Reconciliation service for the Deaf Community will be held at St. John the Apostle Church, located at 7341 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills, on Sunday March 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel. Family and friends are encouraged to join the Deaf Community.

St. Mary the Virgin to host classical guitar concert for Haiti relief Mar. 10

In an effort to generate funds for Haiti in the aftermath of the terrible earthquake that hit the island Jan. 12, St. Mary the Virgin Church in Arlington is partnering with the Fort Worth Classic Guitar Society and the Allegro Guitar Society of Dallas to host a "Classic Guitar Concert" on Wed. March 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Guest guitarists include Mak Grgic on his first visit to the United States from Slovenia, and Christopher McGuire, artistic director of both guitar societies. Both guitarists bring their unique skills and talents to classic guitar, say event organizers.

Christopher McGuire founded the Fort Worth Classic Guitar Society during the 1994-95 concert season. McGuire has performed hundreds of solo concerts in the United States, Mexico, Japan, Venezuela, Germany, Spain, and the Canary Islands. He has played his guitar for presidents of the United States and Mexico, three former

governors of Texas and members of the Spanish Royal Family. A great lover of chamber music, he has been a guest artist with orchestras and chamber ensembles and also composes for his eclectic music group, D'Accord.

Born in 1987 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Mak Grgic follows in a distinguished line of some of today's finest young guitarists emerging from the Croatian school of guitar. Currently studying with Alvaro Pierri on the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna, Austria, he studied at the Elly Basic Conservatory of music in Zagreb. He is on tour as a member of the Zagreb Guitar Quartet performing in the United States.

St. Mary the Virgin Church is located at 1408 N. Davis Dr. in Arlington. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students. All proceeds will be donated for Haitian Relief. Tickets will be available at the door. For tickets or more information, call (817) 498-0363.

*Responding
to God's Call*

Lent — a little time of sanity with Jesus

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

The Lenten season, which has just started, is an annual sober reminder for Christians that Jesus came to suffer and die for us in order to save us from our slavery to sin.

As one of the God billboard signs on the highway says, "There are many options in this life, but in eternity there are two, smoking or non-smoking," Christians believe that there are real consequences to their actions, both in this life and the life to come.

The Catholic Church and many mainstream Christian denominations draw upon this reality by dedicating a 40-day period before the celebration of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord as a period of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, which is called Lent.

Our world seems to be twirling faster and faster, and is noisier than ever. That is all the more reason to adhere to the Lenten season to draw upon the waters of our eternal Lord to find rest, spiritual nourishment, and guidance. Moses, Elijah, and many of the prophets set the standard first by praying and fasting for 40 days in order to turn away from sin and to listen to our heavenly Father. Jesus, too, fasted and prayed for 40 days to overcome temptation to sin and to follow the sole voice of the Father, and now we are given the Lenten season to do likewise.

To turn up the heat on my encouragement to you to take this Lenten season seriously, to be sober and alert, and to take deliberate time to pray an hour a day and to sacrifice daily by abstaining from one

of those daily meals that has made us overweight anyway, I want to officially introduce you to insanity.

I was preparing to preach on the Gerasene demoniac last month (*Mark 5:1-20*), the man who was insane because he had many demons in his body, when I realized something. The passage says that no one could control him and that he kept injuring himself day after day, yet after an encounter with the Lord, he was clothed and sane for the first time in years.

In response, I began to reflect on how insane our world has become. Here are five undeniable insanities that are causing great harm and the fall of our great nation, which we have allowed to occur by our own lack of vigilance and our own infidelity to God:

- **Our nation's debt:** Talk about insanity! When it is all divided out, each four-person family's share of the national debt is \$160,000. It's not that we aren't taxed enough; rather, we have allowed our representatives to spend money like it's their rich uncle's money. Wake up! That's your money they are spending.
- **Fifty million abortions since 1973:** Our society does not even acknowledge that it is a problem. It's not just a problem; it's a direct act against God as it's the deliberate murdering of our own children for personal shedding of responsibilities for our actions.
- **Narcotics:** Narcotics are illegal, yet they have destroyed the lives of millions of people and have left their families wracked by uncontrollable pain and suffering! There is an undeniable correlation between the use of drugs, the lack of hope, and the lack of our loving God in people's lives. Welcome to the results of the denial of God!
- **Pornography:** Pornography has stripped our country of personal dignity. Pornography is destroying the

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

lives of both the young and the old. The Church teaches authentically how holy the body is while the pornography industry teaches that the body has little to no value. Tell me why this is legal when it's more lethal than cocaine.

• **Adultery:** Rounding out the top five is the insanity of adultery! From congressmen to sports figures, this insanity has been publicly flaunted for decades. Less visible is the reason for this insanity and the underlying disease that affects over 75 percent of all marriages. In these cases, the human ego is out of control, unable to forgive, holding onto past injuries and incapable of loving what was once closest and dearest to their hearts. Utter insanity! From my own personal observations, I have yet to find Christ anywhere in the mutual lives of those who are involved in adultery. Those who pray together stay together!

So what does all this have to do with Lent or with vocations? The bottom line is that in order to truly be sane, we need God; we need Christ to bring us back to our senses and our purpose in life. Sure we may not be caught into any of the above insanities, but as is written in *1 Peter 5:8-9a*, "Stay sober and alert. Your opponent, the devil, is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, solid in your faith." The disciplines we practice during Lent will help us to remain sober and alert and solid in our faith.

We, the religious, have chosen to give our lives to the betterment of society, to fight the good fight, so please join us in a little time of sanity with Jesus during Lent with prayer and fasting, forgiving and embracing, loving and healing the human person.

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

Mother / Daughter Tea to be held March 28

The Spring Mother/Daughter Tea will be held Sunday afternoon, March 28, from noon to 4 p.m. The location of the tea has been changed to the Knights of Columbus Hall in Keller. All young ladies, ages 10 to 13, their mothers, grandmothers, or any other special woman in their lives are invited to enjoy and celebrate the gifts of being female.

"Join us for an afternoon in a tea house complete with tea pots and cups, a delicious lunch, and dessert. Other women will be your hostesses and speakers as we share our life experiences and the satisfaction of being female, as well as the special gifts and qualities we have received from our Creator to function in this role. This session will explain, from a faith-based perspective, the physical, emotional, and psychological changes that occur in becoming a woman," states Kathy Stojak, coordinator of the program.

There is a \$12.50 per person fee. Reservations can be made by calling Kathy Stojak at (817) 773-8096. Reservations are being accepted on a first-call basis. The Knights of Columbus Hall is located in Keller at 1907 Whitley Rd.

Windthorst German sausage meal to be held March 7

St. Mary Parish in Windthorst will host its annual German sausage meal Sunday, March 7. Homemade pork sausage, spare ribs and sauerkraut with all the trimmings will be served from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The all-you-can-eat meal, sponsored by the Windthorst Volunteer Fire Department and the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 11 and under. Uncooked sausage will also be available for purchase at \$3 per pound. Dinner guests will also have the opportunity to purchase home-baked goods, compliments of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas.

St. Mary's is located at 101 Church St. at the intersection of Highways 281, 25, and 174 in Archer County. For more information, contact Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6444.

St. Joseph Parish, Rhineland, to host dinner March 21

St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland will host a sausage and fried chicken dinner Sunday, March 21. The dinner, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the parish hall. The cost for dine-in or take-out is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under the age of 12. St. Anne's Christian Mothers' Society Country Store will offer home-baked goods and more during the dinner. Uncooked sausage will be available for purchase at \$3 per pound.

To order ahead or for more information, call John at (940) 422-4561 or Billie at (940) 422-4993.

Catholic Charities to celebrate 100 years of service March 17

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc. announces they will be celebrating 100 years of "providing help, creating hope, and promoting justice" on March 17. All are invited to join them at a special birthday Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann at 6 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. A reception with finger food, cookies, cake, and drinks will follow. Location for the reception will be announced at the Mass. For more information, contact Laura Sotelo at lsotelo@ccdfw.org or (817) 413-3904.

Weatherford youth sponsors 40 Days For Life through April

People of all ages and faiths are encouraged and invited to be a part of the first 40 Days for Life prayer vigil in Weatherford. Participants gather on the Parker County Courthouse lawn (in the center of Weatherford) from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday to pray for the end of abortion.

The vigil, sponsored by the youth group from St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford, began Feb. 17 and will continue through April 3. A small ecumenical prayer service takes place at the top of every half hour. Candles are available for a donation so that this event can become a candle light prayer vigil.

For more information, contact Jeanette Houle at (817) 596-9585.

'Divine Affair' luncheon to be held March 13

The Auxiliary to the Disalced Carmelite Nuns cordially invites all to attend the 25th annual Divine Affair Luncheon and Fashion Show presented by Coldwater Creek University Park Village. The event will be held Saturday, March 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Colonial Country Club, 3735 Country Club Circle, Fort Worth. Reservations are \$35 each.

Although there will be no reserved seating, reservations for the event are requested.

For reservations or more information, contact Cathy Lancaster at (817) 714-8231.

Theatre Nolan Catholic presents 'All Shook Up!' in March

What do you get when you cross William Shakespeare's *12th Night*, the 1950s, and Elvis? "All Shook Up!" Theatre Nolan presents its spring musical All Shook Up March 5, 6, 12, and 13, at 7 p.m. in the NCHS auditorium. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students. There will be a special alumni performance Saturday, March 6, with a reception following the show. For more information, contact Pat Gilmore Pierret in the alumni office at (817) 395-0249.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI — On Sunday, Feb. 7, Scouts and Scouters of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grapevine commemorated Scout Sunday and the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Boy Scouts of America at the 9 a.m. Mass with Father Jacob Alvares as the celebrant. Scouts were altar servers and brought up the offertory gifts. The Scouts received a special blessing from Fr. Alvares at the end of Mass. Father Anh Tran, pictured above (*sitting second from the right*), is pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish and Scout chaplain.

NTC publication deadlines

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

Submit items to jrusseau@fwdioc.org. Items for the March 12 issue must be received by noon on March 3. Items for the March 26 issue must be received by noon on March 17.

Friends of Educate the Children to host gala March 5

Friends of Educate the Children will host the second annual Gala and Silent Auction with master of ceremonies Ralph McCloud and guest speaker Father Robert Thames. Fr. Thames, a priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been a missionary in Mexico and Bolivia for over 30 years and is currently ministering in Cabezas, Bolivia.

The gala event, sponsored by the Mission Council of the Diocese of Fort Worth, will be held Friday, March 5, at Marriott DFW Airport South. For more information, contact Hilda Flores at (817) 560-3300 ext. 112.

Catholic Schools Office to host Teacher Job Fair March 27

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth will hold a Teacher Job Fair Saturday, March 27 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Nolan Catholic High School campus, 4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. Prospective teachers (Pre-K through 12th grade) will have the opportunity to visit with principals and representatives from the 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 ext. 253 or visit the Web site www.fwdioc.org.

Contemplative Outreach sponsors United in Prayer Day March 20

All are invited to join the Contemplative Outreach for its annual United in Prayer Day Saturday, March 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, 9200 Inwood Rd., Dallas. The program will feature video presentations by Thomas Keating, OCSO, speaking about spiritual evolution of humanity and the human condition as well as centering prayer, discussions,

and closing activity. Registrations may be made online at www.CellOfPeace.com, by e-mail at CPDallas@CellOfPeace.com, or by calling (972) 722-6029. The requested donation is \$15 to be taken at the door.

Participants are asked to bring a bag lunch; coffee, bottled water and refreshments will be provided.

Natural Family class to be offered beginning March 21

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the symptothermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. Since the course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to attend a course beginning at least four months before their wedding.

To register for a course starting March 21 at 2 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 N. Bonnie Brae, Denton, contact Tom and Laura Maisano at (713) 557-1110. Visit www.cclfdw.org for more class dates and information.

Subiaco to host open house weekend March 11-12

Subiaco Academy, a Catholic, college preparatory, residential and day school for young men located in western Arkansas, is hosting a Discovery Day for prospective students and their parents March 11-12. The day, which runs from 4:30 p.m. on March 11 to 4 p.m. on March 12, is open to sixth to tenth graders and all activities including overnight stays and meals are free of charge.

Students visiting will have an opportunity to experience dorm life and class orientation with teachers, mingle with current students, and take the placement exam. Activities for parents include classroom visits and information sessions with administration and faculty members. There will also be campus tours for everyone. The Academy offers a challenging college preparatory curriculum for young men in grades 7-12 with emphasis on honors and Advanced Placement courses.

Subiaco Academy is located in western Arkansas approximately 45 miles east of Fort Smith.

For more information about the Discovery Day or to reserve a place, contact the admission office at (800) 364-7824 or e-mail admissions@subi.org.

Youth 2000 set for April 9 at Nolan Catholic High School

The annual Youth 2000 retreat, sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth and led by members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal religious congregation, will be held Friday, April 9 through Sunday, April 11 at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

Youth and young adults, ages 13 to 30, may attend the weekend program of Eucharistic Adoration, music, inspirational talks, personal faith testimonies, and prayer. The cost is \$40 per person if registration forms, including liability releases, are mailed prior to March 19. Registrations are \$50 if mailed after that deadline. Housing is not included in the registration fee. Lunch and dinner will be provided on Saturday; snacks will also be provided at major breaks during the sessions throughout the weekend.

An adult chaperone must accompany groups of up to six youth under the age of 18; all chaperones and participating volunteers must be in compliance with diocesan policies and must have completed safe environment training.

For more information, liability releases, and all diocesan forms, visit the Youth 2000 Web site at www.fwdiocyouthretreat.org. For more information, call (817) 558-9805.

St. George School to host spring fundraising event

All are invited to support St. George School in Fort Worth by attending its third annual spring fundraising event, to be held April 10 from 6:30 to 11 p.m. The event will take place at the school located at 824 Hudgins St. in Fort Worth. The entrance to the gym is located on Karnes Street. "Come enjoy an evening of fellowship with dinner and drink, and silent and live auctions," encourage event organizers. Tickets are \$35 per person. For more information, call the school office at (817) 222-1221.



ST. PETER SCHOOL — Seventh and eighth grade students from St. Peter the Apostle School in Fort Worth celebrated the record snowfall in February by building a snowgirl, complete with school uniform. Pictured above are: (*left to right standing*) Chase Yandell, Michelle Han, Sydney Jongewaard, Teresa McGee, Jose Torres, Andy Steed. Kneeling in the snow are Molly Gribble and Jonathan Martinez.

Diocesan

Diocese plans to open new Catholic high school in Keller

Progress is being made in considering the development of a new diocesan Catholic high school, according to a statement released by Bishop Kevin Vann, in which the bishop summarized findings from a recent feasibility study.

The study, undertaken in response to the recommendation included in the diocesan Strategic Plan for Growth (2009), was initiated to determine the level of interest and potential enrollment for a new diocesan Catholic high school, to be located at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish site in Keller.

The study included a professional market research survey, conducted in the fall of 2009, wrote

the bishop. "A final report of the results was delivered to me and the diocesan Office of Catholic Schools in early December," he noted in the summary document. "The market research survey results, combined with an analysis of community demographic data, provided an enrollment forecast upon which a plan could be built. Results of the market survey showed a favorable level of interest, supporting the decision to take the next steps in planning for the new high school."

The parishes involved in the market research survey process included Good Shepherd, Colleyville; St. Francis of Assisi, Grapevine; St. Mark, Denton; and

St. Michael, Bedford. The parish and school communities who participated included Immaculate Conception, Denton; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Keller; St. John the Apostle, North Richland Hills; and St. Peter the Apostle, White Settlement. Holy Trinity School in Grapevine also took part in the survey, wrote Bishop Vann.

While there may be sufficient initial ninth grade enrollment to consider opening a new high school, the next steps of the planning process are critical, the bishop added, noting that those steps include identifying how a high school might integrate with the long range plans of St. Elizabeth

Ann Seton Parish and studying the financial feasibility of building the school.

The first step cannot proceed until a canonical pastor is appointed for St. Elizabeth's, the bishop explained, adding that the appointment of the pastor will take place as part of this spring's annual assignment process. The second step, that of studying the financial feasibility of building the school, will entail a detailed review of all expenses associated with the opening and determining the level and sources of revenue needed to meet those expenses, he wrote.

"We continue to move with steady resolve to establish quality

Catholic school education to serve our youth for many years to come; in the end, however, it is truly the Lord who is calling us in this step of Faith," wrote the bishop. "It is He who leads and 'sets' this timetable, not the other way around."

The establishment of a new diocesan Catholic high school is an act of the local Church, concluded Bishop Vann in the summary's closing paragraph, calling the effort to build a new school "an act of Faith, built on the Faith and good will of all concerned, in communion with the Bishop and those to whom he entrusts diocesan leadership in response to the Lord's call to teach the Gospel to all the nations."

Immigration Steering Committee holds first meeting, discusses issues

By John English
Contributing Writer

Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope, a letter composed by American and Mexican bishops seven years ago, remains at the forefront of a debate about immigration reform. The implications of that document were discussed on Feb. 6 at St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, as the Immigration Steering Committee held its first introductory meeting, "A Journey of Hope; Welcoming the Stranger: A Call for Action."

Strangers no Longer was written in 2003 because the immigration system that was in place was in need of reform, and, according to the letter, "a comprehensive approach to fixing it is required."

Xergio Chacin, program coordinator for Catholic Charities' Immigration Consultation Services, told an audience of more than 100 people at St. Bartholomew that not much has changed in that time.

"Nothing has been passed in terms of reform. We don't know how or when reform will be enacted," Chacin said.

Father Carmen Mele, OP, director of Hispanic Adult Catechesis, spoke at length about Catholic Social Teaching and immigration, referencing the bishops' letter, and discussing hardships faced by undocumented immigrants, such as constant fear of deportation and a lack of health insurance.

"Every immigrant is a human being with rights to be respected," Fr. Mele said. "He or she must not be mistreated or abused."

The Catholic bishops' call for comprehensive immigration reform, he said, included anti-poverty efforts, attempts to reunify families that have been separated through immigration, temporary worker programs, and a legalization program that would allow undocumented immigrants residing in the United States to obtain citizenship through legal means.

"It is not something governments should do if they want to," Fr. Mele said. "It is something they should feel a responsibility to do, if they can."

Deacon Len Sanchez, moderator for the discussion and diocesan director of Community and Pastoral Services, stressed the isolation many immigrants face, saying that it is important for the Church, and the country as a whole, to treat immigrants with kindness and respect.

"I think that the face of this nation is changing, and I think that the true intent of our being here in this world is to help others," Dcn. Sanchez said. "It is to extend the same love that Christ had for us to others... and do the same to those that we may perceive as different — but are not."

Dcn. Sanchez was quick to point out that immigration reform and difficulties that immigrants confront is not limited to those who pass from Mexico to the United States.

To illustrate his point, the moderator invited Jean Pierre Seminega, along with his wife Emilienne and son Paul, to speak about their experience as Rwandan immigrants living in Russia. Seminega traveled to Russia in 1986 to study, where he eventually met his future wife, also a student.

Although he earned a master's degree in physics, Seminega said he could not find work in Russia because he was an immigrant.

When Seminega immigrated to the U.S. he was welcomed into the St. Bartholomew congregation. He says he considers himself fortunate to have found work as a math teacher at North Crowley High School five years ago, but said he still struggles in many ways.

Referring to the imminent possibility of immigration reform, Dcn. Sanchez said he hopes that people understand the amount of work that lies ahead and what

the Catholic community can do to help with this issue.

Dcn. Sanchez described the hard work that will be needed to help immigrants meet the requirements of any new laws leading to citizenship. It will require an act of solidarity, he said.

The most important thing the day had accomplished, he said was that "We have established a network of communication so that, if and when there is action toward immigration reform, then we will be able to help those in need — to offer them the opportunities that everybody should have."

Sister Rita Claire Davis, SSMN, of St. Jude Church in Mansfield has already taken action to assist immigrants in the United States by starting an English as a Second Language ministry at St. Jude for both adults and children.

Sr. Rita Claire said the program started out with three courses, and has blossomed to 17 with 30 instructors. It has really helped her parish come together, she said.

"It serves as a bridge between our communities. We may never understand each other's cultures completely," Sr. Rita Claire said, "but language helps an awful lot."

Father Stephen Jasso, TOR, pastor of All Saints Church, pointed out the tremendous economic impact that undocumented workers have on the U.S. economy and the fact that most work in jobs that Americans do not want.

Fr. Jasso said he has seen firsthand the problems immigrants face on a daily basis, and he said the quicker some kind of reform is passed into law, the better.

"I think immigration reform should be passed today," Fr. Jasso said. "It is something that is important to our country, and I think the nation is ready for it.... I think that we can accomplish this goal by three means — prayer, sacrifice, and action."



Deacon Len Sanchez (left) listens as Jean Pierre Seminega, an immigrant from Rwanda by way of Russia and now a math teacher at North Crowley High School, shares his experience at "Journey of Hope; Welcoming the Stranger: A Call for Action," Feb. 6 at St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth.

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First Justice Rocks conference draws 100 young adults from diocese

By Michele Baker
Correspondent

Photos by Juan Guajardo

About 100 young adults gathered at St. Vincent de Paul Church on Jan. 23 for Justice Rocks, a social justice conference hosted by the Young Adult Ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"I was really proud of the number of people who attended," said conference coordinator, Brittany Caldwell. "We didn't know what to expect with this being our first event like this. There were several parishes represented. Most of them came from the Fort Worth and Arlington area, but we also had a large group from Wichita Falls. It was really great to see them there."

With an eclectic mixture of Christian themed rock, hip-hop, and pop music provided by Sincere-the DJ serving as a backdrop for the day, participants registered and shared a meal. After a short prayer service, Heather Reynolds, president and CEO of Catholic Charities, Fort Worth gave an overview of Catholic Social Teaching.

"The point here," Reynolds emphasized, "is not just about learning Catholic Social Teaching. It's about reflecting on your gifts and figuring out how you can use those gifts to live out your call."

Ralph McCloud, national director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development of the Unit-



Marcos Martinez (far left), youth and young adults program coordinator for Catholic Relief Services, talks with Rhea Racho (left), Erica Trevino (center) and Teresa Cook (right) about volunteer and social justice opportunities.

ed States Conference of Catholic Bishops reiterated this point in his address later that afternoon.

"Many of us come here as perplexed people," said McCloud. "We know that there's hurt, pain, and suffering in the world, but we don't know what to do; how to respond." In his remarks McCloud retold the story of the raising of Lazarus saying, "Jesus did the hard part in raising Lazarus from the dead, but he invites us to participate in the miracle: 'Unbind him!' Catholic Social Teaching is our way of answering that call to unbind those around us from poverty, injustice, and inequality."

Between the major presentations, conference attendees had

the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions featuring a variety of guest speakers. While smaller in scale, these talks were no less poignant.

"The breakout session by the Tarrant Area Food Bank really brought home some realities," said Sophia Mancuse, Young Adult coordinator for St. Ann Parish in Burleson. "Watching how quickly a family of four goes through a week's allotment of food in six days really opened my eyes. By day seven there's not enough food left to make a meal, so these families have to rely on other resources. It's shocking that in our culture we are so disconnected from that once we sort of 'make it.'"



Ralph McCloud, director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, USCCB, talks to young adults during the Justice Rocks conference. Young adults from around the diocese gathered for Justice Rocks, a conference focused on Catholic teaching on social justice.

Exhibitors from a number of social service organizations provided pamphlets and one-on-one opportunities for conference participants to ask questions about how to get involved. The day ended with Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Church, dinner, and a concert featuring the music of Soundwave with Austin-based folk singer Grace Pettis opening.

"People were really into the concert. Soundwave had them on their feet and participating in the songs and stuff," said conference coordinator Brittany Caldwell. "A lot of people really loved Grace, too. It was great."

"I was amazed the way young adults were so engaged the entire



conference," said Kevin Prevou, director of the Office of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth. "They clearly wanted to know more about social teachings of the Catholic Church and our presenters gave them what they asked for."

"We got a lot of good feedback. People really enjoyed the conference, and it clearly served its purpose," said Caldwell. "I think we have a good foundation to grow this event in the future."

SSMN supporters to hold 'Celebration of Gratitude' honoring sisters' work in North Texas area March 6

All are invited to attend "A Celebration of Gratitude," a one-hour event designed to honor and assist the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur from noon to 1 p.m., Saturday, March 6 at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., east of downtown Fort Worth. Bishop Kevin Vann will offer opening remarks at the program, which will include brief presentations from other community leaders. A lunch will be provided; there is no admission fee. Participants are asked to register between 11:30 a.m. and noon.

The event will offer current and former students, friends, and supporters the chance to visit with the sisters and to offer their financial and prayerful assistance to the women who have worked tirelessly to offer Catholic education and spiritual support to local Catholics since they first arrived in Texas, 137 years ago.

According to documents from the sisters' archives, 1873 was the year in which several classically-educated sisters, originally of

Namur, Belgium, arrived in Waco, and opened Sacred Heart Academy for 29 girls before following the railroad up into North Texas to establish similar academies. They opened St. Ignatius Academy in downtown Fort Worth in 1884, and then used the school itself as collateral to borrow funds to establish yet more schools in Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, and Dallas.

A second celebration, which will also serve as a reunion event for all former students of schools administered by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, will be held April 24, from 3 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.



at Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas.

For more information about the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur or to RSVP to either event, call the Provincial office at (817) 923-8393, or visit the sisters' Web site at www.ssmnwestern.com.

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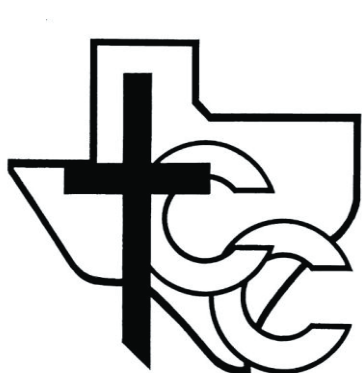
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Centeno...

FROM PAGE 1

as health screenings and mammograms are also available.

Father Jack McKone, pastor of Holy Family, St. Mary Church in Quanah, and St. Joseph Church in Crowell, has glowing words of praise for Centeno, who spends hours each day on the phone and on the road in the surrounding rural areas, offering healthcare information to groups and individuals and working with social service agencies and healthcare providers.

"Stella doesn't just get the job done," he commented. "She goes above and beyond, making people feel the compassion and concern that the Church has for people in need. She is also here [at Holy Family Church] all the time in her role as a parishioner who volunteers to help in many different areas. I can ask her a question about how to get help to anyone who comes to us, and she knows what to do. She is a tremendous resource in this community."

Centeno and her husband, Ben, the parents of two adult sons, also have three grandchildren. Known for her special commitment to incarcerated and at-risk youth, Centeno noted that her relationships with social service providers and agencies throughout the area have helped her provide comprehensive services in a variety of circumstances.

"My job is to keep people within our community as healthy as possible," Centeno said. "These are tough economic times, and more and more people are in need. Many people who have never had to ask for assistance before are having to seek help to pay for their medications and other needs. If there is something that the trust can't help with, I will connect that individual to an agency or provider that can give the required service."

Lisa, whose due date is April 6, ex-

"My job is to keep people within our community as healthy as possible... These are tough economic times, and more and more people are in need. Many people who have never had to ask for assistance before are having to seek help to pay for their medications and other needs. If there is something that the trust can't help with, I will connect that individual to an agency or provider that can give the required service."

— Stella Centeno
Community health facilitator for
St. Joseph Health Care Trust

pressed her gratitude for the help that Centeno continues to give to her. "She didn't just make the phone calls [to the clinic] for me," she reflected. "She has been checking up on me, calling me to make sure we're doing okay, wanting to know if we have what we need. She's just so kind, so compassionate. She makes me feel like this baby is truly a gift from God."

For more information about the trust and available services, call Catholic Charities at (817) 920-7733. Residents of the North and Northwest deaneries may contact Catholic Charities staff member Stella Centeno at her office at Holy Family Church in Vernon, at (940) 552-0347.

*Below and to the right is a listing of a variety of services offered in rural and exurban areas of the Diocese of Fort Worth through Catholic Charities.

Greater Fort Worth area — Denton included

Parish Name	Services Offered/Program name and Description	Dates & time of services offered	Person to contact for information	Contact number/email address
Good Shepherd	Clinical Counseling	By appointment	Kent Bass	Judy Martinez 817-534-0814, ext. 2376
St. Vincent de Paul	Clinical Counseling	By appointment	Julia Leonard	Judy Martinez 817-534-0814, ext. 2376
Immaculate Conception - Denton	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	April Roberts	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Immaculate Conception - Denton	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Holy Name of Jesus	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
St. Matthew	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Our Lady of Guadalupe	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
St. George	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Martha Rojas	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Vietnamese Martyrs	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Christ the King	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Our Mother of Mercy	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814
Immaculate Heart of Mary	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Martha Rojas	Central Intake 817-534-0814
St. Rita	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake 817-534-0814

Wichita Falls area

Parish Name	Services Offered/Program name and Description	Dates & time of services offered	Person to contact for information	Contact number/email address
St. Jude - Burkburnett	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	Renee Russell	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Our Lady of Guadalupe - Wichita Falls	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or

Rural Services

Parish Name	Services Offered/Program name and Description	Dates & time of services offered	Person to contact for information	Contact number /e-mail address
Our Lady of Lourdes - Mineral Wells	Hand in Hand	By appointment	Michelle Garcia	Central Intake 817- 534-0814
St. Stephen - Weatherford	Clinical Counseling	By appointment	Charles Lavine	Judy Martinez 817-534-0814, ext. 2376
St. Stephen - Weatherford	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	Sarah Daniels	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Casa Brendan/Casa Il/St. Brendan - Stephenville	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	Sarah Daniels	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
St. John - Bridgeport	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	April Roberts	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
St. Mary's - Gainesville	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	April Roberts	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
St. Mary - Graham	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	By appointment	Renee Russell	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Holy Family - Vernon	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Mary - Quanah	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Joseph - Crowell	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
Holy Angels - Clifton	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Martha Rojas	Central Intake 817- 534-0814
Our Lady of Guadalupe	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Martha Rojas	Central Intake: 817- 534-0814
St. John - Bridgeport	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
Assmptn of the BVM - Decatur	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Mary - Jacksboro	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
Sacred Heart - Breckenridge	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Our Lady of Lourdes - Mineral Wells	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Jackie Gordon	Central Intake: 817-534-0814
Sacred Heart - Seymour	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Joseph - Rhineland	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
Santa Rosa - Knox City	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Mary - Henrietta	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. William - Montague	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Joseph - Nocona	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Jerome - Bowie	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Stella Centeno	scenteno@ccdfw.org or 1-888-757-9647
St. Rita - Ranger	St. Joseph Health Care Trust	By appointment	Martha Rojas	Central Intake 817-534-0814

Year for Priests

The Gift of Priesthood

Priests of the South and Southwest Deaneries share their experiences



Very Rev. Juan Rivero

Parish: St. Frances Cabrini, Granbury

Other: Vicar of Priests
Dean of South Deanery

Ordained: Dec. 27, 1972
Incardinated: May 7, 1985

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. I experience that gift through a great spiritual enrichment and a sense of purpose. It is both humbling and encouraging to know that you've been called by God. You receive many graces daily as you go about your duties serving God's people.



Father B. George Pullambrayil

Parishes: Immaculate Heart of Mary, Abbot
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, Penelope
Our Lady of Mercy, Hillsboro

Ordained: Dec. 29, 1993

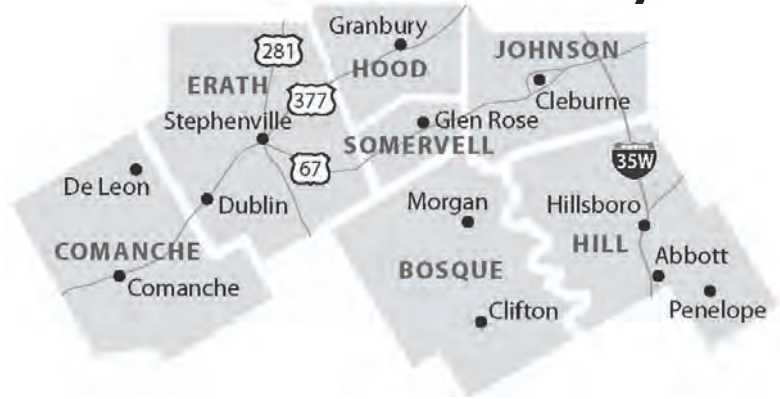


Father Sergio Rizo

Parish: St. Joseph, Cleburne

Ordained: May 27, 1989

South Deanery



Father Philip McNamara, SAC

Parishes: Our Lady of Guadalupe, De Leon
Sacred Heart, Comanche
St. Brendan, Stephenville
St. Mary, Dublin

Ordained: June 15, 1958

Q. Certainly, you've seen a lot of changes in the Church over the past 52 years as a priest. Can you share some memories of that?

A. I was a young priest in Argentina when the change from Latin took place. Spanish wasn't my first language, but the pastor was an older man and he asked me to explain to the people. Young people like change, so being young helped me. Now that I'm nearly 80, though, I prefer to serve people quietly in the background.

Editor's Note: This is the first in an ongoing series featuring priests from the different deaneries in the diocese sharing about aspects of their ministry.

Monsignor Frank Miller (NOT PICTURED)

Status: Retired from active ministry

Ordained: May 29, 1954 for the Diocese of Austin; Msgr. Miller is now retired and living in this diocese and has served in the South Deanery as necessary.

Q. What are you most grateful for as a priest?

A. I guess, two bishops. I'd retired from the diocese in Austin when Bishop Delaney asked me to help out in a parish that had no priest. I was glad to help. I feel sorry for people in parishes without a priest because I feel that they're missing out on a large part of spiritual life.



Father Ray Mullan

Parish: Jesus of Nazareth, Albany
Sacred Heart, Breckenridge
St. Mary, Graham
St. Theresa, Olney

Other: Dean of Southwest Deanery

Ordained: June 29, 1962
Incardinated: July 1, 1994

Q. How can God's people better support their priests?

A. Being willing to cooperate with the priest and volunteering is important. And obviously we need prayer and appreciation just like everyone else. It is a wonderful boost for a priest to see that the people support them. When people say, "Father I pray for you every day," that's what keeps me going.



Father John Casey, SAC

Parish: St. Stephen, Weatherford

Ordained: June 10, 1967

Q. What part of your priestly duties do you find most rewarding?

A. I would say being able to help people: being a vessel of God's presence working through all of us. When I visit a person who is alone, sick, or in prison, I am a sign of hope for them. We believe that God can wash away sins and shame. I let them know that someone cares.

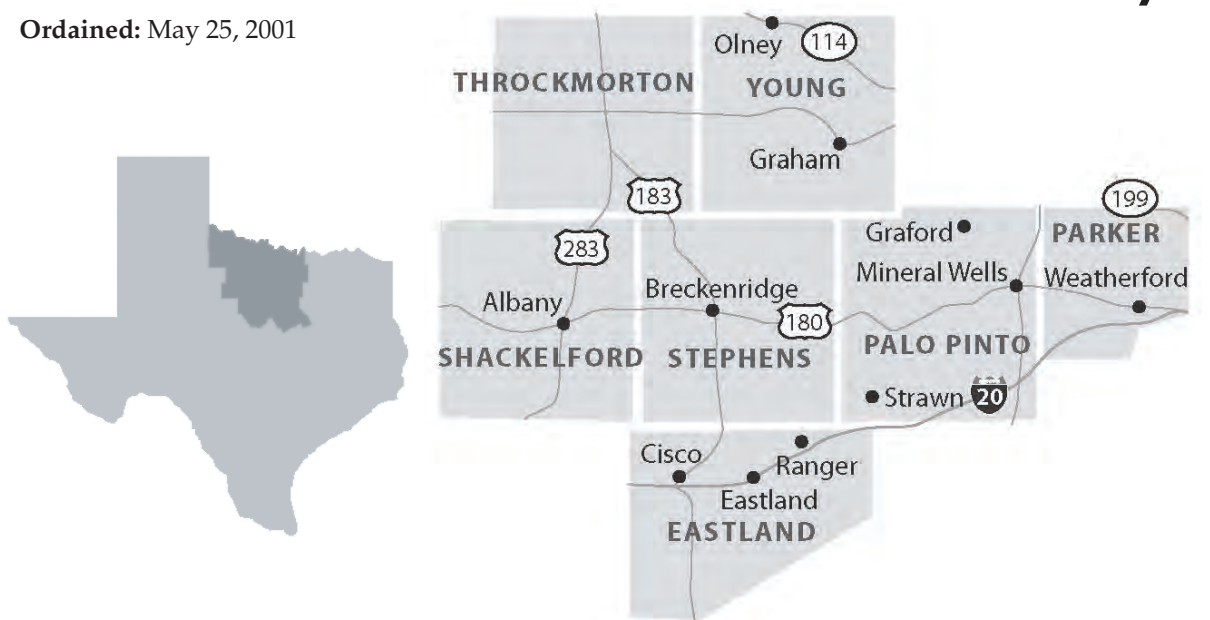


Father Jeff Poirot

Parishes: Our Lady of Lourdes, Mineral Wells
St. Francis of Assisi, Graford

Ordained: May 25, 2001

Southwest Deanery



Viewpoints

From punk rocker to domestic missionary

By David Mills

Ignoring prison rules, the guards let Daniel Weikert bring a Bible into his cell while he awaited a civil court trial. Bored and unhappy, he started reading it a lot, “drinking it like water in a desert — with desperation,” he said.

A month later, he was exonerated of all charges, but he knew he deserved punishment for his sins. And from reading the Bible, he also knew Jesus had taken his punishment on himself.

Although Daniel had grown up in a Christian family and a traditional Episcopal church outside Washington, D.C., “I was a professional heathen,” he says now. “Basically, my whole life was preaching against the Gospel.”

Touring the eastern seaboard in a punk rock band as a high schooler, he’d lived the life punk rockers live. He kept up his musical career while jumping into what he calls “left-wing environmental activism” and membership in the Socialist Workers Party in his twenties.

He didn’t believe in heaven, but he thought he could help build it on earth while having a really good time. He thought being a radical heathen was fun. (And has the tattoos to prove it.)

It wasn’t as much fun as he thought

it would be. “With heathenism comes pain,” he said. “As St. Paul said, the wages of sin is death. Sin kills things inside of us.”

All of his musical success — he worked with three Grammy Award winners — and all of his activism couldn’t deaden the pain of being unable to live the kind of life he really wanted to live.

But coming to Christ changed it all. He returned to the Episcopal Church, becoming a popular speaker and Bible study leader, and working as a music minister at several churches in the Pittsburgh area.

He founded a music ministry, MGO Media. As Rodan Weikert, he performs ragtime, jazz, blues, and gospel music, and produces albums for a variety of musicians.

So far, Daniel Weikert’s story is a typical conversion story, but unlike some converts he kept going. Leaving heathenism for Christianity was “a total paradigm shift,” he said. He saw the world completely differently.

For one thing, he now knew God could work miracles. And knowing that God worked miracles, he suddenly began to wonder if God was working one particular miracle.

Kneeling in an Episcopal church one Sunday during a communion service, he looked at the minister holding the bread and thought, “If faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains, why can’t God be in the Eucharist?”

What if the Catholics are right about it? he asked himself. “For two years, God had been speaking to me, saying, ‘If Christ is risen, and he lives in your heart, where is he now?’” He looked and

Although Daniel had grown up in a Christian family and a traditional Episcopal church outside Washington, D.C., “I was a professional heathen,” he says now. “Basically, my whole life was preaching against the Gospel.”

looked and finally found the answer in the Mass.

Having been drawn to the Church by the Mass, he began to explore what he calls “the typical Protestant issues:” apostolic authority, the nature of the Church, the development of doctrine, who Mary is, who the saints are, the nature of Scripture.” He also began reading the early Fathers of the Church.

At the same time, God kept sending people to help him. A friend, who’d grown up a Pentecostal but “had walked with me in the sins of the past,” started exploring Catholicism. He became a Catholic three years ago.

One day in a local coffee shop, Daniel saw a Catholic book lying on a table and started talking to the man reading it. Ed

Milburn later said he always puts his Catholic books face down to avoid getting into conversations about them.

After a few minutes of conversation, Milburn took Daniel out to his car and pulled a new copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* from the trunk. He gave it to Daniel, who started studying it.

A friend put him in contact with Oratorian Father Drew Morgan at the Pittsburgh Oratory. Meeting with Daniel once a week for a year, Fr. Drew led him through a close study of Catholic teaching, filling out what he had known as a Protestant Bible teacher, then received him into the Church in February of 2007. Milburn served as his sponsor.

Now, as a Catholic, Daniel wants to use his gifts as a musician and a teacher for the Church, while continuing to perform music for secular audiences as a way of reaching them as well. “I believe in being a domestic missionary, trying to change things in our own back yard.”

Like many converts, he never expected to become a Catholic, and never expected to find that only by becoming a Catholic could he get from life what he really wanted. “You have to be counter-cultural to follow Christ, but you have to be really counter culture to follow Christ the way he intended.”

That’s why he titled his conversion talk “From Radical to Reverent and Back Again.” And why he has a lot more tattoos than the kind of convert you’re used to seeing on television.

David Mills is the author of DISCOVERING MARY: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOTHER OF GOD. He can be reached at Catholicsense@gmail.com.

Lent means leaving no stone unturned

By Mary Morrell

“Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

—1 Peter 2:20

Even in winter, there is no better way for me to clear my head when I am having trouble writing than a walk along the shore. Most often, the wind is biting, and there is a soul-deep solitude hard to define. Sometimes I attribute it to the grayness of things; sky, water, boardwalk, even the skyline of the amusement pier is clouded in gray mist. At other times it seems the dearth of neighbors leaves a tinge of loneliness that, in summer, would be welcomed respite. Today, I realize I am missing the birds, most especially the sandpipers.

The beach is devoid of their frenetic activity

this morning, as these lucky birds are wintering in South America. Among that group is a bird named the ruddy turnstone, so called because of its habit of turning over pebbles, shells, and twigs to find food. To watch one at work is to see life breathed into the adage, “no stone left unturned.”

As I considered the days of Lent, that phrase kept coming to mind, as did the image of those stout little birds investing all their energy into discovering the food that would sustain them on the journey to their Arctic breeding grounds.

Discovery has always appealed to me as an important aspect of both the human and spiritual journey, and stones have fascinated me since my childhood days of digging for quartz with my dad in Thatcher Park. I soon became intrigued with blending the two together as a different way of doing Lent this year.

What might be the benefit of leaving no stone unturned during this season of Lent?

Scripture, I was to discover, is filled with references to stones with both positive and negative connotations. One concordance listed

69 New Testament references, certainly more than is needed for one penitential season! In Exodus, stones of remembrance are engraved with the names of the sons of Israel; in Genesis, Jacob uses a stone for a pillow; David kills Goliath with a stone and slingshot; Matthew reminds us that “God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham,” and the devil attempts to use stones as a temptation for Jesus during his 40 days in the desert, saying, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

Among all the symbolism, and images of stones in Scripture, two stand out for me as a focus for this Lenten journey of discovery — obstacle and transformation.

St. Paul writes, “They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, ‘See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall.’”

This reference to Jesus as an obstacle to those who have no faith in him served as an opportunity to consider the many stumbling stones in my own life, rocks of my own creation.

If I turn over the stone of pride, will I discover humility? If I dislodge the rock of fear, will I discover trust? If I turn over the stone of anger, will I discover patience?

No doubt I am not alone in being able to create a list of some substance identifying the stones that need transformation into manna. This can happen, Jesus assures us, if we only ask. After all, he points out, “Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone?” God will certainly do no less.

Surely, Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, could have transformed those simple stones into bread in the desert, but that would have been inconsequential compared to the Paschal Mystery, transforming the stone of death into the Bread of Eternal Life.

For us, as Christians, the pivotal stone of transformation is the tomb stone, overturned by God for our sake: “And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it” (*Matthew 28.2*).

Bishops call for bipartisan action to advance health care reform that protects human life and dignity

WASHINGTON — On the eve of the White House Health Care Summit, the U.S. Bishops urged Congressional leaders “to commit themselves to enacting genuine health care reform that will protect the life, dignity, consciences, and health of all.” In their Feb. 24 letter to congressional leadership, the bishops also cited their longtime support of adequate and affordable health care for all, calling health care a basic human right.

The letter was signed by Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Centre, New York, Cardinal Daniel

DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, chairs of the bishops’ committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development, Pro-Life Activities, and Migration, respectively.

The bishops urged the House and Senate to adopt legislation that ensures access to quality, affordable, life-giving health care for all; retains longstanding requirements that federal funds not be used for elective abortions or plans that include them; effectively protects conscience rights; and protects the access to health care

that immigrants currently have and removes current barriers to access.

“We hope and pray that the Congress and the country will come together around genuine health care reform that protects the life, dignity, consciences, and health of all,” said the bishops.

For more information about the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ teaching on health care reform, visit www.usccb.org/healthcare.

Full text of the bishops’ letter follows.

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader

Dear Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), we strongly urge the congressional leaders from both parties meeting on February 25, 2010 to commit themselves to enacting genuine health care reform that will protect the life, dignity, consciences, and health of all. It is time to set aside partisan divisions and special interest pressures to find ways to enact genuine reform. We encourage the Administration and Congress to work in a bipartisan manner marked by political courage, vision, and leadership.

The Catholic bishops have long supported adequate and affordable health care for all, because health care is a basic human right. As pastors and teachers, we believe genuine health care reform must protect human life and dignity from conception to natural death, not threaten them, especially for the voiceless and vulnerable. We believe health care legislation must respect the consciences of providers, taxpayers, purchasers of insurance, and others, not violate them. We believe universal coverage should be truly universal and should not be denied to those in need because of their condition, age, where they come from, or when they arrive here. Providing affordable and accessible health care that clearly reflects these fundamental principles is a public good, moral imperative, and urgent national priority.

The U.S. Catholic bishops continue to urge the House and Senate to adopt legislation that:

- Ensures access to quality, affordable, life-giving health care for all;
- Retains longstanding requirements that federal funds not be used for elective abortions or plans that include them, and effectively protects conscience rights; and,
- Protects the access to health care that immigrants currently have and removes current barriers to access.

For details on the bishops’ positions on health care, please visit www.usccb.org/healthcare.

We will continue to work vigorously to advance true health care reform that ensures affordability and access, keeps longstanding prohibitions on abortion funding, upholds conscience rights, and addresses the health needs of immigrants. Dialogue should continue and no legislation should be finalized until and unless these basic moral criteria are met. Without commenting on specific proposals that may be brought to the summit, we will work to ensure that legislation meets these criteria and will oppose legislation that does not meet them. We hope and pray that the Congress and the country will come together around genuine health care reform that protects the life, dignity, consciences and health of all.

Sincerely,

Bishop William F. Murphy
Diocese of Rockville Centre
Chairman, Committee on Domestic
Justice and Human Development

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
Chairman, Committee
on Pro-life Activities

Bishop John Wester
Diocese of Salt Lake City
Chairman, Committee
on Migration

Parents always know the tones and cadences of their children’s voices, and so it is with God who always hears us

Calling out to Him



By Kathy Cribari Hamer

“I heard you calling my name last night in a parking lot at TCU,” I told my daughter Meredith, during a nightly phone chat.

She said it wasn’t her voice calling, because she hadn’t been at TCU. She was at home, thank you very much, preparing dinner, reading stories, overseeing homework, driving children to soccer practices, or helping them with school projects.

“Those are my choices, Mom. Those are what I do.”

“I remember those days,” I ignored her, waxing nostalgically, “when life was so busy it was like a ‘Choose Your Own Adventure’ book, except there were no forbidden castles, underground kingdoms, or Evil Power Masters. Well, maybe there was one evil power master, but that was only until everybody finished their homework.

“Anyhow, I heard your voice calling, in the parking lot, but what I heard wasn’t your ‘now’ voice,” I said. “It was your 25-years-ago voice. You said, ‘Mom...’ ‘MOM!’

“It’s funny because not that many people turned around when you called, but I heard your voice and looked for you. I knew it was you,” I told my little girl, now grown. “If it had been the middle of the mall, a carnival, or the state fair, then a zillion people would have turned around, but in a university parking lot, not that many people heard the voice of a little girl. I did though.

“Clearly, I was the only one in that parking lot who cared about you,” I said. “You should remember that.” “I wasn’t in the parking lot, Mom.”

“I know.”

When you hear children’s voices in parking lots, grocery stores, or parks, they always seem to be calling you; their cadences always match those of your own kids, grown or not grown. And all the reasons they could be calling pop into your head, like a choose-your-own fear.

There’s the possibility of a finger caught in the door, something dropped and blown away, a simple broken shoelace, or the inevitable “he hit-me-touched-me-looked-at-me” sibling catastrophe. As they get older, we fear phone calls: “I forgot my lunch.” Or “I had a little accident, but nobody got hurt.”

No matter how old we get, as parents we always hear our children, whether they’re around us or not.

In the everyday world, though, sometimes we listen less than we talk. We run into people we know, and exchange entertaining but meaningless chatter. We recall (or pretend) we were going to call them, or we

SEE HAMER, P. 22

Tarleton students determined to maintain new Catholic ministry

By Juan Guajardo
Editorial Assistant

After several attempts to develop a stable Catholic Campus Ministry at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, a group of 12 determined college students are on the verge of achieving just that.

With the direction of two new advisors, the current group is taking steps to solidify its ministry by making it more active in the community and by creating a master plan of what they hope it will become. While the university has had semblances of a campus ministry for many years, the previous groups were tiny and typically stayed below the radar.

"When I was a freshman I e-mailed a faculty member. She sent me over a hard copy of their contract. Really all it was saying was that they were in compliance with Tarleton so that they could post signs, they could have activities," said Paul Caldwell, a member of the ministry. "That's what that contract was — it recognized them as an organization. So it really wasn't anything, just a Tarleton document."

That disappointment in not having a campus ministry similar to those at other universities was the starting point for the current group of students. They shared their desire to build a strong ministry with their new faculty coordinator, David Crockett, a Tarleton professor, and his wife, Kathleen and told them they would do what was necessary.

"The history here is that it was always maybe four or five students that were interested in having a campus ministry but nobody really knew what to do," Kathleen Crockett said. "And sometimes they would be active and then the following year, nothing was going on."

So last December the group met with Kevin Prevou, diocesan director of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry. He suggested they develop a three-year plan to help ensure that future students will carry out the ministry's goals and mission.



The importance of the three-year plan cannot be understated, group members said.

"The seniors are adamant that they're going to leave something behind and that they're going to maintain contact with the group after they leave to make sure that what they're planning continues to grow, and they're not just lost when we lose a whole lot of seniors," David Crockett said. "That's what it's been for many, many years, a cycle of that. These students are really focused on breaking the cycle."

The core members' planning includes finding a way to keep the young ministry going after the seniors graduate this May, while also prioritizing almost 50 goals within the three-year plan. Their plan and mission statement will also incorporate the six aspects of campus ministry detailed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which include growing the faith community, forming the Christian conscience, developing leaders, and educating for social justice.

Once the plan is written up, they can begin working on the list of priorities which includes: Bible study with a priest, getting more Catholic faculty involved in the ministry, finding a permanent meeting place, providing a spring break mission trip, a larger music ministry, monthly community service opportunities, semester retreats, a full-time staff member, and raising awareness about the ministry.

"That's where we're at, trying to get people the motivation and then the buy-in," Caldwell said. "How do you do that? By making a plan and really sticking to it, and praying."

Despite the challenges facing the group, it has become very ac-

tive, and the mission statement and three-year plan promise to be the seed for a faith-filled ministry that won't fall apart in a year or two.

The students said the Catholic Campus Ministry provides weekly sessions of *Why Catholic?*, occasional retreats, a choir group, community service, and help in the form of Eucharistic ministers, lectors, ushers, and music at the weekly college-oriented Mass held Sunday evenings at St. Brendan Church, located across the street from the university. Members also helped the local Knights of Columbus put on their annual soccer tournament, and they're currently raising money for a local crisis pregnancy center. And last month, the group drove more than 200 miles round-trip to attend Justice Rocks, a social justice conference sponsored by the diocesan Young Adult Council.

"They have really started becoming more and more active over the past year and a half, since the Crocketts have assumed responsibility for being their sponsors," said Dan Baker, a Knight of Columbus who has been helping the students grow the ministry for the past two months. "They've started doing some great projects, and it looks like there's a lot of enthusiasm."

Before the Crocketts came in, the ministry was very different. Not only was it smaller, it was lethargic, providing only a weekly social gathering after Sunday Mass. But the leadership of the Crocketts coupled with a *Communio* Retreat in February 2009, and lots of prayer and student involvement jumpstarted the ministry making it a lively and tight-knit one.

Now students have a place to

grow in faith and an "extended family," among their ministry peers, ministry member Kyle Kveton said.

"It really tickles me the way that they tease, it's like brothers and sisters, the camaraderie amongst them all," Kathleen Crockett said. "They truly love one another. It's just beautiful to behold."

Thanks to the ministry's efforts in the community, they've caught the attention and support of parishioners from St. Brendan and St. Mary Church in Dublin. They've also attracted a few more students. Almost 25 students now participate in the ministry.

"I think they have definitely helped pull us in the right direction," Caldwell said of the Crocketts. "Without them, I don't think we would be here today. They were very crucial in our small group."

A computer information services (CIS) professor and department chair at Tarleton, Crockett said neither he nor his wife had any experience with campus ministry or youth ministry. But

he said he felt he needed to take the role of coordinator.

The day he was handed the job, he woke up with a strong sense that he was going to be asked to do something, and that he should say yes to that call — whatever it was. That day, he and his wife went to morning Mass rather than their usual evening Mass, and there the previous Catholic Campus Ministry coordinator asked him if he wanted to take over.

"That's when I surprised Kathy [my wife] by immediately saying 'yes,'" Dave said. "Typically, we will talk things out, pray and discern if it's the right thing. This just felt like the right thing for me to do, immediately, for some reason. She got to the end of her question basically and I said yes. I felt that I had been prepared, that God basically said 'you should do this.'"

The students appreciate the Crocketts' 'yes.'

"They opened their home to us, they send us texts," ministry member Caitlyn Cooper said. "If you ever have any problems they're always there for you."



ABOVE: Campus Ministry members Kyle Kveton, Caitlyn Cooper, Daphne Hunt, Neal Wyatt, and Paul Caldwell participated in the family weekend tailgate event at Tarleton. Over the past year and a half, the group has grown to almost 25 students.

LEFT: Students from Tarleton State University gathered at their advisors' home to talk about community service opportunities and to plan the future of the ministry. The group's coordinators, David and Kathleen Crockett (center), took over the ministry a year and a half ago and helped it become much more active.

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Campus Ministry

UNT student and priest take new approach to campus evangelization

By Juan Guajardo
Editorial Assistant

Once a week, students walking to class at the University of North Texas in Denton might find themselves passing a large, white kiosk with a Catholic priest sitting serenely behind it. While it may seem unorthodox, it's no surprise for UNT students.

In fact, many of them stop to talk with the priest, or to have confession, or to take a photo with their cell phones, said Saul Hernandez, who came up with the "Talk to a Catholic Priest" kiosk.

A physics graduate student, Hernandez got the idea from an episode of Showtime's *This American Life* that featured an Iraqi man who traveled the nation answering questions and inviting discussion — all from a makeshift kiosk with "Talk to an Iraqi" painted in black letters. After watching it, Hernandez was inspired and thought, "Why not talk to a Catholic priest?"

So he began assembling a tall, wooden kiosk with the help of a physics student who had been one of his students.

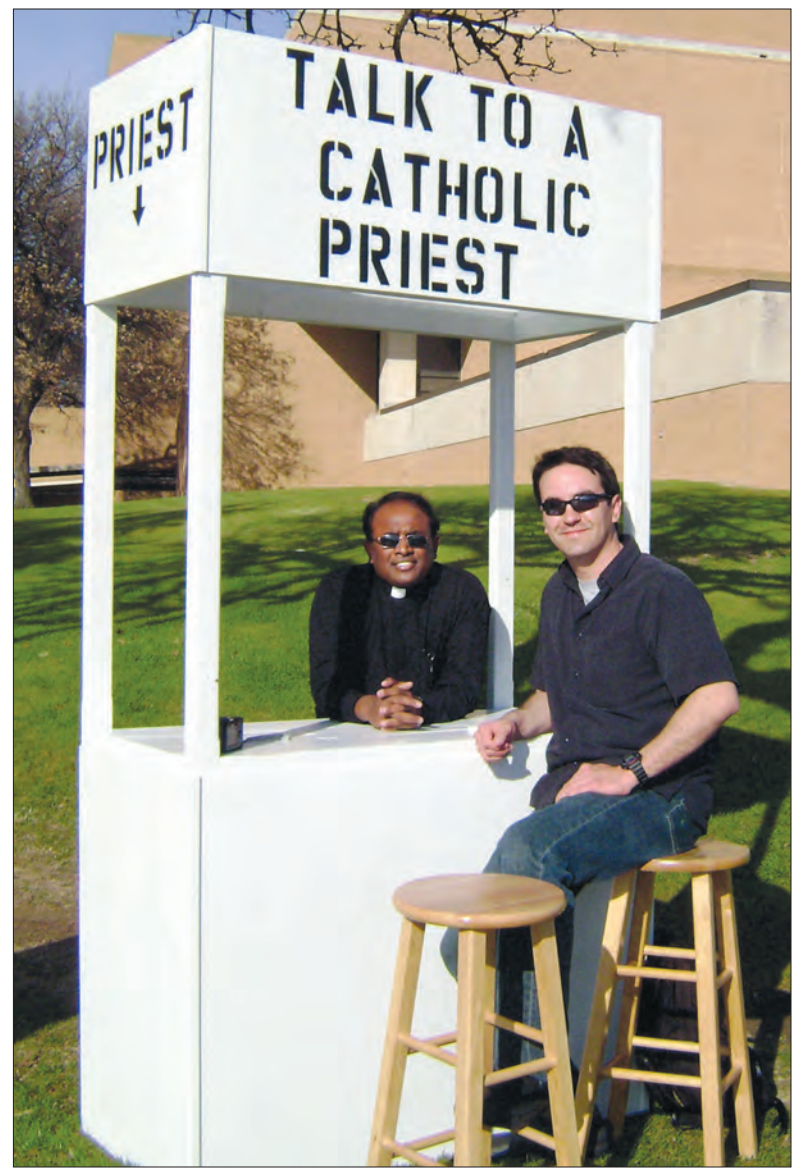
"I offered to trade him phys-

ics conversations for carpentry work," he says, laughing.

He then enlisted the help of Father Victor Cruz, HGN, former chaplain at UNT's Catholic Campus Center, and who still regularly serves the ministry, and on Ash Wednesday of last year, Fr. Cruz began staffing the kiosk.

Since last year, four priests have rotated on a weekly basis at the kiosk, including Fr. Cruz and Monsignor Charles King, both from Immaculate Conception Church, Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the diocesan Vocations Office, and Father Ray McDaniel, from St. Peter Church in Lindsay.

Once a week for two hours, they are there to answer questions, offer advice, dispel doubts, and to simply be available, said



Father Victor Cruz, HGN, associate pastor at Immaculate Conception Church, poses with UNT physics doctoral student Saul Hernandez at the "Talk to a Catholic Priest" kiosk on the UNT campus. Fr. Victor also regularly serves the UNT and TWU campus ministries.

Lenten Vocation Awareness Program

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

Sponsored by
Bishop Kevin W. Vann
And
The Serrans of the Diocese of Ft. Worth



When: For Men: Monday nights during Lent beginning February 22nd
For Women: Tuesday nights during Lent beginning February 23rd

Where: St. Patrick's Cathedral
1206 Throckmorton St.
Ft. Worth, Texas

Schedule: 6:00 Eucharistic Adoration
Exposition and Reflection on Christ
6:30 Evening Prayer
7:00 Closing Benediction
7:15 Presentation by Priests or Sisters, respectively
8:30 Free Evening Meal and Social
9:00 Closing Prayer and Dismissal

With the gift of the Holy Spirit, this program is designed to help see: What is my purpose in life? How do I realize my calling from God? A comparative look at single, married and religious life. For more information, please go to the Ft. Worth Diocese Website on Vocations at <http://www.fwdioc.org> or call Father Kyle Walterscheid at 817-560-3300, ext. 105 or email kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org. There is no cost to attend.

Fr. Cruz.

"I used to get at least 15 to 16 students every week," Fr. Cruz said. He said some of the students would tell him, "I am not a Catholic, but I appreciate and I love your approach. So what is [Catholicism]?" Our availability makes them happy. There's no debate, no confrontation, no preaching, no yelling at them, just simply conversation. Dialogue."

Hernandez said the peaceful, non-aggressive approach attracts many, including non-Catholics, atheists, and agnostics. Indeed, "bringing the Church back together" by reaching out to others was the original idea, he said. It's simply an invitation, and it's working.

"I've seen lines of people waiting to talk to Father," Hernandez said. "We didn't know what was going to happen when we did it. We didn't know if we were going to be shunned off campus or what," but it's turned into a remarkable success.

Since its start, Fr. Cruz has met three students who have

expressed interest in joining the religious life and others who wanted to become Catholic and join RCIA. More commonly, he receives questions about the differences between Catholics and other Christian denominations. But the questions vary.

"Others ask 'Father, are you trying to convert me from my faith?'" said Fr. Cruz, explaining he is there to teach and strengthen their faith, not to proselytize. "I tell them no. Be faithful to your church. I am not here to convert anybody; I am here to tell you what I am. If you are open to knowing about my faith, I'm ready to explain to you," he said.

Fr. Cruz and Hernandez see the ministry as a blessing and a great evangelization tool.

"As a whole, the kids who are there are longing to see God. Longing to experience God," Fr. Cruz said. "So as a Catholic priest, it is my duty to feed and quench their thirst for faith. That's what I've experienced there. I was so happy to be there with them."

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSBRIEFS**Mexican Bishops ask Mexico to reconsider strategy against drug cartels**

MEXICO CITY (CNS) — The Mexican bishops' conference has released a pastoral letter calling on the government to reconsider its strategy of depending heavily on soldiers and federal police to combat powerful narcotics trafficking cartels. The letter also asked the government to halt a wave of violence that has claimed more than 18,000 lives over the past three years. "Security is not directly or principally related to the ability to use force, the number of police officers, the degree of militarization, or the purchasing of weapons," the letter said. "With the passage of time, the participation of the armed forces in the fight against organized crime has provoked uncertainty in the population." "It's very clear this environment of violence and insecurity in which we are living denotes a sense of the loss of God," it said. The letter, released Feb. 15, also asked citizens to denounce crimes and criminal behavior and asked Catholics to do more to help the victims of violence.

Catholic woman spearheads campaign to help homeless during Olympics

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (CNS) — When most people think of the Olympic visitors flocking to this city, they imagine athletes and spectators from around the world. But that's not what sprang to mind for Carolyn Wharton of Star of the Sea Parish in White Rock, nearly 30 miles outside Vancouver. Instead, Wharton immediately thought of all the homeless people making their way to Vancouver. Wharton noted that the homeless population of every Olympic Games host city increases by 300-400 during the games. Wharton is the coordinator of her parish's volunteer group, the Helpers of St. Anne. Every year they hand-make 25-30 convertible coats for homeless men and women — the thick and heavy garments convert to sleeping bags. Wharton decided to increase this year's quota. She had to get the coats commercially made because the workload was too high for Star of the Sea's volunteers. With that came great cost. "We raised over \$20,000 for the project" to have 144 multipurpose coats made, Wharton said.

Pope Benedict greets lunar Year of the Tiger

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI welcomed the lunar new year and praised the spiritual and moral values of the Asian people who celebrate it. The new lunar Year of the Tiger began Feb. 14 with festivities including fireworks displays, colorful processions, traditional dances, and holiday food in many countries across the world. "In various parts of Asia — I think of China and Vietnam, for example — and in many communities throughout the world, the lunar new year is celebrated today," he said. "These are festive days, celebrated by these populations as a privileged opportunity to strengthen family and generational bonds," the pope said at his noon blessing. "I hope that all will maintain and build up the rich heritage of spiritual and moral values that are solidly rooted in the culture of these peoples," he said.

Pope John Paul brought dignity to all who suffer, supreme knight says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II's humility and willingness to let the whole world watch his declining health gave dignity and meaning to suffering, said Carl Anderson, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus. "John Paul suffered boldly before millions," Anderson said at a Vatican conference on health care Feb. 9. "He was willing to have the humility to do this before the world. Through this, John Paul showed exactly what human dignity is all about," he said. Anderson, leader of the worldwide Catholic fraternal organization, was one of the keynote speakers at the meeting sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers. The Feb. 9-11 gathering, titled "The Church in the Service of Love for the Suffering," marked the 25th anniversary of Pope John Paul establishing the council. Anderson said John Paul preached the Gospel and evangelized "with every gift God had given him," including his acting and singing talents, his athletic abilities, and his writing. "And as life went on, we saw him communicate the Gospel using what he also called 'a gift,' that is we saw him use his own suffering."

Benedictine monastery in Oklahoma diocese elevated to abbey

Monks at Our Lady of the Annunciation of Clear Creek Monastery near Hulbert, Okla., enter the sanctuary bearing incense and candles prior to Mass in this 2007 photo. It was announced Feb. 11 that the Benedictine monastery, established in 1999, has been elevated to the status of abbey. (CNS photo/Dave Crenshaw, EASTERN OKLAHOMA CATHOLIC)

HULBERT, Oklahoma (CNS) — Our Lady of the Annunciation at Clear Creek, a Benedictine monastery near Hulbert in the Diocese of Tulsa, has been elevated to the status of abbey.

The change was announced Feb. 11 by Abbot Antoine Forgeot of the Abbey of Our Lady of Fontgombault in France, the monastery's motherhouse.

Father Philip Anderson, one of the original 13 monks who came from the French abbey to help found Clear Creek in 1999, has been elected abbot. He has served as prior of the monastic community since its foundation.

"It's a moment of perfection, and the moment you become fully what you were meant to be. To become an abbey is to reach a certain point of maturity," the abbot-elect said.

Clear Creek was established as a monastery at the invitation of Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa. In the 10 years since it was established, monasteries nationwide and worldwide have declined in membership, but the Oklahoma monastery has grown from its original 13 monks to its current population of 18 professed monks. Twelve of them are priests and six are brothers.

In addition, the community includes eight novices and postulants and seven men who have made their first vows.

Abbot-elect Anderson explained that following its initial

"It's a moment of perfection, and the moment you become fully what you were meant to be. To become an abbey is to reach a certain point of maturity."

— Abbot-elect
Philip Anderson

foundation, a monastery must achieve a certain level of stability in its ability to attract vocations and to become financially secure before it can be named an abbey.

For the Benedictine Congregation of Solesmes, to which Our Lady of the Annunciation belongs, such stability must be illustrated within a monastery's first 13 years of existence. When Clear Creek met those conditions, Abbot Forgeot recommended the change in its status to the abbot who heads the congregation.

Clear Creek is the fourth monastery affiliated with Fontgombault to be elevated to an abbey and is the 20th in the congregation.

Abbot-elect Anderson said there will be few changes in day-to-day life at Clear Creek abbey, although his role will change as the com-



Kristin and Kari Bourtross kneel as Abbot Antoine Forgeot distributes Communion in 2007 at Clear Creek Monastery near Hulbert, Okla. The abbot heads the France-based motherhouse the monastery, which was elevated to the status of abbey Feb. 11. (CNS photo/Dave Crenshaw, EASTERN OKLAHOMA CATHOLIC)

munity will now operate independently from its motherhouse. As abbot, his role is equivalent to that of a bishop who heads a diocese. The role is threefold: sanctifying, teaching and governing.

"Abbot Forgeot hopes we maintain a close relationship with Fontgombault and so do we," Abbot-elect Anderson said. "Our spiritual roots are in France."

His abbatial blessing—a formal service in which he will receive his miter, crosier and ring — will be celebrated at Our Lady of the Annunciation Abbey April 10.

Commodities traders created artificial food shortages

FROM PAGE 1

"It causes false signals to go out to producers and consumers of the commodity," said Masters, who runs his company from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. "It causes a lot of excess volatility in the market ... and makes it much more expensive for the consumer."

For Masters, a Catholic, such market domination poses ethical concerns that deserve attention.

He said poor people, especially those in developing countries, bear the biggest brunt of excessive speculation.

In the case two years ago, speculators, armed with the massive resources of pension funds and major endowments, cornered large segments of the rice, corn, and wheat commodity markets. They also bought crude oil and natural gas futures, rapidly forcing up energy prices.

Then in the second half of 2008, as the world economic crisis gathered steam, the speculators pulled their money out of those commodities. Prices for wheat, rice, and corn spiraled downward just as dramatically, driving many American family farmers out of business and hurting small farmers around the world.

Masters believes the only concern of speculators then was maximizing their returns. Those actions cost U.S. consumers \$110 billion in higher energy prices alone in 2008 before the bubble burst, according to a February 2009 report Masters co-wrote with Adam White, director of research at White Knight Research and Trading, an independent research consulting firm in Alpharetta,



People protest food prices during a march in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2008. Between late 2007 and early 2008, riots erupted in at least 15 developing countries over the rising cost of food. (CNS photo/Normand Blouin, Reuters)

Georgia.

Masters questioned the ethics of such financial activity, especially when it involves food.

"If people are living on \$3, \$4, \$5 a day, their choice is to starve. They don't have any choice," he said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

"Should asset allocation deci-

sions trump human rights?" he asked. "If a bunch of financial investors drive up the price of food, then people die. If people can't eat, then there's something wrong in the free market."

Such unlimited speculation is a recent phenomenon in the financial industry. A variety of reforms enacted after the Great

Depression limited how investments could be made and who could make them. The reforms were designed to prevent wild price swings for both producers and consumers, Masters said.

The limits were in place for 50 years. But in the 1980s the drive for deregulation of financial markets began. Hedgers and speculators wanted the limits lifted on how much they could invest and where to invest it. In 2000, when the Commodities Futures Modernization Act passed, the last major limits disappeared, opening the way for what happened two years ago, Masters said.

And it could happen again, he said.

He's not alone. Recognizing what they see as a threat to the lives of poor people around the world, more than 450 organizations have banded together in a campaign called Stop Gambling on Hunger. Members range from faith-based advocacy organizations to business and labor.

"We can't let our world food and energy prices be determined by the whims of investors," said David Kane, a staff member at the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns in Washington, one of the leading voices on the issue. "It's affecting the most vulnerable people around the world."

Holy Cross Brother Dave Andrews, senior representative at Food and Water Watch, a coalition member, has testified to Congress on the U.S.' moral and ethical responsibilities to rein in speculators. He said he often cites the statements of Pope Benedict XVI, who has repeatedly spoken on the dangers of globalization as it

relates to commodities markets.

But, Brother Andrews said, it's not enough for advocates to push the issue in Washington. The Stop Gambling on Hunger coalition is working to build awareness of the often hard-to-understand issue of commodities trading in congressional districts so that elected representatives hear about the concerns back home as well.

For his part, Masters would like to see a return to reasonable regulation of the financial industry — and that means enacting reforms that would reinstate limits for all commodities speculators, making market manipulation much less likely.

He said he does not want to eliminate speculators from financial markets. He said risk takers are needed to grow a strong economy. He knows; he's been a hedge fund manager for 14 years. He said, however, that he has stayed away from trading in commodities that affect people's livelihood.

One reform measure, the Derivatives Market Manipulation Prevention Act of 2009, has been introduced by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. The bill would make it possible for federal regulators to more effectively investigate and crack down on market manipulators.

Masters also has brought his concerns to Congress, testifying several times on the need for reforms. He said some in Congress have listened, but that there's still a loud voice saying that free markets should rule the day.

"We're not trying to reinvent the wheel," he said. "Just put in the limits that worked for 50 years. It's only when we got rid of the limits that you've seen much more volatility than we've ever seen in history."

CRS anti-hunger programs helped 14.3 million in 2008, official says

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Relief Services' anti-hunger programs around the world directly helped an estimated 14.3 million people in 142 programs, and indirectly helped another 35 million people in 2008, according to a hunger policy analyst for the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency.

Bruce White, who advises the agency on food security, said CRS' approach to hunger covers not only emergency food assistance but safety nets, agriculture, nutrition, finance, and a food resource education component. CRS spent \$470.3 million on its food and feeding programs in 2008, White added.

White spoke during a Feb. 9 panel presentation, "Ending Global Hunger — The Right to Food," as part of the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington.

In addition to interventions with direct food aid, White said CRS conducts "agricultural intervention" as well, the four pillars of that program being agriculture for emergency response, for health, for the environment and for income.

White noted CRS also helps farmers come together for mutual aid to identify, establish, and service markets to sell their crops.

He said CRS and several other anti-hunger groups came together in 2008 to develop what he called a "reasonable gold standard" to reducing hunger in a more comprehensive way.

One area he said on which the group agreed was urging the diplomatic service, including the State Department and the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, to address hunger and food security. "Hunger issues really need to be added to the diplomatic arm of the

U.S. government," White said.

He added that 40 percent of the world's population whose development is "stunted" because of undernourishment or malnourishment during childhood live in India.

Another panelist, Bread for the World Institute policy adviser Eric Muñoz, said that overall, 36 countries in the Indian subcontinent, sub-Saharan Africa, and the island-nations of the Indonesian archipelago are home to most of the world's adults affected by stunted development.

"(Physical) stunting hurts growth in economic development," Muñoz said. Since many adults in those countries depend on manual labor to make economic gains, their smaller size and strength puts them and their nation at a greater disadvantage, he added.

Muñoz reported that food

imports rose in 70 developing nations between 1990 and 2007, while at the same time food assistance to them from other nations declined.

Food assistance from the United States, with the exception of spikes in the early and the late 1980s, has remained relatively consistent in terms of real dollars since 1974, according to Muñoz. He added that the Obama administration has "recognition of this problem," which has "led to pledges of new commitments."

Muñoz said the emergence of food as a human right is embodied in both the U.N. Universal Declaration on Human Rights and its Constitution on the Rights of the Child.

It is also the first goal in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals adopted by almost 200 member-nations in 2000. The goals seek to cut global poverty and hunger in

half by 2015 by increasing richer countries' development aid for poorer nations.

During a question-and-answer forum at the end of the panel, the speakers were asked whether the Millennium Development Goals' hunger objective would be met, given the global financial recession. Muñoz and White said that it would not, although such cuts may succeed in "targeted" nations such as Rwanda in five years.

Rwanda — which is landlocked and has few natural resources — is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa and is the focus of a number of social and economic development initiatives.

The Feb. 7-10 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering was sponsored by 20 Catholic organizations, including five departments and offices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Scripture Readings



March 7, 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 Sharon K. Perkins

It's a very human inclination: the tendency to hide when one is ashamed, afraid, or embarrassed. When we're children, hiding often begins as a game, whether it's peekaboo or hide-and-seek. But sooner or later, the game takes on more seriousness as we learn to conceal ourselves — sometimes quite skillfully — from anything we perceive to be an inconvenience or a threat.

When I was about 10 years old and wanted to escape chores I disliked, I would climb the ladder to a backyard treehouse and hunker down where I thought no one would see me. But I also remember an incident in which I thought I had hurt a favorite aunt's feelings with a foolish remark. The next time she came to visit, I hid outside in some shrubbery for over an hour, just to avoid the embarrassment of facing her! And what child hasn't tried to hide the evidence of wrongdoing to avoid a deserved punishment?

Unfortunately, we carry those tendencies of subterfuge into our relationship with God. In Moses' case, he had good reason: The glory of God was so overwhelming that it was believed that no one could see God's face and live. But Scripture also gives us the examples of Adam and Eve, who hid from God amid the garden's dense foliage to avoid facing the truth and consequences of their disobedience. At best, we find ourselves hiding from God in our abject inadequacy — at worst, we hide from God in our sinfulness. Either way, we're not really fooling anyone, least of all God!

The good news is that God never hides from us. In the words of the psalmist, God is always "revealing" his ways through mighty deeds and disclosing his merciful love through countless kindnesses to us. But in today's Gospel, Jesus has harsh words for those who delude themselves and hide from their own need for repentance. If we really want to see God's face, we must cease fooling ourselves, as St. Paul says, about our own tenuous security, "lest we fall."

Lent is a particular season to remember God's boundless mercy toward us. It is also an invitation to come out of hiding — from ourselves, from one another, and most of all, from God.



"Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."
— Exodus 3:6

QUESTIONS:

In what way have you been fooling yourself about your own need for repentance? What sin or failing have you been hiding from the healing love of God's mercy?

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Lent calls Christians to turn themselves fully over to Jesus

By Carol Glatz
and Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Lenten season calls Christians to strip themselves of evil, superficiality, and lukewarm morality and to turn themselves fully over to Jesus Christ, said Pope Benedict XVI.

"Conversion means to change the direction in life's journey, not by making tiny adjustments, but by an authentic and real about-face," he said during his weekly general audience Feb. 17, Ash Wednesday.

"The call for conversion strips bare and denounces the easy superficiality that very often characterizes our way of life," he said.

"Conversion is to go against the current where the current is a lifestyle that is superficial, inconsistent, disillusioned, and which often tramples us, reigns over us, and makes us slaves to evil or, in any case, prisoners of mediocre morals," he said.

Beginning his Ash Wednesday observance with the general audience, the pope told an estimated 6,500 visitors that Lent, in the words of St. Paul, reminds people



Cardinal Jozef Tomko sprinkles ashes on the head of Pope Benedict XVI during Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome Feb. 17. The pope joined Catholics around the world in marking the start of the penitential season of Lent. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

"not to accept the grace of God in vain," but to recognize that God is calling everyone to penance and spiritual renewal every day.

When life seems exhausting and fraught with difficulties and failure, and when one is tempted to abandon the faith, it is a call to "open ourselves up to God's love in Christ and to live according to his logic of justice and love," he said.

When people receive ashes, the priest tells them either "Turn away from sin and be faithful to

the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return," he said.

To turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel are not two different things, he said; they express the need to completely turn over one's life to the Gospel by "freely answering to Christ who offers humanity the way, the truth, and the life." Only through Jesus can a person be saved and free, he said.

The words "you are dust and

to dust you shall return" remind people of their human fragility and mortality, especially in cultures that tend to censor the human experience of death, he said.

In the evening, Pope Benedict led the traditional Ash Wednesday procession on Rome's Aventine Hill from the Church of St. Anselm to the Church of Santa Sabina, where he celebrated Mass and received ashes on the top of his head from Cardinal Jozef Tomko, retired prefect of the Congregation for the

Evangelization of Peoples.

In his homily, the pope said accepting ashes "is essentially a gesture of humility, which means that I recognize myself for what I am: a fragile creature made of earth and destined to return to the earth, but also made in the image of God and destined to return to Him."

Human beings can recognize and respond to God's voice, but they also can disobey God, the pope said.

"The origin of every material and social injustice is that which the Bible calls 'iniquity' or sin, which basically consists in disobeying God" and not responding to his love, he said.

The first step to restoring justice in the world is to repent of one's personal sins and sincerely seek to live according to God's will, the pope said.

The reward for repentance and good works, the pope said, "is not the admiration of others, but friendship with God and the grace that comes with it, a grace that gives peace and the strength to do good, to love even those who don't deserve it and to forgive those who have offended us."

Scripture Readings



March 14, Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Joshua 5:9a, 10-12
Psalm 23:1-6
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Gospel) Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

By Jeff Hensley

The abundant passion of God for each of us shouts out in this week's reading of the story of the return of the prodigal son.

Depending on our circumstances, we sometimes relate to the role of the prodigal; other times to the father running out to greet him and celebrate; at others we recognize ourselves in the jealous older brother.

Last week I had a roller coaster experience of both sons in a very short span of time.

My wife, a teacher, has been experiencing heart problems and had set an appointment with a cardiologist to interpret the results of a heart scan.

But Friday, as we had breakfast together before she headed to a stressful day at school, she said she felt an odd pressure in her chest and her neck. I asked her if she should go to the emergency room to have it checked out. "No," she said, she had pressing duties at school. Perhaps later ...

Once at school, though, the woman who works with her in her classroom, a strong-willed saint, didn't give her a choice and insisted she go to the emergency room of a nearby hospital.

The hospital staff took appropriate measures: a nitro patch to thin her blood, four baby aspirin to the same end. We spent most of the day together awaiting test results. No indication of a heart attack; no shadows on the X-rays of her heart. Unspecified chest pain was the final diagnosis.

Today, the previously scheduled cardiologist appointment brought the explanation that the high blood pressure readings in the ER would explain her symptoms. But if I hadn't been up for a car repair appointment; if her classroom partner had not urged her to seek treatment, she might have had a stroke. She'd have received no blood thinners. She'd have had more of the job-related stress that had pushed her numbers so high in the first place. Who knows what the outcome might have been.

Last Friday night, I tried to feel like the neglected son — "why has this happened to us?" — as I worried that she might have had a small stroke, only to realize how all these things had to line up just so, in order for my wife's health to be protected. And suddenly, I was the grateful prodigal, receiving so much more than I could ever deserve — from the hand of a loving Father.



"My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice...."

— Luke 15:31bc

QUESTIONS:

Have you questioned God with the perennial "why me?" In contrast, can you recall times when God's unmerited mercy has come to your aid?

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Lent is all about **making room for Love**

By Jeff Hedglen

A number of years ago my wife and I decided to change our eating habits. To help us stick to our newfound desire to eat healthy, we went through the pantry, begrudgingly weeding out all of the "good" stuff, so we could make room for the "good-for-you" stuff. We knew there was little hope of success, if we did not make a clean break from all the yummy, sugary, fatty, starchy, fried awesomeness that lined our shelves — and our arteries. In the weeks that followed, opening the pantry door was always a bittersweet experience, sweet because of all the healthful options to choose from, bitter because of the lack of sweets.

But this notion of making room for new things goes beyond our pantries. In fact, the practices we engage in during Lent can help us make room in our hearts for the sweetest gifts of all.

The buzz around church gatherings these days revolves around what people have given up, or are doing extra, for Lent.

I love the idea of making room for Love. John says in his first letter that God is love (1 JOHN 4:8). Thus, when we make room for Love, we make room for God.

These obligations sometimes become routine and lack significant meaning, especially if we've been giving up the same thing for years. Some people use Lent as a time to get their diet or exercise on track; others use this time to start a new good habit, or kick a bad one. While these are noble pursuits, the slimmer waistlines and habits kicked are not the end goal of Lent.

One of the things I'm trying to do during Lent is to go to a Web site provided by Creighton

University. It is called Praying Lent. They offer a plethora of options from short prayers to daily meditations and even a Lenten audio retreat. There is a line from the Ash Wednesday reflection by Joan Blandin Howard that just won't leave my mind. She says this: "To abstain from that which distracts me from Love is to make room for Love."

This simple thought encompasses much of what our Lenten obligations are supposed to be about. Many of the typical things

given up for Lent — various food items, television, music, and even Facebook — are things that can distract us from our spiritual pursuits. While the simple giving up of these things can be beneficial for our Lenten journey, taking that extra step to realize that in abstaining from these potential distractions from God, we make more room for God, can transform our giving up into getting more.

I love the idea of making room for Love. John says in his first letter that God is love (1 John 4:8). Thus, when we make room for Love, we make room for God. Though I have been walking with God pretty seriously for almost 30 years, there are still so many nooks and crannies where the love of God has yet to find a home.

Every year I run into the same problem that attempts to derail my lofty plans for spiritual growth. The culprit is laziness. As the days go by, my Lenten practices start to fade. Thoughts creep in like, "no one will know if I have this dessert, or check my Facebook once, or drink that Dr Pepper." As soon as that thought

makes its way into my head, my resolve begins to crumble.

Luckily I came across another great quote in this year's *Catholic Update* for Lent that has helped me stay on track. It is speaking about fasting from food, but I think it works for whatever we have given up for Lent: "When we refrain from food, hunger growls like a chained animal within us. Each time you hear that beast, pray for those who contain that beast every day because there is no food." It is amazing how much easier it is to stay focused on my obligation when I unite it in prayer for others who daily go without the things I have given up by choice.

We have four more weeks until Love transforms the sorrow to joy, mourning to dancing, and death to life. Don't get sidetracked from fighting the distractions. Love is coming; make some room.

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.

Lent is the time to turn our lives to Christ

By Lucas Pollice

Lent, of course, is the season in which the Church calls us to do penance for our sin and to foster a deeper conversion in our lives by turning away from sin and turning toward Christ.

During Lent we often give up certain things and do acts of penance such as fasting and abstaining from meat. These are all very effective ways of turning our hearts back toward God and rooting out sin in our lives. In addition, Lent is also a time to grow in our relationship with Christ, to come to a deeper knowledge and love for Christ. This is an important aspect of Lent that we cannot forget — a time for spiritual renewal and a call and opportunity to more deeply fall in love with Christ.

Pope John Paul II calls the Church of the Third Millennium, in light of the Second Vatican Council, to a spiritual renewal by “starting afresh from Christ” and in a new and profound way contemplating the face of Christ. John Paul’s vision for this renewal of the Church starts with coming to a more intimate and profound knowledge and communion with Christ, for it is only in and through this communion that authentic conversion, holiness, and true Christian witness is possible. As Pope John Paul teaches:

Men and women of our own day — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to ‘speak’ of Christ, but in a certain sense ‘show’ him to them. And is it not the Church’s task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine also before the generations of the new millennium? Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first CONTEMPLATED HIS FACE ... as we go back to our ordinary routine, storing in our hearts the treasures of this very special time, our gaze is more than ever FIRMLY SET ON THE FACE OF THE LORD.

— *At the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, 16

Lent provides for us the perfect opportunity to gaze upon the face of Christ, and to come to a deeper and more intimate knowledge of Christ. In light of this vision of John Paul II, I would like to propose to you some ways in which we can, during this holy season of Lent, grow closer to Christ, and to come to truly know Him in a more profound way. Then, after celebrating the Paschal Mystery at Easter, we may truly be transformed through his grace to be a more effective and holy witness of Christ in our world that is so in need of authentic witnesses of Christ

1. THE ROSARY

The Rosary, above all, is a meditative and contemplative prayer fixed on the face and person of Christ — it is a Christ-centered prayer. In fact, each Hail Mary is centered upon the name “Jesus.” The Rosary is not just a vain repetition of prayers, but this repetition is to bring about a meditation upon a particular mystery of Christ’s life and mission. The Rosary, through meditating upon the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries, allows us to contemplate the whole of Christ’s life and salvific mission. Even more profoundly, we pray the Rosary with Mary, not only asking her intercession, but also asking her to teach us about Christ and bring us to a deeper knowledge and relationship with Him. As John Paul II beautifully reflects:

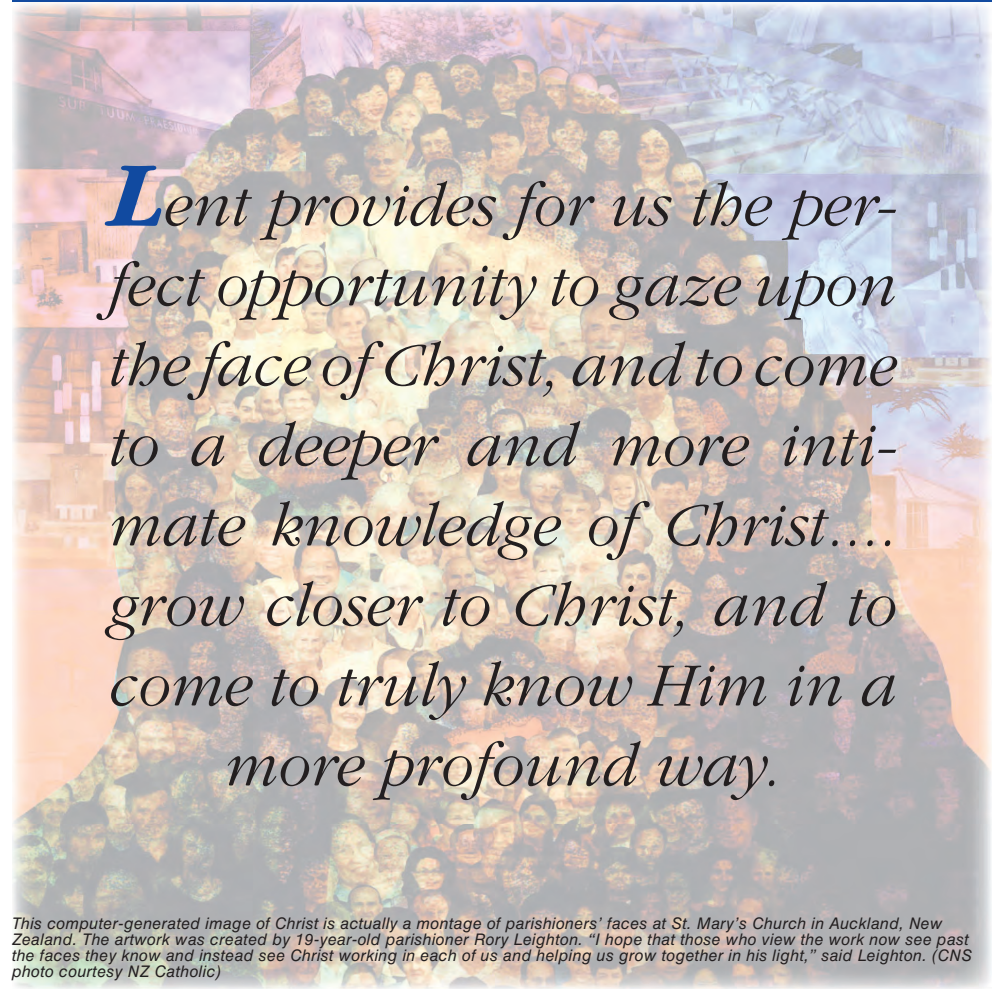
Christ is the supreme Teacher, the revealer and the one revealed. It is not just a question of learning what he taught but of ‘LEARNING HIM.’ In this regard could we have any better teacher than Mary? From the divine standpoint, the Spirit is the interior teacher who leads us to the full truth of Christ (cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). But among creatures no one knows Christ better than Mary; no one can introduce us to a profound knowledge of his mystery better than his Mother. As we contemplate each mystery of her Son’s life, she invites us to do as she did at the Annunciation: to ask humbly the questions which open us to the light, in order to end with the obedience of faith: “Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

— *The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 14

Therefore, a powerful Lenten practice would be to say a daily Rosary, meditating upon the life and mystery of Christ, so that through the intercession and presence of Mary we can come to a much deeper knowledge and intimate communion with Christ.

2. READ SCRIPTURE

Another Lenten practice that can bring us into a more intimate knowledge of Christ is daily reading and reflecting upon a passage of Scripture. It is in and through the Word of God that the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, directly and uniquely speaks to our hearts and penetrates our lives with his truth. Encountering Christ in the Scriptures is in essence a coming to know the words of Christ Himself, and is an important aspect of our lives as we seek to know Christ through prayer and grow in holiness. As John Paul II states, “There is no doubt that this primacy of holiness and prayer is inconceivable without a renewed listening to the word of God” (*At the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, 39). There are many booklets and resources available to us that give the daily Mass readings with commentary and questions for reflection. A few minutes reading and meditating upon Scripture can be for us a daily “Lenten retreat” in



Lent provides for us the perfect opportunity to gaze upon the face of Christ, and to come to a deeper and more intimate knowledge of Christ.... grow closer to Christ, and to come to truly know Him in a more profound way.

This computer-generated image of Christ is actually a montage of parishioners' faces at St. Mary's Church in Auckland, New Zealand. The artwork was created by 19-year-old parishioner Rory Leighton. "I hope that those who view the work now see past the faces they know and instead see Christ working in each of us and helping us grow together in his light," said Leighton. (CNS photo courtesy NZ Catholic)

which we encounter the face of Christ.

3. LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The Liturgy of the Hours is another powerful means in which we can more deeply encounter Christ during the Lenten season. By participating in the Liturgy of the Hours, we are truly participating in the liturgy of the Church where Christ is really present through the uniting of our hearts in prayer with Catholics all around the world. It also helps us to sanctify the different times of the day, through whichever hour or hours we pray, which allows us to walk with Christ throughout our day and make Him present in our everyday lives. Again, there are many resources that can help us pray the Liturgy of the Hours in the full or even simplified form. One particularly good resource is the *Magnificat*, a monthly booklet that contains Morning and Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours for each day as well as the daily Mass readings and other prayer resources. You can order this great resource through www.magnificat.com.

4. ONGOING FAITH FORMATION

Finally, another way of coming to more intimately know Christ is through personal reading and studying of the faith. As John Paul II so often taught, the purpose of catechesis and our call to ongoing faith formation is to bring us into communion with the Person of Jesus Christ:

Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.

— *Catechesis in Our Time*, 5

One of my own Lenten practices is to read a section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* each day. This has already been an enriching and renewing practice as each day has brought a new and deeper insight to what we believe and how we are to live out our Catholic faith. Another good resource to read is the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* which takes the teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and applies them more specifically to the United States and our cultural settings. This season of Lent can be a good time to begin this kind of daily learning that will not only enable us to better know and love Christ, but, in turn, to better live out and witness our Catholic faith.

May this holy season of Lent not only be for us a time of repentance and conversion, but also be the opportunity to contemplate the face of Christ and to fall more deeply in love with Him, so that Christ can be the very purpose and sole meaning of our lives. As St. Paul so powerfully witnesses: “It is no longer I that live, but Christ who lives within me” (*Galatians 2:20*). May this be the truth and reality for all of us!



Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a

master's degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have five children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, Christian, and Julia.

La práctica cuaresmal de visitar las iglesias estacionales nos recuerda que el llamado a la santidad es para todos

Estimados amigos en la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Algunos de ustedes pudieron haber notado que el Papa Benedicto



Monseñor Kevin W. Vann

XVI, el Miércoles de ceniza, predicó, distribuyó cenizas, y celebró la Misa no en la *Basílica de San Pedro*, pero en una iglesia llamada *Santa Sabina*, sobre la *Colina del Aventino* en Roma.

Esta costumbre viene desde los primeros siglos de la iglesia en Roma, cuando la época de cuaresma era en verdad época penitencial, y marcada por una peregrinación diaria a una iglesia distinta cada día de la cuaresma. Estas iglesias se conocen como iglesias estacionales, y la costumbre de visitar una iglesia distinta cada día se convirtió en una manera profunda de caminar a través de la ciudad de Roma para marcar la época de cuaresma.

De hecho, esta costumbre data de los siglos más tempranos de la Iglesia, cuando, durante la época de cuaresma, el Papa celebraba la misa dentro de las cuatro basílicas mayores y la tres basílicas menores en Roma, también conocido como las *Siete Iglesias* o *Sette Chiese*. Estas basílicas son: *San Juan de Letrán*, *San Pedro*, *San Pablo Extramuros*, *Santa María la Mayor*, *Santa Cruz de Jerusalén*, *San Lorenzo*, y *San Sebastian*.

Durante los siglos, otras iglesias fueron agregadas gradualmente a la lista de iglesias estacionales que se visitarían en un día particular de la cuaresma; dos de ellas, *Santa Ágata* y *Santa María Nuova*, fueron agregadas por el Papa Pío XI en el 1934, llevando la lista a sobre 40.

En un día particular de una estación, los fieles de Roma se congregan en una iglesia (llamada la iglesia de la colecta) y comienzan una procesión mientras

*¡E*ra siempre una experiencia profunda el orar en estas iglesias porque sabía que oraba con los cristianos de todos los siglos!

— El Obispo Kevin Vann
Diócesis de Fort Worth

Sacerdotes y seminaristas de la *Pontificia Universidad Norteamericana (Pontifical North American College)* llegan a una misa temprana el *Miércoles de ceniza* en la *Basílica de Santa Sabina*, en Roma, el 17 de febrero. Esto forma parte de una tradición en la cual participó el obispo Vann durante sus cuatros años en Roma como estudiante de postgrado. (CNS foto/Paul Haring)



cantan la *Letanía de los santos* a la iglesia donde se celebrara la misa por el Papa y su clero. Esto se llama "hacer una estación", y la Misa celebrada era la misa comunal de la ciudad y del mundo, o *Urbis et Orbis*, puesto que los fieles congregados no sólo representan la iglesia reunida en Roma, sino también a Iglesia universal invisible, que también se congrega en unión con el Papa. Esta costumbre antigua nos recuerda que Roma es el centro de todo el culto cristiano, y es la comunión visible de la Iglesia universal.

La *Iglesia de Santa Sabina* tiene un gran significado, porque se convirtió en la primera iglesia estacional que se visitará en el primer día de la cuaresma, el *Miércoles de ceniza*. Por lo tanto, en este día, el Papa todavía tradicionalmente celebra la Misa y distribuye las cenizas en esta iglesia hermosa y antigua.

Como tantas costumbres, la práctica de las iglesias estacionales fue disminuyendo gradualmente. Sin embargo, fueron restablecidas a finales del los 70 por un grupo de seminaristas del *Colegio Norteamericano* en Roma. Esta práctica más reciente sería la celebración de la misa en inglés a las 6 o 7 de la mañana, seguida por la misa en alemán, con la misa italiana o en latín por la tarde. Algunas de las iglesias están abiertas solamente en el día de la misa estacional, tal como la *Iglesia de San Jorge* en Velabro, cuya estación se celebra el jueves después del *Miércoles de ceniza* y es una iglesia significativa, puesto que era la iglesia

titular del Cardenal Newman. Hay una lista completa de las iglesias estacionales en el *Misal Tridentino* que llevábamos a misa.

Como estudiante de la *Escuela Graduada de Teología* en Roma por cuatro años, tuve la experiencia maravillosa de completar la devoción de visitar todas las iglesias estacionales dos veces. ¡Era siempre una experiencia profunda el orar en estas iglesias porque sabía que oraba con los cristianos de todos los siglos! De hecho, la palabra "estación" implica un punto de detenimiento o de descanso. La práctica de las iglesias estacionales nos enseña a todos que la época de la cuaresma es una época para detenerse, descansar, y reflexionar sobre la peregrinación de nuestras vidas y sus muchas exigencias para ser restaurados y renovados. Y, como las iglesias estacionales nos dan testimonio de la historia, nos recuerdan que la llamada a la conversión cuaresmal, con todas sus prácticas penitenciales, no es solo un momento contemporáneo, sino una parte de la vida de fe de todos los seguidores de Cristo, a través de los tiempos y en todos los lugares. Nos recuerdan que vivir una vida santa no es sólo posible, sino que para cada uno de nosotros, no importa la vocación o el estado de vida. Estamos llamados a la santidad y para dar testimonio de Cristo a través de nuestras vidas, con la práctica de la caridad.

La cuaresma es la época en la cual nos esforzamos de manera especial para responder a este llamado a la

santidad y luchar por eliminar el pecado, que esta enraizado en nuestras vidas, para que podamos crecer más en nuestra comunión con Cristo. Que todos nosotros durante esta época santa de la cuaresma apliquemos en nuestras propias vidas la gran enseñanza de los padres del *Concilio Vaticano II* quiénes enfatizaron de sobremana este llamado universal a la santidad:

Quedan, pues, invitados y aun obligados todos los fieles cristianos a buscar la santidad y la perfección de su propio estado. Vigilen, pues, todos por ordenar rectamente sus sentimientos, no sea que en el uso de las cosas de este mundo y en el apego a las riquezas, encuentren un obstáculo que les aparte, contra el espíritu de pobreza evangélica, de la búsqueda de la perfecta caridad, según el aviso del Apóstol: "Los que usan de este mundo, no se detengan en eso, porque los atractivos de este mundo pasan" (cf. 1 Cor 7,31).

— *Lumen Gentium*, 42

Que el Señor los bendiga a todos durante estos días de penitencia y gracia.

Kevin W. Vann

+Monseñor Kevin W. Vann
Obispo de Fort Worth

Fe cristiana sin amor no puede vivir, dice el Papa

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Con el amor la fe vive y sin éste ella muere, dijo el Papa Benedicto XVI.

Es el amor de Dios lo que concede verdadero conocimiento espiritual y transforma las vidas de las personas, dijo el 10 de febrero en su audiencia general semanal.

"La caridad yace en el corazón de la fe y la hace cobrar vida. Sin amor la fe muere", dijo.

La charla de la audiencia del Papa se enfocó en la vida y las enseñanzas de San Antonio de Padua, fraile franciscano del siglo 13, que fue contemporáneo de San Francisco de Asís.

San Antonio tuvo un rol clave en el desarrollo de la espiritualidad franciscana, dijo el papa, especialmente referente al rol y la naturaleza de la oración.

Solamente mediante la oración auténtica puede una persona experimentar progreso espiritual y luchar contra las tentaciones de

la avaricia, el orgullo y la impureza y en vez vivir una vida marcada por la pobreza, la generosidad, la humildad y la castidad, dijo.

San Antonio enseñó que la oración necesita silencio, no tanto una ausencia de ruido audible y sonidos, sino un silencio interno en el cual todas las preocupaciones y distracciones mentales se tranquilizan y el alma encuentra un sentido de calma, dijo el Papa.



El papa Benedicto XVI saluda al público al llegar de visitas al centro Caritas para los desamparados, en Roma, el 14 de febrero. (CNS photo/Gregorio Borgia, pool via Reuters)

El Papa, en refugio de desamparados, dice que iglesia no abandonará pobres

ROMA (CNS) — El Papa Benedicto XVI hizo una visita a un refugio para desamparados, operado por la iglesia, y dijo que los actos concretos de caridad son expresiones esenciales de la fe cristiana.

“Sepan que la iglesia les ama profundamente y no les abandonará porque reconoce en cada uno de ustedes la cara de Cristo”, dijo el Papa en un hostel y centro médico de Caritas cerca de la estación principal de trenes de Roma, el 14 de febrero.

Los médicos, las enfermeras y unos 300 voluntarios del centro aplaudieron al pontífice alemán mientras visitaba el complejo durante 90 minutos.

En un discurso el Papa señaló que los fuertes tiempos económicos habían hecho aun más necesarios los servicios sociales operados por la iglesia. Durante los pasados dos años, el centro de Caritas ha visto un aumento de un 20 por ciento en el número de personas que buscan ayuda.

El Papa dijo que el centro es “un lugar donde el amor no es sólo una palabra o un sentimiento, sino una realidad concreta que permite que la luz de Dios entre en la vida de las personas y de la comunidad cívica”.

Dijo que las acciones de la iglesia a favor del necesitado son una expresión natural de la fe en Cristo, quien se identificó de una manera

particular con los pobres.

“En su servicio a la gente que está en dificultad, la iglesia es motivada solamente por el deseo de expresar su fe en Dios, quien es el defensor de los pobres y ama a las personas por lo que son y no por lo que poseen o logran”, dijo.

El Papa citó su encíclica social del 2009, *Caridad en la verdad*, diciendo que la caridad es un principio necesario, no sólo en las relaciones personales, sino también en asuntos económicos más amplios. Eso es un principio urgente necesitado “en un mundo en el cual, en vez, la lógica de las ganancias y de la búsqueda del interés propio aparentan prevalecer”, dijo.

Antes de irse del centro el Papa aceptó el regalo de un crucifijo restaurado, proveniente de la ciudad Onna, la cual sufrió daños severos en el terremoto del 2009 en el Italia central. El crucifijo había pertenecido a la *Iglesia de San Pedro*, la cual fue destruida en el temblor.

Más tarde ese día, hablando durante su bendición de mediodía en el Vaticano, el Papa dijo que el refugio de Caritas es un ejemplo de las beatitudes en acción.

Cuando Cristo dijo: “Benedicidos son ustedes los pobres, porque suyo es el reino de Dios”, estaba hablando de la justicia divina que vendrá al final de los tiempos, dijo el Papa. Pero esa justicia también puede ser manifestada en este mundo, dijo.

Con capital en ruinas, norte de Haití lucha

MILOT, Haití (CNS) — Fresnel Vidor estudiaba Ingeniería Civil en Puerto Príncipe hasta que el terremoto del 12 de enero niveló su universidad privada. Su “bien hecho” hogar soportó el temblor de magnitud 7, pero quedó sin lugar donde estudiar, sin alimento, sin agua y sin dinero.

Después de cinco desesperados días y sin señales de mejora inminente en Puerto Príncipe, abordó un autobús con más de otros 100 pasajeros para un viaje de 24 horas, casi tres veces la duración usual, hacia su pueblo natal Milot, en el norte de Haití.

Vidor llegó sin otra cosa que la ropa que llevaba puesta, pero se consideraba afortunado: podía mudarse con sus padres y cinco hermanos.

“Para mí las cosas están aceptables”, dijo Vidor. “Algunos amigos en Puerto Príncipe cuyos negocios y casas fueron destruidas están en una situación difícil”.

Vidor estaba entre las masas que huían de Puerto Príncipe hacia las provincias lejanas durante los días y las semanas después del terremoto que destruyó gran parte de la capital haitiana.

El terremoto dejó pocos daños en el norte de Haití, pero causó una afluencia de ex residentes de Puerto Príncipe desamparados y desempleados, junto con aquellos que tienen lazos familiares con la región.

Esa afluencia ha tensionado los escasos recursos e ingresos en una parte del país que durante mucho tiempo ha sido descuidada por el gobierno central y ha sido fuertemente dependiente de Puerto Príncipe para que le provea servicios en ambos renglones, público y privado.

“Tenemos mucha gente viniendo desde Puerto Príncipe a nuestra diócesis ... y no sabemos cuánto tiempo se quedará”, dijo a *Catholic News Service* el obispo Chibly Langlois de Fort Liberté.

Cuánto tiempo esas personas se quedarán depende de la reconstrucción de Puerto Príncipe, ciudad que ha dominado la vida nacional, tanto que los viajes a la capital son necesarios para realizar procedimientos burocráticos rutinarios tales como obtener un pasaporte.

Antes del terremoto, Puerto Príncipe absorbía masas de haitianos

empobrecidos que abandonaban las provincias lejanas en busca de mejores oportunidades económicas; también atraía miles de estudiantes y de buscadores de fortuna.

Ahora muchas de esas mismas personas están regresando a casa en masa. El tamaño exacto de la afluencia y del impacto en el norte de Haití ha sido difícil de medir, sin embargo.

Jean-Bernard Simonnet, dueño del centro vacacional *Cormier Plage*, en el norte, dijo que la afluencia de personas y el colapso de la capital ha llevado a escasez de algunos artículos alimentarios y combustible y ha complicado los procedimientos comerciales rutinarios, tales como la banca. Los precios de muchos artículos han aumentado y se espera que el ya alto índice de desempleo se eleve súbitamente, dijo.

El obispo Langlois dijo que la escasez de alimento ya era “el problema grande” en su diócesis antes del terremoto; los programas internacionales de ayuda habían sido responsables de alimentar a muchos de los hambrientos del norte de Haití. El terremoto, dijo, solamente empeoró la situación alimentaria.

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Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

jlocke@fwdioc.org

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

América

Concesiones de *Extensión Católica* apoyarán desarrollo de líderes hispanos

CHICAGO(CNS)—*Extensión Católica* ha otorgado más de \$3.7 millones a 41 diócesis estadounidenses para ayudar a apoyar el desarrollo de liderazgo, los ministerios de la juventud y la familia, y programas eficaces para la representación de católicos hispanos.

“Según crece la población católica hispana es importante que ayudemos a los hispanos a hacerse líderes, no sólo de otros hispanos, sino en la iglesia como totalidad”, dijo en una declaración Arturo Chávez, presidente y CEO del *Colegio Católico Méxicoamericano* en San Antonio.

“Claramente, *Extensión Católica* reconoce la necesidad de utilizar el poder esta creciente demográfica, financiando oportunidades educativas claves, de modo que una nueva generación de líderes

‘Según crece la población católica hispana es importante que ayudemos a los hispanos a hacerse líderes, no sólo de otros hispanos, sino en la iglesia como un todo’.

— **Arturo Chávez, del Colegio Católico Méxicoamericano**

eclesiásticos pueda extenderse más allá de los límites culturales”, añadió Chávez, quien sirve en *El consejo para sociedades basadas en la fe y de vecindarios*, del presidente Barack Obama.

La *Arquidiócesis de San Antonio* recibirá \$85,000 para ayudar en el apoyo de nuevos programas

bilingües de licenciatura y maestría en el *Colegio Católico Méxicoamericano* que preparará a estudiantes para encargarse de los roles de liderato multicultural en parroquias de todo el país.

Otros \$270,000 han sido prometidos a la *Diócesis de Salt Lake City* durante los próximos cinco años para ayudar a satisfacer las necesidades de la creciente población católica hispana de Utah.

Los fondos permitirán que las diócesis creen programas de formación de ministros eclesiásticos laicos para acomodar candidatos de habla hispana, que buscan roles de liderato en la iglesia. Prominentes teólogos hispanos de todo el país proveerán contenido para el programa.



VISTA DE CORDILLERA BLANCA DE PERÚ DESDE EL LAGO PARÓN

— *Los picos nevados de la Cordillera Blanca proveen un fondo escénico para una reunión de aldeanos de habla quechua en la orilla del lago Parón en 2009. Ahora que el control del lago ha regresado al gobierno, los aldeanos locales tienen la esperanza de aumentar su ingreso, promoviendo el turismo en la región. (Foto CNS/Walter Hupiu)*

Líderes católicos desconcertados por propuesto cambio a constitución mexicana

CIUDAD DE MÉXICO (CNS) — Líderes católicos de todo México expresaron decepción por la aprobación, por parte de la cámara baja del congreso, de una propuesta enmienda constitucional que cimentaría la separación iglesia-estado.

Declaraciones emitidas por las arquidiócesis de la Ciudad de México, Guadalajara y León describieron la redacción propuesta como “lamentable” y un revés para la libertad religiosa en un país que tiene historia de contenciosas relaciones iglesia-estado.

Las declaraciones también describieron el cambio como un intento de silenciar a los católicos y

a otros grupos religiosos en tiempos en que los políticos mexicanos están atendiendo asuntos sociales tales como el aborto, la eutanasia y el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo.

“Nadie disputa la separación apropiada y sana de las esferas cubiertas por la iglesia y el estado”, dijo padre Hugo Valdemar Romero, portavoz de la Arquidiócesis de la Ciudad de México, en una declaración del 12 de febrero, un día después que se aprobara la legislación. “Pero es cuestionable si lo que se entiende por ‘secular’ es una actitud antirreligiosa irracional que es específicamente anticatólica e intenta regular y subyugar la iglesia

encuanto a su misión evangelizadora y social”.

El propuesto cambio constitucional viene mientras líderes católicos, a quienes se les unieron sus contrapartes evangélicas y griegas ortodoxas, han expresado objeciones a las nuevas leyes de la Ciudad de México de matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo que toman efecto en marzo.

También viene mientras los líderes católicos son percibidos como teniendo enorme influencia sobre políticas sociales, tales como las prohibiciones constitucionales del aborto, que han sido aprobadas en 18 jurisdicciones durante el último año y medio.

Para enmendar la constitución la legislación todavía tendría que ser aprobada por el senado, por la mitad de las legislaturas estatales de México y por el presidente Felipe Calderón.

La Constitución Mexicana ya garantiza el secularismo en algunos renglones, tales como la educación pública.

Funcionarios eclesiásticos han negado alegaciones de intromisión inapropiada en asuntos políticos y dicen que los críticos están mal informados acerca del rol de las instituciones religiosas en el proceso de política pública.

“El aborto, el divorcio, el matrimonio entre personas del

mismo sexo, etc. no son meros asuntos políticos”, dijo el cardenal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez de Guadalajara en una declaración del 12 de febrero. “Estos son asuntos de moralidad y le conciernen a mucha gente honesta y decente y también a la iglesia y a los ministros de otras denominaciones”.

México ha aplicado la estricta separación iglesia-estado desde la aprobación de las leyes de reforma de Benito Juárez a fines de la década de 1850 y de medidas anticlericales subsiguientes.

Algunas de esas medidas, tales como prohibiciones de que los sacerdotes y los religiosos vistan hábitos en público, fueron desechadas en 1992, cuando México estableció relaciones diplomáticas con el Vaticano. Pero otras restricciones permanecen, incluyendo la prohibición de que organizaciones religiosas posean entidades de medios de comunicación y una prohibición de hablar de asuntos políticos dentro de lugares de culto.

Funcionarios católicos han llamado a finalizar esas restricciones y a recibir la garantía de “libertad de religión” en vez de la actual “libertad de culto” mencionada en la constitución, pero han negado querer inmiscuirse en asuntos políticos.

“En uno de los documentos más extensos y abarcadores de los años más recientes, la conferencia episcopal mexicana afirmó: “Entendemos y aceptamos el estado secular”, dijo el arzobispo José Martín Rabago de León, ex presidente de la conferencia episcopal, en una declaración del 9 de febrero.

El arzobispo añadió: “No queremos regresar al viejo concepto del siglo 19” que apartó la iglesia y el estado y limitó el rol de la iglesia en la vida pública mexicana a meramente asuntos espirituales”.

“era intenso y unico”

“autentica experiencia”

“una experiencia inolvidable”

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O'Leary...

FROM PAGE 24

boy's bedside after the accident was the announcer with the booming, baseball voice. O'Leary recalls the pep talk he was given as if it were yesterday.

"He said, 'Kid, you are going to live. And when you get out of here, we're going to celebrate together at Busch Stadium. We'll call it John O'Leary Day at the ballpark. But, kid, you gotta keep fighting.'"

Years later, O'Leary learned that after closing the door, Jack Buck stood in the hospital corridor and cried. The radio announcer was sure the young fan would die. A nurse confirmed the suspicion.

"She told him I didn't have a chance," O'Leary recalled. "But instead of giving up like everybody else, he prayed about it and asked himself, 'What more can I do for this kid?'"

The hospital visits and pep talks continued for five months, and when John O'Leary Day at the ballpark finally arrived, the baseball announcer realized his young guest faced another obstacle. He couldn't hold anything in his hands.

"So Jack went home and prayed about it and asked himself, 'what more can I do?'" the speaker recounted.

The next day a package arrived with a baseball signed by Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith. Enclosed was a note from Jack

Buck that issued a challenge. If the young baseball fan wanted a second autographed memento, all he had to do was send a thank you note to the guy who signed the first one.

"I'm pretty sure Jack knew I couldn't write. But he also knew that motivation and inspiration doesn't come from a speaker, a teacher, or a parent. Motivation comes from within," O'Leary reasoned. "It's an internal thing. That's what drives us forward in life, and Jack was trying to discover what that drive was for me."

The youngster learned to hold a pen with his fingerless hands and wrote the note. A few days later a second package arrived with another baseball and the same request.

"Hey kid. If you want a third baseball, send a thank you note to the guy who signed the second one."

The ritual continued all summer long, and by the end of the season, Buck had sent his young friend 60 baseballs.

"He taught this kid in a wheelchair — a kid most people would have ignored — how to write," O'Leary said emotionally.

The pair stayed friends, and, years later, when O'Leary graduated from St. Louis University, another package arrived with a note that started with a familiar salutation.

"Hey kid," it said. "This means a lot to me. I hope it means a lot to you. Enjoy it. It's yours."

Tucked inside the cushion of tissue paper was the crystal baseball Jack Buck received when he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

"If you're the best at what you do, you get one of these in a lifetime, and he just quietly handed it over," O'Leary said to the hushed audience. "He showed me, and I hope he's showing you, what real success — what real power looks like."

Meaningful success requires vision, selflessness, courage, and living life with intention and purpose, he explained, adding, "Don't just let things happen to you. Choose the way this life is going to be lived, and, as long as you're on earth, make a difference for others. Shine for them. Let people know God is alive and well through your actions."

Nolan High School senior Mary Kulpa, who considers O'Leary a walking miracle, was impressed by the speaker's optimism.

"Someone who's experienced a tragedy like his could be morbid or depressed, but he's not a victim," she said. "He's sharing his incredible story with others hoping they get something out of it."

Stephen McWilliams called O'Leary's message inspiring.

"A lot of strangers stepped up to the plate and kept helping him," explained the Nolan sophomore. "It's made me evaluate whether I'm doing enough to help other people."

Pope...

FROM PAGE 1

and the civic community."

He said the church's actions in favor of the needy were a natural expression of faith in Christ, who identified in a particular way with the poor.

"In its service to people in difficulty, the Church is motivated solely by the desire to express its faith in God who is the defender of the poor and who loves people for what they are, and not for what they possess or accomplish," he said.

The pope cited his social encyclical of 2009, *Charity in Truth*, saying that charity was a necessary principle not only in personal relations but also in larger economic dealings. That is an urgently needed principle "in a world in which, instead, the logic of profit and the search for self-interest seems to prevail," he said.

Before leaving the center, the pope accepted the gift of a restored crucifix from the town of Onna, which suffered severe damage in the 2009 earthquake in central Italy. The crucifix had belonged to the Church of St. Peter, which was destroyed in the quake.

Later in the day, speaking at his noon blessing at the Vatican, the pope said the Caritas shelter was an example of the beatitudes in action.

When Christ said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours," He was speaking of divine justice that will come at

"In its service to people in difficulty, the Church is motivated solely by the desire to express its faith in God who is the defender of the poor and who loves people for what they are, and not for what they possess or accomplish."

—Pope Benedict XVI
Caritas Medical Center

the end of time, the pope said. But that justice can also be manifested in this world, he said.

"This is the task that the disciples of the Lord are called to carry out in today's society," he said. He expressed appreciation to the many people who donate their time and effort to social service centers around the world.

The pope, who dedicated his Lenten message this year to the theme of justice, encouraged people to read the message and meditate on it.

"The Gospel of Christ responds in a positive way to the human thirst for justice, but in an unexpected and surprising way. He does not propose a social or political revolution, but one of love, which He has already realized through his cross and resurrection," he said.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11

were going to see them, and then we end every one of those conversations with "lunch! ... Call me." We even make a phone-receiver sign with our hands, talking into the little finger when we say "call me." Or we make a little dial sign, even though dial phones were history before some of us were born. (In the modern world of iPhones, we make a little iTouchy sign.)

Usually, though, we don't follow through with the requested "call me, call me!"

A few days ago I heard a Gospel choir sing, and they meant what they were saying — they weren't faking. Their hands were clapping, and every word they intoned was real, not vacant, shallow, or meaningless. This choir sang "Jesus! Excellent!" and they emphasized the "ex" in a lengthened and exaggerated first syllable. It was not only EXcellent, it was EXciting, EXhilarating and EXtraordinary — in four-part harmony.

And their faces! Their faces were washed with joy, gleaming with belief, and lit with the knowledge they have a friend (Jesus! EXcellent!) they can always call, and he, excellently,

will always hear them.

Then last night I sat on the floor in a circle of young people — beautiful young people, all 20-something, and as different as black hair is from blue hair, literally. They are part of a step-dancing group. Their weekly sessions are for practicing praise-dance skills, but in many ways that process is only incidental, because they take half their time reflecting and praying.

During last night's meeting, the boy whose turn it was for faith-sharing had made no real preparation, so he apologized for that, telling his friends they would have to listen to him

ramble.

He spoke of the bad things that may have happened to the jeans-clad group, who sat with their feet (EXpert in praise-stepping) extended into the circle like spokes in a poorly shaped but very functional wheel. He talked of the recent death of a parent, and then spoke of less-tragic circumstances in the group, whose members were, really, more connected with final exams than with finality in life.

The young man said he had been spending time with the Lord and had decided to memorize a passage of Scripture that, when needed, would comfort him, or "bring him into the presence of God."

This is the Scripture he proclaimed, by memory:

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.

"Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" *Philippians 4:8*.

This was an EXTRAordinary week for me.

I learned that in thinking about the true, the right, the pure, the lovely, the admirable, and the excellent, certainly we will hear the voice of God speaking to us. This will happen whether we are in a parking lot, in a concert hall, or sitting on the floor.

And when we hear the voice of God, like hearing the voices of our children, it is excellent.

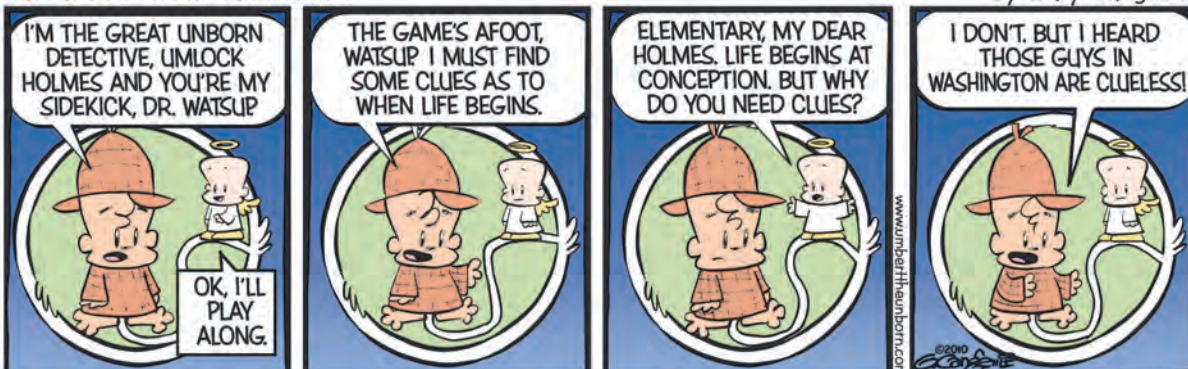
EXcellent.



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May, 2009 her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association for the second time in two years at the Catholic Media Convention in Anaheim. In 2005, Kathy's column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



Calendar

EDUCATE THE CHILDREN GALA

Friends of Educate the Children will host the second annual Gala and Silent Auction with master of ceremonies Ralph McCloud and guest speaker Father Robert Thames. Fr. Thames, a priest of the Diocese of Fort Worth, has been a missionary in Mexico and Bolivia for over 30 years and is currently ministering in Cabezas, Bolivia. The gala event, sponsored by the Mission Council of the Diocese of Fort Worth, will be held Friday, March 5 at Marriott DFW Airport South. For more information, contact Hilda Flores at (817) 560-3300 ext. 112.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

People of all ages and faiths are encouraged and invited to be a part of the first 40 Days for Life prayer vigil in Weatherford. Participants gather on the Parker County Courthouse lawn (in the center of Weatherford) from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday to pray for the end of abortion. The vigil, sponsored by the youth group from St. Stephen Parish in Weatherford, began Feb. 17 and will continue through April 3. A small ecumenical prayer service takes place at the top of every half hour during the two-hour period. Candles are available for a donation so that this event can become a candle light prayer vigil. For more information, contact Jeanette Houle at (817) 596-9585.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc. will be celebrating its 100th anniversary March 17. All are invited to join them at a special birthday Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth at 6 p.m. A reception with refreshments will follow. For more information, contact Laura Sotelo at lsotelo@ccdfw.org or (817) 413-3904.

TEACHERS' JOB FAIR

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth will hold a Teacher Job Fair Saturday, March 27 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Nolan Catholic High School campus, 4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. Prospective teachers (Pre-K through 12th grade) will have the opportunity to visit with principals and representatives from the 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 ext. 253 or visit the Web site www.fwdioc.org.

LENTEN SPEAKER SERIES

St. Joseph Covenant Keepers is sponsoring a Lenten speaker series at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 2016 Willis Lane, Keller. The series is offered each Friday evening beginning at 8 p.m. The series will continue with Steve Kellmeyer speaking March 12, 19, and 26. Kellmeyer is a noted author and frequent speaker on Catholic radio. Kellmeyer's topics will be "The Passion of Jesus Christ"; "The Crucifixion and Death of Christ"; "The Resurrection and Ascension." For more information on the Lenten speaker series, contact Frank Laux at (817) 939-8594.

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

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

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller; at 1301 Paxton Ave. (Padre Pio House) in Arlington; and at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton at 2255 Bonnie Brae St. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.com, 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. 102 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

To Report Abuse

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

YOUTH 2000 RETREAT

The annual Youth 2000 retreat, sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth and led by members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal religious congregation, will be held Friday, April 9, through Sunday, April 11, at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. Youth and young adults, ages 13 to 30, may attend the weekend program of Eucharistic Adoration, music, inspirational talks, personal faith testimonies, and prayer. The cost is \$40 per person if registration forms, including liability releases, are mailed prior to March 19. Registrations are \$50 if mailed after that deadline. Housing is not included in the registration fee. Lunch and dinner will be provided on Saturday; snacks will also be provided at major breaks during the sessions throughout the weekend. An adult chaperone must accompany groups of up to six youth under the age of 18; all chaperones and participating volunteers must be in compliance with diocesan policies and must have completed safe environment training. For more information, liability releases, and all diocesan forms, visit the Youth 2000 Web site at www.fwdiocyouthretreat.org. Registrations may be mailed to Fort Worth Youth 2000 Retreat, 4334 Fair Ridge Drive, Aledo 76008. For more information, call (817) 558-9805.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. Since the course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to attend a course beginning at least four months before their wedding. To register for a course starting March 21 at 2 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 N. Bonnie Brae, Denton, contact Tom and Laura Maisano at (713) 557-1110. Visit www.ccldfw.org for more class dates and information.

RESPECT LIFE HOLY HOUR

The Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth sponsors a Holy Hour from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral on the third Monday of each month. The hour begins with a rosary and is followed by Eucharistic Adoration. All are invited to come and pray for an end to abortion and all offenses to the sanctity and dignity of human life. For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.

MINISTRY FOR GAYS, LESBIANS

The Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities and Their Families regularly meets the fourth Thursday of the month for prayer and conversation at the Catholic Renewal Center at 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. The next meeting will be held March 25. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH 2009/10 DIRECTORY

The 2009/10 Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth directory is currently available for purchase. The cost for each directory is \$15. Send a check, payable to *North Texas Catholic*, to Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, along with mailing address. For more information, contact Judy Rousseau at (817) 560-2452 ext. 308.

MEN'S / WOMEN'S DISCERNMENT

The Vocations office sponsors a Men's Monthly Discernment the second Monday of each month for single men ages 16 to 50 and a Women's Monthly Discernment the third Monday of each month for single women ages 16 to 50. The groups meet at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., to pray together, share their vocational call, listen to God, break open the Word, and to share a meal together. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations at (817) 560-3300 ext.110 or kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

DISCERNMENT AT OLV

Single women, ages 18 to 45 are invited to come for an evening of prayer, supper, and sharing, hosted by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, the first Friday of each month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory Center, 909 W. Shaw St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, at (817) 923-3091 or syacruz@sbcglobal.net.

NTC SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The *North Texas Catholic* is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published. Items for the March 12 issue must be received by noon on March 3. Items for the March 26 issue must be received by noon on March 17. Send information to jrusseau@fwdioc.org.

'DAY OF COMMUNIO'

A Day of *Communio* (formerly known as the Ministerium) will be held Thursday, April 15 at St. Bartholomew Parish, 3601 Alta Mesa Blvd., Fort Worth. This program is designed to provide an opportunity for cooperation of ordained and lay ministers of the Church. Clergy, religious, deacons, parish staff, and campus ministers are invited to attend. The keynote speaker for this event is Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities, USA. The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. with prayer and end at 3:30 p.m. Mass will be celebrated at 8 a.m. for those who wish to attend. For more information, contact Joe Rodriguez at (817) 560-3300 ext. 115.

UNITED IN PRAYER DAY

All are invited to join the Contemplative Outreach for its annual United in Prayer Day Saturday, March 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, 9200 Inwood Rd., Dallas. The program will feature video presentations by Thomas Keating, OCSO, speaking about spiritual evolution of humanity and the human condition as well as centering prayer, discussions, and closing activity. Register online at www.CellofPeace.com or e-mail, CPDallas@CellofPeace.com or call (972) 722-6029. Requested donation is \$15 to be taken at the door. Participants are asked to bring a bag lunch; coffee, bottled water, and refreshments will be provided.

COURAGE SUPPORT GROUP

Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for Catholics striving to live chaste lives according to the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality, meets the second and fourth Friday evenings of each month. For more information, e-mail to CourageDFW@Catholic.org or call (972) 938-5433.

CARMELITE LUNCHEON

The Auxiliary to the Discalced Carmelite Nuns cordially invites all to attend the 25th annual Divine Affair Luncheon and Fashion Show presented by Coldwater Creek University Park Village. The event will be held Saturday, March 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Colonial Country Club, 3735 Country Club Circle, Fort Worth. Reservations are \$35 each. Although there is no reserved seating, reservations for the event are requested. For reservations or more information, contact Cathy Lancaster at (817) 714-8231.

MOTHER / DAUGHTER TEA

The Spring Mother/Daughter Tea will be held Sunday afternoon, March 28 from noon to 4 p.m. The location of the tea has been changed to the Knights of Columbus Hall in Keller. All young ladies, ages 10 to 13, their mothers, grandmothers, or any other special woman in their lives are invited to enjoy and celebrate the gifts of being female. "Join us for an afternoon in a tea house complete with tea pots and cups, a delicious lunch, and dessert. Other women will be your hostesses and speakers as we share our life experiences and the satisfaction of being female, as well as the special gifts and qualities we have received from our Creator to function in this role. This session will explain, from a faith-based perspective, the physical, emotional, and psychological changes that occur in becoming a woman," states Kathy Stojak, coordinator of the program. There is a \$12.50 per person fee. Reservations can be made by calling Kathy Stojak at (817) 773-8096. Due to limited space, reservations are being accepted on a first-call basis. The Knights of Columbus Hall is located in Keller at 1907 Whitley Rd.

THEATRE NOLAN

What do you get when you cross William Shakespeare's *12th Night*, the 1950s, and Elvis? All Shook Up! Theatre Nolan will present its spring musical "All Shook Up" March 5, 6, 12, and 13, at 7 p.m. in the NCHS auditorium. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students. There will be a special alumni performance Saturday, March 6, with a reception following the show. For more information, contact Pat Gilmore Pierret in the alumni office at (817) 395-0249.

ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES NEEDED

The trade school in Honduras, partners with Good Shepherd Catholic Community in Colleyville, is in need of electrical supplies to renovate the carpentry workshop to provide a safer environment for the students. The items needed include: 60 AMP 3 phase disconnect 250 Volt; 200 AMP 3 phase 4 wire 30 circuit panel 120/240; three-quarter inch EMT 400 feet; one-half inch EMT 500 feet. For a complete list, send an e-mail to hearts4honduras@gmail.com. For more information, contact, Debbie Dohner at (972) 523-1391.

SUBIACO DISCOVERY DAY

Subiaco Academy, a Catholic, college preparatory, residential and day school for young men located in Arkansas, will host a Discovery Day for prospective students and their parents March 11-12. All activities including overnight stays and meals are free of charge. Students visiting will have an opportunity to experience dorm life and class orientation with teachers, mingle with current students, and take the placement exam. Activities for parents include classroom visits and information sessions with administration and faculty members. There will also be campus tours for everyone. Subiaco Academy is located in western Arkansas approximately 45 miles east of Fort Smith. For more information or to reserve a place, contact the admission office at (800) 364-7824 or e-mail admissions@subi.org.

WINDTHORST DINNER

St. Mary Parish in Windthorst will host its annual German sausage meal Sunday, March 7. Homemade 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 meal, sponsored by the Windthorst Volunteer Fire Department and the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 11 and under. Uncooked sausage will also be available for purchase at \$3 per pound. In addition to the meal, home-baked goods, compliments of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, will be available for purchase. St. Mary's is located at 101 Church St. at the intersection of Highways 281, 25, and 174 in Archer County. For more information, contact Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6444.

RHINELAND SAUSAGE DINNER

St. Joseph Parish in Rhineland will host a sausage and fried chicken dinner Sunday, March 21. The dinner, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the parish hall. The cost for dine-in or take-out is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under the age of 12. St. Anne's Christian Mothers' Society Country Store will offer home-baked goods and more during the dinner. Uncooked sausage will be available for purchase at \$3 per pound. To order ahead or for more information, call John at (940) 422-4561 or Billie at (940) 422-4993.

ST. GEORGE SPRING EVENT

All are invited to support St. George School in Fort Worth by attending its third annual spring fundraising event, to be held April 10 from 6:30 to 11 p.m. The event will take place at the school located at 824 Hudgins in Fort Worth. The entrance to the gym is located on Karnes Street. "Come enjoy an evening of fellowship with dinner and drink, and silent and live auctions," encourage event organizers. Tickets are \$35 per person. For more information, call the school office at (817) 222-1221.

Classified Section

PRINCIPAL

St. Andrew School in Fort Worth (PreK-8th grade parish school with nearly 700 students) is seeking a visionary principal to sustain and nurture a tradition of continuous improvement within an effective learning atmosphere where students achieve academic excellence in a Catholic environment. Applicants must have excellent interpersonal skills and leadership qualities. Additional requirements include being a practicing Roman Catholic; have a master's degree, including 18 hours in administration and three years experience in Catholic school education. Previous administrative experience is preferred. The position is available for the 2010-2011 school year. Submit a letter of interest, résumé, references, and a request for application packet to: Catholic Schools Office, St. Andrew Principal Search, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108-2919.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Holy Family Catholic School, a parish school in the Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking an energetic, enthusiastic, and experienced educator to teach middle school religion and English language arts. Applicants must have catechist certification and state certification is preferred. Interested candidates are encouraged to send a résumé and cover letter to the school principal Dr. John Shreve at jshreve@hfsfw.org or Holy Family Catholic School, 6146 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth, Texas 76107. Upon review, Dr. Shreve may schedule an initial interview with the applicant. Visit school Web site at www.hfsfw.org.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

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

Good Newsmaker

John O'Leary, badly burned at 9, endured a long and painful rehabilitation aided greatly by God, the kindness of others, and...

some very special

Baseballs

Story and Photos

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

When adults talk to adolescents about making a difference in the world, the words often go in one ear and out the other.

But when the messenger has suffered through one of life's greatest tragedies — and has the snapshots and scars to prove it — even the most jaded teenagers straighten up in their seats and listen.

That's what happened when John O'Leary visited Nolan Catholic High School Jan. 21 for a presentation sponsored by the Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation.

The Catholic school graduate, who now tours the country as a motivational speaker, was just 9 years old when an experiment with gasoline in his parents' garage literally exploded in his face. Third degree burns covered most of his body, and his chance of surviving the critical hours after the accident was less than one percent.

Addressing the students from the Hartnett Arena gym floor, the 33-year-old Missouri native recalled his thoughts as he clung to life in the burn unit.

Wrapped in bandages and lying in darkness, the young O'Leary expected anger and disappointment from his father. After all, didn't he almost incinerate the family's home?

Instead, he heard words of compassion and love. Leaning over the bed, his father whispered how proud he was of him. His mother said that to live, he had to fight and take God's hand on the journey.

"When we're children, we don't understand how much our parents love us," the speaker explained, as a photo of his crimson torso flashed on the screen. "They don't worry about material things as much as they do their kids. They worry about us living our best life."

Many kind, compassionate people helped the struggling burn victim



LEFT: John O'Leary gestures broadly during his talk to Nolan Catholic High School students.

BELOW: Fr. Richard Villa, president of Nolan Catholic High School, (left) poses with O'Leary and Jim and Kathy Breen in the Hartnett Arena.



ABOVE: Nolan Catholic students listen to John O'Leary Jan. 21. O'Leary, who overcame life-threatening burns at age 9, reminded students to make a difference and "Let people know God is alive and well through your actions."

RIGHT: John O'Leary visits with a group of Nolan Catholic students.



through months of recovery, numerous surgeries, and the amputation of his fingers. Thanks to their support and example, O'Leary not only survived the crisis, he thrived because of it. Today the happily married father of three has a unique understanding of what true success in life means, and he shares those insights on the lecture circuit and through his work in pediatric hospital ministry. The cradle Catholic also writes a free, inspirational newsletter available online.

Looking over the sea of blue and grey uniforms, O'Leary told Nolan students to dream big.

"Have a huge vision for life, but it

can't be about you," he said, adding a twist to the advice.

To explain his point, he talked about a former caretaker — a big, strong, man named Roy — who would lift him out of the hospital bed each morning and exercise his weakened legs. Holding the reluctant youngster just above the ground, Roy would insist, "Boy, you are going to walk again, so you might as well get used to it."

Any normal 9-year-old would have tuned out the authority figure. O'Leary, who had no muscles left in his legs and was slightly intimidated by the nurse's size and strength, didn't have that option. He began to believe the words of

encouragement.

"When everyone else was talking death, wheelchairs, and disabilities, Roy talked about walking," said O'Leary who stood up eight weeks later. "It was a profound vision, way bigger than him. Dream big but be selfless. It's not about you. It's about helping others."

Another stranger who reached out to the suffering youngster had a voice familiar to baseball fans. Young John O'Leary was an ardent follower of the St. Louis Cardinals, and he knew Jack Buck from his play-by-play commentary of baseball games on the radio.

One of the first visitors to the young

SEE O'LEARY, P. 22

MAILING LABEL: Please enclose label with address change or inquiries concerning mail delivery of your paper. Thank you.

Inside... This issue of the NTC

In this Year of the priest, we all want to honor the priests of the diocese for their gift of themselves to God and his people. Here are a few of them speaking of their experience of priesthood. **9**

Calling for bipartisan action, the U.S. Bishops clarify one more time, Catholic principles that must be observed to receive their support on health care reform: It must protect human life and dignity. **11**

UNT grad student Saul Hernandez teamed up with Fr. Victor Cruz and other Denton priests to provide something unusual on campus. Called "Talk to a Catholic Priest", it's a priest in a kiosk. **13**