



# NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth Vol. 29 No. 2 March / April 2013

## Pope Benedict XVI resigns

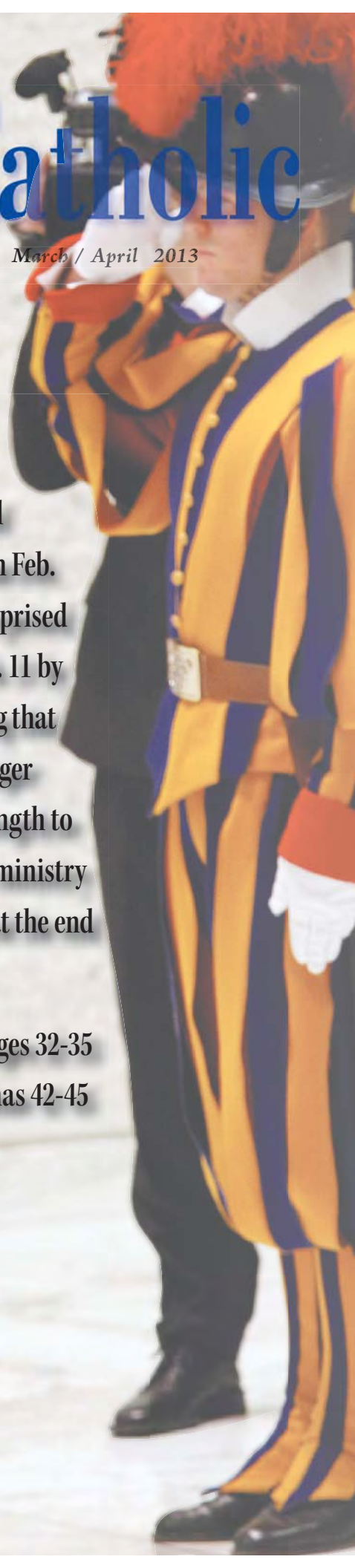
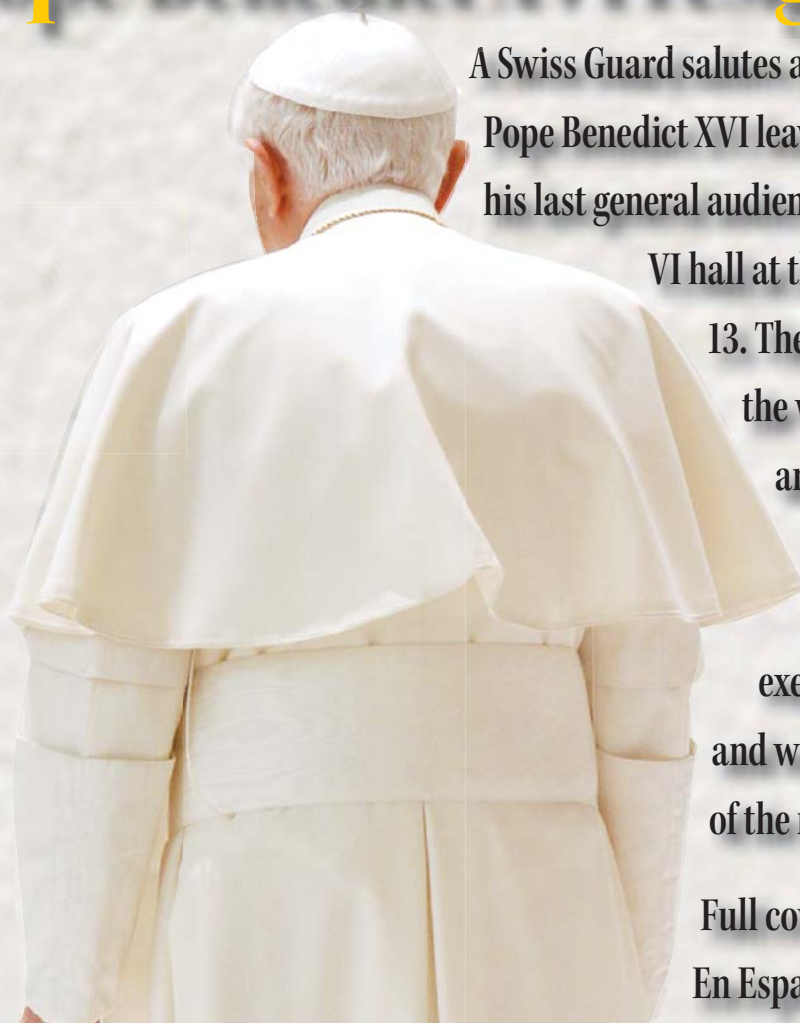
A Swiss Guard salutes as  
Pope Benedict XVI leaves  
his last general audience in Paul

VI hall at the Vatican Feb.

13. The pope surprised  
the world Feb. 11 by  
announcing that  
he no longer  
has strength to  
exercise his ministry  
and will retire at the end  
of the month.

Full coverage pages 32-35

En Español páginas 42-45



*Remember that  
you are dust,  
and to dust  
you shall return."*

As the Church  
enters into  
Lent, guest  
writers have  
contributed  
reflections to  
the NTC.

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**MAIN PICTURE:** A Swiss Guard salutes as Pope Benedict XVI leaves his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Feb. 13. The pope surprised the world Feb. 11 by announcing that he no longer has strength to exercise his ministry and will retire at the end of the month. *(CNS photo/Paul Haring)*

**CORNER PICTURE:** A parishioner at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Fort Worth receives ashes on his forehead during a noon Ash Wednesday service held Feb. 13. *(Photo and artwork by Donna Ryckaert / NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC)*



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# North Texas Catholic



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## Adventures of a journalist — or when breaking news changes your plans

This issue has truly been an adventure. This issue also helped prove the saying, “make plans and watch God laugh.”

It being the Season of Lent, we had this huge plan where we asked several of our columnists to offer a Lenten reflection (20-23), and for the first time, we asked some of our diocesan staff dealing with Hispanic ministry to contribute reflections in Spanish (40-41). We also had a grandiose plan for Donna Ryckaert, one of our best photographers, to capture some Ash Wednesday images for a potential front page (of course her pictures were too good not to use at least as a teaser on the front).

We also made arrangements to finish early, considering that that our editor, Jeff Hensley, had his hip replaced earlier this week (he’s recovering quite well, thankfully with the help of great doctors and plenty of prayers), our administrative assistant had to leave town, and our printer told us that if we waited a week, we wouldn’t go out until March.

So we all worked long hours, and through the week-end, and by Sunday night, we had it all under control. Then the Pope decided to resign...

So I created this meme to give you an idea of what my mind went through.



But it was exciting, too. After all, this is why I became a journalist, to be able to cover breaking news like this and get the information out. Joan Gillen worked round-the-clock to get some local reaction about the Pope’s resignation (32-35). And, we were able to get that into Spanish, as well (42-45)!

This is an amazing point in history, and I can’t wait until next issue when we can feature our next Holy Father.

We’ve also expanded our social media presence. We’ve been keeping up with Twitter and Facebook, especially considering all the news, AND we’ve finally started blogging at [www.ntcatholic.blogspot.com](http://www.ntcatholic.blogspot.com). And we still have plenty of breaking news at our website, [northtexascatholic.org](http://northtexascatholic.org). Check us out, and don’t be a stranger!

Tony Gutiérrez  
Associate Editor



CNS photo / Daniel Sone

David Halfmann, 17, of St. Louis, stands with a pro-life sign on the National Mall during the March for Life rally in Washington Jan. 25.

## At annual March for Life, crowds show endurance, passion to continue

By Carol Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The tens of thousands of participants at the annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 25 demonstrated just how determined they are not only by showing up in such large numbers on a bitter cold day, but by continuing a 40-year tradition of protesting the U.S. Supreme Court's decision legalizing abortion.

"Forty years ago, people thought opposition from the pro-life movement would eventually disappear," Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Pro-Life Activities, told the crowd assembled on the National Mall for a rally prior to the march along Constitution Avenue to the front of the U.S. Supreme Court. "The march grows stronger every year."

Many speakers praised the resiliency of the crowd, braving a cloudy 20-degree day and standing on snow dusted ground, but they also spoke of the pro-life movement getting re-energized by young people who are becoming the movement's new torchbearers.

Hundreds of high school and college groups were scattered in the rally crowd, their members texting, taking

pictures, and creatively protesting by wearing pro-life stickers on their faces and carrying placards in the backs of their jackets.

Their placards did not have jarring images or messages but predominantly took a gentler tone such as: "Abolish Abortion Courageously" or "I am the pro-life generation."

Another new aspect at this year's rally was more use of social media technology, with speakers prior to the rally's start urging participants to tweet about the rally and follow March for Life on Facebook.

One tweet read to the crowd, which drew a lot of cheers, was from Pope Benedict XVI, which said: "I join all those marching for life from afar, and pray that political leaders will protect the unborn and promote a culture of life."

Rueben Verastigui, youth activist, had a message for the crowd's youths.

"You can't just sit around waiting for change to happen; [you] have to get up and make it happen." He told them to be involved in pro-life work in their schools and even if they feel alone, they should remember this experience. "Look around, we are not alone. We are not the future of the pro-life movement; we are the pro-life movement."

## Judge dismisses HHS lawsuit brought by dioceses, charitable agencies

CHICAGO (CNS) — A U.S. District Court judge Feb. 8 dismissed a lawsuit filed against the federal contraceptive mandate by the Springfield and Joliet dioceses, their respective Catholic Charities agencies, and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Judge John W. Darrah of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago said in his ruling the claims of the plaintiffs "are unripe for adjudication."

The dioceses and Catholic Charities agencies argued that the federal regulations requiring all employers, including most religious employers, to cover contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their employee health plans violate their religious freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Until the final rules on the mandate are implemented, the Obama administration has in place a "safe harbor"

period that protects employers from immediate government action against them if they fail to comply.

But the dioceses and agencies said in the lawsuit they would need time to "begin taking compliance measures now" to prepare for when the safe harbor period ends.

Darrah ruled "the necessity to postpone judicial review of plaintiffs' claims until the departments have finalized the amended regulations outweighs the purported hardship to plaintiffs in their ability to plan for contingencies."

On Feb. 1, the HHS issued new proposed rules aimed to redefine the criteria by which nonprofit religious institutions may be either "exempt" or "accommodated" in opting out of providing coverage that goes against the teachings of the faith. The USCCB president said the new proposal shows movement but falls short of addressing their concerns.

## Nigerians must not give up on democracy, bishop says

By Peter Ajayi Dada  
Catholic News Service

LAGOS, Nigeria — Nigerians must not give up on democracy, said Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto.

"I have been listening to what people are saying about revolution," the bishop said. "But I can tell you very frankly that no revolution is going to take place in this country."

Bishop Kukah spoke at the 10th Daily Trust Newspapers Dialogue on the theme "Nation Building: Challenges and Reality" in Abuja Jan. 23. CNS obtained a copy of his text.

He said few Nigerians are able to separate being in power from being in office, as many Nigerians assume that only those who are in office should solve the country's problems.

Bishop Kukah criticized people who describe Nigeria as a mere geographical expression and say it cannot be united.

"There isn't a single nation in the world that was not a mere geographical expression until nation-building built it up," he said.

Nigeria's population is almost equally Christian and Muslim, and militants trying to impose Islamic law have targeted security institutions and Christian churches. Yet Nigeria's religious leaders often say that Christians and Muslims live in harmony at the local level. In addition, the country's rich natural resources — such as oil — have been targeted by vandals — some Church leaders have said because almost 100 million of the country's 162 million people live on less than \$1 a day.



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic

Diocesan Leadership Award recipient Bishop Kevin Vann poses with the recipients of the Outstanding Service Awards from each school in the diocese.

## Catholic Schools celebrate their 'Mission from God' at annual banquet

By Kathy Cribari Hamer  
Correspondent

The Diocese of Fort Worth celebrated Catholic schools at its annual banquet Jan. 26 at the Fort Worth Convention Center, with the theme "Mission from God," taken from the 1980 film, *The Blues Brothers*.

A moving video narrated by diocesan Superintendent Don Miller featured student photographs and messages from staff members.

"Each of our Catholic schools focuses on supporting parents in their role as the primary educators of their children," he said, "by bringing each and all of the Catholic school community into a daily, personal encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Sustained by his gospel witness, the mission of our Catholic Schools

must teach and show that there are real consequences to a real faith.

"Indeed we're on a mission not only from God, but with God, through God, and ultimately to God."

Miller then presented the Outstanding Service Awards to representatives from each school, and the annual Diocesan Leadership Award to former Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann who was installed as bishop of Orange, California in December.

"All of us involved with Catholic schools... understood," Miller said, "very clearly, that Bishop Vann's first priority was that our schools always be absolutely and authentically Catholic. The Catholic identity of our schools was always number one — everything else tied for second."

## Faithful urged to pray and work to end abortion at annual Respect Life Mass

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

Diocesan Administrator Monsignor Stephen Berg celebrated the diocese's annual Respect Life Mass Jan. 23 at St. Patrick Cathedral, along with several other diocesan priests.

Worshippers carried Respect Life program banners down the center aisle before the Mass. Volunteers involved in pro-life ministries participated in the procession by placing red candles beneath the altar. Each flickering votive represented the 53 million lives lost to abortion since the U.S. Supreme Court's Jan. 22, 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. After the last candle was set down, Betsy Kopor, coordinator of Rachel Ministries, a post-abortive ministry, positioned *The Book of Innocents* in front of the display. The ledger contains the names of children lost to abortion in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"Interest in our pro-life ministries continues to grow," said Kopor as a steady stream of people filed into the pews. "When he was here, Bishop Vann supported our work and we continue to benefit from that."

In his homily, Msgr. Berg said the 20th century evils of communism, fascism, and social engineering led to the



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC  
A Mass-goer places a red votive candle beneath the altar, representing the 53 million lives lost to abortion since 1973.

violent deaths of millions of people, "and those deaths are recorded in the history books because they are sad and tragic."

But there are no history book entries documenting the equally tragic loss of life due to abortion in the U.S.

"We live in a culture that solves social problems by killing people," he continued calling the hidden violence of abortion insidious. "The ability to pursue happiness is understood to include the right to eliminate the unwanted, the vulnerable, and the unprotected."

Evil and suffering will always exist on earth, Msgr. Berg admitted.

"It's our task to continue to confront it," he added encouragingly. "We may become discouraged but the work of God is the work of life."

## Following MLK's example, we should be 'drum majors' for Jesus, says homilist



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / NTC  
Fr. Jerome LeDoux dances to the Gospel choir during his homily, urging all to join him in praising Jesus.

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

Held annually to coincide with the federal holiday honoring Martin Luther King's birthday, the 27th annual MLK Memorial Mass brought together people from across the diocese to St. Joseph Church in Arlington Jan. 19 to pray for an end to discrimination, injustice, and violence.

"If Brother Martin were standing here now, this is what he would tell you," said homilist Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD, pastor of Our Mother of Mercy

Church in Fort Worth. "Wherever you are, be a drum major for Jesus Christ. Be all that you can be, whether that's in school, the choir, at work, or in the marketplace."

African-Americans have more freedom today than when King sparked the Civil Rights movement, Fr. LeDoux said, but freedom comes with responsibility, "and that begins in the home."

Only 33 percent of African-American households are nuclear today, Fr. LeDoux said, adding, "something is dreadfully wrong with our world."

The priest told the congregation they will find the strength to change society by turning to Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost the same way Martin Luther King did when faced with adversity.

Before the final blessing, MLK committee members Michael Barks and Madeline Morrison announced five winners of the newly established MLK diocesan essay contest.

Barks explained they wanted kids to research King "to impress on students that the values [he] stood for are universal."



# Fr. José Fetzer, SJ, (1960-2012) was known for his gift of teaching spirituality

By Jenara Kocks Burgess  
Correspondent

Father José Emilio Fetzer, SJ, 52, who was known in the Fort Worth Diocese for his gift of teaching spirituality at the Montserrat Retreat Center at Lake Dallas, died Dec. 22, 2012, at Ignatius Retreat Center in Atlanta.

“That was his favorite topic ... how to apply spirituality to real life, [and] how to make it influence your decisions and viewpoint,” said Father Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ, who worked with Fr. Fetzer while he was at Montserrat. “That was something he worked on and loved doing, lecturing, and discussing,” he said.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated Dec. 27 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, and his body was buried in the Jesuit Cemetery at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau. A Memorial Mass was celebrated Feb. 3 at St. Ignatius Chapel at Montserrat.

Fr. Fetzer was born March 12, 1960, in Lima, Peru. He studied at the University of Lima, then at DeKalb College and Georgia State University in Atlanta. Before joining the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), he was a parishioner of the Atlanta cathedral, and decided to join the Jesuits while praying in the chapel at the Ignatius Retreat Center.

He entered the Jesuit Novitiate Aug. 14, 1995 at St. Charles College. After his first vows on Aug. 15, 1997, he studied at Creighton University in Omaha, and at Saint Louis University where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish.

Fr. Fetzer taught Spanish at Jesuit College Preparatory School in Dallas 2001-2003, after which he earned a Master of Divinity from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 2006, he joined the staff of Mont-



Father José Emilio Fetzer, SJ

serrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas.

Fr. Rodriguez said he worked with Fr. Fetzer at Montserrat from 2006 until 2011. Fr. Fetzer was a deacon when he first came to Montserrat and worked Jesuit or Ignatian spirituality, Fr. Rodriguez said. After Fr. Fetzer was ordained a priest on June 14, 2008 at Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans, he continued teaching spirituality at Montserrat.

Fr. Rodriguez said Fr. Fetzer was also instrumental in making sure catechists, who were teaching in Spanish in various parishes in the Fort Worth and Dallas Dioceses, could get credit for attending continuing education classes at Montserrat. Fr. Rodriguez said they taught the classes as a team with Fr. Rodriguez teaching Church history and Christology and Fr. Fetzer teaching spirituality.

In a 2010 interview with the *North Texas Catholic* while Fr. Fetzer was a retreat director at Montserrat, he elaborated on his desire to help those he served encounter God.

“I see my role as a Jesuit priest as facilitating the encounter between God and the human person,” Fr. Fetzer said. “My different experiences of God have been illumined by the Spiritual Exercises [of St. Ignatius]. To give the Spiritual Exercises is to relate one’s experience of God with others. Although they require a great amount of prepara-

tion, directing the Spiritual Exercises is ultimately sharing who one is and what one has with others. It is sharing one’s experience as a loved sinner with others,” he said.

Fr. Rodriguez said Fr. Fetzer provided a great deal of spiritual direction for priests and deacons, but also for laypeople, working particularly with Spanish speakers. Fr. Rodriguez said Fr. Fetzer also helped parishes in Lewisville, Denton, and Dallas by celebrating Mass on weekdays or weekends when he was available.

“He was very ready to help other priests because they were overloaded or had to take some time off,” Fr. Rodriguez said. “He was very excited about becoming a priest. That’s why he said as many Masses as possible in different locations with different congregations.... The whole experience of ordination was still fresh in him.”

Joanne Jensen, assistant to the pastor at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville, said Fr. Fetzer

helped with the Parish Lenten Mission one year and celebrated many Masses on the weekends at St. Philip.

“He was wonderful. He had this great sense of humor you don’t see very often,” she said.

Jensen said the parishioners were sad to hear about his death, and they were also sad when he moved to Atlanta because they appreciated how much he helped with the Masses at St. Phillips.

Fr. Fetzer left Montserrat in 2011 to work at the Ignatius Retreat Center in Atlanta as a retreat director.

“He was able to make friends with about everyone he met. He wasn’t shy at all,” Fr. Rodriguez said.

Fr. Fetzer was preceded in death by his father, Emilio Fetzer. He is survived by his mother, Olga Balarin de Thorne, of Lima, Peru, and by his sisters, Maria Alicia Robertson of Redmond, Washington, and Maria Olga, Maria Inez, Erika and Regina Fetzer, all of Lima.

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# Fr. Richard Beaumont, longtime pastor of St. Bartholomew, dies at 81

By Michele Baker  
Correspondent

Father Richard Beaumont, a retired priest for the Diocese of Fort Worth who had served the last 23 years of his ministry at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, passed away Jan. 10. He was 81.

"He loved being a pastor," said Fr. Beaumont's best friend and long time St. Bartholomew parishioner, Dan Patterson. "He told me there's not a better vocation. I could see how important it was to him to preach the Gospel and bring people to Jesus. That's what he loved to do."

"Beau," as he was affectionately known at St. Bartholomew, was known for his love for the Word of God, his bold preaching, and his deep personal commitment to leading people to Christ.

"He was single-minded; determined to bring everyone in the pews to a personal relationship with Jesus," said Joe Winterling, a member of the parish for more than 30 years. "He didn't sugar coat anything. If we needed correction, he corrected us. If we needed encouragement, he



Father Richard Beaumont

encouraged."

Fr. Beaumont's congregation remembers a man whose pastoral approach made a huge impact on the lives of individuals as well as the parish.

"Beau believed in being a pastoral leader: shepherd of the flock," said Jim Tamulevicz, another longtime parishioner. "I used to be a Christmas and Easter kind of Catholic but when I heard Beau preach I thought, 'Wow! Now that's something I haven't heard in the Catholic Church for a long time.' He was preaching Jesus Christ. And I decided to come back. I had to come back."

Though fueled by a sense of personal responsibility for the spiritual

life and growth of his charges, Fr. Beaumont didn't see himself as the central figure in his ministry. That place was always reserved for Jesus.

Said Marie Tamulevicz, Jim's wife, "Everything was about having a personal relationship with Jesus. That's what he was about. If we could do that, everything else would fall into place. So, naturally, he taught us about finding Jesus in the Word: the Bible."

At one point there were five weekly Bible studies at St. Bartholomew, with two led by Fr. Beaumont, and the others led by lay people.

"The key to everything was the Bible studies," said Winterling, who over the past 30 years has led three. Winterling said that was where the church workers came from, from people who caught Fr. Beaumont's vision for the Church from their familiarity with the teachings of Scripture.

People in the Bible studies be-

came more involved in the church. Individual spiritual growth flowed into the life of the parish leading to better worship, better stewardship, and a strong sense of community that reached far beyond the confines of the Southwest Fort Worth church.

"He had an ecumenical heart," Winterling continued. "He wanted to show that we were united and that Jesus was the focus. He wasn't afraid or intimidated about bringing in people like televangelist James Robison or singer Dallas Holm."

Fr. Beaumont's primary concern was always the spiritual growth of his flock. Perhaps most revealing of his feelings towards the congregation he'd led for more than 20 years was the fact that he chose St. Bartholomew as his parish home after he retired.

"Beau still worshipped with us but he didn't want to draw any attention to himself," said Winterling. "He became just another parishioner."

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# Philanthropist Ruth Carter Stevenson (1923-2013) supported diocesan institutions

By John Henry  
Correspondent

On an October 1950 afternoon, Bishop Joseph P. Lynch stood with Nenetta Burton Carter and her daughter, Ruth, along with an assembly of doctors, nurses, and other hospital workers and supporters to dedicate a renovated obstetrical department at St. Joseph Hospital on South Main Street. Donations from Nenetta Carter made the improvements possible.

No place in Europe or anywhere else in the world can, Bishop Lynch said, “equal or better the equipment here,” according to a *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* newspaper account of the event.

“I do not deserve any thanks,” said Mrs. Carter. “Ruth has done all the hard work.”

The project at St. Joseph’s turned out to be the first in a life full of philanthropic endeavors, including faithful devotion to interests of the Catholic Church throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth, by Ruth Carter Stevenson, who died Jan. 6 at age 89.

Mourners gathered at St. Patrick Cathedral for her funeral.

Catholic Charities, Nolan Catholic High School, the Discalced Carmelite Nuns of Arlington, and St. Patrick Cathedral have all been the major beneficiaries of the Amon Carter Foundation, which Stevenson served as president until her death.

Donations total well into the millions, said John Robinson, the foundation’s executive vice president.

The value of the foundation’s gifts to Nolan are in the tens of millions, including a donation of the tract of land where the school was built in the early 1960s.

Since then, the foundation



Ruth Carter Stevenson

has contributed grants to build a new academic wing, library, and home economics suite in the 1980s; a state-of-the-art multi-purpose center in 2001; renovations to the auditorium, library, guidance suite, and computer lab in 2008; and a grant to upgrade the science lab in 2010.

Each year, Nolan selects top students as Amon G. Carter Scholars in honor of the foundation’s contributions, said school spokeswoman Annette Kearns.

“The Nolan Catholic community was saddened by the loss of one of our area’s greatest philanthropists,” said Father Richard Villa, SM, Nolan’s president. “The impact Ruth Carter Stevenson and the Amon G. Carter Foundation have made on our school ... is immeasurable.”

Stevenson and her mother were both parishioners of Holy Family, itself the recipient of Stevenson’s personal generosity.

Stevenson was born Oct. 19, 1923, to Amon and Nenetta Carter in Fort Worth.

Her father, too, was a generous benefactor of St. Joseph Hospital, donating close to \$2 million by the time of his death in 1955.

Among his gifts was the construction of the nursing school dormitory in the early 1950s, a project that, like the women’s center renovations, Stevenson

personally oversaw.

Stained glass windows at St. Patrick attest to Nenetta Carter’s devotion to her faith, a faith tradition Stevenson joined by converting in 1964, according to a biography provided by the Amon Carter Museum.

According to that document, Stevenson’s spiritual advisers included famed televangelist Ven. Bishop Fulton Sheen from “Life is Worth Living,” and Monsignor Earnest Langenhorst of the then Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.

Stevenson’s giving to the Church was a continuation of the devotion of her mother, who promised to spend her life helping others if God would safely return her son, Amon, Jr., who was serving overseas in World War II, according to an account in the personal papers of Amon G. Carter at the TCU library.


One of Ruth Carter Stevenson’s last gifts to the diocese was the landscaping to the St. Patrick Parish Center. Gardening was a passion of hers. Ruth Carter Stevenson was a doer.

“She personally oversaw the landscaping design of the parish center,” said Art Dickerson, chairman of the committee that oversaw the construction of the project. She suggested that they go visit with the director of the Botanic Garden who suggested the hiring of a landscape architect, a position paid for by the Amon G. Carter Foundation.

“She wanted a lot of input into what landscaping took place,” he said. “We met with her whenever we needed to. She had a lot of knowledge.”

“She really was a remarkable person if you look back at all that she has done.”

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# Laws of Fast and Abstinence

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has determined that the following practices shall prevail in the United States: Fast and Abstinence are to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all those who have celebrated their 18th birthdays until one has celebrated his / her 59th birthday. Abstinence from meat is to be observed on the Fridays of Lent by all who have celebrated their 14th birthdays.

The Church recognizes that there are chronically or seriously ill individuals who cannot fast or abstain. The Church still calls for

these individuals to participate in acts of penance and works of charity. These can be performed throughout the week; however, it is especially appropriate that these acts be performed on Fridays in place of the Friday fast.

No one can be dispensed from the necessity of doing penance. Catholics are strongly urged to practice voluntary acts of mortification and works of charity. The bishops of the United States have urged Catholics to consider abstaining from meat on Fridays “as a tangible sign of our need and desire to do penance for the cause of peace.”

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES



NTC Photo / Juan Guajardo

Undergraduate accounting student Santeev Khadka listens to the Jan. 18 VITA presentation at UTA. CCFW hosted the presentation at the school to target students interested in volunteering as income tax preparers.

### VITA teaches clients about taxes

When talking about the Catholic Charities Fort Worth’s VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program, staff members relay stories of surprise and joy that many CCFW clients experience when they learn they will be receiving hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of dollars back in tax refunds after filing their cost-free tax return through VITA.

“We had a young, single mother with four children come to us for assistance, and we helped her to file her income tax return,” Mary Goosens, CCFW’s vice-president of administration and chief financial officer, recalled at a Jan. 18 VITA kick-off rally held at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). “She was making \$30,000 a year. She couldn’t believe it when she learned that she would be getting a tax refund of \$8,000.” The client, with the help of financial education offered by CCFW, was able to make changes in her life that led to a better-paying job, said Goosens.

CCFW offers the VITA program as a partner with the United Way Income Initiative, “as part of our huge goal to end poverty in this community,” added Goosens, noting that approximately \$90 million in tax credits have gone unclaimed

in Tarrant County since 2008 because taxpayers were unaware of the availability of the credits.

At the rally, Texas State Representative Diane Patrick of District 94 addressed a large group of UTA students who were preparing to serve as VITA volunteers. “It’s wonderful to see the powerful collaboration between Catholic Charities, United Way, and our university partners,” Patrick said. “This is an exciting program because the dollars that come back to taxpayers are returned to the community and that improves our economy.”

Business and accounting students at local universities are recruited and trained each year to serve as intake coordinators and to prepare income taxes at the 12 local VITA sites, said CCFW staff members. In 2012, 325 VITA volunteers assisted clients with filing 3,659 tax returns and obtaining refunds of \$6.9 million, including \$2.69 million in Earned Income Tax Credits.

VITA clients may also enroll in public benefit programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, and supplemental nutrition programs.

*For more information about sites and necessary documents, visit [www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org) or call (817) 534-0814.*

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 Dr. Kathryn Karges – Ob/Gyn at Caritas Complete Women’s Care

# 'Welcome to Arlington'

Catholic Charities empowers and blesses another community with their services

By Nicki Prevou /Correspondent • Photos by Donna Ryckaert



Catholic Charities Fort Worth CEO Heather Reynolds and Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley cut the ceremonial ribbon opening the agency's Arlington office. The new Arlington CCFW campus will help expand services to the area.

ON FEB. 4, LEADERS FROM THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH AND FROM THE CITY OF ARLINGTON joined an exuberant gathering of Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) staff and board members to celebrate an historic occasion, as the agency opened an Arlington office, at 917 W. Sanford St., less than two miles from the campus of the University of Texas at Arlington.

A festive crowd spilled from the cozy building onto the neatly landscaped yard for a brief presentation, prior to a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the blessing of the new office space by Monsignor Stephen Berg, diocesan administrator.

Heather Reynolds, CCFW's chief executive officer and president, led enthusiastic applause for Father Tom Craig, pastor of

St. Vincent de Paul Church in Southwest Arlington. "He deserves recognition on this day, because Fr. Tom is the one who encouraged us to envision this facility," explained Reynolds. "He helped us to see that we need a stronger Catholic Charities presence here in Arlington, both with staffing and with facilities." The agency was able to quickly respond by procuring a building and additional staff members, said Reynolds, "because of the support of this city's great mayor, from our Catholic diocese, from Commissioner Andy Nguyen, and so many others who join us in our commitment to end poverty in this community."

The need for expanded social services within the Arlington community has become more urgent,

Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck told the crowd, because of increasingly troubling statistics. "Between 2005 and 2011, Arlington had one of the top five highest increases in child poverty rates in the United States, and that is not where we want to be," he said, adding that 15 percent of Arlington residents are now living below the federal poverty line. "Catholic Charities has made it their goal to end poverty in our area, and I know that we in Arlington can all work together to meet that goal."

The new Arlington CCFW campus, with ample classroom space as well as private offices for client consultations, offers comprehensive programs in financial education, emergency financial and medical assistance, and also serves as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. The building is adjacent to another Catholic Charities' property, the Nuestro Hogar housing complex for low-income, elderly, or disabled residents.

"Here on this site, we will expand the network of services that

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**LEFT:** Msgr. Stephen Berg, diocesan administrator for the Diocese of Fort Worth blessed the building at 917 W. Sanford St. • **RIGHT:** Fr. Tom Craig, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, pictured with Heather Reynolds, is credited with encouraging Catholic Charities to open a branch office in Arlington.

are available in this area,” declared Commissioner Andy Nguyen, of Tarrant County’s Precinct 2, which covers much of Arlington, Mansfield, and portions of Grand Prairie. “I came to this country in 1981, as a 14-year-old boy, a refugee from a Communist country,” he added, noting that Catholic Charities reached out to his family by providing assistance with housing, food,

and education. “What I love about Catholic Charities is that their service does not cripple those who receive their services, but, instead, empowers their clients. Catholic Charities, welcome. Welcome to Arlington.”

*For more information about CCFW, visit [www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org) or call (817) 534-0814.*

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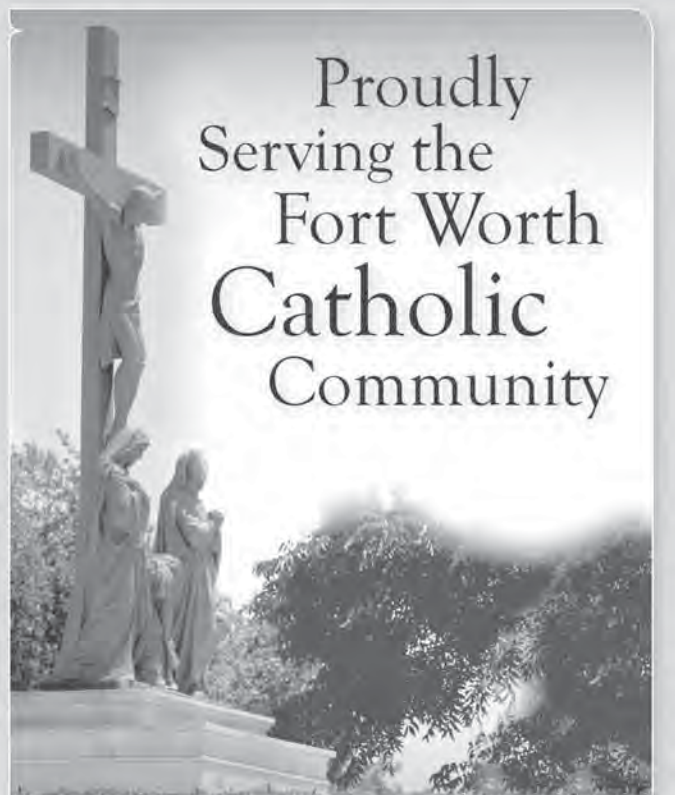
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A nun makes a cross on a woman's forehead with ashes during Ash Wednesday Mass at the cathedral in Bamako, Mali, Feb. 13. Catholics around the world began the penitential season of Lent with prayer, fasting and the mark of ashes. (CNS photo/Joe Penney, Reuters)



A child dressed as a Swiss Guard stands in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Feb.12. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)



Mark Gonnella, wearing a T-shirt with Pope Benedict XVI's name, prays after receiving ashes during Ash Wednesday Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis Feb. 13. (CNS photo/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis REVIEW)



Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York smiles as he helps distribute food to people in the St. Francis Breadline outside St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York on Ash Wednesday Feb. 13. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)



A flash of lighting is seen over St. Peter's Basilica during a rainstorm at the Vatican Feb. 11, (CNS photo/ANSA/Alessandro Di Meo via Reuters)



Fireworks are set off at the inauguration of a new statue of the Virgin of the Socavon on Santa Barbara hill outside of Oruro, Bolivia, Feb. 1. The statue of Mary and the Christ Child measures 148-feet in height and pays homage to the local patroness invoked in the protection of mine workers. (CNS photo/David Mercado, Reuters)

# Cross-Words

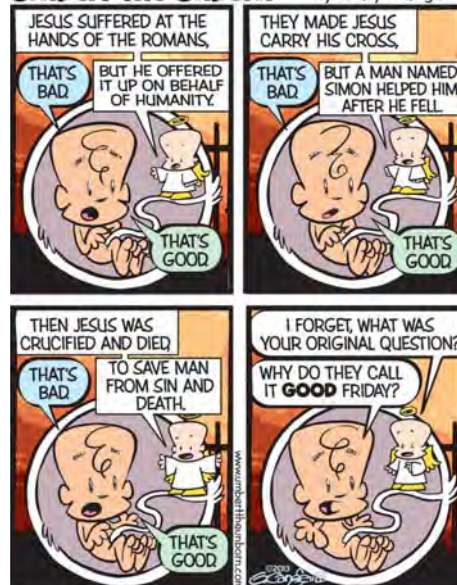
By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

1. Abraham's wife
2. Maxim
3. Speedy
4. Maturing
5. Prevaricate

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

## Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



## The FLOCK by Jean Denton

www.sheepdotcom.com





## Pope's resignation allows for enhanced Lent

**WE ARE LIVING** in a very important time in the life of the Church; the news of Benedict XVI stepping down came as a surprise to all of us. After only eight years he is retiring due to advanced age and the rigors of the job. The timing of the announcement in a particular way is perfect. We are just entering Lent, a season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and what a better thing to be praying and fasting for than for Benedict as he finds rest in retirement and most especially for the Cardinals as they discern the next person to occupy the Chair of Peter.

The season of Lent is full of so much symbolism, meaning and opportunities for deep reflection. The traditions of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in Lent stretch back centuries. While they root us to the most ancient practices of our faith, at the same time they renew us and propel us forward.

Prayer is one of the most foundational elements of the Christian life. At its most basic level it is conversation with God, yet it takes many forms: private personal expressions of words, thoughts, emotions, song and silence; corporate worship and sacramental experiences of Mass and Reconciliation; and ancient meditations of the mysteries of the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, or the Liturgy of the Hours. Whatever the format, prayer draws us closer to our loving God and unites us deeper with him. This Lent as we are spending time in prayer, let us lift up Benedict XVI and the Cardinals.

Fasting is another important aspect of Lent and is, in and of itself, a form of prayer.

Whatever the format, prayer  
draws us closer to our loving God  
and unites us deeper with him.

This Lent as we are spending  
time in prayer let us lift up  
Benedict XVI and the Cardinals.

Fasting rules have changed through the ages, but throughout Church history fasting has been considered sacred. The early Church fasted intensely for two days before the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This fast was later extended and became a 40-day period of fasting leading up to Easter. The current regulations on fasting are these: Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Though fasting can take many forms, the official definition as explained by the U.S. bishops means partaking of only one full meal, plus some food, not equaling another full meal, two other times during the day. In addition to fasting from food, many people fast from, or give up, other things like Facebook, sodas, sweets, or any number of other things for the entire season of Lent.

Whatever form our fasting takes, it is not enough to simply go through the actions of the fast. The pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God, and prayer and fasting together brings us to what Lent is about — a

deeper conversion. So this Lent, as our fast produces hunger, or longing for the things we have given up, let us remember Pope Benedict who has given up much by stepping down, and the next pope who will simultaneously give up much as he takes on much responsibility when he slips on the Fisherman's Ring.

The third part of our Lenten sacrifice is almsgiving. One way of thinking about this is to give more money than we usually do, but Bishop David Ricken says, "It's about more than throwing a few extra dollars in the collection plate; it's about reaching out to others and helping them without question as a way of sharing the experience of God's unconditional love." The Catholic encyclopedia puts it this way: "Any material favor done to assist the needy, and prompted by charity, is almsgiving."

So basically almsgiving is putting our prayer and fasting into concrete action motivated by the love of God. Again, this Lent we can offer up our almsgiving in honor of this transitional time in the papacy.



*Jeff Hedglen is the Campus Minister at UTA and associate director of Young Adult Ministry for the diocese. He is also the primary convener of Camp Fort Worth's many editions.*

In our self-absorbed, social media-saturated society it is possibly more important than ever to heed the words of Jesus from *Matthew 6*:

*But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret, and when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting, but when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden.*

This year our Lenten obligations take on a new significance as the history of our Church is unfolding before our very eyes. Let us join together as the Body of Christ, united as one in Christ Jesus and pray, fast, and offer alms so that the perfect will of God will be revealed to the College of Cardinals as they gather to choose the next successor to Peter.

# Every role is important

Even the small ones

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

**LAST WEEK I WAS IN THE CREW** of the *True North IV*, the 1987 America's Cup 12 metre sailboat, racing in the Cozumel Regatta. We were against the America's Cup winning yacht, *The Stars & Stripes*, and it was kind of a big deal: we won.

My job on the yacht wasn't significant, though. I didn't tack, jibe, trim sails, or grind winches, but since it was my first time on a sailboat, and since I swim about as well as a bag of sand, it was suitably difficult. I held the stopwatch and pushed the button.

But it wasn't just a dozen individuals with more difficult jobs that won the regatta, was it?

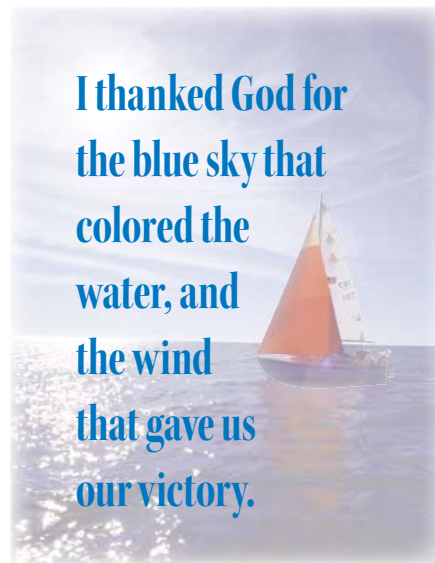
No. Each small position combined to make a big difference.

As a kid, I remember having a real sense of gratitude to God for the blessings he had given me — big and small. It was uncanny for a 10-year-old, but I was joyful to have the specific parents I had, to have been born Catholic, in Pueblo, Colorado, in the United States. I thanked God for the Rocky Mountains, and that I got to live near them. They were all small miracles, and I counted them off on all my little fingers.

Last week, in a racing yacht, in the Gulf of Mexico, I had that realization again. I thanked God for the blue sky that colored the water, and the wind that gave us our victory. Sitting next to my friend Eunice, watching her husband Ron grinding the winch, and my husband Larry pulling the line, I was overwhelmed.

I was content sitting there holding that stopwatch. Eunice was happy handing out drinks. They were small jobs. We weren't doing much. But, "My cup runneth over," I thought.

When Lent comes I inevitably struggle with the idea of doing and not doing, for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ who gave us everything we have and do. Then I remember how unsuccessful I am at giving up my favor-



ite food: chocolate chip ice cream.

So, instead of failing at that, I find the best thing for me is to take-on instead of giving-up. I try to gain a fuller understanding of the suffering Jesus felt, and use that understanding to help — just a little — the suffering some of our brothers and sisters feel. They don't have to be homeless and visibly deprived. They can be sitting right next to us in church.

Doing a small job — every single day of Lent — is bigger than no ice cream.

Recently at the Diocesan Catholic Schools Banquet, Bishop Kevin Vann took the stage to receive the annual Diocesan Leadership Award. In his thank-you speech, he touched the audience by saying, "You have been, you are, you will be always, my family. You taught me how to be a bishop."

Oh, we are such small people! Yet he accredited us with an enormous act.

And then he described his parish school in Springfield, Illinois, and the way Catholic education affected him and his friends as they grew up. "My last year in Springfield," he said, "some of the fellows my age tried to get together — it may have been in a tavern, but

once a month we'd get together for lunch."

The guys were his contemporaries, with a commonality of upbringing, family, and the Catholic faith. The Bishop said the values they learned in grade school, what their parents hoped they would learn and stick with, in fact did, 50 years after the fact.

"A couple of years ago, one of our classmates came down with cancer, was suffering and dying," Bishop Vann said, "and those guys began to take turns caring for him. These were 58 to 60-year old men. And they would sit with him and his family hour after hour. They got whatever he needed, and they prayed with him when he was dying."

Each man in that group helped take care of the classmate, the Bishop said.

Was their effort just a "little" job? Was it like my little job on our boat in the regatta?

No. I was just a time-keeper; those men didn't hold a stopwatch.

They held their friend's hand as he lay dying.

*"Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala... and the disciple... whom he loved..."*

—John:25-26

"I got there for one of the nights right before our classmate died," Bishop Vann said, "and prayed with him and a bunch of those guys. And they saw him off, in a funeral, to eternal life.

"They prayed with him to the end. They took care of him."



*Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish. Her family life column has been recognized repeatedly by the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada.*



# Life-giving love

## in a violent world

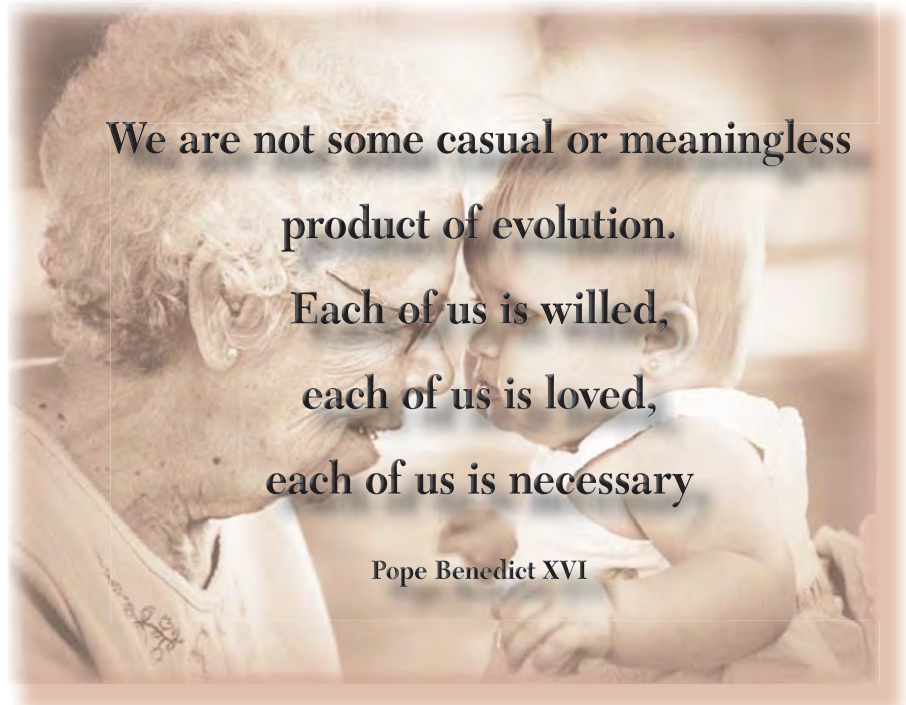
By Kimberly Baker

**MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA SAID THAT ABORTION WAS THE GREATEST THREAT TO PEACE IN THE WORLD. WHEREVER THERE IS VIOLENCE AGAINST LIFE, WHETHER IT BE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, OR EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE, THERE CAN NEVER BE TRUE PEACE.**

Loss of respect for life increases the cycle of violence in society. Every time an abortion happens, there are two victims of violence: the baby and the mother. The promotion of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide supports the idea that the lives of the elderly and sick are “not worth living.” This idea, along with a culture that places a priority on personal gratification over helping those in need, encourages those who are younger to view elderly people as burdens, placing them at greater risk for abuse and neglect.

Respect for life is fostered in families, most particularly in a person’s childhood experiences and formative years. How important it is to educate children and young people from an early age about their personal dignity, and to awaken in them sensitivity for the dignity of others! One need only look at the typical school playground to see children who are ridiculed, bullied, or shunned by stronger or more popular children, either because they have special needs, uncommon physical characteristics, or other attributes. Sometimes these children experience the bullying and shunning of others even into adulthood, and then the bullied victims sometimes respond in violent or inappropriate ways in their local communities.

In contrast to the violence of the anti-life mentality, respect for life builds peace. Respect for life comes from acknowledging the dignity of each human being. It is rooted in love, which each of us needs to live. A person without love is at war with



**We are not some casual or meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary**

Pope Benedict XVI

himself and the world, causing violence and divisions in the most intimate relationships and extending to the wider society. Love affirms the profound respect and God-given dignity of each person.

In his 2013 Message on the World Day of Peace on Jan. 1, Pope Benedict XVI highlighted the importance of respect for life for peace in the world:

“The path to the attainment of the common good and to peace is above all that of respect for human life in all its many aspects, beginning with its conception, through its development and up to its natural end. True peacemakers, then, are those who love, defend and promote human life in all its dimensions, personal, communitarian, and transcendent. Life in its fullness is the height of peace. Anyone who loves peace cannot tolerate attacks and crimes

against life.”

Disregard for human life — in whatever form this may take — does not make the world more “convenient” or “free.” Instead of solving problems, it only causes more pain and division in society. All of us, whatever our calling, can contribute to promoting a culture of life through our own personal daily witness, radiating Christ’s love by upholding respect for others. When you help another person discover his own dignity, you are helping to build a more peaceful world, one life at a time.

*Kimberly Baker is a staff assistant for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. For more information on the bishops’ pro-life activities, visit [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife).*

# Clueless In the Universe

Are we missing God's hints

By David Mills

## SHE WAS SITTING ON THE COUCH JUST A LITTLE CLOSER TO THE YOUNG MAN THAN WAS

**NORMAL** and staring into his eyes as he talked much longer than people usually do. When he mentioned a movie he wanted to see, she said she'd like to see it too. When he described a place he'd visited, she said she wished she could go there as well.

This went on for quite a while, till I wanted to hiss into that clueless young man's ear, "Just ask her out, you idiot." The poor young woman signaled her interest in every way she could, but the fellow just missed it. It was one of those times I understood what my grandmother meant when she said, "I wanted to wring his neck."

"In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves." This was the end of Carl Sagan's remark about the "pale blue dot" on which we live, a remark quoted with reverence by NASA's "solar system ambassador" for New York.

No hint, says Sagan. He's right, says the ambassador. They're both very definite about the emptiness — the godlessness — of the cosmos, but maybe they're just as clueless about the hints God leaves throughout the cosmos as the young man on the couch was about the young woman's romantic interest.

God seems to leave hints, what the sociologist Peter Berger once called "rumors of angels." The cosmos itself, for one. Why is there something and not nothing, as the philosophers have put it? Isn't that a hint that someone made it?

Goodness, especially heroic goodness, is another one. If people manage to be good and some people manage to be saints, that's a hint that there is someone

*God seems to leave hints, what the sociologist Peter Berger once called "rumors of angels." The cosmos itself, for one. Why is there something and not nothing, as the philosophers have put it? Isn't that a hint that someone made it?*

perfectly good. And our constant search for meaning is a third. If we search for meaning, maybe we search for it because we know an ultimate meaning can be found. The experience of joy is yet another. If we feel joy, maybe we feel it because at heart the universe is built on joy.

These are only hints, not arguments. They don't prove that God exists but they should make us look for him. Someone else may interpret them in a different way. But still, we see them, even if Sagan and the ambassador don't.

Yet they still declare "No hints." It's this assertion of omniscience, this claim to know with such certainty that the universe is empty of the supernatural, that we need to challenge. It's the attitude behind so much of what the fellow I've called "the atheist at the water cooler" believes.

If he doesn't see it, he thinks, it's not there, and the rest of us are just fooling ourselves when we send our prayers heavenward. He's always so confident about it that sometimes we begin to wonder if he's right.

He, Sagan and the ambassador, shouldn't be so confident. They're not omniscient. They don't really know the universe is empty. They're human beings like every other human being and human beings spend much of their lives as clueless as the young man on

the couch. Maybe they've just missed the hints.

Drivers don't always see the shining red lights that keep them from hitting other cars. People walking in the park miss the signs saying "wet paint" on the bench they then sit on. Almost no one reads the long warnings that the drugstore includes with their medicine, which might well say something like "Don't eat grapefruit while taking these pills because if you do, really, really bad things will happen to you."

The young man may have felt, as young men often do, that this gorgeous young woman couldn't possibly be interested in him and missed every hint she sent him that she was. Maybe Sagan and his peers don't think that man is worthy of a God's attention and therefore don't notice when God tries to get their attention. Maybe they don't want to notice. Maybe they ignore the clues because they don't want to solve the mystery.

Are you completely sure, we might say, when someone insists the universe gives us no hint of God's presence, that you're really looking?

*David Mills is executive editor of First Things ([www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com)).*



# The Intelligence Inside of the Aging Process

Aging is a transformation in beauty and biology

By Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI

## WHAT CAN GOD AND NATURE

have had in mind when they designed the aging process? Why is it that just when our mental prowess, our human maturity, and our emotional freedom are at their peak, the body begins to fall apart?

Our faith, of course, because it opens us to a perspective beyond our biological lives, sheds some light on these questions, though it doesn't always give us a language within which to grasp more reflectively what is happening to us in the aging process. Sometimes a secular perspective can be helpful and that is the case here.

James Hillman, in a brilliant book on aging entitled, *The Force of Character and Lasting Life*, takes up these questions. What did God and nature have in mind when designing the aging process? He answers with a metaphor: The best wines have to be aged in cracked old barrels. The last years of our lives are meant to mellow the soul and most everything inside our biology conspires together to ensure that this happens. The soul must be properly aged before it leaves. There's intelligence inside of life, he asserts, that intends aging just as it intends growth in youth. It's a huge mistake to read the signs of aging as indications of dying rather than as initiations into another way of life. Each physical diminishment (from why we have to get up at night to go to the bathroom to why our skin sags and goes dry) is designed to mature the soul. And they do their work without our consent, relentlessly and ruthlessly.

The aging process, he asserts, eventually turns us all into monks and that, indeed, is its plan, just as it once pumped all those excessive hormones into our bodies to drive us out of our homes at puberty. And God again is in on this conspiracy. Aging isn't always pleasant or easy; but



there's a rhyme and reason to the process. Aging deliteralizes biology. The soul finally gets to trump the body and it rises to the fore: "We can imagine aging as a transformation in beauty as much as in biology," writes Hillman. "The old are like images on display that transpose biological life into imagination and art. The old become strikingly memorable, ancestral representations, characters in the play of civilization, each a unique, irreplaceable figure of value. Aging: an art form?"

Increasingly, as we age, our task is not productivity, but reflection, not utility, but character. In Hillman's words: "Earlier years must focus on getting things done, while later years consider what was done and how." The former is a function of generativity, we are meant to give our lives away; the latter is a function of dying, we are also meant to give our deaths away.

And the aging process raises a second series of questions: What value do the elderly have once their productive years are over? Indeed the same question might be asked of anyone who cannot be useful and productive in a practical sense: What is the value of someone living with Alzheimer's? What is the value of people continuing to live on in palliative care when there is no chance of recovery or improvement and they have already slipped away from us mentally? What is the value of the life of a person who is so mentally or physically challenged that by normal standards he or she

cannot contribute anything?

Again, Hillman's insights are a valuable supplement to the perspectives offered us through our faith. For Hillman, what aging and disability bring into the world is character. Not just their own. They help give character to others. Thus, he writes: "Productivity is too narrow a measure of usefulness, disability too cramping a notion of helplessness. An old woman may be helpful simply as a figure valued for her character. Like a stone at the bottom of a riverbed, she may do nothing but stay still and hold her ground, but the river has to take her into account and alter its flow because of her. An older man by his sheer presence plays his part as a character in the drama of the family and neighborhood. He has to be considered, and patterns adjusted simply because he is there. His character brings particular qualities to every scene, adds intricacy and depth by representing the past and the dead. When all the elderly are removed to retirement communities, the river flows smoothly back home. No disruptive rocks. Less character too."

Aging and disability need to be regarded aesthetically. We are a culture that does everything it can to deny, delay, and disguise aging. We put our elders away into separate homes, away from mainstream life, tucked away, with no disruptive rocks for us to deal with. We are also a culture that is beginning to talk more and more about euthanasia, defining value purely by utility. If Hillman is right, and he is, then we are paying a high price for this, we have less character and less color.

*Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He can be contacted through his website [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).*

## SEEKING GOD'S PATH VOCATIONS

# Lent — a perfect time for discernment

By Fr. Isaac Orozco  
Director of Vocations

Lent is upon us and some things come to mind as I ponder what might be going through a discerner's heart and mind. Those who are considering a vocation to the priesthood are about to walk into a gold mine of spiritual opportunity since entering into Christ's Passion with the Church is a powerful set-up for what is to follow, namely Easter and the Resurrection. The question is, "How do I make the most of Lent, and is there any special advice to take in?"

For the purpose of this article I would like to offer an angle that isn't exactly obvious, but on the other hand, isn't exactly original. The originality of the following approach has to do with integrating the economic concept of "opportunity cost." I like the term "opportunity cost" because it requires that one understand the notion of sacrifice. It's an economic concept that involves measuring the lost value of a particular choice when two or more choices are mutually exclusive.

When calculating the opportunity cost of a decision, one has to be willing to forgo or sacrifice other possibilities. For example, I can choose to either be Catholic or Agnostic but I can't be both. One reality excludes the other,



and so I am forced to choose.

This isn't to say that all decisions are mutually exclusive. But many are, so when those decisions bear down on me, forcing me to choose, I know that I can fall back on a method of reasoning that weighs the lost benefit of saying yes to one thing and no to another. The lost benefit that results from my decision is the opportunity cost.

Some people hate being forced to choose and can't seem to stomach the idea of saying no, nervously looking for a win-win solution in every deliberation. They might resent and deny that some, and in fact many, choices necessarily exclude other oppor-

tunities. But when it comes to the spiritual life, we can all relax since every no is really a yes! When as a Catholic I say no to Satan I am really saying yes to Jesus and that is quite alright. So if for some reason I were to resent the fact that in saying yes to Jesus that I had to say no to the devil, I might want to rethink my aversion to saying no.

As we journey into Lent, the liturgical season for conversion, it is crucial to make a list of those things to which we want to say yes. This is because if we don't have an idea of what we are prepared to embrace, Lent risks being reduced to a time when we say no to soda, television, chocolate, or

whatever.

It's alright to give up things during Lent, and it is actually recommended, but every sacrifice isn't just a no. In sacrifice we encounter a benefit as well. Lent actually presents us with opportunities to not only rule things out but to be appreciative for the upshots of grace that belong to every decision.

However, in the area of discernment, people often get stuck as they calculate what might be lost, thinking that they might be giving up a big career or something along these lines. What is often overlooked is the opportunity cost of not pursuing a vocation to ministry in the Church.

In point of fact, for those in whom a desire to minister is implanted, the opportunity cost is far greater when they decide against discernment. Missing an opportunity for discernment might lead to spiritual atrophy, personal confusion, and regret. It is my hope that for all those discerners paralyzed by the thoughts of what they might lose in discerning a call to ministry, a serene and wise contemplation of the "opportunity cost" of not discerning should also be considered. This Lent is a great time to consider both.





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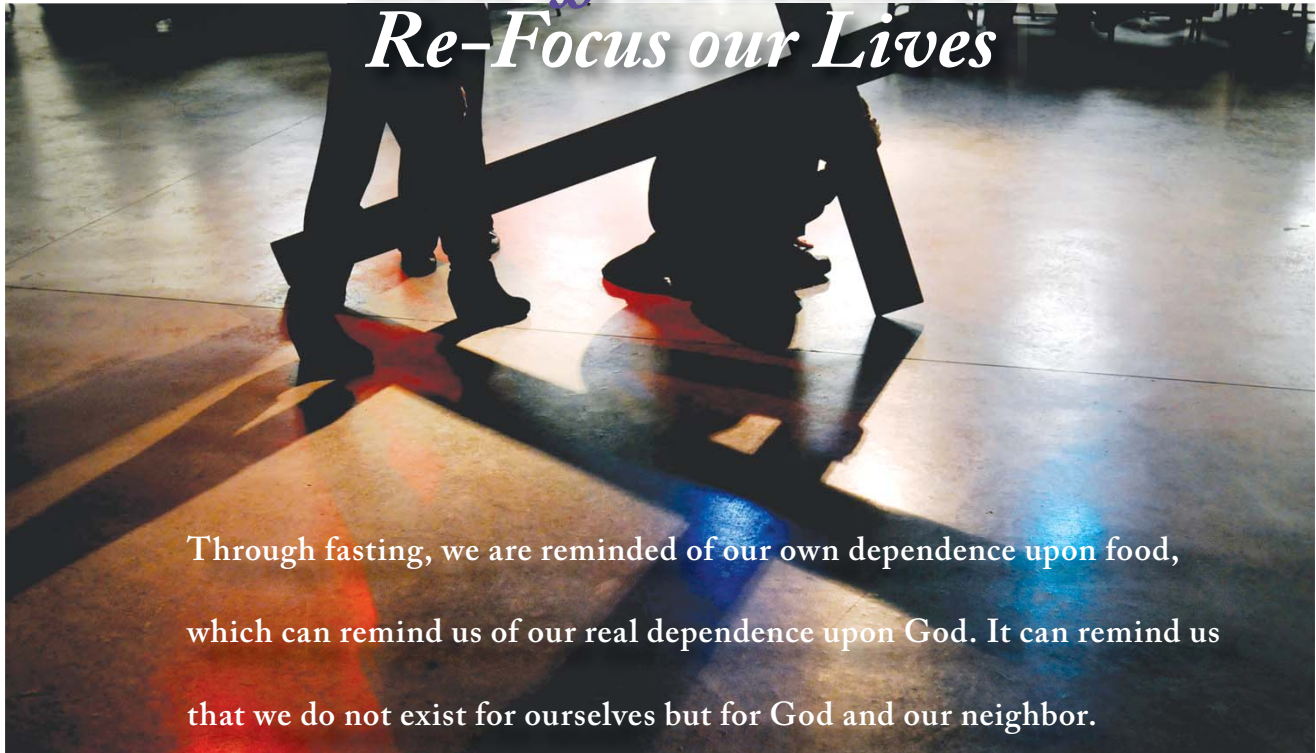


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# Lent offers chance to Re-Focus our Lives



Through fasting, we are reminded of our own dependence upon food, which can remind us of our real dependence upon God. It can remind us that we do not exist for ourselves but for God and our neighbor.

In this CNS file photo youths perform the Living Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of the Americas Church in Rochester, New York. (CNS photo/Mike Crupi, CATHOLIC COURIER)

## Fasting helps us turn toward God

BY FATHER JONATHAN WALLIS  
DIRECTOR OF CATECHESIS

I don't like to fast. Lent starts with a fast, and it is something I dread. However, I've realized something obvious: I'm not the only one fasting on Ash Wednesday. I'm not the only one called by the Church to remember that I am dust, and to dust I shall return. I'm not the only one called to say "no" to myself and "yes" to Jesus Christ and his Church.

Fasting, which is a form of voluntary suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ, serves a very important end. Pope Benedict, in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*, reflects upon suffering as a gateway to learn hope and love:

*It is when we attempt to avoid suffering by withdrawing from anything that might involve hurt, when we try to spare ourselves the effort and pain*

*of pursuing truth, love, and goodness, that we drift into a life of emptiness in which there may be almost no pain, but the dark sensation of meaninglessness and abandonment is all the greater (37).*

Through fasting, we are reminded of our own dependence upon food, which can remind us of our real dependence upon God. It can remind us that we do not exist for ourselves but for God and our neighbor. It is ironic, but the voluntary acceptance of suffering and self-denial can lead to a greater love of God and our neighbor.

In the season of Lent we are called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. These are recommended that we might see ourselves more and more in the light of the Holy Spirit; that we might turn away from sin and toward God and his Church, who is the true source of life, love, and hope.

*It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it, and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love" (37).*

The irony of Lent is that through suffering and self-sacrifice, our capacity to love is increased. Suffering teaches us that we are not the center of the universe and that center is Jesus Christ. Our small sufferings unite us to the cross of Jesus Christ and give us a glimpse of the infinite love he has for us.

May God grant you a holy Lent and a joyous Easter. May this be a time to grow in love of Jesus Christ and of his Church.

*Father Jonathan Wallis, director of Catechesis for the diocese. pastors St. Rita Parish Ranger; Holy Rosary Parish, Cisco; St. John Parish, Strawn; and St. Francis Xavier Parish, Eastland.*



## *Re-Boot your spiritual life in Lent*

By JEFF HEDGLEN  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

There are times when I wish setting things right in my life was as easy as restarting my computer. When my personal computer is running a bit slow, or won't connect to the Internet, or just isn't working the way it is supposed to work — and especially when it completely locks up — all we have to do is do a “re-boot” and most of the time everything gets reset and things are back to normal. If only resetting the spiritual life was as easy.

A while back at a daily Mass, Father Timothy Perkins from St. Peter the Rock Anglican Ordinariate Community was reflecting on the parable of the Sower and the Seed. The one where the Sower throws seeds for planting and some fell on the path and the birds came and ate it up; other seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil; others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. He observed that we all like to think we are the fertile soil. But in truth, he continued, our souls have each of the types of soil delineated in Jesus' teaching.

Who among us has not, at some point in our lives, been faced with a temptation, knew the right thing to do, but then gave in to the temptation, just like the seed thrown on the pathway that is



Cardinal Francis E. George distributes ashes to worshippers during Ash Wednesday Mass at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago March 9. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

eaten up by the birds? Or who has not in some superficial way embraced the faith, only to abandon it when things get tough, like the seed that fell on rocky ground where it had little soil and withered in the noonday sun? Again, which of us has not been choked by the sin in our lives, or been the one causing others to be choked by sin?

To be sure, we also have been rich soil that has borne much fruit in friendships, family, and works of charity and piety. But to be so shortsighted as to not recognize the other types of soil in our lives is to not be completely honest.

This reality is exactly what makes the season of Lent so perfect. In the jour-

ney of the Church year, I think Lent is kind of like a re-boot. We slow down, remove some of the more ceremonial aspects of our liturgical expressions and focus in on the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which is the absolute center of all of our beliefs.

Another complication in this reality of the various “soils” in our soul, is that we may actually have all of the soil types active in our soul at the same time. One area of our life may be receiving the faith deeply and making a significant impact for the Kingdom of God, but other areas may be struggling to embrace the seed, or we may not be doing enough in a par-

ticular area to feed and grow the seed of faith, or perhaps there is another area where we are avoiding God's word, for we know what He would say and we don't want to listen.

Whatever the condition of our soil, the Church offers us this season to take a step back and be honest with ourselves. But we are not left to fend for ourselves. We are offered opportunities for reconciliation, even Lenten missions, retreats, or days of reflection.

But to make this re-boot effective, we have to make an honest assessment of our spiritual lives. The goal of self-assessment and examinations of conscience is not to point out our failures and cause self-loathing, rather the purpose is to reveal areas where growth is needed. John Paul II in many places states the uniting of our human struggle to the cross of Jesus allows us to connect with the healing power of the cross. Wherever our soil is in need of nurturing, we have only to look to the cross of Jesus and invite the Crucified Christ into this area of our lives and then work with Him through the suffering journey, all the way to Easter and resurrection.

*Jeff Hedglen is Campus Minister at the University of Texas at Arlington and associate director for Young Adult Ministry for the diocese. He is a regular columnist and longtime contributor to the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC.*

## *The Fourth Station released my grief*

By DENISE BOSSERT  
NTC COLUMNIST

I have prayed the Stations of the Cross many times since my conversion. But the time that took me most off-guard occurred at the end of Lent 2012. My husband wanted to have an open house on Easter Sunday. I agreed to it — reluctantly. I spent hours preparing for guests and resenting it. I had to get out of the house, and praying the Stations was a pretty good excuse.

I wasn't expecting it to be a moment of grace.

When I heard the story of a mother who watched her Son die, I heard it with new ears. Immediately, I thought of another time, a time long before my conversion in 2005. After my non-sacramental marriage ended, I met John. He had no children of his own, and I desperately wanted to have a child with him, but an earlier tubal ligation made it impossible.

John and I went to the orientation meeting for prospective in vitro fertilization (IVF) couples. The medical team explained that Catholics might have issues with the process, but counselors were available to dispel their concerns. I wasn't Catholic, and my own faith community had no official response to IVF. So, we charged forward.

It was a Monday during Lent 1998 when my husband and I drove to St. Louis for



This is a snapshot of the Fourth Station of the Cross at Denise Bossert's home parish, Immaculate Heart of Mary, in New Melle, Missouri, in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. (Photo by Denise Bossert)

the final stage of the IVF process.

We arrived at the hospital, and I was prepped for embryo transfer. Three fertilized embryos had successfully developed. Two other embryos had stopped dividing. I asked the reproductive assistant if that meant the embryos had died. She wouldn't say the word "dead." She just kept saying they wouldn't divide anymore, but that we should focus on the three embryos that remained.

Later that day, John and I talked about how quiet the room was and how the lights were strangely dim — for a surgical room. We spoke with the doctor and technician for a minute, all in hushed voices,

and then they asked if we would like to see the embryos.

I walked over to the microscope and peered inside. At first, I didn't see anything. Then, I saw them. Three little embryos.

We had come face-to-face with the earliest moments of our children's lives. We had peered into something that only God should see. In that moment I realized that we were treading on something sacred.

Only one baby survived the transfer. By the time our daughter began kindergarten, I was in the process of converting to the Catholic faith. I studied the Church's teachings on morality, and I realized how greatly I had

sinned. I confessed my sin, but I didn't experience grief over my lost children.

Last year at Stations of the Cross, the grief came suddenly.

I had prayed the Stations of the Cross a number of times during Lent — especially that Lent. This was just one more time — I thought.

But as soon as we hit the fourth station, I experienced grief. Overwhelming grief. Four babies were gone, sacrificed for my purposes, so that I could have what I wanted, so that I could remedy my previous sin of sterilization. My fault, my fault, my most grievous fault.

Lent takes us off-guard. And it should.

We step into our own tombs and face our sins. Like St. Peter, we say, depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful (wo)man, but Lord, if you wish it, you can make me clean (*Luke 5:8-13*).

And then, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus says, "I do will it. Be made clean. Go now, and become my faithful witnesses."

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



## *'Cast thy burden on the Lord'*

BY MARY MORRELL  
MANAGING EDITOR,  
THE MONITOR,  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

Lately, at the end of a busy day, on my very long drive home from work, I've been turning off the car radio for a welcome time of silence. But, inevitably, interrupting the silence are the soulful tune and lyrics from an Otis Redding song that keeps running through my head: "Oh, she may get weary, young girls they do get weary..."

And every time I find myself getting choked up and weepy.

"What is your problem?" I would ask myself — as if I had no clue.

Finally, my state of denial was shattered when I stopped by one of our parishes for a few moments of prayer and noticed a large wicker basket hanging on the wall, brimming with white slips of paper. A plaque on the wall identified it as the "Parish Burden Basket."

In that moment, sitting in the last pew, I began to cry. Otis' words were making complete sense.

While I may not be so young anymore, I am surely feeling very, very weary and weighed down with burdens.

It stems mostly from the fact that life offers no guarantees — about health, about finances, about family life. The reality may be that we



Palms are engulfed in flames during a palm-burning ceremony at Holy Cross Church in Nesconset, New York, in 2012. Ashes from the fire were to be used three days later in Ash Wednesday services at the church.

(CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC)

have done everything in our power to raise our children with love and faith, and things go wrong; we may have made a concerted effort to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy, only to have someone diagnosed with a serious illness; we may work hard to be financially secure only to be hit with any number of storms that threaten our future.

Eventually, the burdens begin to weigh us down, draining our energy and our joy, especially when our best efforts to meet the challenges fall short.

And therein lies the real problem — our need to do it ourselves, to be in control.

Our faith calls us to, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5-6). How well we are able to do this not

only affects our spiritual and emotional health, it frames the power of our witness as disciples of Christ. Certainly a disciple devoid of hope and joy, one who fails to trust in the Lord's goodness and mercy, will have a hard time leading others to Christ.

For me, God's exclamation point came in the mail yesterday when a long-time reader sent a card with the lyrics to a lovely, old hymn:

*"The weary pilgrim on life's pathway — struggling on beneath thy load, hear these words of consolation, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord.'... Are thy tired feet unsteady, does thy lamp no light afford, is thy cross too great and heavy? 'Cast thy burden on the Lord.'... And He will strengthen thee, sustain and comfort thee — 'Cast thy burden on the Lord.'"*

That hymn inspired in me a new Lenten resolution — giving up control; a challenging sacrifice I pray will prepare my heart for the "giving over" that is a true surrender to God's love and will for me.

And with God's musical whispers in my ear, I believe the only way for this to happen is to recognize that I can't make it happen on my own.

Only with God's grace will this be a penitential act that stretches my ability to surrender everything to God, and one that will continue to grow my relationship with God throughout this Year of Faith.

*Mary Regina Morrell and her husband are the parents of six adult sons and live in Colonia, New Jersey.*



Cherie Haefner and her husband, Leland, serve oncology nurse Kathleen Gordon a warm meal courtesy of Noreen's Nourishment.

## *A tiny infant's inspiration gave 'Noreen's Nourishment' wings and continues to give hope and comfort to many*

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

**NOREEN FITZGERALD WAS TOO YOUNG TO LEARN BIBLE STORIES OR RECITE PRAYERS, BUT IN THE EYES OF SOME ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISHIONERS, THE BABY GIRL WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF 10 MONTHS, IS A SAINT.**

"She lived less than a year, yet look at the ministry she inspired," marvels Leland Haefner as families began to file into a hospitality room at Cook Children's Medical Center. "It gives hope and comfort to so many people."

Haefner and his wife, Cherie, are longtime volunteers for Noreen's Nourishment — a program that provides a weekly meal for

the parents and siblings of young cancer patients hospitalized at the pediatric facility. Every Sunday for the past 11 years, members of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington have prepared, delivered, and served hot casserole dishes, meat entrees, vegetable trays, fruit bowls, and desserts to families who spend weeks on the oncology floor while their youngsters undergo chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

Two hundred parishioners participate in the ministry by making financial contributions, cooking, purchasing drinks and other supplies, or through prayer.

"To me, coming here is a blessing," says Haefner, who delivers and sets up the buffet the first Sunday of each month. "It keeps me aware that God is present in all of us. That's why, in my mind, Noreen's a saint. The Catholic Church will never canonize her, yet she taught our community what it means to reach out to those in need."

Noreen's mother, Lori Fitzgerald, started the ministry after her baby died at Cook Children's on August, 14, 1999 — four months after she was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive liver tumor. Comforting her in-

fant daughter through four major surgeries and five rounds of chemotherapy was grueling, but there was another side to the heartbreak Lori never forgot. Caring for a sick baby during an extended hospital stay meant neglecting an older child.

"You stop working, so there's no income, and you have an ill youngster who is very needy, so you don't shop, and there's no time to prepare meals for the family," explains Fitzgerald, describing the pyramid of stress. "Neighbors brought over food when Noreen first got sick but, unfortunately, cancer lasts longer



than two weeks.”

A guilt-filled moment of realization inspired the ministry. After spending the night at home because she wasn't feeling well, Lori, who was pregnant, raced back to the hospital early the next morning with eight-year-old daughter, Joy.

“Joy went to the playroom but kept coming back to tell me she was hungry,” Lori remembers. “I was busy taking care of Noreen, so I just shooed her back to the playroom.”

After repeated visits to her sister's room asking for breakfast, the tired mom lashed out, “Joy, what do you want me to do? Have you seen me go to the grocery store lately?”

The sadness blanketing her daughter's face as she closed the hospital room door is indelibly set in Lori's memory.

“She was just a little girl who wanted breakfast, and I had no way to feed her,” she says, quietly recalling her desperation. “Not being able to feed your healthy child, yourself, or the rest of the family, is a struggle that shouldn't be there.”

After Noreen died, the grieving mother resolved to make life

easier for the families of other young cancer patients. An early attempt to begin a hospital meal ministry failed, but Fitzgerald's determination never waned. Two years later, with the encouragement of fellow parishioner Debbie Dixon and the approval of St. Vincent pastor Father Tom Craig, Noreen's Nourishment hosted a pizza night for the oncology nurses and families at Cook Children's.

Jesse Minton delivered those boxes of pizza Feb. 10, 2002 and continues to help manage the ministry along with wife, Amy. Today, steaming pans of lasagna, brisket, and macaroni and cheese feed 35 people a week, including the nursing staff.

“Several cooks make something that will feed 10-12 people, and it's brought to the church office on Sunday before 2 p.m.,” explains Minton, a Catholic convert who says the ministry affirms his faith. “Drivers take the food to the hospital and set up the buffet. Everything is cleaned up by 4:30 p.m.”

A rotating, uncomplicated schedule encourages participation.

“This is a ministry that lets busy parishioners, who don't have

a lot of time, do some good work for others,” he adds. “People help out when they can.”

Nurses tell parents about the weekly meal provided by St. Vincent de Paul during the admission process. The healthful respite is appreciated and acknowledged in thank you notes and kind words.

“This is the first meal we've eaten together since Christmas,” confides the parent of a 19-year-old cancer patient hospitalized since December. “Our daughter is in isolation, so it's a blessing to come here and spend some time together.”

After enjoying a quick bite, the vigilant mom and dad returned to the hospital room and sent their two hungry, teenage boys to the lounge for an early dinner. A hot, home cooked meal sustains the entire family, the

wearily mom says.

“And you feel the love that went into it,” she adds. “You know somebody prepared the meal with a prayer for you and that's comforting, too.”

Lori Fitzgerald started Noreen's Nourishment to help others, but says the thriving ministry is also a balm for her own grieving heart. Losing a child can destroy a parent. Knowing her daughter's illness and death inspired a program that makes caregiving easier for other families battling cancer is a “huge” consolation.

“Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a canonized saint in the Catholic Church,” Lori admits. “Leave it to God to give you greater than your heart's desire. He made me the mother of a saint.”



The St. Vincent de Paul Church ministry provides Sunday dinners weekly to families of young cancer patients at Cook Children's Medical



# CELEBRATING SCHOOL

## All Saints service beautifies city block

By Joan Kurkowski-G  
Photos by Joan Kurkowski

A joint project of the National Association and the U.S. Bishops, Catholic Schools Week offers an opportunity to celebrate faith and service — qualities that set us apart. Book fairs, career days, and service projects helped throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth share and value to society. Though Catholic Schools of the diocese are a sampling of the urban and suburban Worth area as well as those in



When All Saints Principal Christina Mendez wanted to convey the value of a Catholic education to her students, she came up with a project that would inspire them and impress the community.

As part of Catholic Schools Week activities, the 120 youngsters enrolled at the Fort Worth North Side campus slipped on plastic gloves and carried garbage bags as they picked up litter on their playground and surrounding property.

“Part of Catholic Schools Week is celebrating what we do, and one of the pillars of Catholic schools is service,” she told the assembly of young trash collectors before they headed outdoors.

As younger students gathered bits of newspaper and plastic that had blown against the schoolyard fence, eighth-graders journeyed past the gate to an adjacent field strewn with cans and refuse from nearby businesses. Children were instructed not to touch

broken glass or needles. The second grade First Communion class straightened prayer hymnals and cleaned pews inside All Saints Church.

“We do service for each other and in service to the community,” Mendez explained. “By community, I mean not only our city but our church.”

Before a morning rain shower fell, All Saints students managed to fill a dozen trash bags with debris cleared from the property. First-graders were pleased with their efforts to remove rocks and leaves surrounding a statue of the Blessed Mother.

“Jesus created the world and cleaning it makes him happy,” enthused Adan Soldana, a first-grader. “It keeps the world healthy.”



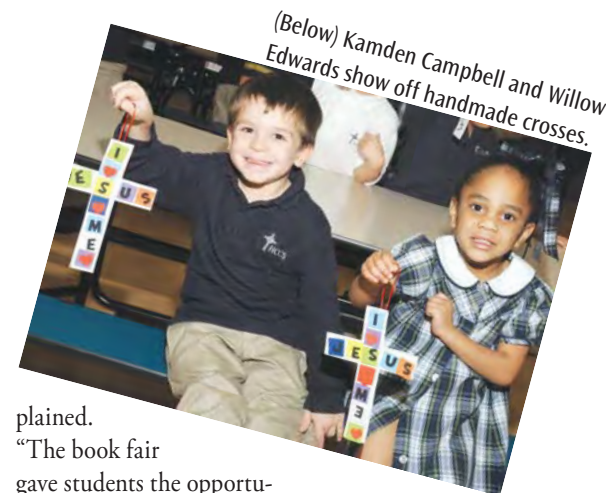
All Saints students learn the value of service to others during Catholic Schools Week.



## Holy Cross book fair connects students to faith

Although Holy Cross School in Frisco opened its doors for the first time last August, finding ways to celebrate its first Catholic Schools Week wasn't a problem for Principal Marie Pishko. A seasoned educator, she drew on her experience at other schools and decided to offer parents and students a Catholic book fair.

The Pauline Sisters, a religious order dedicated to using communication to spread the Good News, provided merchandise for the sale. Parents and their youngsters made selections from a variety of prayer missals, First Communion kits, movies, and age appropriate “Lives of the Saints” books. Pishko learned about the Pauline Sisters’ media service at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference. “We talk about faith every day,” the principal ex-



(Below) Kamden Campbell and Willow Edwards show off handmade crosses.

plained. “The book fair gave students the opportunity to buy things that will help them connect to their prayer lives.”

Finding Catholic reading material and movies isn't easy or convenient for busy families. “We had a tremendous response and hope to expand the book fair next year,” Pishko added. “Catholic education is a wonderful gift to pass on to our children. Holy Cross School is blessed to be part of that.”

Holy Cross teacher Lori Miller helps Angelina





# NG CATHOLIC S WEEK

Gillen / Correspondent  
-Gillen & Donna Ryckaert

onal Catholic Education  
S. Conference of Catholic  
Week (Jan. 27-Feb. 2) was an  
y, high academic standards  
et Catholic education  
y, intergenerational activities,  
e 20 Catholic schools in  
owcase their excellence  
we couldn't get to all the  
se, we sought to give a  
burban schools in the Fort  
n other parts of the diocese.



Cherub choir members  
Amanda Wisker and  
Rachel Renner sing  
at ICC's all-school  
Mass.



Fr. Manuel Holguin greets Immaculate Conception students after Mass.

## DVD celebrates Nolan's 50-year history

As part of its observance of Catholic Schools Week, Nolan Catholic High School premiered "A Golden Time To Be A Viking" — a DVD chronicling the 50-year history of NCHS.

Guests walked the "red carpet" to peruse the school's new alumni hall before gathering in the auditorium to watch the video. Early photos of the Bridge Street campus and interviews with former students and faculty featured in the DVD, offered insight into the school's traditions and growth.

Paula Nelson Jackson was a member of

the school's first graduating class in 1962. Her grandson, sophomore Lane Proctor, is the third generation of her family to attend Nolan. His mother, Jennifer MacDonald Proctor, was Nolan's salutatorian in 1983.

"Catholic schools saved my life," Jackson said, reflecting on her years attending Our Lady of Victory and Nolan. "I grew up in an interesting family. The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur were wonderful to the children they taught. They just loved you and took care of you. It gave my life stability."

Rosemary Hayes  
finds her picture  
on Nolan's  
Alumni Wall.



Fr. Richard Villa, SM, Nolan Catholic president visits with Sabrina Evans, Jacob Hughes, Sophie Kings, Ben Wagner, and Gabi Richard before the DVD premiere.

OLV students Mattie Travis and John Paul Lopez toss pennies into a donation jar held by Gabby Renteria and Ross Herberger. (Photo courtesy of Our Lady of Victory School)



## Pennies from OLV benefit patients

Pennies for Patients is helping students at Our Lady of Victory School pray for youngsters and adults battling life threatening illnesses. The Catholic Schools Week activity raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. A representative from the organization visited the Hemphill Street campus to explain how fundraising campaigns help researchers find a cure for disease.

Students deposited their donations

in classroom change jars.

"It's important to be the hands and feet of Jesus and help others when we can," said Holly Smith, the Student Council advisor who coordinated the project.

Last year, a similar program raised \$1,000 for the Ronald McDonald House charity.

"It teaches children that when we bless others, God blesses us," Smith added.



## Career Day aims OMM students toward tomorrow

Our Mother of Mercy first- and second-graders experienced just how quickly Fort Worth firefighters respond to an emergency call. The Station 5 fire truck was on campus for Career Day when 911 dispatchers radioed an alarm. Within seconds the firemen boarded the truck and were on their way.

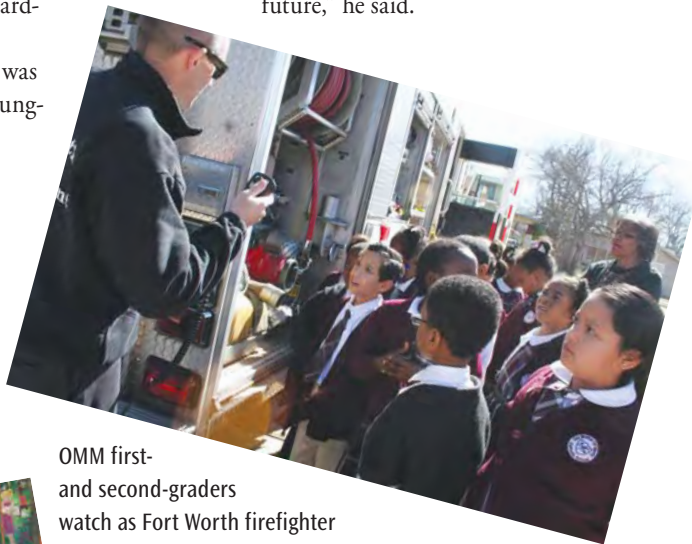
Learning about different professions was one of the ways Our Mother of Mercy youngsters celebrated Catholic Schools Week.

“It makes a connection for the kids between what we’re doing every day and what our ultimate goal for them is,” says Principal Erin Vader. “It allows them to see different careers and lets them think more creatively about what they can do with their lives.”

Eighth-grader Devin Glenn was

most impressed with a presentation given by Doc Gallagher — a radio personality who gives listeners financial advice.

“It taught me that if I study and work hard I’ll have a lot of options for my future,” he said.

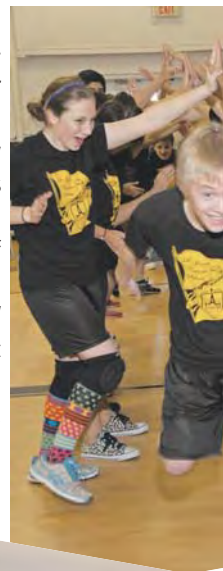


OMM first- and second-graders watch as Fort Worth firefighter David Knox points out the features of his Station 5 firetruck during Career Day.



## CELEBRATING SCHOOL

St. Joseph eighth-grader Peyton Flaherty receives a spirited send-off before a faculty / student volleyball game.



Sr. Angela Pham spikes the ball.

## Sacred Heart says, ‘thank you!’

For students at Sacred Heart Elementary and High School in Muenster, part of Catholic Schools Week meant saying “thank you.”

“Our volunteers and alumni association raises between \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year for us, and other people in different ways support our ministry,” explains Principal Rafael Rondón.

To express their appreciation for the gift of a Catholic education, youngsters write “thank you” letters to their parents and other supporters in the community. The median income in Muenster is \$30,000 and for many families, tuition payments are a sacrifice.

“Faith is important to our families and they want to convey that to their youngsters,” Rondón added.

Students present “thank you” notes to their parents and Sacred Heart upperclassman personally deliver letters of appreciation to local businesses and community leaders during Catholic Schools Week. The gesture leaves recipients with a positive impression of the school and the students receive a lesson in shared commitment.

“Writing the letters gives them an opportunity to reflect on how we depend on each other to make this ministry work,” the principal says. “Our theology teaches we are all members of the Body of Christ. Our lives are integrally tied to one another.”



Sacred Heart seniors John Paul Hesse and Kaitlin Hesse deliver a thank you note to Mike Kent at Muenster Memorial Hospital. (Photo Courtesy of Sacred Heart)





Marlene Harris learns about Smart Boards from



## St. Andrew grandparents add generational spirit

“Amazing.” That’s how Marlene Harris described the Smart Board used in grandson Gus Flori’s fifth grade classroom at St. Andrew School. The digital, touch-sensitive whiteboard is linked to a computer and allows teachers to download material onto the screen.

“Technology is something we need in the classroom,” Harris said during her Grandparent’s Day visit to the school. “It’s important for kids to have access to the next generation of computer technology along with their traditional courses.”

More than 500 grandparents attended the intergenerational event celebrated for

the 23rd year at St. Andrew School to observe Catholic



Mr. and Mrs. John Avila have six grandchildren at St. Andrew School — more than any other family.

Schools Week. Square dancing, bingo, a book fair, and a performance of Shel Silverstein’s poem “Sick” by drama club members were some of the activities grandparents and grandchildren enjoyed together.

Betty Austin attends Grandparents Day every year to spend time with granddaughters Katherine and Elizabeth Walters.

“I’m so impressed with the education they are receiving here,” she said. “The girls are just blossoming.”



St. Joseph eighth-graders challenge faculty.



Drama students perform “Sick” by Shel Silverstein.

## Memories, renovations part of St. Peter’s 60th anniversary

Rachel McGann sent daughters, Mary Grace and Katie to St. Peter School in White Settlement because she wanted to give them the best start in life. Like many other Catholic school parents, the Saginaw resident is a product of Catholic schools herself, having graduated from Our Lady of Victory and Nolan Catholic High School.

“It’s worth the financial sacrifice because I want them to grow up to be faith-filled people,” McGann explained. “Sending children to a Catholic school is not about being wealthy or elitist. It’s about our values.”

Celebrating its 60th anniversary, St. Peter School observed Catholic Schools Week by reflecting on the past and showing parents and alumni how new im-



provements to the school building will impact generations of future students. A \$1.2 million renovation project, made possible by a “Remember, Renew, Rebuild” parish campaign and diocesan Sharing in Ministry money, replaced windows, floors, the roof, and the heating and air conditioning system. Students are also enjoying an updated gym and expanded computer lab.

“We’ve been celebrating our 60th anniversary all year,” said Principal Cynthia Cummins, a veteran of 41 years in Catholic education. “For me, working in a Catholic school is payback. My parents went to Catholic schools, I went to Catholic schools, and so did my children. The foundation they received made them academically sound and well-grounded in their faith.”

Jennifer Torrance shares memories with daughter, Chole McLain.



Cassata High School students unveil a mural at a ribbon-cutting ceremony last fall, celebrating several renovations to the school that were the result of a capital campaign.



## A Network of Support

*Cassata High School meets personal needs of students struggling in typical high school environments by creating a network of local organizations and volunteers to support the students*

*By Nicki Prevou / Correspondent • Photos by Juan Guajardo*

**IT'S THE SCHOOL YOU MIGHT WISH YOU COULD HAVE ATTENDED YOURSELF, WITH NO BULLYING, NO CLIQUES, AND NO LUNCHROOM DRAMA ALLOWED.** Classes are small in size and self-paced, led by cheerful, empathetic teachers who also serve as a protective presence in the parking lot and in the brightly painted hallways.

Or perhaps it's a community that you wish you could somehow join as an adult, and then are happily surprised to learn that you are, in fact, warmly invited to do so. Visitors to Cassata High School near downtown Fort Worth marvel at the spirit of sincere welcome and nurturing inclusion that emanates from the very walls of the recently renovated 92-year-old building.

"We are always expanding the network, getting the word out to let people know that there is something special happening here at Cassata, and they too, can be a part of it all," says Jeff Hedglen, incoming chairman of the school's board of directors. Hedglen, who

served as coordinator of youth ministry for St. Bartholomew Church in Southwest Fort Worth for 25 years, has seen "countless" teenagers struggling to be successful in their large high schools, he says, and he values the close-knit Cassata community that successfully prepares students for productive adult lives.

"So many young people, for one reason or another, don't fit into the typical eight-hour day in a big school, with everything that goes along with that," he reflects. "At Cassata, it's exciting to see students blossom and grow because they are given so much personal attention

and encouragement, and they gain a sense of being members of a large and very loving family." When individuals within the larger community witness those profound connections, they, too, want to be a part of the school's legacy of success, he says.

As the adult members of that "family," Cassata's administrators, staff members, and an ever-expanding number of dedicated volunteers are committed to the school's mission, which has not changed since its founding in 1975. The private, nonprofit institution, sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth, provides a

quality secondary education to students who are in need of extra assistance in obtaining a high school degree or a GED. The school serves approximately 230 students ages 13 and older each year.

### LILY'S STORY

"Lily," whose parents did not complete high school, is a 19-year-old in need of that "extra assistance" that Cassata provides. She, too, dropped out when she became pregnant at age 15.

"After three long years of being out of school, I started to realize how important education really is," she told guests at a recent Cassata event. "Most important of all is my son," she added. "I want to be able to provide him with better things and a better future. It is very important to me to be a good role model for him."

After learning about Cassata's flexible schedule, Lily enrolled in morning classes at the high school, which allowed her to continue working each afternoon. "Everyone greeted me here as if they already knew me," she marveled. "I come to school here every morning, and they give me that great energy and the positive attitude that makes me want to keep going every day for a better me."

Lily's story is not unusual, says Susan Flood, now in her third year of service as president of the school. "Many of our students face significant barriers to obtaining an education," she says. "In 2012, 38 percent of our graduates were the first in their families to earn a high school diploma, and 19 percent were teen parents." Ninety-four percent of those graduates went on to enroll in a college or vocational program or to enter the military, she adds.

### ROBERT'S STORY

The stories behind those statistics bear witness to the poignant, very personal victories many Cassata students have experienced in overcoming difficult circumstanc-

— "Lily"



es. Seventeen-year-old “Robert,” who described himself in a recent essay as “a young African American male who wants bigger and better things in life,” wrote of his struggles to feel successful in his previous school setting.

“My junior year of high school was hard... I was failing three classes and I was struggling and stressing out to the point where I was frustrated, overwhelmed, and later I just shut down.” When school officials suggested that he transfer to Cassata, “I was crushed. I felt like I was superman and let down the whole world... ever since that day I vowed to never fail again in any part of my life, and to make sure that I accomplish more than anyone expects me to. I aim to be the best, even if it means starting over from scratch.”

Three months into his new life at Cassata, things changed, he wrote. “This has been a great experience for me. It just brings such a peaceful atmosphere, nothing like I felt at the other school I attended. There is less drama, less worrying, and less stress. It felt as if for the first time in my high school years, I could finally breathe without any doubt going through my head.”

The teachers are “so kind and helpful,” Robert added. “They actually encourage you to ask for help at any time, without hesitation. The staff here is amazing, and they let you know that they are here for you and they care. Thanks to the help from my teachers, I am passing all of my classes and I am more relaxed than I have ever been. Ever since I came to Cassata, it feels like my confidence is higher than it has ever been.”

#### THE MENTORS’ STORY

In addition to the cadre of dedicated staff members and teachers, designated mentors — community members who participate in the innovative “Cassata Connections” program, founded by Cassata volunteer Tracy Rector — offer even more support within the school system. Mentors meet regularly with their assigned students as an additional way of offering individualized attention outside of the classroom.

Pam Presswood, wife of current Cassata board chairman Mark Presswood, has mentored 16 year-old “Fabi,” for the past two years. The experience has been rewarding and “really, a lot of fun, because I love working with the kids, and Fabi is such an outstanding person, from a great family, with a great deal of maturity,” says Presswood. “As a professional, I have a strong interest in making sure that young women are exposed to positive experiences within the busi-

ness community, something more sustained than just a career day.”

The pair recently went into downtown Fort Worth to see *West Side Story* performed onstage at Bass Hall, reports Presswood. Other adventures include trips to Central Market to introduce Fabi to sushi, an excursion to a food truck park, and information-gathering lunches with other professional women.

“We talk all the time about different career options, and what various jobs would entail,” says Presswood. “I really encourage others to consider participating as a mentor, because Tracy [Rector] has structured things so that every accommodation is made to enable adults to be involved at Cassata. I go to the school to have lunch with Fabi once every other week, and the lunch is provided, so that makes it very easy for me to carve out that time.

“It’s so rewarding,” Presswood concludes. “Being a good mom, and also reaching out to other kids in this way, is something that I want people to remember me for.”

Susan Flood agrees that a life spent in service to the needs of young people is indeed, a meaningful vocation. “It is not easy being a teenager today,” she says, ruefully. “These kids are dealing with so much that’s out there. This is a safe haven, a place where the students know that they can learn without distractions while being treated with kindness and respect. And because they feel so supported, they can go on to reach their full potential.”

*For more information about Cassata High School and how to become involved, call (817) 926-1745, or visit [www.cassatahs.org](http://www.cassatahs.org).*

## Life After Cassata

- Students from the Texas Christian University (TCU) GO Center visit Cassata High School weekly to offer advice on taking college placement tests, conducting college research, and navigating financial aid. Students work with the GO Center mentors to establish their own customized college plan.
- Representatives from schools throughout North Texas visit Cassata to meet with students, opening their world to a vast range of opportunities available to them after graduation. Students also visit colleges during the academic year, including TCU, Tarrant County College (TCC), and Texas Wesleyan University.
- Cassata’s partnership with TCC, particularly the Trinity River Campus, eases the transition for Cassata graduates into college life. Several Cassata juniors and seniors are currently taking afternoon classes at TCC to qualify for college credit through dual enrollment.
- Cassata High School has a Tier One rating from the military. This rating gives Cassata students priority acceptance into all branches of the military and helps them qualify for a higher entrance ranking. Recruiters from all branches visit Cassata and meet with interested students.



The Cassata Closet is an attractive “shopping space” within the school that provides new school clothing, uniforms, and work attire at no cost for students who would not otherwise be able to purchase these items. Baby supplies such as diapers, formula, toys, and clothing are also available for the children of students. All goods are donated by Cassata supporters.



Fabiola “Fabi” Fernandez is a Cassata student mentored by Pam Presswood.



Priscilla Harrier regularly tutors Larry Renteria.



CNS photo / L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

Pope Benedict XVI places a white stole on the remains of 13th-century Pope St. Celestine V during a 2009 visit to the earthquake-damaged Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila, Italy. St. Celestine, a hermit who was elected at 80, became overwhelmed by the office and resigned from the papacy.



CNS photo / L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

Pope Benedict XVI attends a Feb. 11 meeting with cardinals at the Vatican announcing that he will resign at the end of the month. The 85-year-old pontiff said he no longer has the energy to exercise his ministry over the Universal Church.

# Pope Benedict resigns

## Citing health reasons, 85-year-old pontiff will vacate his office Feb. 28

By Carol Glatz and Cindy Wooden / Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Saying he no longer has the strength to exercise ministry over the Universal Church, Pope Benedict XVI announced Feb. 11 that he would be resigning at the end of the month after an eight-year pontificate.

“After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths, due to an advanced age, are no longer suited to an adequate exercise of the Petrine ministry,” the pope told cardinals gathered for an ordinary public consistory to approve the canonization of new saints.

Pope Benedict, who was elected in April 2005, will be the first pope to resign in almost 600 years.

He told the cardinals, “In today’s world, subject to so many rapid changes and shaken by questions of deep relevance for the life of faith, in order to govern the bark of St. Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months, has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me.”

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told journalists at a briefing that the pope’s decision was not prompted by any medical illness, but was due to a natural “decline of strength” associated with old age.

Even though the announcement had caught almost everybody by surprise, it was

not a snap decision, but rather one that “had matured over the past few months,” Fr. Lombardi said.

The pope made his announcement in Latin from a pre-written text during a morning ordinary public consistory where a large number of cardinals were present.

When he delivered his announcement, the pope seemed very “composed, concentrated” and read “in a solemn manner” in keeping with the importance of what he was saying, Fr. Lombardi said.

Fulfilling the canonical requirement, Pope Benedict solemnly declared to the cardinals, “Well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom I declare that I renounce the ministry of Bishop of Rome, Successor of St. Peter, entrusted to me by the cardinals on 19 April 2005, in such a way, that as from 28 February 2013, at 20:00 hours, the See of Rome, the See of St. Peter, will be vacant and a conclave to elect the new supreme pontiff will have to be convoked by those whose competence it is.”

It is up to the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, to make preparations for a conclave to elect a new pope.

Fr. Lombardi said after the pope steps down, he will move to the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo outside of Rome. He will stay there until the renovation is completed of a cloister, set up by Blessed John Paul II, which is located

inside the Vatican Gardens, he said.

The pope will then live in the cloister, called the Mater Ecclesia monastery, and dedicate his time to prayer and reflection, the Vatican spokesman said.

It was likely the pope would keep writing, he added, since the pope has mentioned many times that he has wanted to spend more time dedicated to study and prayer.

When asked if there would be any confusion over leadership or a schism were a possibility, Fr. Lombardi said he believes the pope “had no fear of this” happening because he clearly demonstrated his desire to step down and no longer be pope or retain any papal authority.

“I think in no way is there any risk of confusion or division” in this respect, he said.

The pope, who is past the age allowed a cardinal to vote for a new pope, will obviously not be part of the conclave that will convene to elect his successor, he added.

He is not likely to play any role in the “interregnum” or time between popes because “there is no role for a predecessor pope” during this period, the priest said.

The Jesuit priest said a “sede vacante” usually lasts less than a month, and that it was more than likely a new pope would be elected in time to lead the full schedule of Holy Week and Easter liturgies.

Cardinal Sodano, who was one of the





CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, *Long Island Catholic*  
 Pope Benedict XVI kisses an infant as he leaves one of his weekly general audiences in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in 2007.

many cardinals present during the pope's announcement, addressed the pope, telling him the news left them with "a sense of loss, almost completely incredulous."

However, it was obvious that his decision was based on a "great affection" for the well-being of the Church, the cardinal said.

Fr. Lombardi said being a pope today is "much more fast-moving, more demanding" than it was in the past with an almost nonstop full schedule of public and private events and liturgical celebrations.

When asked why the pope chose Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, as the day to announce his stepping down, Fr. Lombardi said most likely the date was a coincidence, and that the pope instead chose an event — the ordinary public consistory — where a large number of cardinals would be present.

"The pope chose this significant occasion with the gathered cardinals" as the best moment to announce his plans, the Vatican spokesman said.

When asked whether the pope had any medical illnesses or bouts of depression that may have prompted his resignation, Fr. Lombardi said the pope was "absolutely not" depressed and possessed a remarkable "spiritual serenity" and composure despite the many difficult moments he has had to face as pope.

The Vatican spokesman also said he was not aware of any medical illness that would have caused the pope to step down, rather it was due to a "normal" deterioration of physical and mental strength that comes with old age.

The pope has increasingly had trouble walking in the past year, often using a cane and always being assisted getting up and down steps. However, the Vatican has never released medical information that would make it appear the pope suffers from anything other than joint pain connected to his age.

The option of a pope to resign is explicitly

	LEO XIII	CLEMENT XII	CLEMENT X	BENEDICT XVI
years of pontificate	1878-1903	1730-1740	1670-1676	2005-2013
age at death or resignation	93 years, 140 days	87 years, 305 days	86 years, 9 days	85 years, 318 days

Sources: CNS, HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism and New Catholic Encyclopedia © 2013 Catholic News Service

written into the Code of Canon Law. It says a pope may step down, but stipulates that the decision must be made freely and "duly manifested." No one needs to formally accept a pope's resignation for it to be valid.

The last pope to resign was Pope Gregory XII in 1415.

Pope Benedict had long said it would be appropriate for a pope to resign for the good of the Church if the pontiff felt he were unable to physically bear the burden of the papacy.

In his book-length interview, *The Light of the World*, with German journalist Peter Seewald, the pope said, "If a pope clearly realizes that he is no longer physically, psychologically, and spiritually capable of handling the duties of his office, then he has a right and, under some circumstances, also an obligation to resign."

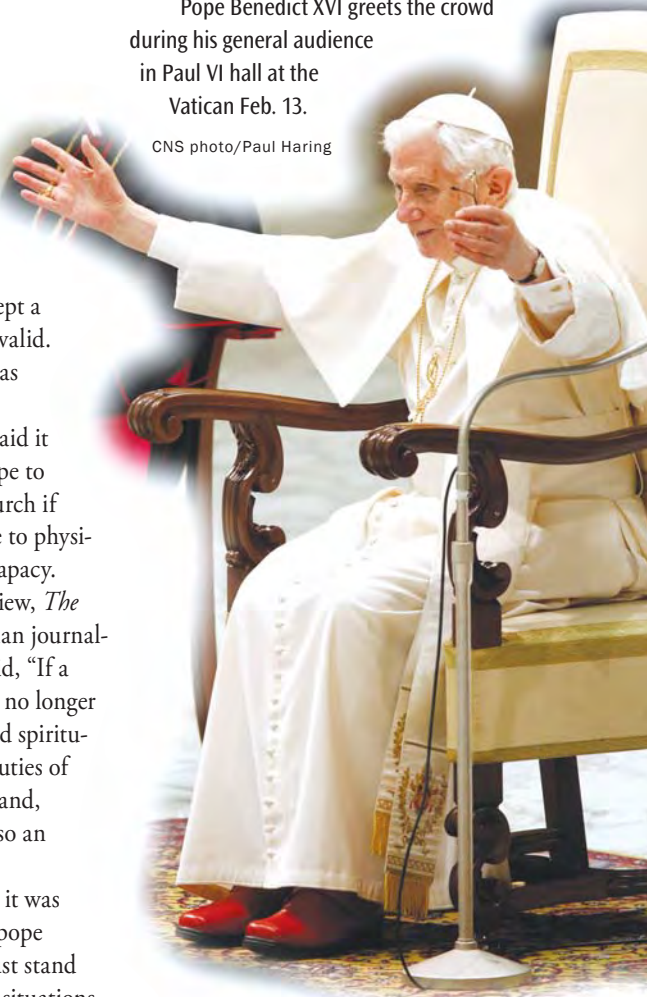
The pope told the author it was important, however, that the pope "must not run away" and "must stand fast and endure" any difficult situations that are facing the Church. For that reason, he was not thinking of resigning in 2010 — the year the interviews were conducted.

"One can resign at a peaceful moment or when one simply cannot go on," the pope had said.

Before ending his remarks during the consistory, Pope Benedict told the cardinals: "I thank you most sincerely for all the love and work with which you have supported me in my ministry and I ask pardon for all my defects. And now, let us entrust the holy Church to the care of our supreme pastor, our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore his holy Mother Mary, so

Pope Benedict XVI greets the crowd during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Feb. 13.

CNS photo/Paul Haring



that she may assist the cardinal fathers with her maternal solicitude, in electing a new supreme pontiff."

The pope said, "I wish to also devotedly serve the holy Church of God in the future through a life dedicated to prayer."

Fr. Lombardi said he felt "great admiration" for the pope's "great courage" and "freedom of spirit" in making this decision. The spokesman said it shows the pope is not only fully aware of the great responsibilities involved in leading the Universal Church, but his hopes that "the ministry of the Church be carried out the best way" possible.

# Pope Benedict resigns

## Local Catholics react to Pope's announcement

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

When 105 University of Dallas students signed up to study at the school's Eugene Constantin Rome campus this spring, becoming eye-witnesses to Church history was something they never anticipated.

But that's what happened Feb. 11 when Pope Benedict XVI announced his retirement from the papacy effective Feb. 28. The spiritual leader of 1.2 billion Roman Catholics cited failing health as the reason for his historic and unexpected decision. A pontiff hasn't resigned since Pope Gregory XII vacated the office to end a Schism within the Church almost 600 years ago.

University of Dallas students now have the opportunity to experience the election of a pope and Holy Week activities from a campus that's a mere 10 miles from the Vatican.

"The students are totally taken by this event," said Dr. Peter Hatlie, director and dean of UD's Rome program who met with undergraduates to discuss the issue and its implications during a scheduled Feb. 11 meeting. "It's really going to recalibrate our semester. We're going to take every measure possible to make sure they can be in Rome and live this once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Rome is typically a relaxed city but the mood changes with significant papal news. Hatlie was living in Rome when Pope John Paul II died and was succeeded by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in 2005.

"Italy in general, but especially Rome goes into high speed," the educator said. "The newspapers will have pages and pages of stories everyday about what's happening."

Hours after Pope Benedict's announcement, Italian radio stations

were totally dedicated to covering the story.

"I think our students are ready to put down their pens and go to St. Peter's Square starting tomorrow. There is huge enthusiasm," Hatlie said. "The news was stunning."

Special excursions and speakers will offer students background information and insight into the papal election. Looking back on early Church history and reconstructing Pope Gregory's 15th century papacy is one lecture UD students can expect to hear, he continued.

Living near the Eternal City as the world welcomes a new pope is a formative experience for UD students.

"We often talk about transforming lives in higher education. This event will absolutely have that effect," Hatlie promised.

In North Texas, Catholics wonder how a change in the papacy will affect the Diocese of Fort Worth. Parishioners hoped for the quick appointment of a new bishop to succeed Bishop Kevin Vann who was reassigned to the Diocese of Orange, California by Pope Benedict in September 2012. Many speculate the election of a new pope could delay the process.

"We await God's will for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth as we look forward to the appointment of our next bishop," said Diocesan Administrator Monsignor Stephen Berg in a statement following the pope's resignation announcement. "We also await God's grace of wisdom as the College of Cardinals begins their conclave to elect our new pope."

Msgr. Berg said Pope Benedict's plan to retire demonstrates his humility and deep devotion to the Church.



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

Pope Benedict XVI greets the late Msgr. Charles King and Sr. Francesca Walterscheid, SSMN. The two were chosen to represent the diocese at a papal audience during a diocesan-sponsored pilgrimage to Rome in 2009.

"I ask the people of the Diocese of Fort Worth to please pray for Pope Benedict, in thanksgiving for his unselfish ministry as our Holy Father, and that he may continue to experience God's gifts of grace and peace in his retirement," he added.

Deacon Emilio (Popo) Gonzalez from Immaculate Conception Church in Denton fielded calls from concerned parishioners after the pope's statement.

"First we're struggling without a bishop and now a pope. But God will take care of all that," said the deacon, who along with his wife Lupe had been bestowed the *Benemerenti* Medal by Pope Benedict in 2011. "We worry too much. God has his plan."

Like the rest of the world, Dcn. Gonzalez was surprised by the Pope's plans to retire but understands his decision. When Pope Benedict leaves office Feb. 28 at the age of 85, he will have outlived all but three of his 264 predecessors. At 78, he was the oldest man elected to the Chair of St. Peter in 300 years.

"I don't blame him. His health is failing. He's tired and feels he can no longer stay on as pope," the deacon sympathizes.

Pundits speculate the new pope could hail from Africa, Asia, or Latin

America — a pleasing thought to Dcn. Gonzalez who ministers to a burgeoning Hispanic community in Denton.

"A pope from a Latin American country? That's what I'm hoping for," he admitted. "Latin Americans are almost 100 percent Catholic and having a pope from Latin America would only make us stronger and very proud."

Pope Benedict XVI was the first German elected to the papacy since 1523.

Sister Francesca Walterscheid, SSMN, took advantage of her shared heritage with the pontiff during a 2009 papal audience. During a trip to Italy's shrines with 500 other pilgrims from the Diocese of Fort Worth, the Muenster native and the late Monsignor Charles King were chosen to meet the pope.

"I spoke to him in German," said the sister who still vividly recalls the Holy Father's heartwarming, friendly smile. "He was so expressive."

Given only a few moments to shake hands with Pope Benedict, the Fort Worth tourist remembers uttering, "we love you" in his native language.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



“He responded but I don’t know what he said. I was pretty overwhelmed,” she confessed. “I was so honored to meet him. It’s a nice memory to have.”

St. Francesca, who lives with other members of her religious community at Our Lady of Victory Center, said the sisters turned on a television newscast after hearing initial reports of the pope’s retirement. Although the decision is precedent-setting in modern times, she supports the pope.

“He’s intelligent enough to know if it’s time to leave,” the sister explained. “At his age it’s difficult to carry the world on your shoulders.”

The 118 voting members of the College of Cardinals will convene before Easter to select a successor to Pope Benedict. Any cardinal may participate in the discussions, but only those younger than 80 may vote.

Immediately following his Feb. 28 resignation, the pontiff will spend time at Castel Gandolfo, a summer retreat south of Rome near the University of Dallas’ campus. He will later move to a cloistered monastery, according to Vatican reports.

# What Pope Benedict’s resignation means for the Church

**By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent**

It was a totally unexpected news event and the ramifications took even a seasoned theologian like Dr. Mark Goodwin by surprise.

“I’ve been bombarded with phone calls,” admits the University of Dallas interim dean of the School of Ministry.

Popes embrace the pontificate till death. Pope Benedict XVI’s decision to resign from the papacy effective Feb. 28 threw a wrench into modern Church tradition. Pope Gregory XII resigned in 1415 to bring an end to the Great Western Schism, and the last pope before him to leave his post was Pope St. Celestine V in 1294, a contemplative, who preferred a solitary life and resigned after five months.

Papal resignation, an anomaly in the modern era, is producing a plethora of questions.

“What will we call a retired

pope? I don’t know. I’m not a Canon lawyer but I’m sure they are rifling through documents to find out,” Goodwin speculates.

The theology expert says some analysts have suggested Pope Benedict’s retirement is a reply to his predecessor, John Paul II’s choice to suffer until the end of his papacy.

“I don’t agree with that,” he says asserting that John Paul II and Benedict are two very different popes. “Each had his own distinctive style and sense of vocation.”

John Paul II exemplified the dignity and value of suffering at the end of life. A scholar and prolific writer, Pope Benedict may reveal his personal mission in a book, Goodwin added.

“Announcing his resignation as we begin Lent is significant,” the professor continues. “The timing is interesting. There is a liturgical underpinning to this event. We’ll have to wait and see what happens

at the end of 40 days.”

Marlon De La Torre, director of Catechist Formation and Children’s Catechesis in the Diocese of Fort Worth says Catholics are understandably saddened but should view the pope’s decision positively.

“We see the Holy Father’s prudence. Obviously he knows his health best and he sees the need to step down,” De La Torre explains. “He’s taking care of his Church and being a good father to his children. He’s preparing the Church for a new transition.”

Why the Holy Father chose to resign during the Year of Faith and before writing a document on the New Evangelization has led to some negative speculation, the director admits.

“This might be seen as bad timing but, ultimately, you can’t control that,” he says.

De La Torre also noted that while as prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he submitted his resignation three times, and each time Blessed Pope John Paul II refused to accept it.

The secular media may also misperceive and misunderstand why the Holy Father would step down but there is a provision in Canon Law allowing a pontiff to resign.

“If it happens that the Roman Pontiff resigns his office, it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely and properly manifested but not that it is accepted by anyone,” says the Code of Canon Law, Canon 332.2.

“So Pope Benedict is not doing something out of the ordinary. This has been done before,” De La Torre states. “What makes it significant is this is the first time it’s been done in quite a long time.”

## 11 cardinals from US eligible to vote in conclave

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — There are 11 cardinals from the United States who are under the age of 80 and therefore eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a successor to Pope Benedict XVI:



• Raymond Burke, head of the Apostolic Signatura, and archbishop emeritus of St. Louis



• Daniel N. DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston



• Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York



• Francis E. George, OMI, archbishop of Chicago



• James M. Harvey, archpriest of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls



• William Levada, retired prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and San Francisco archbishop emeritus



• Roger M. Mahony, retired archbishop of Los Angeles



• Edwin O'Brien, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, and archbishop emeritus of Baltimore



• Sean O'Malley, OFM, Cap., archbishop of Boston



• Justin F. Rigali, retired archbishop of Philadelphia



• Donald W. Wuerl, archbishop of Washington

**March 3, 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 Jean Denton**

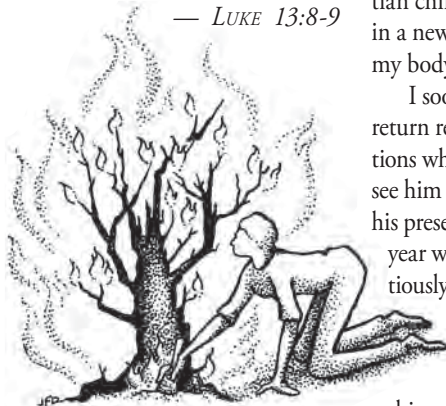
There is the burning bush and then there is the not-so-burning bush. That's what this weekend's readings offer us.

The first is the classic story of Moses recognizing God's presence — a bush burning not to be consumed, but aflame with his life. Such a moment of clarity is what comes to believers — sometimes only briefly — when they know beyond doubt that God is with them.

The Gospel reading includes Jesus' parable of a bush that shows no signs of life. It hasn't produced fruit because it has been neglected. The gardener realizes he's responsible for nurturing the potential life

*"Leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down."*

— LUKE 13:8-9



in the plant.

In my experience, the two are the same bush.

I can remember several burning bush moments. One was on my first silent retreat when 40 years of life experience were put into context

with just the right words from a Jesuit retreat master, so that I suddenly understood who "I AM" was.

Another time was during celebration of the Eucharist a day after I'd held a malnourished Haitian child in my arms, and I heard in a new (burning) way, "This is my body."

I soon learned that I needed to return regularly to places or situations where God waited for me to see him again and stir up the life of his presence. Going on retreat every year was one way to conscientiously remember God's working in my life and be inspired to respond both in ministry and in my relationships with other people. I also returned to Haiti periodically to be

touched by the deep faith of people living and loving despite constant hardship.

But when I get busy or distracted with other things and become inattentive to God, the burning bush becomes the neglected bush of the Gospel parable. As I pursue selfish interests, shallow concerns and pettiness can suck the life out of what was once fertile spiritual ground.

The season of Lent calls us to focus on the burning bush of God's presence in our lives and urges us to nurture the ground he allows us to share with him. If we make a commitment to constantly return to him in prayer or action, we will be blessed by the richness of the fruit produced.

**QUESTIONS:**

How do you go about revisiting moments when God has revealed his presence to you? In what ways can you nurture these experiences to help increase God's reign?

**March 10, Fourth Sunday of**

**Lent. Cycle C. Readings:**

- 1) Joshua 5:9a, 10-12
- Psalm 34:2-7
- 2) Corinthians 5:17-21
- Gospel) Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

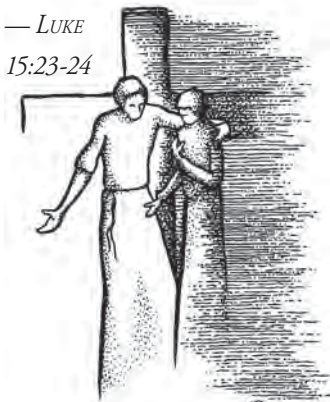
**By Jean Denton**

For three hours Glenn paced the floor of his hotel room. It was the first night of the European tour he was taking with his 18-year-old son — who'd already gone missing.

Father and son both had been looking forward to this adventure together, a graduation present. But right off the bat, the son pulled this stunt. After they'd returned to their room from dinner, the son said he was going to get a soda from the vending machines down the hall. Instead, he decided to go out on his own and check out Lon-

*"Let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."*

— LUKE 15:23-24



don's nightlife.

Luckily, he didn't have much money with him so he was back at the hotel only a few hours later. When Glenn tells the story 25 years later, the joy and relief he felt

at his son's return is still palpable. His anger and disappointment at the young man's thoughtless folly had long ago become a humorous recollection.

"I don't know why he didn't ..." Glenn starts, then catches himself. "Well, I do know why he didn't ask, because he knew I wouldn't let him go out alone."

Every parent who has worried about the safety of a disobedient child can relate to this week's Gospel story of the prodigal son. Mostly, they understand the overriding joy of the father when he is reunited with his wayward child.

This is Jesus' message in the parable: However disobedient we are, however much we exploit

God's gifts, however we may separate ourselves from him, take his love for granted or ignore it altogether, however far we fall and however long it takes, our loving Father waits for us with open arms, hoping always that we will come back to his embrace.

As with Glenn and his adolescent child, God knows our nature. He knows we sin despite possible consequences. But he is sorry when we suffer and doesn't want us to get lost in our fall. He wants us to come back and share in the life he has for us. Whenever we acknowledge the dysfunction of our sinfulness and choose to come home to him, God senses fulfillment of his dream and he celebrates.

**QUESTIONS:**

When have you recently felt separated from God? Why? Why do you believe God desires us to be reconciled to him and each other?



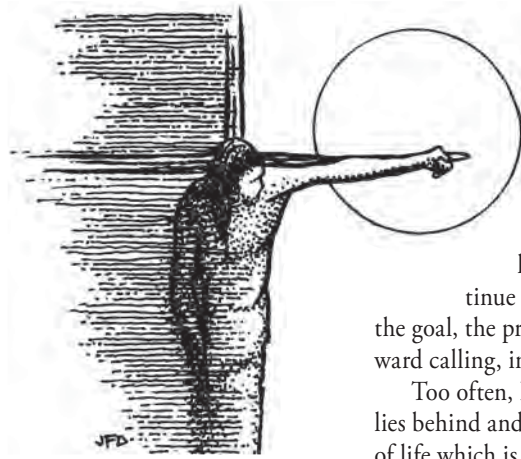
**March 17, Fifth Sunday Of Lent. Cycle C. Readings:**

- 1) Isaiah 43:16-21
- Psalm 126:1-6
- 2) Philippians 3:8-14
- Gospel) John 8:1-11

**By Jeff Hedglen**

**T**here are things in my past — some going back 30 years — that I regret. One is the way a friendship ended. Another was a racist remark I made at a table with a black man sitting across from me. I also regret some of my attitudes and actions in a dating relationship when I was in my 20s. There are plenty of similar past incidents that periodically come to mind and really throw me for a loop. I wish they could just stay in my past.

Try as I might to forgive and move on, when such an event comes back to mind I can dwell on it for hours and lament my



*“Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”*  
— JOHN 8:11

but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus.”

Too often, I focus on what lies behind and not the real goal of life which is life with Jesus here on earth and in heaven. This reminder from Paul was a welcome wake-up call.

The issues on which I was dwelling did not necessarily involve sin but were more like regretful words and actions. Still,

sinful things that I have done, regretted, and gone to confession for years ago also haunt me.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus speaks to these situations also. To all of us, as to the woman caught in the act of committing adultery, he asks, “Has no one condemned you?”

She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

Not only does Jesus not condemn us, he points us forward, away from our sin and regrettable actions. He says, “Go.” This means we must move on from where we are today to a new place, free from the condemnation of others, ourselves, and God.

failings or not doing more to make up for my wrong. Even though I have sought reconciliation and restitution for most of my past wrongdoing, these things can haunt me for days.

This week’s readings struck me as the proverbial “2-by-4 to the head” with regard to dwelling on the past. In Philippians, Paul says, “Forgetting what lies behind

**QUESTIONS:**

Are there things from your past that still haunt you? Why do you think this happens? What can help you truly take to heart Paul’s and Jesus’ words from this week’s readings?

**March 24, Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion. Cycle C.**

**Readings:**

- 1) Isaiah 50:4-7
- Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
- 2) Philippians 2:6-11
- Gospel) Luke 22:14-23:56

**By Sharon K. Perkins**

**T**here are “night people” and there are “morning people.” I am the latter. I’m just at my best early in the day. It’s also my favorite time to pray, for several reasons.

One reason is that by the evening I’m simply worn out and am more apt to fall asleep than to pray. Also, in the morning, I haven’t yet been challenged with the responsibilities of the day, so I’m open, “empty” and disposed to listen to God.

Finally, I find that when those inevitable daily challenges come, I

am already oriented to discern and respond to them in a God-focused way. My life becomes less about me and my problems and more about God’s will and God’s providence.

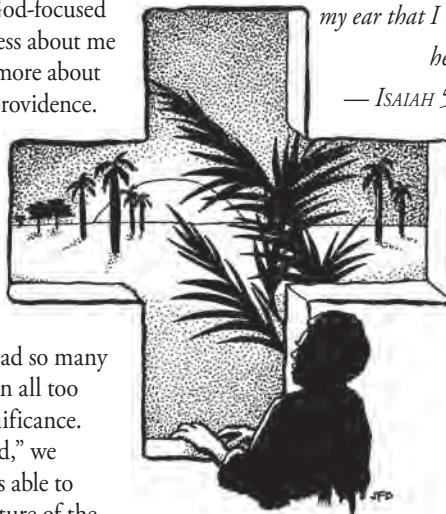
The readings for Palm Sunday provide us with a narrative of the sufferings of Jesus and his climactic surrender to his Father’s will. It’s an account that we’ve heard and read so many times before that we can all too easily minimize its significance. “Jesus is the Son of God,” we think, so of course he is able to endure the physical torture of the cross and the emotional anguish of ridicule and abandonment. No problem.

But St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians reminds us that it was not Jesus’ “equality with God” that was on display at Calvary, but his very human act of self-emptying.

*“Morning after morning he opens*

*my ear that I may hear.”*

— ISAIAH 50:4



already been formed and matured through the habit of constant prayer and communion with his Father.

Jesus’ abilities to “not turn back,” to give his “back to those who beat” him, to follow through with his own test on the cross, were schooled in him long before Calvary, in the treasured classroom of early morning prayer when his mind and body were most disposed to listening to the love language of his Father.

I wish I were more consistent in my early morning prayer. My best intentions often falter. It’s a discipline I’m trying to cultivate, however, so that I can become closer to my Father, more receptive to his goodness and more obedient to his plan for me.

I maintain that Jesus’ humble self-surrender didn’t simply begin in the week of his passion; it had

**QUESTIONS:**

At what time of day are you at your best? How can you cultivate a habit of prayer so that you are in communion with God throughout the day?

**March 31, The Resurrection of the Lord. Cycle C.**

**Readings:**

- 1) Acts 10:34a, 37-43
- Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
- 2) Colossians 3:1-4
- Gospel) John 20:1-9

**By Jean Denton**

My son and his fiancée planned to marry in the summer. But that February the bride-to-be learned that her mother’s cancer, previously in remission, had returned. Jennifer traveled home to spend a weekend with her mother, Teresa, while she was hospitalized. However, Teresa’s condition suddenly deteriorated and it became clear that she would die within a few weeks.

Zachary and Jennifer quickly made the decision to get married two days later. Teresa, while very sick, was gratified that she would be able to be present at her only daughter’s wedding.



Jennifer’s extended family had spent long days together in the hospital waiting room, consoling one another and taking turns sitting with Teresa. But at 7 a.m. on Wednesday there would be a respite from their sadness when Jennifer and Zachary would walk down the aisle in the tiny hospital chapel.

Through mighty effort, Teresa

*“Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. ...When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.”*

— COLOSSIANS 3:2, 4

dressed to look her best for her daughter’s big day. The sun had barely come up when her husband wheeled her into the chapel. (They’d chosen the early hour so she’d have maximum energy.)

The ceremony was short and simple, but beautiful as Zachary and Jennifer proclaimed and promised their abiding love for each other. For two hours, despite the circumstances, that day was only about a family celebrating life, love, and happiness. The sorrow was totally dispelled by joy.

**QUESTIONS:**

What are some times in your life that you recognize as an eternal kind of joy? How can you share what you’ve seen in Christ’s resurrection and celebrate the day the Lord has made?

The Easter Scriptures call us to be witnesses to Christ’s resurrection, to see God fulfill his plan for us to have a life of eternal joy with him. The psalm describes it: “This is the day the Lord has made.”

Such a day is the day in which suffering and sorrow are obliterated by joy. Although in this life we know the pain of sickness, hardship, oppression, and injustice, at Easter we can see that these are born of the darkness of a sinful, incomplete world. They are not of God’s making.

Through Christ, God redeems human life. It is in the day the Lord has made that we experience the joy of a couple’s love, the birth of a child, the embrace of a family, the smile of encouragement — happiness that is eternal.

**April 7, Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy). Cycle C. Readings:**

- 1) Acts 5:12-16
- Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
- 2) Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19
- Gospel) John 20:19-31

**By Jean Denton**

Belief can be contagious. But if you’d told me so six months ago, I’m not sure I would’ve agreed. I’m sorry to say my faith is often weak: I want, as the doubting apostle Thomas did, tangible evidence of Jesus’ saving power.

I’ve been blessed to know his presence through my own actual experiences of pain and through witnessing Christ’s healing in the suffering of others. So I believe — because I’ve seen.

But I still sometimes doubt. When I doubt, I wish I could



be one of those Jesus talks about in this weekend’s Gospel when he says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” Until last January, I didn’t understand how that could be.

I was with a group visiting a parish in Haiti I’d been to many times before. When we arrived in the church courtyard on a Saturday morning, a longtime friend ran out to greet us. But as we started

*“The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’”*

— JOHN 20:20-21

to chat, she seemed distracted by what was going on in the church and led us into the sanctuary.

It was filled with people waving their uplifted hands and singing mightily. Our friend squeezed into a pew and joined in. We followed. A priest walked up and down the aisles, holding high a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament. The procession and the singing continued unabated for more than 40 minutes. Occasionally, people would kneel and close their eyes. The choral leader fervently

**QUESTIONS:**

When has your belief in Jesus’ resurrection been the strongest? What ways have been most effective in passing your faith on to others?

exhorted them in prayer.

It was the third anniversary of the earthquake that had devastated their country. Photos of victims of the tragedy — loved ones of many gathered in the church — were carried by individuals in the procession. The people sang to the resurrected Christ in full belief that he was present with his promise of salvation.

In John’s Gospel story, the resurrected Lord came and stood in the midst of his disciples. I imagine that gathering was much like this. Here, the people rejoiced and their song said, “We have seen the Lord.”

Standing with them, I was swept into their belief. So we are called always to bring Christ to others.



## April 14, Third Sunday of Easter. Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41  
Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13  
2) Revelation 5:11-14  
Gospel) John 21:1-19

### By Jeff Hedglen

As a freshman in college, because I was surrounded by people who did not know my history, I was amazed at how easy it was to be a different person than I was in high school. I had been very active in my faith in high school, but in college none of the people I was in class with knew this, so I realized it would be an easy thing to be an undercover Christian.

At my home church, I was attending a Bible study through which I became convicted that I was not being a witness to my faith, so I did what I thought was

*"Do you love me?"*

— JOHN 21:16



a simple thing: I put a one-inch circular button on my backpack that simply said, "I ♥ Jesus."

I was quickly amazed at the power of that tiny statement. People would see that button and conversations would ensue. Sometimes they, too, were Christian and we had a nice conversation. Other times, when they discovered I was a Catholic, the conversation turned more interesting. Often, the people who commented were not Christian and the discussion that followed would be deep and full of questions, doubt, and their own story of faith or lack of faith.

In addition to striking up conversations, the button served to hold me accountable to its message. If I was announcing that I loved Jesus, I had to act like I loved Jesus.

### QUESTIONS:

How do you reveal your love for Jesus to your friends, family and community? Have you ever "suffered dishonor" for your love for Jesus?

This week's readings reveal the early disciples spreading the good news about Jesus after his resurrection and proclaiming their love for him, often to their own detriment. We also see Jesus repeatedly asking Peter if he loves him. Loving Jesus is not just a matter of the heart; it is a call to action. Peter is told by Jesus to "feed my sheep," and the disciples' love for Jesus drove them to share this love.

Our love for Jesus also needs to be on display. But it is not enough to wear a button or put a bumper sticker on one's car. We need to show our love for Jesus with our words and deeds. For the world will really know we are Christians by our love.

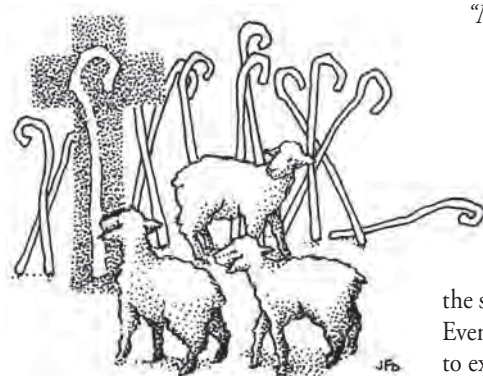
## April 21, Fourth Sunday of Easter. Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Acts 13:14, 43-52  
Psalm 100:1-3, 5  
2) Revelation 7:9, 14b-17  
Gospel) John 10:27-30

### By Sharon K. Perkins

Whether I'm at my office desk, at home or on the move, I'm usually within close proximity of a phone. And thanks to the invention of caller ID, I can always tell who the caller is before I answer. So if I don't recognize the number or name on display, I can choose to ignore the call.

It wasn't always that way. Prior to caller ID, I'd answer the phone whenever it rang without the benefit of foreknowledge. Most of the time, I'd recognize a familiar voice on the line and respond appropriately. Sometimes, however, it was a telemarketer or an unfamiliar caller and I figured out pretty quickly that we



would not be having an extended conversation.

Jesus uses the image of the shepherd and sheep in today's Gospel to describe his relationship with his followers, for he leads and protects the sheep that the Father has entrusted to him.

In the Middle East during the first century, shepherds usually were responsible for large flocks and often shared grazing land with other flocks — so when it was time to collect one's sheep, each shepherd was able to sort

*"My sheep know my voice;*

*I know them,  
and they follow me."*

— JOHN 10:27

them out of the larger herd by the sound of his voice. Even if shepherds were to exchange clothing, it was the distinctive voice, not the shepherd's scent or appearance, that identified him to his flock.

The readings of the Easter season focus on the risen Lord calling, forming and shepherding his people, the Church — not only at its beginning, but throughout history to the end of time. Thus the first reading

### QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been tempted to follow the voice of another shepherd? What most helps you to learn and follow the distinctive voice of Jesus the shepherd?

relates how the gentiles responded favorably to Paul and Barnabas because they recognized through their preaching the authentic "word of the Lord."

The psalm, sung in the present tense, reminds us that the Lord's faithfulness to his flock extends "to all generations." The second reading features John's glorious vision of Jesus, both shepherd and lamb, who will lead us to "life-giving water" for all eternity.

There are many "voices" clamoring for attention in our lives, some important, some frivolous and all of them capable of drowning out the voice of the Lord. But there is only one Shepherd, and his voice is the one that matters most.

# Entendiendo el lenguaje de la Cuaresma

POR MARLON DE LA TORRE

DIRECTOR DE LA OFICINA DE CATEQUESIS DE NIÑOS



*“Si tú quieres, puedes observar los mandamientos; está en tus manos el ser fiel. Ante ti puso el fuego y el agua: extiende la mano a lo que prefieras. Delante de los hombres están la vida y la muerte, a cada uno se le dará lo que ha elegido.*

*Qué grande es la sabiduría del Señor, que fuerte y poderoso es él! El todo lo ve. Su mirada se posa en los que le temen; conoce todas las acciones de los hombres. A nadie le ha pedido que sea impío, a nadie le ha dado permiso para que peque”.*

— ECLISIÁSTICO 15:15-20

¿Qué pasaría si se les diera varias propuestas que garanticen una relación más cerca con Jesucristo y su Iglesia? ¿Aceptaría usted estas propuestas? O, ¿simplemente se sacudiría y seguiría en su “feliz” camino? *Eclesiástico* nos presenta un examen de conciencia, si se le puede llamar así, con varios ‘escenarios’.

## UN EXAMEN DE CONCIENCIA

En el versículo 15, *Eclesiástico* propone, si somos capaces de guardar los mandamientos, está en nuestras manos el serle fiel. Enfoquémonos en este punto más profundamente, si aceptamos al único Dios verdadero y renunciamos a nuestros pequeños dioses que desvían nuestra devoción a Él, entonces nuestra salvación se vuelve más clara. La segunda propuesta dice que si confiamos en Él, nuestra relación con Él se vuelve más tangible. La siguiente propuesta es bastante directa y apropiada.

Dios pone ante nosotros el fuego y el agua, y cualquier cosa que elijamos nosotros extendemos la mano. El fuego y el agua sirven como ejemplos figurativos del bien y del mal como los detalles del siguiente verso. Y esto se convierte en el punto por excelencia de todo el pasaje. Nuestro Padre en el Cielo siempre nos va a hacer proposiciones para elegir su amor. Sólo nosotros podemos elegir libremente el rechazarla. Él nunca se impone sobre nosotros, si no más bien nos ofrece una opción.



Foto por Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic

Raymond Medina recibe cenizas en la frente durante la misa de mediodía en la Parroquia de Santa María de la Asunción en Fort Worth.

## LAS PROPOSICIONES DE LA CUARESMA

En el tiempo litúrgico de la Cuaresma (*Mateo 4*) se puede llegar con gran alegría y anticipación. Algunos leyendo este artículo ya pueden estar diciendo, ¿Estás bromeando? Sin embargo, no debemos olvidar que Jesucristo siempre nos presenta y propone oportunidades para crecer en intimidad con él. La Cuaresma propone dos puntos.

**1:** Un deseo interior y exterior para realizar actos de penitencia (actos penitenciales). Ejemplos de estos actos son la confesión, la abstención de ciertas cosas, actos de sacrificio para ayudar a otros (obras corporales y espirituales de misericordia).

**2:** La renovación de nuestra vocación bautismal. Durante este tiempo penitencial, se nos recuerda de la Pascua de Cristo (vida, muerte, resurrección, ascensión) y el viaje que abrazó para resucitar nuestra humanidad del pecado. Su Resurrección brotó esperanza eterna de Su conquista del pecado y la liberación de amor por su pueblo para continuar su misión en la tierra a través de la Iglesia (*Lucas 24:1-12; Hechos 2:1-29; 37-42*).

## La comprensión del lenguaje

El ayuno, la abstinencia, la penitencia, la

confesión y, sufrimiento suenan como duras palabras en apariencia la primera vez que se pronuncian. Sin embargo, cuando reflejadas contra del sufrimiento de Cristo en la cruz, las palabras de gracia, misericordia y alegría reflejan cómo nos amó tanto que soportó las condiciones más inhumanas para abrir las puertas del cielo (*Juan 3:16-17, 30*). Nuestra alegría se basa en el regalo hermoso que nos dejó en la belleza de la Iglesia y la vida sacramental, en particular la Eucaristía fuente y culminación de nuestra vida cristiana (*Catecismo de la iglesia católica 1324*).

La Cuaresma es una oportunidad para la renovación, el reconocimiento de nuestra naturaleza pecaminosa, la voluntad de ayuno y abstinencia, y lo más importante, la liberación de los vicios que continuamente nos atrapan. No piense ni por un minuto que soy ajeno a los desafíos que enfrentamos todos los días cuando se trata de pecado. Mis limitaciones buscan por una renovación continua de mi propia alma que refleja cuántas veces he negado a nuestro Señor. La clave es el reconocimiento de estas situaciones y la búsqueda de una intimidad llena de la alegría de Cristo en nuestros corazones. Les dejo con estas palabras penetrantes del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica 1431*:

*La penitencia interior es una reorientación radical de toda la vida, un retorno, una conversión a Dios con todo nuestro corazón, y al final del pecado, el alejamiento del mal, con repugnancia hacia las malas acciones que hemos cometido. Al mismo tiempo, comprende el deseo y la resolución de cambiar de vida, con esperanza en la misericordia de Dios y confiar en la ayuda de su gracia. Esta conversión del corazón va acompañada de un dolor y tristeza saludables que los Padres llaman ANIMI CRUCIATUS (aflicción del espíritu) y la compunción de cordis (el arrepentimiento del corazón).*





## El pregón Pascual como la clave de la Vigilia

POR PADRE CARMELO MELE, OP  
DIRECTOR DEL INSTITUTO JUAN PABLO II

Para aquellas personas que van a recibir los primeros sacramentos, la Vigilia Pascual redunda con emoción. Pero para los fieles que asistan misa cada domingo, la misma liturgia puede ser una prueba. Les parece a menudo larga, complicada, y — en verdad — extraña.

No obstante, la Vigilia Pascual es conocida por los liturgistas como la culminación de la liturgia anual. Como tal, sería una lástima si la gente pierde su significado. Pero no hay razón para la desesperanza. Solamente hay que apreciar el “Pregón Pascual”, cantado casi en el principio de la liturgia, para captar la esencia de la Vigilia. De hecho, se puede decir que el “Pregón Pascual” sirve como la clave de entender no sólo la liturgia del *Sábado de Gloria* sino también todo el tiempo cuaresmal-pascual. Aquí se resaltan algunas características del gran himno para facilitar su entendimiento.

El “Pregón Pascual” es ambas una balada contando las hazañas que Dios hizo en la historia de la salvación y una petición pidiendo a Dios que acepte la ofrenda humana para agradecerlo. Su enfoque es el Cirio Pascual ya encendido, simbolizando a Cristo. La canción pide a Dios que vea benignamente esta obra de manos humanas y, por extensión, los sacrificios de los fieles durante la Cuaresma.

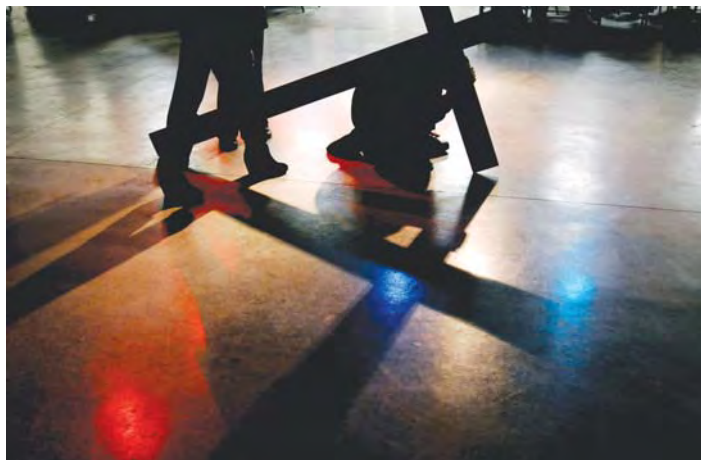


Foto CNS / Mike Crupi, *Catholic Courier*

En esta foto del archivo de CNS, jóvenes realizan las estaciones de la cruz en la *Iglesia Nuestra Señora de las Américas* en Rochester, Nueva York.

Comienza con el cantor — un diácono si es posible — dirigiéndose a cuatro grupos con la petición que se alegren porque Cristo ya brilla en la gloria de su victoria sobre la muerte. Llama la atención particularmente el último grupo, la gente que se ha congregado para la liturgia. Se le pide que rece por el cantor mismo para que cumpla la tarea de dar las alabanzas apropiadas al resucitado.

El Pregón Pascual tiene la apariencia de la oración eucarística en algunos aspectos. Repite la invocación a orar que conocemos en la misa: “El Señor esté con ustedes... Levantemos el corazón... Demos gracias al Señor...” También, en forma de oración a Dios Padre, procede a dar la *anamnesis* o memorial, recordando ocho eventos salvíficos para que todos los presentes los experimenten. Estos incluyen tanto la liberación de los israelitas de la esclavitud en Egipto como la entrega de los discípulos de

Jesucristo por medio de su muerte y resurrección.

Esta re-presentación de eventos históricos destaca las referencias a la luz, mostrando a los fieles el camino a Dios. En primer lugar, la luz, es la columna de fuego que guió a los israelitas por la noche en el desierto. Entonces, es la luz de la resurrección que, como un relámpago, llenó la noche tan brillantemente que se han ahuyentado los pecados y se han lavado las culpas.

En el medio del relato de los eventos, el Pregón hace una proclamación audaz. Llama el pecado de Adán, debajo del cual todavía vivimos heridos, “feliz” porque llevó a la venida de Cristo al mundo. Eso es, el himno celebra el amor de Dios tan asombroso que le dio a Su propio Hijo a la humanidad como su compañero y rescatador. ¿Es como si Dios estuviera premiando a la humanidad por haber pecado!

El Pregón termina pidiendo a Dios que no permita nunca al cirio apagarse. Representando a la vez a Cristo y su resplandor en sus discípulos, el cirio es para reflejar al mundo la verdad y el amor del resucitado por siempre.

A veces se llama el Pregón Pascual el *Exultet*. Este nombre latín significa “alégrense”, la primera palabra del himno. Toda la creación ya puede alegrarse porque Dios ha revelado a Su propio Hijo para restaurarle la justicia. Como el himno dice en otra parte, si no fuera para Cristo, sería mejor que nunca fuéramos nacidos porque nuestro destino habría sido el abismo de la muerte.

### 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, mandar correo electrónico a [jllocke@fwdioc.org](mailto:jllocke@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 monseñor Stephen Berg.

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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



Foto CNS / L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters



Foto CNS / L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

El papa coloca una estola blanca sobre los restos del Papa San Celestino V durante una visita en 2009 en la *Basílica de Santa María di Collemaggio*, que fue dañada por un terremoto. Celestino, elegido como pontífice a los 80 años, pero abrumado por la investidura, se convirtió en un ermitaño y renunció al papado.

El Papa Benedicto XVI asiste a una reunión el 11 de febrero con los cardenales en el Vaticano, anunciando que renunciará a fin de mes. El pontífice, con 85 años de edad, explica que ya no tiene la energía para ejercer su ministerio sobre la Iglesia universal.

# Papa Benedicto renunciará

## Citando razones de salud, el pontífice, con 85 años de edad, abdicará su investidura

Por Carol Glatz y Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — Diciendo que ya no tiene la fortaleza para ejercer el ministerio sobre la Iglesia universal, el papa Benedicto XVI anunció el 11 de febrero que estará renunciando a fin de este mes después de un pontificado de ocho años.

“Después de haber examinado mi conciencia repetidamente ante Dios, he llegado a la certeza de que mis fuerzas, debido a una edad avanzada, ya no son apropiadas para un ejercicio adecuado del ministerio petrino”, dijo el papa ante los cardenales reunidos en un consistorio ordinario público para aprobar la canonización de nuevos santos.

El papa Benedicto, quien fue elegido en abril del 2005, será el primer papa en renunciar en más de 600 años.

Él dijo a los cardenales: “En el mundo de hoy día, sujeto a tantos cambios rápidos y sacudido por cuestiones de profunda importancia para la vida de fe, para poder gobernar la barca de San Pedro y proclamar el Evangelio, se necesita fortaleza de mente y de cuerpo, fortaleza que durante los últimos meses se ha deteriorado en mí hasta el punto en que he tenido que reconocer mi incapacidad para cumplir adecuadamente el ministerio que se me confió”.

El padre jesuita Federico Lombardi, portavoz del Vaticano, dijo ante periodistas en una sesión informativa, que la decisión del papa no fue motivada por alguna enfermedad médica, sino

debido a una natural “reducción de fortaleza” asociada con la edad.

Aunque el anuncio sorprendió a casi todos, no fue una decisión repentina, sino que “había madurado durante los últimos meses”, dijo el padre Lombardi.

Usando un texto previamente escrito, el papa hizo el anuncio en latín durante un consistorio ordinario público matutino donde estaban presentes un gran número de cardenales.

Cuando pronunció su anuncio, el papa parecía muy “compuesto y concentrado” y leyó “de manera solemne”, adecuadamente con la importancia de lo que estaba diciendo, dijo el padre Lombardi.

Cumpliendo con requisito canónico, el papa Benedicto declaró solemnemente ante los cardenales: “Muy consciente de la seriedad de este acto, con plena libertad declaro que renuncio al ministerio de obispo de Roma, sucesor de San Pedro, que me fue confiado por los cardenales el 19 de abril de 2005, de tal manera, que desde el 28 de febrero de 2013, a las 20:00 horas, la Sede de Roma, la Sede de San Pedro, estará vacante y un cónclave para elegir al nuevo sumo pontífice tendrá que convocarse por aquellos que tienen la competencia para hacerlo”.

Corresponde al decano del Colegio Cardenalicio, el cardenal Angelo Sodano, hacer los preparativos para un cónclave para elegir un nuevo papa.

El padre Lombardi dijo que después que el papa entregue su puesto, se mudará a la villa papal en *Castel Gandolfo* en las afueras de Roma.

Él se quedará allí hasta que se haya completado la renovación de un claustro establecido por el beato Juan Pablo II dentro de los Jardines del Vaticano, dijo.

El papa entonces vivirá en el claustro, llamado monasterio *Mater Ecclesia*, y dedicará su tiempo a la oración y reflexión, dijo el portavoz del Vaticano.

Es probable que el papa siga escribiendo, añadió, puesto que el papa ha mencionado muchas veces que ha querido pasar más tiempo dedicado al estudio y a la oración.

Al preguntársele si habría alguna confusión sobre el liderazgo o si había posibilidad de un cisma, el padre Lombardi dijo que creía que el papa “no tiene temor de que esto” sucediera porque él demostró claramente su deseo de entregar el puesto y ya no ser papa ni retener autoridad papal alguna.

“Pienso que de ninguna manera hay riesgo de confusión o división” respecto a esto, dijo.

El papa, quien ya pasó la edad permitida para que un cardenal vote por un nuevo papa, obviamente no será parte del cónclave que se reunirá para elegir a su sucesor, añadió.

No es probable que él tenga ningún rol en el “interregnum”, o el tiempo entre papas, porque “no hay ningún rol para un papa predecesor” durante este período, dijo el sacerdote.

El sacerdote jesuita dijo que una “sede vacante” usualmente dura menos de un mes, y que es más que probable que un nuevo papa sea elegido a tiempo para liderar el programa completo de la Semana Santa y las liturgias de Pascua.

El cardenal Sodano, uno de los muchos carde-





Foto CNS / Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic

El Papa Benedicto XVI besa a un bebé al salir de una de sus audiencias generales, repetidas semanalmente, en la Plaza de San Pedro en el Vaticano, en el 2007.

nales presentes durante el anuncio del papa, se dirigió al papa diciéndole que la noticia le dejó “un sentido de pérdida, casi completamente incrédulo”.

Sin embargo, fue obvio que su decisión se basó en un “gran afecto” por el bienestar de la Iglesia, dijo el cardenal.

El padre Lombardi dijo que ser papa hoy día es un “movimiento mucho más rápido, más exigente” que en el pasado, con un programa completo casi imparables de eventos públicos y privados y celebraciones litúrgicas.

Al preguntársele por qué el papa escogió el 11 de febrero, fiesta de *Nuestra Señora de Lourdes*, como el día para anunciar su entrega del puesto, el padre Lombardi dijo que lo más probable fuese que la fecha fue una coincidencia y que el papa en vez escogió un evento, el consistorio ordinario público, donde un gran número de cardenales estaría presente.

“El papa escogió esta significativa ocasión con los cardenales reunidos” como el mejor momento para anunciar sus planes, dijo el portavoz del Vaticano.

Al preguntársele si el papa tenía alguna enfermedad médica o episodios de depresión que podrían haber causado su renuncia, el padre Lombardi dijo que el papa “absolutamente no está” deprimido y posee una notable “serenidad espiritual” y compostura, a pesar de los muchos momentos difíciles que ha tenido que enfrentar como papa.

El portavoz del Vaticano también dijo no estar enterado de ninguna enfermedad médica que hubiera causado que el papa entregara el puesto, sino que se debe a un deterioro “normal” de la fortaleza física y mental que viene con la vejez.

El papa ha tenido cada día más dificultades para caminar durante el pasado año, a menudo usando un bastón y siempre siendo ayudado a subir y bajar escalones. Sin embargo, el Vaticano nunca ha emitido información médica que pueda aparentar que el papa sufra de algo que no sea el dolor articular relacionado con su edad.

Años de pontificado	1878-1903	1730-1740	1670-1676	2005-2013
Edad al tiempo de su muerte o renuncia	93 años, 140 días	87 años, 305 días	86 años, 9 días	85 años, 318 días

Fuentes: CNE, Harper Collins, Enciclopedia de la Religión Católica y la Nueva Enciclopedia Católica © 2013 Catholic News Service

La opción de renuncia de un papa está explícitamente escrita en el *Código de Derecho Canónico*. Este dice que un papa puede dejar su puesto, pero estipula que la decisión debe ser tomada libremente y “manifestada debidamente”. Nadie tiene que aceptar formalmente la renuncia de un papa para que esta sea válida.

El último papa que renunció fue Gregorio XII en 1415.

El papa Benedicto XVI ha dicho durante mucho tiempo que sería apropiado que un papa renunciara por el bien de la Iglesia si siente que no puede resistir físicamente la carga del papado.

En su entrevista-libro, *La luz del mundo*, con el periodista alemán Peter Seewald, el papa dice: “Si un papa se da cuenta claramente de que ya no está capacitado física-, psicológica-, ni espiritualmente para manejar los deberes de su puesto, entonces tiene el derecho y, bajo ciertas circunstancias, también la obligación de renunciar”.

El papa le dijo al autor que es importante, sin embargo, que como papa, “no debe huir” y “debe mantenerse firme y soportar” cualesquiera situaciones difíciles la Iglesia enfrente. Por esa razón él no estaba pensando en renunciar en el 2010, año en que se llevaron a cabo las entrevistas.

“Uno puede renunciar en un momento pacífico o cuando uno simplemente no puede continuar”, había dicho el papa.

Antes de terminar sus comentarios durante el consistorio, el papa Benedicto dijo ante los cardenales: “Les doy las más sinceras gracias por todo el amor y el trabajo con que me han apoyado en mi ministerio y pido perdón por todos mis defectos. Y ahora, confiemos la santa Iglesia al cuidado de nuestro pastor supremo, nuestro Señor Jesucristo, e imploremos a su santa Madre María para que ella pueda ayudar a los padres cardenales, con su

El Papa Benedicto XVI saluda a la multitud durante la audiencia general en el Salón de Pablo VI en el Vaticano, el 13 de febrero.

Foto CNS / Paul Haring



diligencia maternal, en la elección de un nuevo sumo pontífice”.

El papa dijo: “Deseo también devotamente servirle a la santa Iglesia de Dios en el futuro mediante una vida dedicada a la oración”.

El padre Lombardi dijo sentir “gran admiración” por la “gran valentía” y “libertad de espíritu” del papa al tomar esta decisión. El portavoz dijo que eso demuestra que el papa no está solamente plenamente consciente de las grandes responsabilidades que tiene el liderato de la Iglesia universal, sino también de sus esperanzas de que “el ministerio de la Iglesia se lleve a cabo de la mejor manera” posible.

# Papa Benedicto renunciará

## Los católicos locales reaccionan

Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Corresponsal

Cuando 105 estudiantes de la *Universidad de Dallas* se inscribieron para estudiar en el campus *Eugene Constantini* de la universidad en Roma esta primavera, nunca esperaban convertirse en testigos presenciales de la historia de la Iglesia.

Sin embargo, eso fue lo que ocurrió el 10 de febrero, cuando el Papa Benedicto XVI anunció su renuncia, efectiva el 28 de febrero. El líder espiritual de 1,2 mil millones de católicos citó problemas de salud como la razón para su decisión histórica e inesperada. Un pontífice no ha renunciado desde que el Papa Gregorio XII abdicó de su investidura para poner fin a un cisma dentro de la Iglesia hace casi 600 años.

Estudiantes de la *Universidad de Dallas* ahora tienen la oportunidad de presenciar la elección de un papa y apreciar las actividades de Semana Santa desde un campus que está a sólo 10 millas del Vaticano.

“Los estudiantes están totalmente fascinados por este evento”, dijo el Dr. Peter Hatlie, director y decano del programa de la *Universidad de Dallas* en Roma, quien se reunió con los estudiantes para discutir el tema y sus implicaciones, en una reunión el 11 de febrero. “Realmente esto va a recalibrar nuestro semestre. Vamos a tomar todas las medidas posibles para asegurarnos de que puedan estar en Roma para vivir esta experiencia única en la vida”.

Roma es una ciudad generalmente tranquila, pero está sujeta a cambios de ánimo repentinos luego de importantes noticias papales. Hatlie vivía en Roma cuando el Papa Juan Pablo II murió y fue sucedido por el cardenal Josef Ratzinger en 2005.

“Italia en general, pero sobre todo Roma, entra en alta velocidad”, sugirió el pedagogo. “Los periódicos tendrán

páginas y páginas de reportajes diarios sobre lo que está pasando”.

Horas después del anuncio del Papa Benedicto XVI, las estaciones italianas de radio se volcaron totalmente a cubrir la historia.

“Creo que nuestros estudiantes están listos para dejar sus plumas e irse a la *Plaza de San Pedro* a partir de mañana. Existe un entusiasmo enorme”, dijo Hatlie. “La noticia fue impresionante”.

Vivir cerca de la Ciudad Eterna mientras el mundo le da la bienvenida a un nuevo Papa es una experiencia formativa para los estudiantes de Dallas.

“A menudo hablamos de transformar la vida con la educación superior. Este evento absolutamente tendrá ese efecto”, prometió Hatlie.

En el norte de Texas, los católicos se preguntan cómo un cambio en el papado afectará a la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*. Los feligreses esperaban el nombramiento expedito de un nuevo obispo para reasumir la posición del obispo Kevin Vann, quien fue reasignado a la *Diócesis de Orange, California*, por el Papa Benedicto XVI en septiembre de 2012. Muchos especulan que la elección de un nuevo Papa podría retrasar este proceso.

“Aguardamos la voluntad de Dios para la **Diócesis católica de Fort Worth** mientras esperamos por el nombramiento de nuestro próximo obispo”, dijo el administrador diocesano Monseñor Stephen Berg en un comunicado, tras el anuncio de la abdicación del Papa. “Pedimos también que la gracia de la sabiduría de Dios guíe al *Colegio Cardenalicio* al comenzar su cónclave para elegir a nuestro nuevo Papa”.

El Monseñor Berg comentó que el plan del Papa Benedicto XVI para retirarse demuestra su humildad y profunda devoción a la Iglesia.

“Pido a todos los fieles de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth* que, por favor,



Foto CNS / L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

El Papa Benedicto XVI saluda al fallecido monseñor Charles King y la Hma. Francesca Walterscheid, SSMN. Los dos fueron elegidos para representar a la diócesis en una audiencia papal durante una peregrinación a Roma en 2009.

oren por el Papa Benedicto, en acción de gracias por su ministerio abnegado como nuestro Santo Padre, y para que pueda continuar experimentando en su retiro los dones de la gracia y la paz de Dios”, agregó.

El diácono Emilio (Popo) González, de la *Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción*, recibió llamadas de preocupados feligreses después de la declaración del Papa.

“Primero estamos luchando sin obispo y ahora sin Papa. Sin embargo, Dios se hará cargo de todo eso”, explicó el diácono con confianza. “Nos preocupamos mucho. Pero Dios tiene su plan”.

Al igual que el resto del mundo, el diácono González se sorprendió con los planes de jubilación del Papa, pero entiende su decisión. Cuando Benedicto XVI deje su cargo el 28 de febrero a la edad de 85 años, él habrá sobrevivido a todos menos tres de sus 264 predecesores. A los 78 años, fue el hombre de más avanzada edad elegido a la *Cátedra de San Pedro* en 300 años.

“No lo culpo: su salud está fallando, está cansado y siente que ya no puede permanecer como Papa”, el diácono concuerda.

Los expertos especulan que el nuevo Papa podría provenir de África, Asia o América Latina — una agradable suposición para el diácono González, quien sirve a una creciente comunidad hispana en Denton.

“Un Papa de un país latinoamericano? Eso es lo que estoy esperando”, admitió. “Los latinoamericanos somos casi 100 por ciento católicos, y tener un Papa de América Latina sólo nos haría más fuertes y orgullosos”.

El Papa Benedicto XVI fue el primer alemán elegido para el papado desde 1523.

La hermana Francesca Walterscheid, SSMN, aprovechó su patrimonio compartido con el pontífice para conseguir una audiencia papal en el 2009. Durante un viaje a los santuarios de Italia con 500 peregrinos de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*, la nativa de Münster y el fallecido Monseñor Charles King fueron elegidos para conocer al Papa.

“Hablé con él en alemán”, dijo la hermana, que todavía recuerda vívidamente la sonrisa reconfortante y agradable del Santo Padre. “Era tan expresivo”.

Teniendo en cuenta sólo un momento para estrechar la mano del Papa Benedicto XVI, la turista de Fort Worth recuerda que le dijo, “te amamos”, en su idioma nativo.

“Respondió algo, pero no sé lo que dijo. Me sentí bastante abrumada”, confesó. “Fue un honor reunirse con él. Es un recuerdo agradable de tener”.

CONTINUADO EN LA PRÓXIMA PÁGINA



La hermana Francesca, quien vive junto con su comunidad religiosa en el *Centro de Nuestra Señora de la Victoria*, dijo que las hermanas prendieron el noticiero de la televisión después de escuchar los informes iniciales de la jubilación del Papa. Aunque la decisión no tiene precedente en tiempos modernos, apoya su decisión.

“Es lo suficientemente inteligente para saber si es hora de irse”, explicó la hermana. “A su edad, le debe ser difícil llevar el mundo sobre sus hombros”.

Los 118 miembros votantes del *Colegio de Cardenales* se reunirán antes de la Pascua para seleccionar el sucesor del Papa Benedicto XVI. Cualquier cardinal podrá participar en las deliberaciones; sin embargo, únicamente los menores de 80 años podrán votar.

Inmediatamente después de su abdicación el 28 de febrero, el Papa pasará una temporada en *Castel Gandolfo*, una residencia de verano al sur de Roma, cerca del campus de la *Universidad de Dallas*. Más tarde se trasladará a un monasterio de clausura, según informes del Vaticano.

# El significado para la iglesia de la renuncia del papa

**Por Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Corresponsal**

Fue una noticia totalmente inesperada, cuyas ramificaciones tomaron hasta a un veterano teólogo como el Dr. Mark Goodwin por sorpresa.

“He sido bombardeado con llamadas telefónicas”, admite el decano interino de la *Escuela del ministerio (School of Ministry)* de la *Universidad de Dallas*.

Los Papas abrazan el pontificado hasta la muerte. La decisión del Papa Benedicto XVI de renunciar al papado el 28 de febrero rompió con la tradición de la Iglesia moderna. El Papa Gregorio XII declinó el papado en 1415 para poner fin a lo que se llegó a conocer como *El Gran Cisma de Occidente*; antes de eso, el último Papa que cedió su puesto fue San Celestino V en 1294: una persona contemplativa, prefería una vida solitaria, y renunció luego de cinco meses al frente de la Santa Sede.

La renuncia papal, una anomalía en la era moderna, está generando una gran cantidad de preguntas.

El experto en teología comenta que, según algunos analistas, la jubilación del Papa Benedicto XVI es una respuesta a la decisión de su predecesor, Juan Pablo II, de continuar siendo Papa hasta la muerte, a pesar de los sufrimientos causados por el paulatino deterioro de su estado de salud.

“No estoy de acuerdo con eso”, dice, afirmando que Juan Pablo II y Benedicto XVI son dos Papas muy diferentes. “Cada uno tenía su propio estilo, y su sentido de la vocación”.

Juan Pablo II fue la ejemplificación de la dignidad y el valor del sufrimiento al final de la vida. Del otro lado tenemos al Papa Benedicto: un erudito y escritor prolífico – tal vez pueda revelar su misión personal en un libro, Goodwin añadió.

“El anunciar su renuncia al comienzo de la Cuaresma es significativo”, el profesor continúa. “Este momento es interesante. Hay un fundamento litúrgico para el evento. Tendremos que esperar y ver qué pasará al final de 40 días”.

Marlon De La Torre, director de educación de catequistas y catequesis de los niños en la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*, dice que los católicos están comprensiblemente tristes, pero deberían ver la decisión del Papa de manera positiva.

“Vemos la prudencia del Santo Padre. Obviamente, conoce su salud mejor que nadie y ve la necesidad de jubilarse”, explica De La Torre. “Está cuidando de su Iglesia y siendo un buen padre para sus hijos. Está preparando a la Iglesia para una nueva transición”.

La razón por la cual el Santo Padre ha decidido renunciar durante el *Año de la fe* y antes de escribir un documento sobre la Nueva Evangelización ha dado lugar a cierta especulación negativa, admite el director.

“Podría ser visto como un mal momento; sin embargo, en última instancia, no se puede controlar eso”, dice.

De La Torre también señaló que, como prefecto de la *Congregación para la doctrina de la fe*, el cardenal Josef Ratzinger presentó su renuncia tres veces, y cada vez el beato Papa Juan Pablo II se negó a aceptarla.

Los medios de comunicación seculares a la vez pudieran erróneamente percibir y malentender por qué el Santo Padre dejaría su cargo, pero hay disposiciones en la ley canónica que permiten la renuncia de un pontífice.

“En caso que el Pontífice Romano renuncie a su cargo, se requiere para su validez que la renuncia se haga libremente y que se manifieste correctamente, pero no que sea aceptada por nadie”, está escrito en el *Código de derecho canónico, Canon 332.2*.

“Así que el Papa Benedicto XVI no está haciendo algo fuera de lo común. Esto se ha hecho antes”, dice De La Torre. “Lo que lo hace significativo es que esta es la primera vez que se ha hecho en mucho tiempo”.

## 11 cardenales del EU con derecho a voto en el cónclave

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Once cardenales de los Estados Unidos son menores de 80 años y, por lo tanto, tienen derecho a votar en un cónclave para elegir a un sucesor del Papa Benedicto XVI:



• Raymond Burke, cabeza del Tribunal supremo de la signatura apostólica, y arzobispo emérito de St. Louis



• Daniel N. DiNardo, arzobispo de Galveston-Houston



• Timothy Dolan, arzobispo de Nueva York



• Francis E. George, OMI, arzobispo de Chicago



• James M. Harvey, arcipreste de la *Basílica de San Pablo de Extramuros*



• William Levada, prefecto emérito de la *Congregación para la doctrina de la fe*, y arzobispo emérito de San Francisco



• Roger M. Mahony, arzobispo emérito de Los Ángeles



• Edwin F. O'Brien, gran maestro de la *Orden de caballería del Santo Sepulcro*, y el arzobispo emérito de Baltimore



• Sean O'Malley, OFM, Cap., Arzobispo de Boston



• Justin F. Rigali, arzobispo emérito de Philadelphia



• Donald W. Wuerl, arzobispo de Washington, D.C.

# Book: *THE POPE AND THE CEO*

## New book shows us how to elevate our work to a higher level

By Jerry Circelli

**STRESSES ASSOCIATED WITH WORKING FOR A LIVING CAN TAKE A HEAVY TOLL ON PEOPLE IN ANY BUSINESS, ESPECIALLY AS THEY STRIVE TO SUCCEED AND BECOME TOP PERFORMERS IN THE WORKPLACE.** Even people with the best intentions who set out to maintain a good work / life balance can find the scales tipping in the wrong direction.

From time to time, we need a reminder to help us refocus our priorities and realize what it is we truly want to accomplish through our work.

That's where *The Pope and the CEO*, comes in. A clear, concise, compelling, and easy read, the book gives us a behind-the-scenes look at Pope John Paul II. Through the eyes of a young member of the Swiss Guard whose life was transformed by his encounters with the Pope, we see divinely inspired leadership in action. We see how Christ's leadership qualities were practiced by Pope John Paul II and how he modeled them for the world to see.

Andreas Widmer would refine the lessons he learned as a business executive and CEO. In addition to his many business endeavors, Widmer serves as director of Entrepreneurship Programs at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

In his book, Widmer shows us that through humility, faith, and prayer, along with compassion for every person on his staff, John Paul II inspired people to not only excel at their jobs, but in life, and to remain on the path to heaven.

Could we do that at our jobs?

That's the challenge Widmer presents to us through his book. But he offers us a guide on how to do it, based on life lessons



Photo by Jerry Circelli / North Texas Catholic Legatus member David Fisher looks on as author Andreas Widmer signs his book, *The Pope and CEO* for Tony and Mina Milburn.

learned from Pope John Paul II.

*The Pope and the CEO* covers many thought-provoking topics, including the relationship between business and faith, business ethics, and leadership techniques gleaned from Pope John Paul II himself.

Specifically, Widmer outlines nine principals for business leadership. Treated as chapters of the book, they include:

- Know Who You Are: The Importance of Vocation
- Know God: The Power of Prayer
- Know What's Right: Ethics and the Human Person
- Know How to Choose What's Right: Exercising Your Free Will
- Know Where You Are and Where You Are Going: Bridging the Paradox of Planning for the Future yet Living in the Present
- Know Your Team: The Value of Cultivating and Synchronizing Talent

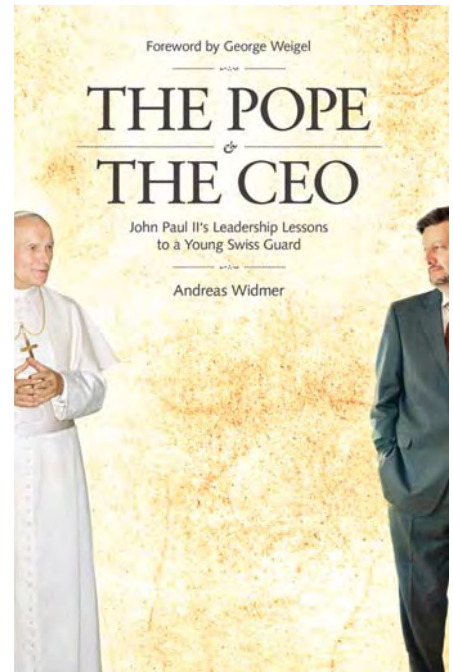


Image courtesy of Catholics United for Life

- Live as a Witness: The Testimony of Right Action
- Live a Balanced Life: All Things in Moderation
- Live Detachment: Intentional Humility and Poverty

At the end of each chapter are powerful guides and challenging questions and exercises.

If you feel caught up in your work and business, experience frustration, and fear you may lose track of priorities from time to time, this book is for you. Written by a former Swiss Guard, CEO, and businessman who has experienced all the above, it will help you feel a connection not only with the author, but also with Blessed Pope John Paul II himself.

*Jerry Circelli is a freelance correspondent for the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC, and in addition to writing reviews, he has written numerous features. To learn more about THE POPE AND THE CEO and the author, Andreas Widmer, visit [thepopeandthecEO.com](http://thepopeandthecEO.com).*



# Lessons in Leadership

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the young man's life, strengthen his faith, and serve as the first major leadership lesson Widmer would learn from Pope John Paul II. During his next two years in the Swiss Guard, Widmer not only guarded, but also studied the pope. And 25 years after his first encounter with Pope John Paul II, Widmer would chronicle lessons learned in a compelling book he authored, entitled, *The Pope and the CEO*.

While he took a copy of the book with him to present to the Legatus business-leader group, he was more interested in talking about the virtues of Pope John Paul II than the book itself.

The reason is evident to anyone who has read Widmer's book. In it, he writes of the day he left the Swiss Guard to pursue a new chapter in his life. The pope, Widmer wrote, told him to "Go and bring Christ into the world!"

The departing guard would consider the pope's directive to be not only part of his plan, but also his duty.

"You see, there's a code of honor in the Guards passed from generation to generation," Widmer wrote. "When you're sworn into active duty, you pledge to defend the pope with your life, to shield him with your person. But when you've gone back out into the world, it's understood that you will continue to shield him, only this time with your persona, with how you live your life."

Both in his book and in his talks, Widmer cites Pope John Paul II's special ability to pray. It was a quality that most impressed the author. Widmer is convinced that prayer enabled the pope to maintain a deep understanding and compassion for all people around the world, as well as a keen sense of awareness of those around him.

"How did this man have the wherewithal to recognize there's a 20-year-old kid outside his apartment who's missing his mom?" Widmer asked. He then posed a question for the CEOs and business leaders, "Do you know the person who cleans your office late at night? Do you know that person's name, his situation, his problems?"

John Paul II knew these things, said Widmer, because he was "a man of prayer."

"Prayer is not something for God," Widmer said. "Prayer is for us. Prayer helps us to



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Andreas Widmer stood tall and strong in the service of Pope John Paul II from 1986 to 1988. The Swiss Guard, an elite military force, has defended pontiffs for more than 500 years. (Photo courtesy Andreas Widmer) • In 2009, when the commander of the Swiss Guards asked former guards to return for temporary service to help during a busy time, Widmer was quick to respond. It had been more than 20 years since he first served, and Widmer cherished the opportunity to once again help a pontiff, this time Pope Benedict XVI. (Photo courtesy Andreas Widmer) • CEOs and business leaders from the Legatus Chapter of Fort Worth learned some valuable lessons from Andreas Widmer, author of *The Pope and the CEO*, at their January meeting. Pictured from left are President Jack Sheedy, David Fisher, Andreas Widmer, Brian Von Gruben, and Bill Petrelli. (Photo by Jerry Circelli)

look at the world through the eyes of God. That's what prayer does. And when you're coming out of prayer, you begin to see things you would not otherwise notice — things like sorrow, weakness, and despair."

John Paul II saw the challenges people faced, Widmer said, and treated all people around him just the way he had treated the lonely Swiss Guard.

"I was intrigued with this man," Widmer said. "I started to watch him and to pray. I saw him as a man who did everything well and I wanted to be like him."

The ultimate lesson he learned from John Paul II was not to look at the pope for answers, but to look at the life of Jesus Christ and follow *his* lead. Through the way he lived his life, Pope John Paul II became a directional sign to Christ, Widmer said. The pope's modeling of his life through Christ was the pontiff's way of saying, "Whatever you admire in me comes from Him, and you can have it too," Widmer said.

The former Swiss Guard encouraged the business executives at the Legatus meeting to do the same — to live their lives and run their businesses based on wise moral decisions. Then, when workers look to them for direction, they too will see Christ.

In the final analysis, Widmer said, we shall be judged on our days on earth and how we have conducted our lives, including working or running our businesses. Our creations will be like those of children who paint a picture and give it proudly to their parents. Our palette, however, will be our God-given talents. How we apply them will be our painting.

"What I pray for you and for me tonight is that we can create a beautiful painting with our lives and then when our day comes ... we can go and stand in front of God the Father and say, 'Here, I painted this for you.'

"And that He then can embrace us and say, 'Well done, you good and faithful servant. Welcome into your Father's kingdom.'"

# GOOD NEWSMAKER

## Lessons in Leadership

*Former Swiss Guard passes on lessons learned from Blessed Pope John Paul II*

By Jerry Circelli / Correspondent

**A SELF-PROCLAIMED TOUGH GUY, 20-YEAR-OLD ANDREAS WIDMER FACED THE WORLD WITH SOLID SELF-ASSURANCE THAT MEASURED UP TO HIS CHISELED, 6-FOOT 9-INCH, TOWERING FRAME.** Unshakable and prepared for any challenge, this military-tested new member of the Pontifical Swiss Guard was prepared to go about his work with discipline and confidence.

But not this night. This was Dec. 24, 1986 — a day Widmer would normally enjoy with his parents and five siblings, celebrating traditional holiday customs at their small Swiss farming village. In Europe, the Christmas season revolves around this day, and it was always Widmer's favorite time of year.

This year, however, Widmer would not be sharing the splendor of the holidays with his family. He would have to work. After excelling at rigorous physical and academic testing, Widmer had been accepted earlier than expected into the elite forces charged to protect the pope. While he anticipated starting in this role after the New Year arrived, he was called in to work Christmas Eve, of all days.

Anger, sadness, and melancholy quickly set in as the tallest of the Swiss Guards felt small, unfulfilled, and lonely. Instead of being joyful on this day, Widmer recalled, "I cried my eyes out."

Widmer recounted the ordeal for 40 business leaders and their spouses gathered to hear his



Photo courtesy Andreas Widmer

Pope John Paul II expressed appreciation for the work of Swiss Guard Andreas Widmer from his first day on the job to his last. It was a lesson in leadership that would change the young man's life.

talk at the Fort Worth Chapter of Legatus monthly meeting on Jan. 10 at the Fort Worth Club.

He told them that the façade of toughness he had built around himself had crumbled away that Christmas Eve night in 1986, leaving him feeling like a 7-year-old boy who just wanted to go home to his mother. He felt he had made the wrong choice in joining the Swiss Guard. "I just wanted to undo all of this," Widmer said. "I wanted to go home and start over."

But then, Widmer got the call on his two-way radio. Pope John Paul II was about to depart his living quarters to celebrate Midnight Mass at St. Peter's Basilica. Widmer was instructed

to unlock the door in a secure area in anticipation of the pope's walk-through, en route to the Basilica. He recalled vividly unlocking a large door and seeing a warm, yellow light cascading through the doorway. Next, he saw Pope John Paul II in the doorway, dressed in a long, white cassock.

"He had a habit of tilting his head when he was interested in something," Widmer recalled. "Well, he tilted his head, looked right at me, and said, 'I've never seen you here before, what's your name?'"

"I told him my name and that I was a new recruit. I really didn't have to say anything else. He just knew how I was feeling.

"He said, 'Of course, this is your first Christmas away from home isn't it?'"

"A tear came down my eye," said Widmer.

"He reached out his hand and took my hand in his, then he pulled me in closer and grabbed my elbow with his other hand. He said, 'Andreas, I just want to thank you for the sacrifice you are making for the Church tonight. I'm glad you are here, and I really appreciate what you're doing. And, I'm going to pray for you as I celebrate Midnight Mass tonight.'"

Widmer was stunned that the pope would take the time to get to know him and care about his feelings, let alone pray for him at Midnight Mass. And in later years, Widmer grew even more enamored of the fact that this Pope — a leader of 1 billion Catholics dealing with Cold War tensions and conflicts within the Church itself — would take time to comfort a young man missing his mother.

The moment would change

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