

NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

Vol. 27 No. 3

April 2011

Masters Level Theology Study

For non-traditional
students is coming
to the Diocese
by way of
Ave Maria
University



Institute for
Pastoral Theology
AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY

(Artwork courtesy of Ave Maria University, Institute for Pastoral Theology)

This fall Ave Maria's Institute for Pastoral Theology will bring additional opportunity for advanced formation to the diocese

By Michele Baker

Building on the diocese's strong commitment to provide formation opportunities to the faithful, Bishop Kevin Vann has invited Ave Maria University's Institute for Pastoral Theology (IPT) to establish a graduate program in theology in the Diocese of Fort Worth with classes beginning in the fall of 2011. The three-year course of study will culminate in a Master of Theological Studies degree in pastoral theology.

In a letter to priests, deacons, directors of religious education, and principals, announcing the new opportunity to earn a master's in

theology locally, Bishop Vann pointed out that the diocese has, over the years, "made it a priority to provide programs of doctrinal and spiritual formation to all ... engaged in ministry and pastoral activity through a variety of programs.... Most especially, the Pope John Paul II Institute School of Lay Ministry provides an excellent two-year program of doctrinal and spiritual formation that meets the needs of a wide variety of catechetical, liturgical, and pastoral ministries."

Lucas Pollice, director of Catechesis for the diocese, gave an overview of the variety of educational needs to be addressed: "We are currently working on developing a number of adult formation programs in the diocese that meet the great need for adults to truly know

and understand the faith," he said. Currently, the most important is the Pope John Paul II Institute which offers lay ministry formation, adult formation opportunities, and training for those who direct and teach catechesis in the RCIA process. The JP II Institute, Pollice said, summarizing, "provides basic and intermediate formation that is the stepping-off point to more advanced formation such as the Institute for Pastoral Theology."

"The IPT would be ideal for those who are looking for a graduate level program that is an in-depth study of the pillars of the Catholic faith," Pollice continued, "such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the writings of the Second Vatican Council, the writings of Pope John

SEE INSTITUTE, P. 19

"This degree program is rooted in the Catholic Tradition, faithful to the Magisterium, and designed for the non-traditional student The IPT format was developed to accommodate students whose access to graduate studies in theology is restricted by job, family, or distance."

— Timothy Herrman, associate director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University

Our Shepherd Speaks

Lent, encountering the Cross of Christ and repenting

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The season of Lent is upon us, and this time is given to us by the Church each year as a season of repentance and conversion as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's death and Resurrection at Easter.

The season of Lent is a great gift of the Church as it calls us to serious conversion, to look deeply into our hearts and lives with the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to uproot the sources of sin in our lives, and to more radically conform ourselves to Christ. Lent is a serious season, but it is such a great moment of grace for all of us if we are willing to respond to the call of Christ to "repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

We need to examine more closely this call to conversion and repentance. The word conversion in Greek means *metanoia* which literally means "to turn around." Conversion or *metanoia* means to turn away from sin and turn toward God; it is a call to uproot, to cast away all that is within us or around us that causes us to sin so that we may have a more profound relationship with God.

I think sometimes the temptation for us during Lent is to do the bare minimum, to give up something rather trivial, to try and pray a little more here or there. Not that these things are not good in themselves, but do we take the season of Lent as a time to seriously turn away from sin? Do we examine with seriousness what we do and say, what we watch on TV or the Internet, how we treat people, our attitudes, the example we give to others? Do we seriously discern the things that may lead us to sin and remove them from our lives? This is the kind of serious conversion that the season of Lent is calling all of us to do.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his recent Message for Lent, teaches us what this holy and penitential season is all about:

"In synthesis, the Lenten journey, in which we are invited to contemplate the Mystery of the Cross, is meant to reproduce within us 'the pattern of his death' (Philippians 3: 10), so as to effect a deep conversion



Bishop Kevin Vann

in our lives; that we may be transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus; that we may firmly orient our existence according to the will of God; that we may be freed of our egoism, overcoming the instinct to dominate others and opening us to the love of Christ. The Lenten period is a favorable time to recognize our weakness and to accept, through a sincere inventory of our life, the renewing Grace of the Sacrament of Penance, and walk resolutely towards Christ." (3)

First, our Holy Father teaches us that Lent is about encountering the Cross of Christ, the Cross that not only saved us, but the Cross that also continuously calls us to die with Christ to our old, sinful self, so that we might rise with him to new life in the same way that St. Paul teaches us:

Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming (upon the disobedient). By these you too once conducted yourselves, when you lived in that way. But now you must put them all away: anger, fury, malice, slander, and obscene language out of your mouths. Stop lying to one another, since you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator.

—Colossians 3:5-10

This kind of conversion is only possible if we are willing, like St. Paul, to be knocked off our horse, if we are willing to allow

the grace of the Holy Spirit to purify and transform us and turn us firmly on the path of righteousness and salvation. But we must first be willing to put to death with Christ those things that are obstacles to holiness and our relationship with Christ. That is why we are called to fasting and sacrifice during Lent. These are very effective ways of curbing our passions and desires, of dying to ourselves, our wants and needs, so that we might be able to rely more on the grace of Christ and be more conformed to Him and the Cross.

Secondly, the Pope reminds us that true and serious conversion is only possible through our participation in the Sacrament of Penance. It is through this great sacrament of Christ's mercy that true conversion takes place: We recognize our sins, take full responsibility for them, confess them to Christ, and then receive through sacramental absolution new life and grace in Christ. Each and every confession is like the parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32) played over and over again. Through the Sacrament of Penance, Christ in his great mercy embraces us, restores us, and strengthens us in his grace, and there is great rejoicing in heaven because a sinner has truly repented and is fully alive in Christ. Through confession, we literally empty ourselves of sin so that we can be filled with the grace of Christ. Participation in the Sacrament of Penance should always be a regular part of our life as Catholics, but particularly during the season of Lent as we strive for a deeper conversion to Christ. Our parishes provide many opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance during Lent, with Penance services and extra time for confessions. Be sure and consult parish bulletins and announcements for these times.

Lent is also a very important time in many of the parishes for those who are beginning their final preparation to be received into full communion with the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). I have the privilege at the beginning of Lent each year of celebrating the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion with all of the people from all around the diocese who are preparing to enter the Church at Easter. This powerful rite calls the Elect, or those who are about to be baptized to continue to grow in their experience and knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Savior and grow in their understanding of their own need for redemption and their calling to receive the grace of Christ. The rite also calls the Candidates, or those who are already one with us in Baptism but are preparing for full

communion with the Church, to be more conformed to Christ and to turn away from the darkness of sin and toward the grace and mercy of Christ. However, one of the most important parts of the rite asks everyone who is there representing all of the parishes if they are ready to offer a faithful witness to the Elect and Candidates as they prepare for the Easter sacraments. It is very important for us to remember that the responsibility for those who are entering the Church is not just the responsibility of the pastor, or the RCIA director and catechists. The RCIA process is a work of the entire parish who constantly witness to the Elect and Candidates how the Catholic faith is to be lived out in the ordinary circumstances of life, and how each and every one of us is called to be a faithful witness to Christ and the truth that He has entrusted to the Church.

Many of you will also witness some of the other RCIA rites in your parishes over the coming weeks. On the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, the three Scrutinies will be celebrated for the Elect who are preparing for Baptism at Easter. Each Scrutiny is based upon a passage from the Gospel of John: The first is based on Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:4-42), the second on Jesus' healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-41), and the third is based on Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). Each of these passages from Sacred Scripture reveal to us a moving and powerful story of conversion and salvation, and the saving power of Jesus who comes to bring us out of the darkness of sin and death and into his marvelous light. The Scrutinies and the witness of those coming into the Catholic faith are great reminders to all of us that we are called to this kind of conversion and that Jesus is truly "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). I encourage you to take some time to reflect upon these passages as a part of your journey of faith and holiness this Lenten season.

In the meantime, please be assured of my prayers as we together seek to more deeply know the Lord and his love and mercy during this penitential season. I look forward to sharing with you the joy of Easter and the grace of the resurrected Christ.

+Kevin W. Vann

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



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Confession is healing for all of us

If you're really interested in a "behind the scenes tour" of what's going on in the Diocese of Fort Worth, I recommend (once again) following the **Bishop's Blog** on the diocese's home page: www.fwdioc.org.

Bishop Vann continues to give a newsy, personal approach that lets you in on matters of importance to the local church. Recent postings, as we go to press, have included an update on a recent meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council; notes about the Focolare Movement's new presence in our diocese, an account of a recent series of visits the bishop made to seminaries where our future priests are being formed, and details about the new stained glass windows at Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo.

I promise I'm not being told to plug Bishop Vann's blog. I really do think that if you're interested in knowing more about the local Church and the national Church, you'll find it fascinating. And I promise not to lead with a plug for the **Bishop's Blog** at www.fwdioc.org next month (although I still might mention it).

Want to know more about how the DCCW (Diocesan Council of Catholic Women)

works and what women in our parishes have gotten out of their involvement at the parish, diocesan, provincial, and national levels? Then read Jenara Kocks Burgess's article on **Page 9**.

Worried about heading into the confessional during Lent? Want to know more about the history of our faith's practices and how far back they can be traced? (You may be surprised.) Then read the package of articles on the sacrament of Penance, Reconciliation, or Confession on **Pages 16 & 17** — according to the authors, all these terms are correct.

Michele Baker does a nice job of telling us what it's like for youth and young adults to take part in mission work in her stories on the Texas Mission Council's recent meeting in Fort Worth on **Page 15**.

Thanks for reading us. Visit the Web for fresh news at www.fwdioc.org/ntc.

Jeff Hensley
Editor

NTC now offers advertising in print and online

Reach all the Catholics all the time

Since the **NTC** went live with its online edition in mid-September, the site — www.fwdioc.org/ntc — has been offering a mix of local stories we've created and national, international, and Vatican news from Catholic News Service. We can now offer advertising both in print and online.

For people with a need to reach the Catholic audience in the 28 counties of the Diocese of Fort Worth, the print edition of the **NTC** goes to 82,000 plus homes every

month. And for the time between editions, the online news version of the **North Texas Catholic Newsmagazine** www.fwdioc.org/ntc, offers access to readers seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Readers can now sign up to receive the **NTC's** Twitter feed, spotlighting stories of interest as they are posted, or even use their smart phone to scan the Microsoft Tag (both at right) to go directly to www.fwdioc.org/ntc.

So now, more than ever, advertising in the **NTC** can help those who want to market to Catholics in the diocese — and beyond. The **NTC** can reach the people they're interested in reaching, anytime, anywhere.

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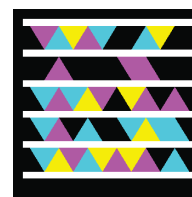
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Pope remembers slain Pakistani minister Bhatti; bishops recognize him as martyr

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI prayed that the assassination of Pakistan's minister for minorities would awaken people's consciences to the need to protect the freedom of religious minorities.

"I ask the Lord Jesus that the moving sacrifice of the life of the Pakistani minister, Shahbaz Bhatti, will awaken in people's consciences courage and a commitment to safeguarding the religious freedom of all men and women and, in that way, promote their equal dignity," the pope said March 6 during his midday Angelus address.

A radical Muslim group is suspected of murdering Bhatti, who was killed in his car in Islamabad March 2. He was the first Catholic to serve as minister for minorities and was outspoken against Pakistan's anti-blasphemy laws, which Christians say have been used to persecute religious minorities.

When Bhatti visited Ottawa in February, he said, "I follow the principles of my conscience, and I am ready to die and sacrifice my life for the principles I believe."

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said Bhatti will be remembered as "a valiant witness of faith and justice."

Bhatti was the second Pakistani official to be assassinated for opposing the anti-blasphemy laws. Salman Taseer, a Muslim and governor of Punjab province, was killed Jan. 4.

In a commentary for Vatican

television, Fr. Lombardi said the fact that a Christian and a Muslim both died for the same cause is a "spark of hope" for working for respect for human rights.

"This is no longer just a dialogue of mutual knowledge or a dialogue in commitment for the common good; from a dialogue in life we pass to the dialogue of witness in death, to the price of one's own blood so that the name of God not be distorted as an instrument of injustice," he said.

Meanwhile, an official of the bishops' conference of Pakistan said the body would meet in late March to review a proposal to ask the Vatican formally to identify Bhatti as a martyr.

Bishop Andrew Francis of Multan, president of the bishops' Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, drafted the proposal and told the Vatican's missionary news agency, Fides, "Bhatti is a man who gave his life for his crystalline faith in Jesus Christ. It is up to us, the bishops, to tell his story and experience to the Church in Rome, to call for official recognition of his martyrdom."

Catholic bishops in the United States and Canada were among those who spoke out against Bhatti's murder, noting that he had promoted interfaith dialogue. Canadian bishops also encouraged Prime Minister Stephen Harper to ensure that Canadian foreign policy officials make clear that religious freedom is promoted in meetings with officials of other governments.

Cardinal Rigali expresses 'renewed sorrow' for victims of the 'evil' of abuse

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — The Stations of the Cross and the sacrament of Reconciliation served as solemn settings for the penitential service that Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia led to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis March 11, the first Friday of Lent, in the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul.

"We know that the expiation of all the sins of the world is accomplished only by Jesus through his suffering, death, and resurrection," said the cardinal in his homily for the evening service.

That is the reason the congregation of close to 100 gathered "in reparation, sorrow, and hope to accompany Jesus on the Way of the Cross as he falls beneath the weight of all sins," the cardinal said.

"We also accompany his brothers and sisters, victims of abuse who, like Jesus, bear the weight of the sins committed against them. We acknowledge that Jesus alone is the savior of the world who has the power to forgive, to restore, and to heal us all."

The cardinal acknowledged "the grave offense to God and the great harm to innocent victims of the evil of sexual abuse of minors, especially by members of the clergy."

In the name of the archdiocese, the cardinal expressed "renewed sorrow

for this evil inflicted on children and young people" and asked God "to forgive those who have committed this sin."

"I ask God to sustain us in our human weaknesses as we struggle with determination to confront this evil definitively," continued the cardinal. "And I ask God to make us ever more effective both in promoting the protection of children and in addressing allegations of sexual abuse."

In the congregation was a contingent of parishioners from St. Philip Neri in the Queen Village section of Philadelphia.

"I was very impressed by the expression of repentance and contrition," said Jeff Omana, 35, of St. Philip Neri.

Omana appreciated how the Church admitted sin and asked for forgiveness on behalf of those who sinned. "By asking for forgiveness and constantly stressing the point of penance — just admitting there was wrongdoing" appeared authentic, he told *The Catholic Standard & Times*, the archdiocesan newspaper.

Regarding the confrontation of the clerical abuse scandal, "we'll get through this and we'll be better for it," said Msgr. Daniel J. Sullivan, archdiocesan vicar for clergy.

Briefly

Nation, World, Church



CNS photo/Reuters

Newly-elected Maronite Patriarch Bechara Rai expected to unite Catholics, speak truth

BEIRUT (CNS) — Church bells rang, horns blasted and firecrackers echoed throughout Lebanon as it was announced that Bishop Bechara Rai of Jbeil, Lebanon, had been elected the new patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church.

Patriarch Rai, 71, known for his courage to speak the truth, is seen as someone who can unite Maronite Catholics, who have been divided among political party lines.

The patriarch's election was announced March 15. Elections began March 11, after the Maronite synod spent two days in spiritual retreat and reflection. He replaces Cardinal Nasrallah P. Sfeir, 90, who retired because of age.

Father Joseph Mouawad, vicar general of Jbeil, predicted Patriarch Rai would unite Maronite Catholics and begin a pastoral renewal of the Church.

"I think his first mission will be to confirm us in our faith here in Lebanon and, as head of the Church, he will try to unite Christians, the different parties, and to consolidate the communion among the Maronites," Fr. Mouawad said.

"He has a deep spirituality, and he is very sociable and open to the others, and he has great courage. He says the truth even if someone doesn't want to listen to it," Fr. Mouawad said.

Of Lebanon's population of nearly 4 million, approximately 33 percent are Christian. Of the approximately 5.5 million Maronite Catholics worldwide,

approximately 1 million live in Lebanon.

The new patriarch has served as president of the Lebanese bishops' communications committee and hosted a weekly program on Telelumiere, Lebanon's Christian television station. The program, "Boushra al Rahi," which means "Good News of the Shepherd," provided commentary and teaching on that Sunday's Gospel, and the patriarch encouraged listeners to live the Scriptures in a practical way.

Mohammad Sammak, secretary-general of Lebanon's Christian-Muslim Committee for Dialogue, said Patriarch Rai has an ability to transcend divisions. Patriarch Rai "is known for being very courageous in expressing his point of view, and actually he speaks out what he believes in. That's why it is easy to deal with him, because he's honest with himself," he added.

At his request, Patriarch Rai will officially be installed on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25. Catholic patriarchs do not have their elections confirmed by the pope, but the new patriarch will request and receive spiritual communion from Pope Benedict XVI.

The 77th patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church said "Communion and Charity" would be his motto.

He was born Feb. 25, 1940, in Himlaya, Lebanon. He was ordained a priest of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sept. 3, 1967, and was made a bishop in 1986. He has served as bishop of Jbeil since 1990.

Cause for Father Augustus Tolton, first identified African-American priest takes step forward with prayer service, oaths

CHICAGO (CNS) — Bishops, priests, religious, and laypeople gathered for midday prayer in a Chicago chapel to witness Cardinal Francis E. George and commission members take an oath to carry out their duties for Father Augustus Tolton's sainthood cause.

"History is what God remembers. So this is a most important moment in the history of the archdiocese," Cardinal George said during his homily at the prayer service in St. James Chapel at the Quigley Center in Chicago.

Father Tolton is the "first identified black priest in the United States," said Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago, who read a biography of the priest during the service.

The Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes requires "the formal introduction of a cause for sainthood to take place in a public session with a gathering of the Christian faithful," according to the prayer service's program book.

The chapel session launched the canonical inquiry into the life and virtues of Father Tolton and formally commissioned those who will serve the cause in official capacities.

The archdiocese still awaits the Vatican naming the priest a "servant of God," the title given to those whose cause for canonization has been officially opened. The congregation allows a diocese to move forward while awaiting the title.

A diocese must appoint various people to lead the cause, such as an episcopal delegate and promoter of justice, as well as theological and historical commissions, and a guild. At the head of all of this is the diocesan bishop and the postulator who he appoints.

During the Feb. 24 session, Cardinal George, along with Bishop Perry, the diocesan postulator, and the historical and theological commissions took oaths of fidelity to the cause. Others who took oaths were Father Michael Hack, as episcopal delegate; Oblate Father William Woestman, as promoter of justice; and notaries Patricia Rimkus and Ellen Sochacki. The cardinal also signed decrees associated with examining evidence into Father Tolton's life.

Several bishops were in attendance: Bishop John R. Gaydos of Jefferson City, Missouri, where Father Tolton was born and baptized a Catholic; Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Raymond E. Goedert; Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Illinois, and Auxiliary Bishop Martin D. Holley of Washington.

The next stage of the cause involves taking testimony from witnesses about the reputation of Father Tolton's sanctity. There also will be a trip to Rome to examine archives to document Father Tolton's six-year stay, from 1880 to 1886, at what is now called Pontifical Urbanian University.



CNS Photo

Father Augustus Tolton

At the service, after the prayers and before the oath-taking, Bishop Perry covered highlights of Father Tolton's life.

Born the son of slaves in Missouri, he studied for the priesthood in Rome because no American seminary would accept him. Sent to what was then called the Diocese of Quincy (now Springfield) in southern Illinois, he later came to Chicago to start a parish for black Catholics. He was only 43 years old at the time of his death.

"He is described as one who worked himself to exhaustion," said Bishop Perry, reading a biography on the priest. Father Tolton died during a heat wave walking home from a retreat. He was one of two priests in the city who died that week of heat exhaustion, the bishop said.

Throughout his life, Father Tolton endured racism on every level, even in the Church. But through it all, he remained faithful to the Lord, his Church, and his people.

"He never dishd back the prejudice thrown in his face," Bishop Perry said.

At present, there are no recognized saints from the Civil War or Reconstruction periods or the Civil Rights Era in the United States, so, if canonized, Father Tolton would be the first.

"He is a holy model for anyone who wants to serve God," Bishop Perry said. "His story highlights how the United States of America is a work in progress."

During his homily, Cardinal George explained that studying the life and works of Father Tolton is important because "there is a pattern of holiness in every generation and in every time. But then, along with what we do to examine the cause, there is what God will do to show that it is his cause, too."

This is why we pray for miraculous intercessions by those up for sainthood. It invites God to show us how he worked in the life of this person, he said.

"History is what God remembers and miracles are how God would like the world to be," said Cardinal George, who also noted he recites the prayer of canonization to Father Tolton every evening during compline. (The prayer is available on cards and at www.toltoncanonization.org).

Briefly

Diocesan, State



Photo courtesy of Mike Sanford

Seven newly awarded Eagle Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 1703 at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield sit during their Eagle Scout ceremony Feb. 28. This was the troop's first class of Eagle Scouts.

St. Jude Parish honors Boy Scout troop's first class of Eagle Scouts at ceremony Feb. 28

Father George Foley and the community at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield honored Boy Scouts of America Troop 1703's first seven Eagle Scouts on Feb. 28.

In the span of three months, the small 25-member troop based out of the parish produced the seven Eagles and the parish community reaped the benefits of their Eagle Scout projects, which included a new walkway and freshly painted Education Center classrooms.

The seven new Eagle Scouts honored were David Fox, Keith Larsen, Jake Petrie, Josh Petrie, Alonso Pone, Blake Rainey, and Michael Smith.

At the celebration, parishioners and guests were welcomed by Scoutmaster Mike Sanford and heard about the history of scouting and some famous scouts. They also viewed slideshows of the Scouts' projects. The seven new Eagles were then presented with certificates of recognition, Saint Christopher medals, and cross and chalice pendants with chains. Bill Bellman, former retreat program chair for the Fort Worth Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, led the invocation, and Fr. Foley led the benediction. Each new Eagle Scout also set up a table display of his personal scouting history which parishioners viewed at a cake reception provided by the St. Jude Welcoming Committee.

TCC, Catholic Health Association of Texas release joint statement regarding Catholic health care policy in Texas

Editor's note: *The Texas Catholic Conference, the statewide association of Roman Catholic dioceses in Texas, and the Catholic Health Association of Texas issued the following joint statement March 3 regarding Catholic Health Care in Texas.*

During the health care debate, there were several voices within our national Catholic health care ministry who called for support of the final version of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). However, after a great deal of effort to change key language and careful examination of the controversial bill the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops did not support the final version of the national health care reform bill that was passed by Congress and signed by the President.

The USCCB supports health care reform, in principle, but not the particular legislation that passed. The bishops are committed to health care reform which ensures that health care is accessible and affordable for all, while maintaining current federal law regarding abortion funding and

conscience protection. Unfortunately, the final health care bill did not meet all of these conditions.

As the 82nd session of the Texas legislature approaches, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas and the Catholic Hospital Association of Texas are committed to working together in fidelity to tenets of the Catholic Church. Catholic health care is an integral part of the health care delivery system that people in Texas rely on every day and the Bishops in solidarity with CHA TX have a long history of serving those in need and speaking for those whose voices often go unheard.

The Church's health ministry, as a visible manifestation of the healing presence of Christ the Lord, is committed to providing quality health care to all people in our communities and to using the resources we have to the greatest community benefit.

Andrew Rivas,
Executive Director
Texas Catholic Conference

Patrick Carrier
Catholic Health Association of Texas

Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools Office to hold teacher job fair April 2

The Office of Catholic Schools will hold a Teacher Job Fair Saturday, April 2, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Nolan Catholic High School campus, located at 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth, TX, 76103.

Prospective teachers (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade) will have the opportunity to visit with

principals and representatives from the diocesan schools.

Application and benefits information for the coming school year will be available.

For more information, contact the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300, or visit the website: www.fwdioc.org/catholicschools.

University of Dallas announces new pastoral ministry major for undergraduate students

Irving — The University of Dallas announced it will offer a new major in pastoral ministry beginning in fall 2011, following unanimous approval by the university's Board of Trustees on March 3.

"When the University of Dallas was established more than 50 years ago, our founders were explicit in their desire to develop a university that could help meet the needs of the Catholic Church," said Thomas W. Keefe, president of the University of Dallas. "I am pleased that we are able to continue to meet the needs of the growing Church in North Texas through the formation of a new undergraduate degree in pastoral ministry. And I am confident our founders would be proud of the action we have taken today."

The program was developed at the specific request of Bishop Kevin Vann of Fort Worth and Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas due to the significant need for additional ministers to serve the Church in North Texas. In the Diocese of Dallas alone there are currently only 64 active priests to serve the more than 1.3 million Catholics in the Diocese.

"We have too many volunteers who have great will but do not have the necessary preparation," said Bishop Farrell. "I have asked the university to come together with the faculty of theology and the School of Ministry to come up with a course of study to enable the Church to continue and to help preach the gospel of Jesus Christ into the next 25 years."

The pastoral ministry program was developed by a joint committee of University of Dallas faculty including distinguished members of the Department of Theology as well as members of the faculty of the School of Ministry. The curriculum that was developed has been reviewed and carefully examined by Bishop Farrell and Bishop Vann and has received their endorsement.

"[Bishop Farrell's] support for this program at the University of Dallas, and my support for this at the same time are another clear expression of a spirituality and theology of communion," said Bishop Vann in a statement to the Board of Trustees. "I know as well that we both together will continue to be involved with President Keefe in the ongoing development and strengthening of this program."

The pastoral ministry major

will combine a commitment to the educational vision of the liberal arts with a commitment to hands-on service of Christ and his Church. Students enrolled in the major will take all the required courses in UD's core curriculum in the areas of art, literature, philosophy, politics, science, and history. At the same time they will interact with ministry professionals, study contemporary Church documents regarding specific ministries, and discover and polish skills for service through practical application.

"Catholic parishes, schools, and organizations need professionals who are well educated in their faith, and thoroughly formed in the skills of communicating and fostering that faith in others," said President Keefe. "UD's new degree in pastoral ministry is designed to fill that need."

In addition to distinctive classroom curriculum, each pastoral ministry student will participate in a year-long internship that includes a capstone project designed to give students a chance to demonstrate both conceptual mastery of the foundations of the ministry and practical expertise in the skills it requires. Students will also have the opportunity to interact with a number of collaborative partners, alumni who hold a master's degree in pastoral ministry, and other influential Church leaders who have supported the University of Dallas and the University's School of Ministry.

"This blend of immersion in the UD core curriculum, with its emphasis on great books and great ideas of Western Civilization, the Rome semester, and a year-long internship in a parish or diocesan setting makes the degree outstanding and second to none," added Brian Schmisek, dean of the School of Ministry.

Additional information about the pastoral ministry major and how to apply can be found at www.udallas.edu/pastoralministry.

The University of Dallas is a Catholic, co-educational university with students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs through the Constantin College of Liberal Arts, the College of Business, the Braniff Graduate School of Liberal Arts, and the School of Ministry. The University of Dallas has its main campus in Irving, an international campus near Rome, Italy, and a learning center in Frisco. For more information, visit www.udallas.edu.

Border violence among issues discussed by bishops from along Texas-Mexico border

EL PASO, Texas (CNS) — Shared concerns over violence among Mexico's drug gangs and broader issues related to discrimination and human rights violations against immigrants and their impact on the Church were discussed by bishops from dioceses along the Texas-Mexico border during a three-day meeting that ended March 3.

Gathering in El Paso, across the border from Ciudad Juárez, ground zero in Mexico's drug war and where thousands of murders occur annually, the 10 bishops also discussed pastoral issues related to the celebration of the sacraments, said Father Juan Armando Renovato Lopez, spokesman for the Diocese of Piedras Negras, across the border from Eagle Pass, in the Diocese of Laredo.

The bishops agreed to coordinate practices on both sides of the border, making it easier for U.S. residents to get married or to have their children baptized in Mexico in front of relatives who find it difficult to cross the border because of the violence, Father Renovato said.

"It's important that we have the same requirements along the border in regards to marriage preparation. That's been a big issue for us," Brownsville Bishop Daniel E. Flores told television station KVIA in El Paso.

Mexico's crackdown on organized crime and drug cartels has claimed more than 35,000 lives over the past four years. Violence mainly had impacted those involved in illegal activities, but the Chihuahua State Human Rights Commission recently reported at least 200 entire families

have been killed in retaliation for the actions of relatives.

Fr. Renovato told Catholic News Service the bishops also wanted to explore "how the Church can offer assistance to migrants, many of whom don't have any money."

Northward migration continues even though the route for undocumented Central Americans across Mexico has become ever more dangerous with organized criminal groups entering the human smuggling business.

The bishops celebrated a special Mass for peace and justice at St. Patrick Cathedral March 2 to pray for peace along the border. They were joined by dozens of parishioners from throughout El Paso.

"I hope that these prayers, that we will join together in saying, in English and Spanish, our communities will truly bear fruit for all of us to benefit from," Bishop James A. Tamayo of Laredo told television station KVUE in El Paso.

Border violence was among the issues Mexican President Felipe Calderón and President Barack Obama discussed during a meeting in Washington.

On March 4, the two leaders agreed to work together even harder to combat the drug violence. Obama committed the U.S. to speeding up the pace of training and equipping Mexican forces to fight the drug cartels. He also said the U.S. must curtail the flow of cash and arms into Mexico that get in the hands of drug lords.

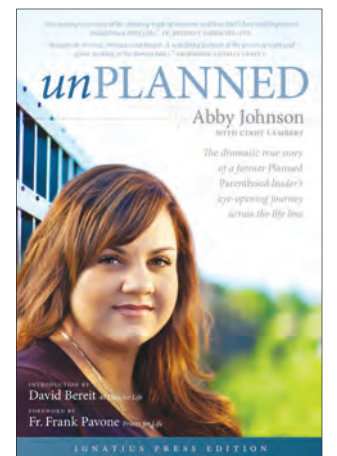
Former Planned Parenthood director Abby Johnson, now pro-life, to become Catholic

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — A woman who walked away from her job as a Planned Parenthood clinic director after helping with an ultrasound-guided abortion is preparing to enter the Catholic Church.

Abby Johnson, 30, who has been speaking at pro-life events around the country, will become a Catholic, along with her husband, Doug, in her native Texas within the next few months. The couple has a 4-year-old daughter.

"When we went to the Catholic Church for the first time, we knew that was where we were supposed to be and we have been there ever since," said Johnson, who said she particularly loves the Church's reverence for Mary as the mother of God. "The more we started learning about the beliefs of the Church and the Eucharist and everything, it seemed like this was what had been missing our whole lives."

After eight years as a Planned Parenthood volunteer and employee, Johnson walked away from her job as director of a Planned Parenthood clinic in Bryan/College Station, Oct. 6, 2009, during a prayer vigil by 40 Days for Life.



CNS Photo

Johnson, who had one abortion at age 20 and another at 23, first began working as a clinic escort while a student at Texas A&M University. Assisting with an ultrasound during an abortion in September 2009, she describes in her book, *unPlanned*, turned her into a pro-life advocate.

Johnson is in the process of obtaining an annulment of the marriage to the man who was her husband at the time she had her abortions, so that the Catholic Church will officially recognize her second marriage and she and husband Doug can enter the Church.

Archbishop Jose Gómez installed as fifth archbishop of Los Angeles

Former metropolitan of San Antonio Province replaces retiring Cardinal Roger Mahony

By Mike Nelson
Editor, *The Tidings*
Newspaper for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Catholic News Service

More than 6,000 people assembled for two Masses Feb. 27 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to observe a historic — and rare — transition of leadership in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

On the day Cardinal Roger M. Mahony celebrated his 75th birthday — the age at which bishops are canonically required to submit their resignations to the pope — Archbishop Jose H. Gómez was welcomed as the new leader of the church of Los Angeles.

Archbishop Gómez was named last spring by Pope Benedict XVI as coadjutor archbishop for Los Angeles. He had served five years as archbishop of San Antonio, and was previously an auxiliary bishop of Denver.

On March 1, Pope Benedict XVI accepted the cardinal's resignation.

Cardinal Mahony, the first native Angeleno to serve as archbishop of Los Angeles, was installed in September 1985 to lead the nation's most populous archdiocese, now numbering nearly 5 million Catholics. The cardinal was a priest of the Fresno Diocese when he was named a Fresno auxiliary bishop in 1975, then bishop of Stockton, California, in 1980.

The two Masses — one in English, one in Spanish — marked the first time that this ritual of transition has been celebrated in the eight-and-a-half-year-old cathedral. Since Los Angeles was created an archdiocese in 1936, only three other transitions of leadership have occurred, all at the former St. Vibiana's Cathedral.

Archbishop Gómez is Los Angeles' fifth archbishop, following Archbishop John Cantwell and Cardinals James Francis McIntyre, Timothy Manning, and Roger Mahony.

The ceremony featured an entrance procession that included Los Angeles' auxiliary bishops. Archbishop Gómez's coat of arms was carried by Sister Mary Elizabeth Galt, archdiocesan chancellor and a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Monsignor Royale Vadakin, vicar general and moderator of the curia. During the Mass, the new coat of arms was installed on the cathedra, the bishop's chair.

For his motto, Archbishop Gómez has chosen a phrase

I want to spread this simple and beautiful truth of the Gospel: That each of us is born from the love of God. That each of us is a child of God who belongs to the family of God, the Church. We are born to be saints — every one of us!

— Archbishop Jose Gómez

'For greater things we were born'

THE TIDINGS, Newspaper for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles



CNS photo/Victor Aleman, Vida Nueva

Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony applauds as Coadjutor Archbishop Jose H. Gómez stands with his crozier during a Feb. 27 Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. The Mass included a ceremony symbolizing the transfer of pastoral leadership of the Los Angeles Archdiocese from Cardinal Mahony to Archbishop Gómez. Cardinal Mahony turned 75 that day, the age at which bishops are required to submit their resignation to the pope.

from Chapter 4, Verse 16, of the Letter to the Hebrews: *Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae*, Latin for "Let us go forth with confidence to the throne of grace." It expresses the Christian belief that all mankind is called to salvation in Jesus Christ, the compassionate priest and intercessor. Through his salvation, God's throne has become the judgment seat from which mercy flows.

During the Mass, the new archbishop, welcomed enthusiastically by the assembly, led the singing of "Happy Birthday" to his predecessor, who likewise received a long ovation in appreciation of his quarter-century of leadership and service to the archdiocese.

In the March 4 issue of *The Tidings*, the Los Angeles archdiocesan newspaper, Archbishop Gómez wrote that

he hopes "to spread this simple and beautiful truth of the Gospel: that each of us is born from the love of God, that each of us is a child of God who belongs to the family of God, the Church."

"We are born to be saints — every one of us!" he added.

He said he has "five basic priorities" as he begins his work: education in the faith; promote vocations to the priesthood and the religious and consecrated life; "to help us to see the beauty of the Church's cultural diversity"; to "proclaim to our society that life is sacred from conception to natural death"; and to "defend and strengthen the natural institutions of marriage and the family based on the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman."

TCC encourages Catholics to participate in Advocacy Day

North Texas Catholic Staff

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

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

"The Diocese [of Fort Worth] has participated in Advocacy Day over the years. This year, the Texas Bishops are organizing Catholic organizations in the same day," said Pat Svacina, diocesan director of Communications and coordinator for the diocese's participation in the Advocacy Day. "Our charge as a diocese is to discuss the Bishops' agenda. When we're down there in Austin, we'll be discussing the issues that the Catholic Bishops want discussed with the legislators."

This year, a delegation from the Diocese of Fort Worth comprised of clergy, diocesan

and parish staff members, and other lay people involved in several organizations within the diocese will visit legislators assigned by the TCC in groups of four or five. Svacina said that while not everyone in the diocese can physically attend the Advocacy Day, he encouraged the faithful to participate in other ways.

"Every Catholic in the diocese is asked to follow what's going on in Austin," Svacina said. "The best way people can help, is the week before, to write, call, or e-mail their state representatives and senators, show their support for the Advocacy Day, and ask the legislators to support the TCC's agendas."

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

- The budget shortfall — "The TCC supports a balanced approach to solving the budget shortfall, including seeking revenue to adequately fund needed public services and prepare Texas for the future";
- Life and family life issues — "Our foundational principle to protect the life and dignity of all human persons calls us to work to end abortion, euthanasia, destruction of human embryos, cloning, and assisted suicide. Marriage and the family are central

social institutions that must be supported and strengthened";

- Immigration — "We recognize the historic and present-day contributions of immigrants in Texas by supporting their ability to work in a healthy environment in order to provide for their families and continue their valuable participation in the community";
- Education — "We recognize parents as the primary educators of their children through supporting parental choice in education";
- Health and human services — "We show God's special concern for the poor and vulnerable by supporting programs that make health care more affordable and accessible, environmental protections, and support for morally appropriate health research";
- Criminal justice reform — We support fiscal and moral reform in our state's criminal justice system with an emphasis on ending the death penalty and supporting successful rehabilitation and reintegration of those re-entering society."

Svacina said that the TCC will address specific bills before the state legislature on the Advocacy Day, and those will be based on what is current. Catholics are urged to regularly visit the TCC's website at www.txcatholic.org to know which bills will be pending the legislature by the Advocacy Day. However, the TCC will not remain silent

throughout the rest of the legislative session, either.

"Advocacy is not just limited to April 6," Svacina said. "Catholics are going to be testifying throughout the legislative session on issues of importance to the Catholic Bishops."

Emphasizing the importance of the advocacy, Cardinal DiNardo, on a statement on the TCC website, said that we advocate "because religion is part of the public square."

During the Advocacy Day, Bishop Vann, along with the other bishops of Texas, will be personally meeting with Governor Rick Perry, the lieutenant governor, state speaker, and other statewide officials to address the concerns of the TCC.

"Most important, I think for us all to be aware of, is the importance of prayer," said Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville at the end of a promotional video on the TCC's website. "I would like to make a special appeal for all the Catholics in the state to pray for the success of the hopes and the dreams of so many people that our state would be a more humane and more respectful place every day."

For more information about Advocacy Day and how to participate, visit the TCC website at www.txcatholic.org, or contact Pat Svacina, coordinator for the Diocese of Fort Worth's participation at (817) 560-3300, ext. 318, or at psvacina@fwdioc.org.

Join Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann,
other clergy and laity in prayer...

Catholics United for Life
and Mother and Unborn
Baby Care's

Annual
Good Friday Vigil
for
Life

"Can you not pray with me one hour?"
Matthew 26:41

April 22, 2011
1:00-2:30 pm

Planned Parenthood Abortion Center
301 S. Henderson, Ft. Worth, TX
For More information call
(817) 738-1086

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LATIN MASS

5:30 P.M. SUNDAYS

ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH

509 W. MAGNOLIA, FORT WORTH

HIGH MASS SECOND AND FOURTH SUNDAYS

LOW MASS FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS



INTERNATIONAL PILGRIMAGE TOURS - DFW - 2011

- IRELAND - Dublin, Cork, Galway, Knock-Sept 12-21 - \$1,799*
 - E. EUROPE - Prague, Krakow, Budapest - Oct 24-Nov 2 - \$1,999*
 - HOLYLAND - Galilee, Bethlehem, Jerusalem - Nov 7-15 - \$1,899*
 - ITALY + GREECE - Papal Audience Rome, St. Peter's, Vatican Museums, Padre Pio + Athens, Meteora - Oct 24 -Nov 1 - \$1,899*
Optional Greek Island 4-day cruise ext. +Ephesus, Patmos - \$749*
 - PANAMA CANAL CRUISE - Sep 28-Oct 14 - from \$2,699
Prices -per person dbl.occ. includes airfare DFW, breakfast/dinner/daily, 1st class hotels (pvt. facilities), local escort,coach +driver,Excludes taxes
*All air taxes/fuel surcharges are EXTRA at final ticketing date.
Above international prices are subject to currency rate changes.
- CALL MICHAEL /SUE MENOF -GOLDEN WORLD TOURS-**
TEL 972-934-9635 for full details-terms/conditions/registration, min #s, etc.

Diocese

April designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Judy Locke
Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection and Victim Assistance Ministry

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:13-14).

April is "Child Abuse Prevention Month," an annual

observance in the United States begun in 1983 when an initiative focusing on prevention was launched by the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. Today a combination of church-affiliated institutions, public and private entities, and government agencies support and enable child abuse prevention efforts, on a short-term basis or as permanent organizational commitments. Many of these permanent commitments involve on-going programs to build awareness of the importance of child abuse prevention, education to teach child abuse prevention

and intervention skills, and legislation aimed at protecting the unborn, children, teens, and young adults.

This year, in addition to a letter on the diocesan website (www.fwdioc.org) from Bishop Kevin Vann, acknowledging April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, readers will find a number of helpful links, chosen to enhance understanding and to provide practical suggestions for recognizing the signs of child abuse, establishing and maintaining safe environments for children, and talking to children and youth about ways


they can protect themselves. These strategies include everything from "Saying 'No'" and reporting boundary violations to ways children can protect themselves and adults can assist in the reduction of incidents of bullying.

It is most appropriate that Child Abuse Prevention Month is held during the Easter season. There is no better time than Easter to celebrate the protection of our most valuable gift from God — our children. For information on how to become more informed and involved in keeping our children safe or to report abuse to the Catholic Diocese of Fort

Worth, call Judy Locke, director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection and Victim Assistance Ministry at (817) 560-2452, ext. 201, or Father Stephen Berg, Chancellor and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300.

To report child abuse, contact Child Protective Services (Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services — Department of Family Protective Services), at: 1 (800) 252-5400.

To report child abuse to civil authorities, contact the police department in the city where the abuse occurred.



BUSINESS LEADERS - AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

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

THE PINES CATHOLIC CAMP OPEN HOUSE



APRIL 10 12-4PM
BIG SANDY, TX

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AT NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

APRIL 3RD 2011

SPRIT GAMES

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY THE STEPHEN BREEN MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

10:00 AM Registration
11:00 AM Outdoor Mass with Bishop Vann
 Music by Jesus Team A/Jesus Te Ama

12:00-4:00 PM Concessions open
12:30-4:00 PM FESTIVAL
 PUNT PASS AND KICK CONTEST
 DODGE BALL
 MINUTE TO WIN IT
 FEAR FACTOR
 AMAZING RACE
 KICKBALL
 ...AND MUCH MORE!
4:00 PM DAVID HIRA, ILLUSIONIST

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 T-SHIRT IS YOUR ALL DAY TICKET TO COMPETE.

STEPHEN BREEN
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

The Stephen Breen Memorial Foundation proudly brings Fort Worth's Catholic kids of all ages together for the 5th Annual SPIRIT GAMES, a day of competition and fun! (In case of rain, all possible events will continue indoors.) Learn more about Stephen's Foundation at www.stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org. All proceeds benefit the purpose of supporting Catholic education and kids with cancer.

\$10 covers all activities and a t-shirt! T-shirt is your ticket to compete. (Food and drinks extra.) No fee for parents to attend. Max charge of \$50 per family. Financial assistance available, please inquire about vouchers available for qualified families.

Register by filling out a registration form and returning with admission fee to your school office by Wednesday, March 23 for Priority Registration. Registrations will be accepted up to the day of the event. Security will be provided. However, parents are encouraged to remain with younger children.

Register Online at www.stephenbreenmemorialfoundation.org

Diocesan Council of Catholic Women encourages, offers support for women's involvement in parish and parish organizations

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, just like in dioceses throughout the United States, parish women's groups work together through the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) to help affect real change in their communities, cities, regions, country, and even the world.

Margaret Adams, current president of the Fort Worth Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (DCCW), said she thinks it's important to be a part of the women's organizations that make up the NCCW because they really live by their mission statement "to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service."

"You find out who needs what and how to help," she said. "To nurture, to care more, to be more active in your parish — it's a combination of love and empathy to reach out to others and do what is best for them," Adams said.

"Women always want to have a say, and if you don't join an organization, then you don't have a say. If you don't get involved, then you don't have a voice," Adams said.

According to the NCCW's website at www.nccw.org, the organization consists of more than 4,000 affiliated Catholic women's organizations in parishes and dioceses throughout the U.S., representing hundreds of thousands of Catholic women, and almost 4,000 additional unaffiliated individual Catholic women. The website states that NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

"I'm proud to be a part of it," said Joyce Brown-Thomas, immediate past president and current parliamentarian for the DCCW and a member of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth.

"It's one that Catholic women should be aware of. They're doing outstanding things in the community — not just in the parishes. We are empowered to do this as Catholic women," she said.

Adams said she became a member of the Catholic Women's Organization (CWO) in her parish, St. Jude in Mansfield in 1992. Then she served in several different positions in the East Central Deanery Council of Catholic

Women before being asked to be president-elect of the diocesan organization two years ago.

The Fort Worth DCCW currently has active organizations in the East Central, Northwest, and Southwest deaneries, Adams said. Of the 89 parishes in the Fort Worth Diocese, there are 25 to 30 active affiliates. The women's organizations at the parish level are known by various names, but they are all a part of the NCCW.

Kathy Thome, president of the East Central Deanery's council, who is also on the diocesan board, said she is hoping more women at more parishes will join or start a Catholic women's organization in conjunction with the NCCW.

"By being a part of this organization, you become a part of your parish. You actively participate because of that," she said.

Adams said each deanery can have their own service projects and activities throughout the year. And during the quarterly diocesan and deanery meetings, members report on those activities.

Thome said the aspect of participation in DCCW she enjoys most is the communication among Catholic women.

"Being able to network and find out what our parish women's groups are involved in is what I like best," she said. "We're a part of Catholic Relief Services. It's been an enlightening experience."

Adams said that DCCW affiliate at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, the Sacred Heart Church Altar Society, recently raised more than \$14,000 for a Vietnamese parish to repair its roof.



Margaret Adams (FAR LEFT), president of the Fort Worth DCCW, sits with other DCCW officers at the opening general session of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) Convention held November in Washington, D.C. From left to right are Adams, Florence Marcucci, secretary; Kathleen Thome, president of the East Central Deanery CCW; and Joyce Brown Thomas, DCCW past-president.

Judy Shaw, treasurer for the Fort Worth DCCW and legislative concerns chair for the Northwest Deanery CCW, said the whole Northwest Deanery council also raised more than \$7,000 for their "socks and underwear" program, benefiting children in the Appalachian Mountains.

Shaw, who is also worship coordinator and a lifetime member of Sacred Heart, said she has been a member of the Council of Catholic Women since the 1970s through the altar society.

Shaw said she would recommend that Catholic women join this organization to get to know other Catholic women and to keep up with what is going on in the Church and world today. Shaw said because the organization is national and international, their activities have a big impact through such projects as their letter-writing campaigns to Congress opposing abortion and same-sex marriages.

"It's not just you as one church. All these Catholics are writing. Your group may only have 10, but when you combine that with other parishes, there were probably thousands of letters that were sent," she said.

In the East Central Deanery, members collected diapers, baby wipes, and nonperishable items for the food pantry as well as collecting books for local elementary schools, Adams said.

Thome said she joined the St. Thomas Women's Organization at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth and became a

By being a part of this organization, you become a part of your parish. You actively participate because of that.

— **Kathy Thome**
President, East Central Deanery CCW

representative to the East Central deanery meetings in 1978 to meet people. From there, she worked her way through the organization until she was serving on the national board at one point.

As diocesan president, Thome said she worked on raising awareness in helping victims of domestic violence. She said they also worked with HIV patients through Catholic Charities.

Thome said women should get involved to broaden their outlook on life.

"The bottom line is it's a network of women all over the world. It gives you insight into what everyone else is doing. If you don't get involved, you don't do anything," she said.

Adams said diocesan and national conventions are held annually.

"We all have the same mission. The first time I ever went to national convention, I was amazed that there were people from all over the world there. It was inspiring that it was not just the Catholic women in our own little parish," Adams said.

The DCCW sends out an

update four times a year after each diocesan meeting to all the parishes, even those who without current affiliate women's groups, and representatives of the diocese report on what the different parish groups are doing throughout the diocese.

Any parish can organize or reorganize an organization for Catholic women by contacting Margaret Adams by phone at (817) 473-4168 or by e-mail at madams127@sbcglobal.net.

The next diocesan convention will be held Oct. 13 at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls in the Northwest Deanery, and the workshops and speakers will incorporate this year's theme, "Campaign for Human Dignity." The NCCW convention will be in Chicago in November.

"We try to educate women at these workshops. Getting them involved in helping people less fortunate than us is what we strive to do," Adams said. "You can go to church and come home and not think of being part of an organization or not think of the people that are less fortunate than us. The more people involved the better."

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Instead of Entertainment the holy sacrifice of the Mass

By Denise Bossert

When I was in my early twenties, I listened to a lot of evangelical Christian music. If a group was a Dove Award recipient, I had their CD. I went to as many concerts as I could afford. On Sunday mornings, our Protestant worship services loosely followed the pattern of a Christian concert. We judged our Sunday mornings by the special music performance and the pastor's homiletics. We based our assessment of sermon and song on how closely they matched their professional counterparts in the big leagues: TV evangelists and Dove Award recipients.

One of the first things an outsider notices about the Catholic Mass is that there is nothing performance-based about it. It's all about prayer. Everything is a prayer. By design, true prayer is God-focused.

Paragraph #2559 of the *Catechism* tells us that humility is the foundation of prayer. We come to God humbly, like the beggar. We do not come to Him from our own great heights. We come to Him out of need. We come to Him out of love.

Self is eclipsed by God — or perhaps more accurately, self is absorbed by God. Everything is rendered to God, *for God*.

Emptied of self, we are ready to receive all of Christ.

These truths are most sublimely actualized when we pray the Mass. Although the cantors are as gifted as any I encountered in my previous walk as an Evangelical, Catholic cantors don't even try to play by the same rules as their Protestant counterparts. You don't get the feeling that you are at a concert. You never feel like you should have paid for a ticket and surrendered it at the door.

The cantor is there for one reason: to help us pray the Mass with reverence and great devotion. And the homily doesn't mimic the message of a self-help guru. The priest or deacon can't just pick a text at random and run with it. He is called to help us enter into Sacred Scripture and come to a fuller understanding of 2,000 years of Church teaching.

In a word, these cantors and musicians, servers and lectors, deacons and priests are all *servants*.

They are not performers.

One would think that a person might have to sacrifice a lot to be Catholic. One might expect the Mass to be extremely boring — stripped of all the hype. One might wonder why there aren't more Catholics seeking out mega-churches and claiming their own seats in the auditorium.

For that matter, why would those born

The pinnacle moment of my year is the Liturgy of the Eucharist at Easter Vigil....

No kidding, it is the *best* Saturday night of the year.

and raised beyond the embrace of Mother Church — those who believe they are free to choose any place of worship without guilt — why would they ever deliberately walk away from the performance-style worship of other faith communities and be content with the Catholic Mass?

The answer is almost the same for every convert. In the Mass, heaven touches earth, and we receive the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

The pinnacle moment of my year is the Liturgy of the Eucharist at Easter Vigil. I do not say this lightly. No kidding, it is the *best* Saturday night of the year. I wouldn't be surprised if heaven itself opened up, and I could see angels turning toward the altar. I wouldn't be surprised to see the saints weeping for joy right along with the rest of us.

And it isn't just the priest praying the Mass that pierces my soul. I would willingly trade all my albums, tapes, and CDs just to listen to the cantor's voice as she sings the Litany of Saints on that same night.

But there's more. Doesn't it get to you when you see a little child hold the prayer book while the parish priest leads the faithful? Really, can you think of anything sweeter than how that little one looks up to the priest and waits for him to close the cover — how the child quietly walks back to his seat and waits patiently for the moment he is needed next?

Even that little child knows that it isn't about him. It is about helping the people to pray.

That's powerful stuff. In moments like that I realize how the Church has preserved the proper meaning of worship. Even with all the changes in technology, all the big screens and sound systems, even with the stage-centered, entertainment-based Christianity that mimics some *American Idol* episode — for 2,000 years, the Catholic Church has remained *holy* — *Christ-centered*.

This is the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

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

Speak of the Devil...

He's only a creature, you know

By David Mills

A lot of people think demons are very "cool" in movies. The idea that we might meet an evil spirit gives them a thrill, but it's the kind of thrill you get from a roller coaster, which makes you feel you're going to crash when you know you're not.

But suggest to the person who's just seen "The Exorcist" or "Damien" or the new movie "The Rite" and loved it that the devil and his angels hate him and want the worst for him, and he will either roll his eyes or back away from you slowly. That, he thinks, is just nuts.

It's only nuts if it's untrue, and the Church, as per usual, insists on the reality even though it is one modern people just don't see. (Why they don't see it is an interesting question, but it has to do with the bizarre idea that the world can't contain both demons and modern science, as if the facts we know about the natural world tell us anything about the supernatural world.)

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* brings up Satan when it explains what is wrong with us and what happened in the Garden of Eden. "Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy." That voice was Satan's.

The plea "Deliver us from evil" in the Our Father, it says, "is not an abstraction, but refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God." Quoting the Gospel of John and Revelation, it calls the devil "a murderer from the beginning, . . . a liar and the father of lies" and "the deceiver of the whole world." Quoting St. Ambrose, it calls him "your adversary" and "the enemy."

The Church has Satan's number. "He is only a creature," the *Catechism* explains, and because he is only a creature, "he cannot prevent the building up of God's reign." Although he can do a lot of damage to people and society, he is allowed to do what he does only "by divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but 'we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him,'" as St. Paul tells us.

In other words, God wins, and we win through Him, and Satan loses. Satan's rebellion is doomed. The creature can reject his Creator but he cannot defeat Him. He's completely outgunned, like a rowboat with a water pistol taking on an aircraft carrier, but infinitely moreso.

What might we say to someone who's not rolling his eyes or backing away, and wants to know why we think Satan real

In other words, God wins, and we win through him, and Satan loses. Satan's rebellion is doomed. The creature can reject his creator but he cannot defeat him. He's completely outgunned, like a rowboat with a water pistol taking on an aircraft carrier, but infinitely moreso.

and dangerous? You might ask him, "Do you believe in angels?" An amazingly high percentage of Americans believe in angels, including many who don't claim a religion and some who don't believe in God.

If he says yes, you can point out that if the world contains good spirits, it might very well contain bad spirits. If we have angels, we might have fallen angels. We know just from looking around that man went bad. Some angels might have gone bad too.

If that doesn't work, you might ask him if he believes in ghosts. A lot of people do, and some of them even have ghost stories to tell. If they believe in ghosts, he ought to grant the possibility of other, more definitely evil, spirits. After all, some ghosts, judging from all the stories, are malevolent.

If he says no to both questions, he probably disagrees not primarily with the Church's teaching about Satan, but with her teaching about the supernatural in general. That's a different and more difficult discussion.

To be honest, this is not a subject I would feel comfortable talking about. I know why people roll their eyes, and I don't want them rolling their eyes at me. But the person who asks needs an answer. He ought to feel a thrill when he thinks about demons, but it should be the kind of thrill he'd get from stepping on a rattlesnake. What he doesn't know can hurt him.

David Mills is the deputy editor of FIRST THINGS (www.firstthings.com) and a member of St. Joseph's Church in Coraopolis. He can be reached at catholicense@gmail.com. The sections of the CATECHISM quoted are 391, 2851, 2852, and 395.

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Compassionate counseling begins with announcing the dignity of both mother and child

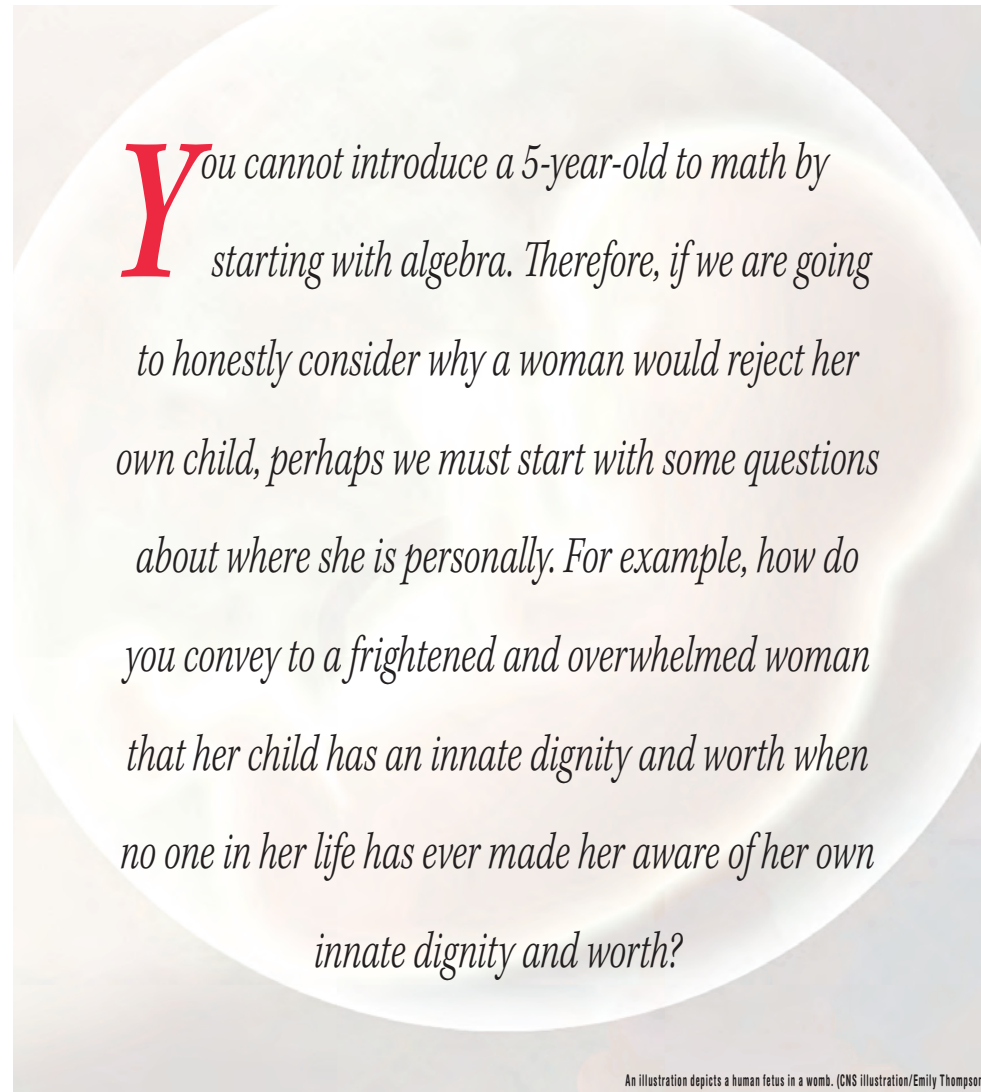
By Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore

One of the most significant moments in Salvation History is the Feast of the Annunciation. This is the moment a fallen and broken humanity had longed for... sort of. The angel of the Lord appears to a young girl and tells her that not only is the Son of God coming, but that the God she has put all her faith and trust in is asking her to carry this child for nine months, give birth to Him, and continue to trust in the Lord through it all.

Wait, a child? Not quite what was expected. It is tempting to skip ahead to that most beautiful, faith-filled line of Mary's, "Be it done to me according to your word" (*Luke 1:38*), after all, Salvation History as we know it hinged upon her response, but let us stop for a moment and consider how this moment affected a young girl.

Even in the most ideal of circumstances, at some point in time, pregnancy is accompanied by some strong, overwhelming feelings. After all, from the moment of conception a child depends on you! Mary's pregnancy, from the very beginning, was hardly surrounded by ideal circumstances. She was only betrothed to Joseph, not married, which meant that her pre-existing condition came with the sentence of being stoned to death, but Joseph would not subject her to this. Furthermore, nothing about her pregnancy was easy. Out of love and family devotion she hiked to a neighboring town to visit a relative, Elizabeth. Then, just to keep things interesting, a census was to be taken, and she and Joseph were forced to journey to Bethlehem to be properly counted. Mary could not have known what was in store for her, but she placed her trust in God. She may have been surprised by an angel appearing to her and certainly by all that he had to say to her, but her faith in the Lord won out.

In her recent book, *unPLANNED*, Abby Johnson, former director of a Planned Parenthood facility here in Texas, wrote that she had regularly, "presented confused, anxious, and panicked women with their options — parent, abort, or adopt — as if... discussing menu options." When abortion was chosen, she acknowledged that she "laid out their options again — surgical or medication — with their safety and comfort in mind, and all the while a tiny baby, tucked securely inside a womb, had been in the same room with us, with no one to speak on his or her behalf." Honestly, I can't say I found this shocking, only heartbreaking. Pro-lifers often stand on the sidewalks outside abortion facilities and try to be the voice for the unborn. However, on the sidewalk, it is about more than being a voice for the unborn; it is about being an angel to a



mother in great need.

Like the angel Gabriel, we too have all been sent to proclaim Christ to the world, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (*Matthew 28:19*). To do this, however, the first thing we must do is meet people where they are. You cannot introduce a 5-year-old to math by starting with algebra. Therefore, if we are going to honestly consider why a woman would reject her own child, perhaps we must start with some questions about where she is personally. For example, how do you convey to a frightened and overwhelmed woman that her child has an innate dignity and worth when no one in her life has ever made her aware of her own innate dignity and worth? You must start at the beginning and speak to the mom. The angel of the Lord, before he got to the part that might have been a little overwhelming, started by speaking comforting words to Mary about Mary! "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Next, we must consider that perhaps this young woman has never met God. This means we must ask ourselves, how do we want to be remembered for the introduction? Ultimately, we can speak of a loving God, but if we do not convey that love through our actions and treatment of others, it's not that our words fall on deaf ears, it's that they

are not believable.

In Jesus Christ we find the entirety of the human experience, from the moment that the angel of the Lord says that the Holy Spirit will overshadow Mary, to birth, adolescence all the way to adulthood, human suffering, and death. The Lord chose, freely, the Father's will and to embrace the beauty and fullness of human life. Had each of these aspects not been integral to the human experience, we would not find them in the life of Christ. In Mary we find the model of sacrifice and submission for the gift of salvation. In the angel Gabriel we see the herald, sent to announce the gift of salvation in the person of Jesus. We are called to proclaim the name Jesus as Lord and Savior to a broken world. We are called to say, yes, just as Mary did, to all the gifts given, even when they pose a great challenge. We are also called to trust in God's will and mercy. As we face the challenges in our own lives and help others through theirs, as we reach out in charity and truth to those around us, let us remember the words of the angel to Mary, "nothing will be impossible for God" (*Luke 1:37*).

Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore is the diocesan director of Catholics Respect Life.

Human Dignity, resilience, and Lenten resolve

By Jeff Hensley
Editor, *North Texas Catholic*

In the underground passageways that connect the terminals of Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport is a permanent exhibit of mostly human figures carved from serpentine stone and springstone by Zimbabwean sculptors.

The figures and groupings of figures, are done in a style of highly polished green, brown, and black faces, contrasting with rough stone, ranging from a light tan to light brown.

Many are family groupings, done at about 150 percent of life size. They are massive, warm, and impressive.

They speak of love within families: mothers and fathers and children, faces shining as they emerge from the surrounding roughened stone of their bodies. Most individuals or family groups are carved from a single piece of stone, each weighing tons.

My first few times rushing through, making connections, I passed too quickly, but eventually I made time to examine and appreciate these representations of family relationships.

They emanated a sense of dignity, solidarity, and humanity that brought with it an appreciation of the values they portrayed.

But what makes the collection come to mind during Lent, is the size of the figures' hands. The hands seem to be nearly double the scale of the rest of the massive bodies and faces.

These hands remind me of the figures of Jesus you sometimes see, with the hands missing, conveying the idea that we are now his hands and feet, carrying his love to a hurting world. These massive hands convey a sense of the power we all share to protect, to provide for, and to nurture those we love and those we encounter who need the love of Jesus.

So as we move through the season of Lent, perhaps we can be moved to see the power we hold, individually and collectively, to bring food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to those who have no roof. Even though our hands and our means seem small, linked by prayer and a concern for the common good, joined together in the love of our shared Father, they become massive instruments of healing, of peacemaking, of nurturing. In our weakness, is his strength.

Vocations

Responding to God's call

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



By Father Kyle Walterscheid,
Director of the Office of Vocations

Is Sunday Mass optional?

Someone asked me the other day, "Did your parents make you go to Church?" Make me? I didn't know it was an option — when something is made normative by parents, then it's an expectation and not an option. We are making a huge mistake when we choose not to establish good, healthy, and holy expectations in the family along with solid explanations.

Here, in the middle of Lent may be the perfect time to answer a similar question, "Why do I have to go to Church on Sundays?" while at the same time explaining why the argument "I can pray just as well at home" is not a legitimate Christian reason for not attending Mass on Sunday.

Our honoring the Sabbath has a long history that dates back to the Israelites' miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt. God tells Moses, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days you may labor

and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath day of the Lord, your God.... In six days the Lord, your God, made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day, he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the seventh day and made it holy" (*Exodus 20:8-11*).

As Christians, keeping holy the Sabbath takes on an even deeper significance. Our "Sabbath" is transferred permanently to Sunday, the first day of the week and the day Jesus rose from the dead as an everlasting sign of hope for eternal life after death. Let us stop for a minute and ponder what this means. Jesus wants us to receive this blessing of eternal life with him. Wow! Not a million years of heaven, but eternal life!

A few weeks ago we heard in our Sunday Gospel that not all who call out "Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven but only the one who does the will of my father in heaven" (*Matthew 7:21*). Is it the Father's will that we remain at home instead of going to Church on Sundays? Not according to Scripture, nor has it been an acceptable way to practice one's faith at any time in Christian history. Paul's letter to the Hebrews (*10:25*) reminds the faithful to attend regular (Sunday) gatherings as "We should not stay away from our assembly, as

is the custom of some, but encourage one another." And St. John Chrysostom (*c. 349-407*) writes "You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more; the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests."

Now we are getting to the heart of the matter. In communal prayer we gain everything: a union of minds with God; the strength and courage received from fellow Christians; the bond of giving, thinking, about, and praying for others; and most importantly as the source and summit of the Christian life, we get to see and receive Jesus in the Eucharist as He leads his flock to eternal life. This community also helps us to keep each other accountable in our walk with Christ.

So, don't just send your kids to church, go with them! Parents, you have the obligation to be parents and to lead your children by way of example to holiness and happiness in Jesus Christ who alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When you don't, that's when the breakdown of the family begins. Mass is meant to be and should be the highlight of our

week! Optional? If we are sick, disabled, or elderly, or care for infants, then there are dispensations and alternative forms of communal prayer, but our Church states unequivocally in its *Catechism* under 2181, "Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin."

While many say they can pray just as well at home, what percent of those choosing not to attend church are choosing to pray for an hour at home on Sunday? Does it really make any sense to say we believe in Jesus who has called us to be "one body" but then choose not to worship together, pray together, receive his precious Body and Blood, as we gather together to receive the same message from Christ, to be challenged in our hearts, while being given individual tasks even as we share in a common mission? To choose not to attend regular Sunday services is to choose to dismember ourselves spiritually from Christ. The longer we stay away from worship of God in community, the further will be our severing, suffering, and pain which we will experience because, "O Lord...you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

Invite people to come back and experience the joy of Christ in community as we prepare for the joy of Easter.

Despite troubles, Church is gift of God, pope tells priests

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Even if the Church is beset by problems, it is still a gift of God, Pope Benedict XVI told several hundred pastors of Rome parishes.

Too often, "perhaps because of a fear of triumphalism," priests and other Catholics do not rejoice enough over the gift of being part of the Church, the pope said March 10 during his annual Lenten meeting with the Rome pastors.

"Certainly, there always are difficult, negative aspects" of the Church's life on earth, "but it is a beautiful gift that we can live in the Church" and receive the sacraments of God's love and mercy, the pope said.

"The fact that the Church is not only a gift of God and divine, but also very human" means there always will be problems and a

need for penance, he said.

"The Church is always threatened. There is always a danger, the opposition of the devil," who does not want there to be believers on earth, the pope said.

Christians, however, can be confident that "truth is always stronger than lies, love is stronger than hatred, and God is stronger than all the opposing forces," he said.

The meeting at the Vatican began with a strong round of applause for the pope, who will turn 84 April 16 and will celebrate the 60th anniversary of his priestly ordination in June.

Rather than responding to the priests' questions, as he has done in the past, Pope Benedict reflected with them on a reading from one of St. Paul's letters. Only occasionally referring to his notes, he spoke for almost 40 minutes.

A priest is a servant and that means

"doing not what would please me most," but what is necessary to serve others, he said.

As priests, "sometimes we have to do things that don't immediately appear spiritual and wouldn't be our choice; from the pope to the lowliest assistant pastor, we all have to do administrative and temporal work," he said.

Pope Benedict said that everything a priest says and does — whether or not he's formally ministering to someone at the moment — reflects on his priesthood, because the idea of someone being a "part-time priest" is impossible.

Priesthood is not an occupation a man chooses as a career, he said. "Only God can make a priest, and if there's a choice involved, it's God's."

Priests must preach the truth, the whole truth, taught by the Church, and not "an ala carte Christianity according to

his own tastes; he mustn't preach a Gospel according to his own ideas and theological preferences. He must not hesitate to proclaim God's whole truth, even the truth that is uncomfortable, even on themes that personally I don't like very much," the pope said.

Pope Benedict said that like St. Paul, today's priests must go forward with the Gospel knowing that sometimes they may face physical danger because of what they preach.

"St. Paul says that pure biological survival is not my priority; my primary concern must be to carry out my service and to be with Christ," the pope said.

"Being with Christ is true life," he said, and while "we certainly must care for our health and work at a reasonable pace, we also must recognize that the ultimate value is to be in communion with Christ."

Catechesis

Marriage is the sacrament of life-long and life-giving love

By Lucas Pollice

The sacrament of Marriage is the sacrament of life-long and life-giving love in which spouses, filled with the grace of Christ, become a living and visible sign of Christ's love for the Church.

Along with Holy Orders, Marriage is also a sacrament of vocation at the service of the communion of the Church, for as the domestic church, the family is necessary and irreplaceable in the building of the Body of Christ, the Church. In the book of Genesis the two creation stories reveal God's plan for the sacrament of Marriage. God created man and woman in the image and likeness of God and called them to live in an intimate union of life-long and life-giving love.

Life-long Love

Marriage unites a man and a woman in life-long love: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body" (Genesis 2:24). In the sacrament of Marriage they are called to a profound union of love, a union that is so real and so complete that the two become "one flesh." In living out their marriage vows, they give a complete gift of self to each other: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Through this complete self-giving, spouses so powerfully unite that in a sense they truly become one — a new reality.

This intimate union is revealed in Genesis in that "the man and his wife were both naked, yet they knew no shame" (Genesis 2:25). There was nothing that separated the oneness that united Adam and Eve. In the New Covenant, the complete union of spouses in marriage is strengthened and sealed by Christ's grace every day sustaining the one-flesh union of husband and wife. The declaration of love between the man and the woman before God and his Church is a bond that cannot be broken except by death. Husband and wife are called to grow in love and communion each and every day, even through the hardships and sufferings of life, with the help and presence of God's grace.

Life-giving Love

Marriage is also fruitful through life-giving love: "God blessed them saying, 'Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it'" (Genesis 1:28). As revealed in Genesis, the union of husband and wife is also ordained

by God to be fruitful in the creation of new human life. The love between spouses is a fruitful love, often pouring forth from them in a new life. Through their sexual union, they mysteriously participate in the creative power of God in the creation of a new person created in the image and likeness of God. They become co-creators with God!

Marriage is an intimate and profound union of love between husband, wife, and God that bears fruit in other ways, too. "Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice" (CCC, 1654).

The Sign of the Sacrament of Marriage

The sacrament of marriage is unique from all the other sacraments in that the sign of the sacrament is not oil, or laying on of hands, or some other external sign. The sign of this sacrament is the love pledged and lived out between husband and wife. That love is the visible and tangible sign of a supernatural reality. The spouses both administer the sacrament of marriage to one another through the exchanging of their vows. Through Christ's grace they become the very sign of the sacrament; living and visible witnesses to the reality of Christ's love for the Church.

In a mystical way, marriage makes this love of Christ present. Paul speaks of this reality in his letter to the Ephesians:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.... This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.

—Ephesians 5:25-27; 32-33

Thus, the love between husband and wife should mirror the love of Christ for the Church, a love that is complete, unconditional, self-sacrificing, unending, nourishing, and cherishing. Spouses are always called to be faithful to the reality to which they bear witness, through their daily commitment in living faithfully the love they pledge to one another. Thus, marriage is a daily, yes, a daily commitment of spouses to love one another as Christ loved the Church,

even through the sufferings, hardships, sicknesses, and hurts of life.

Christ did not abandon the Church, but even embraced the cross for her salvation. Marriage at times also calls spouses to bear the cross for one another, but through Christ's grace their love and union is strengthened. Lived faithfully, it becomes the living witness and sign of the sacrificial love of Christ that knows no boundaries. Marriage literally makes Christ's love incarnate in the world and society. As Pope John Paul II beautifully teaches:

Spouses are therefore the permanent reminder to the Church of what happened on the Cross; they are for one another and for the children witnesses to the salvation in which the sacrament makes them sharers. Of this salvation event marriage, like every sacrament, is a memorial, actuation and prophecy: "As a memorial, the sacrament gives them the grace and duty of commemorating the great works of God and of bearing witness to them before their children. As actuation, it gives them the grace and duty of putting into practice in the present, towards each other and their children, the demands of a love which forgives and redeems. As prophecy, it gives them the grace and duty of living and bearing witness to the hope of the future encounter with Christ."

—Familiaris Consortio, 13).

The Family is the Domestic Church

The family from the very beginning of time has always been not only the source of human life, but also the source and nurturing of the divine life of faith. God has willed that Christian spouses be faithful witnesses of Christ and his love for the Church. It is within the family that the love of Christ is first witnessed to children. Through the parents the seeds of faith are planted and then carefully nurtured in children so they may produce great fruit. Thus, the family is called the "domestic church" not only because it is called to be a model of the Church, but also the Church is strengthened and continues to grow and flourish by way of the family. Parents have a particular responsibility to bring children up in the faith. They are the first heralds of the Gospel, bringing to their children the light and life of Christ, therefore through the family the Church becomes "incarnate" in society. As John Paul II states: "The Church thus finds in the family, born of the sacrament, the cradle and the setting in which she can enter the human generations and where these in their turn can enter the Church" (Familiaris Consortio, 15).



The Marriage Prayer Card focuses on the covenant of marriage and the bond that is created from the union. It serves to strengthen the bond and encourage peace and love within the entire family. For information on ordering the USCCB prayer card for married couples and other materials, visit www.usccb.org.

The Family is a Witness of Faith to the World

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

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

Marriage is the sacrament of life-long and life-giving love that is the real and visible sign and witness of Christ's love for the Church and the mystery of God's love. Marriage and the family are also at the very heart of the Church's life and mission. In the face of the modern day "culture of death" that seeks to attack and degrade the family, the family must be the courageous herald of the "culture of life" and an instrument of God's life and love in a world so often lost in darkness.

Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master's degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University.

Features

Lent, loneliness and being with Jesus

By Jeff Hedglen

I recently saw the Oscar-nominated movie "127 hours." The film is about mountain climber Aron Ralston, who became trapped by a boulder in Robbers Roost, Utah, for more than five days in early 2003 before amputating his arm with a dull knife. The 127 hours are at times funny, excruciating, lonely, terrifying, and inspiring. While watching this movie, the movie "Castaway" with Tom Hanks as a FedEx employee stranded on an uninhabited island for over four years came to mind. I think the fact that both of these men spent significant time alone and afraid for their lives is what made the connection for me. But it was the being alone part that really stayed with me.

I tried being totally alone for a weekend once. I had heard of many people who had gone on personal retreats, just them and God. They spoke so highly of the experience that I decided to try it for myself. Well, halfway into the first day I was going crazy, and by the end of the weekend, I was almost out of my mind. And this was less than 48 hours, nowhere near 127, and I was not perilously wedged to the side of a mountain, risking death.

All this thinking about loneliness brought to mind the book *Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the "Saint of Calcutta."* This book tells the story of Mother Teresa and the founding of the Missionaries of Charity, but more than that it reveals the inner workings of the heart and mind of this much beloved modern day saint.

Her letters reveal a deep and extended time of darkness and spiritual loneliness. Pretty much from the time she started the Missionaries of Charity until the time of her death, some 50 years, she had no real emotional or felt presence of Jesus. In and of itself this is significant, but prior to her founding her order she had the most blissful and intimate experiences with Jesus, the likes of which few have ever enjoyed.

The loss she felt and the doubt it produced was profound, but this is not the face she showed the world. She says in her letters that she continued to smile out of love for Jesus, for even though she did not feel his presence, she believed He was always inside her.

I think in our own way we each have short or extended periods of loneliness. For some it is a passing moment, for others a lingering feeling. For young adults, loneliness can be more of a desire to find their life partner; for older adults it can be more of missing their life partner. But loneliness and being alone can be different things.

Jesus spent 40 days alone in the desert. I do not know if he felt lonely during this time, but I do know that the time was very important in his life. During those 40 days God was preparing Him for the ministry he was to embark on, a ministry that would change the world forever.

The Church offers us the season of Lent to invite us into a desert experience, not a time of loneliness, but a time away from the hype and over-stimulation of the world. We are called into a time of self reflection, spiritual meditation, physical fasting, and contemplating Jesus. This last one is the clincher. It is when we connect our Lenten practices

to Jesus that we dive deepest into the mystery of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

Our desert experience and periods of loneliness are not foreign to our Savior. Whether it was during the temptations in the desert or the abandonment he felt on the cross, Jesus knows what it is like to be alone, to experience loneliness.

This is not to say that a profound sense of loneliness can be overcome with a good Lenten season. But whether the desert time we experience is 127 hours long or an experience more like Mother Teresa, Jesus is our companion on the journey, so in a very real sense we are never totally alone, even if it sometimes feels that way.

Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw.org.



A Bangladeshi migrant worker bathes March 7 at a refugee camp near the border crossing of Ras Jdir, Tunisia, after fleeing violence in Libya. As fighting between rebels and government forces in Libya intensified, Pope Benedict XVI called for aid and assistance to civilians caught in the conflict.



A girl makes an offering during Mass marking Missionary Childhood Day in Nairobi, Kenya, Feb. 19. Many of the children attending the service made contributions to help those less fortunate than themselves.



Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York distributes food to people in the St. Francis Breadline outside St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York on Ash Wednesday March 9. The longest continuously running breadline in the nation was founded in 1930 by Franciscan Brother Gabriel Mehler to feed people impoverished by the Great Depression.

Cross-Words

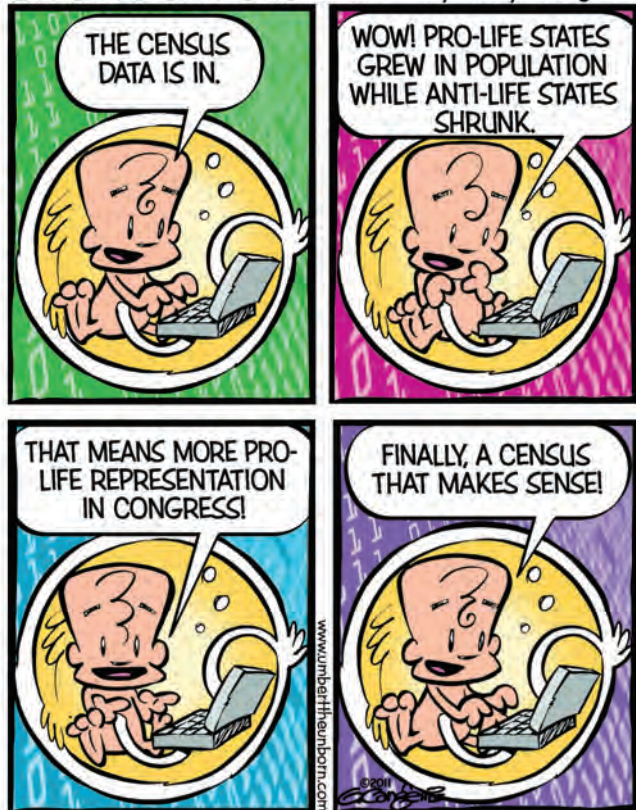
By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

1. Moses' brother
2. Pure love
3. blathers
4. Unlocks
5. Loch monster?

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2				
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Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



The FLOCK by Jean Denton



Texas Mission Council's annual conference held in Fort Worth Feb. 25-27 teaches participants how to help youth connect

Faith and Mission

Stories by Michele Baker / Correspondent
Photos by Donna Ryckaert

Participants in the Texas Mission Council's 2011 annual conference gathered at the Trinity Hotel in East Fort Worth February 25-27. This year's theme, "Youth In Mission," drew a diverse group.

"Youth ministers, those interested in mission work, and representatives from diocesan organizations throughout the state have come for ongoing formation and ideas to minister to those young people interested in mission," said Colleen Cargile, director of Social Ministry for St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills and Mission Coordinator of the Maryknoll Mission Education Team (MMET) that served as the planning commission for this year's conference.



A poster with information about the Maryknoll Society was displayed at the conference.

Keynote speaker, Matthew Rouso, director of the Maryknoll Mission Office in New Orleans, provided an engaging profile of "Millennials" — those young people born in the 1990s and coming of age in the 21st Century — to kick off the discussion Friday evening. Ethnically and racially diverse, technologically savvy, politically progressive, less religiously observant, more trusting of institutions, and more educated than any generation in American history, Millennials have hearts and minds that are fertile ground for the seeds of mission work.

"They are more tolerant and open-minded than previous generations," Rouso observed. "Because for them diversity and multiculturalism have been constant buzzwords." Furthermore, Rouso notes a "great spirit of volunteerism and an interest in the world around them."

In fact, Rouso would posit that the need to "sell" the mission experience among this generation

is less necessary. The sense of service is already there, well-cultivated, and waiting to be engaged, a sentiment echoed by Liz Schaufert, senior high coordinator of Youth Ministry for St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington.

"Youth are yearning to serve," she said. "Every time I put out a call for mission I have a waiting list. My biggest job is helping them connect it to their Catholic faith. You have to form them: find out why they want to serve and prepare them."

The benefit of extensive formation was clearly on display during a panel discussion Saturday morning. Briana Monsalve and Olivia Migacz, both high schoolers at Bishop Dunne Catholic School in Dallas joined University of North Texas student Carmen Castrejon and recent Midwestern State University graduate Francisco Salas in describing their experiences as missionaries.

Salas related how his understanding of mission evolved during a service trip to Mexico after he graduated from college. "I was still of the mentality that mission work was getting your hands dirty. You know: manual labor," he said. "But it's much more than that. It's also educating people and bringing something back."

What missionaries bring back from their experiences is as important as what they bring to them according to the Texas Mission Council which was established in 1992. One of the ongoing goals of the council is to put forth mission as a process requiring reflective thought beforehand, critical thinking skills during missionary trips, and engaged spirituality upon return.

Father Thomas Craig, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, touched on this aspect in his homily Sunday morning. He said, "When we say that God will provide, we're to pick up where God leads us. It's a call to put our faith in action."



Keynote speaker Matthew Rouso, director of the Maryknoll Mission Office in New Orleans, talks about how young people, especially the "Millennials," have the skills, education, and qualities to serve as missionaries.



Fr. Robert Thames, who does mission work with Educate the Children in Bolivia, speaks to an audience of youth ministers and young people interested in mission work at the Texas Mission Council conference.



Sr. Patricia Ridgley, SSMN, (center) and Sr. Rosemary Stanton, SSMN, (right), sing during a praise and worship session. The sisters helped organize the conference.

Youth and young adults share experiences from missions at conference

A panel discussion Saturday morning proved to be one of the high points of the Texas Mission Council's 2011 Annual Conference. Briana Monsalve and Olivia Migacz, both high-schoolers at Bishop Dunne Catholic School in Dallas joined Carmen Castrejon, a student at the University of North Texas in Denton, and Francisco Salas, a recent graduate of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, in describing their experiences in mission. For each young person, learning was a central component.

"One of the greatest spiritual values I came to understand during my trip," said Briana Monsalve, who went on a mission trip to Honduras, "was that everything in life is beautiful. The people there are spiritually driven. For them, simply waking up in the morning or sitting under a palm tree is a gift from God and part of his love for us."

Salas, who had been on several mission trips as a student, came to a renewed sense of the importance of education during a service trip to Mexico after graduating from college. He recalls, "We spent the whole first week



From left to right: Bishop Dunne Catholic School students Briana Monsalve and Olivia Migacz, sit on a panel with UNT student Carmen Castrejon, and MSU alumnus Francisco Salas to share their mission experiences at the Texas Mission Council's "Youth in Mission" conference.

just learning about the political issues and the unrest there. We went during the Swine Flu epidemic, and it was very important that we'd been educated first and then sent out."

Lydia Torrez, director of Advancement for Bishop Dunne, stressed the connection between successful missions and thorough preparation. "These children are formed," said Torrez. "In addition to regular meetings, there is a 17-week online course required of our students. They learn the culture, the politics, the history, the literature, the geography of the places we send them."

"The mission trip I embarked on last summer — in June of 2010 — has forever marked me and has shaped me into the young person I am today," said Olivia Migacz, one of Torrez's charges who made a mission trip to Honduras. "I would not have the values that I have today if it were not for the Honduran people. They opened my eyes to what really matters in life: God, others, and family."

Over and over again, the young adults on the panel reiterated a sentiment common among those who have experienced the special call to mission.

"I went there thinking that I was going to help them," said Castrejon, "but in the end, they held me in their arms and helped me."

Sacrament of Confession

Growing spiritually through the confession of sin

By Mitch Finley
Catholic News Service

Clearly, the confession of sins to a priest (presbyter) was taken for granted in the early church, and it was understood as a way to give glory to God. But the practice encouraged by James had its origins in the example and teachings of Jesus himself.

There seems to be no end to Hollywood's fascination with — and frequent misrepresentation of — the sacrament of reconciliation. Even some Catholics in the last generation or so have lost an appreciation for what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* refers to, using not one or two but four terms: "The forgiveness of sins committed after baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance or reconciliation" (No. 1486).

Part of any complete look at the origins of this sacrament must begin with Scripture. If Catholicism is about anything, it's about being scriptural. Thus, when we experience the sacrament of reconciliation, we give glory to God, as Scripture understands it.

We hear and read rather frequently the words "give glory to God," sometimes without being sure what this terminology means.

In Scripture "glory" refers to the presence of God. So to "give glory to God" means to engage in an action with the intention of drawing attention to the presence of God in a specific situation.

As such, we give glory to God when we grow spiritually by confessing our sins, particularly in the sacrament of reconciliation.

There are more than a few important instances in Scripture that echo this sacrament. For an Old Testament example, read through Leviticus 5:5-6 and 19:20-22. In both cases, the one who sins is instructed to go through the priest in order to obtain God's forgiveness.

Such instances clearly serve as a foreshadowing, if you will, of the Christian sacrament of reconciliation. The law or custom was already there in Judaism, so it was natural that Jesus would take it for granted, and that the early church, to give glory to God, would elevate it to the status of a personal sacramental encounter with the risen Christ.

Two declarations of Jesus in the Gospels, and one in the Letter of James — which most Catholic Scripture scholars conclude is more wisdom literature than a true letter — provide substance for

understanding reconciliation as both a sacrament and as a way to give glory to God.

The oldest New Testament example may well be the words of James 5:14-16: "Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another."

Clearly, the confession of sins to a priest (presbyter) was taken for granted in the early church, and it was understood as a way to give glory to God. But the practice encouraged by James had its origins in the example and teachings of Jesus himself.

In Matthew 9:6-8, for example, Jesus says: "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he then said to the paralytic, 'Rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.' He rose and went home. When the crowds saw this they were struck with awe and glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings."

Of all the ways available to us to give glory to God, celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation is one not to be neglected during Lent and all year round.

Mitch Finley is the author of more than 30 books on Catholic themes, including THE SEEKER'S GUIDE TO BEING CATHOLIC; Wipf & Stock Publishers. To learn more, visit mitchandkathyfinley.com.



Father Tomasz Ludwicki hears a confession during a local pilgrimage in Munster, Ind. (2010 file photo / CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)



They will know we are Christians by our willingness to seek reconciliation (a sign of our love)

By David Gibson
Catholic News Service

You could cook up an entirely new kind of Christianity simply by removing reconciliation from the mix. However, this new Christianity would be unrecognizable as such.

That seems to be a central tenet of many Catholic thinkers today. A concern is that if we overlook the importance of reconciliation, we forget one of Christianity's basics — namely, that God is a reconciler who heals the wounds that divide people from him, divide them within themselves and divide them from each other.

I should note at this article's outset that three points underlie all that follows:

1. For Catholics, reconciliation is both a sacrament and a way of life.
2. The reconciliation experienced sacramentally can give rise to a reconciling way of life.

3. Both as a sacrament and a way of life, reconciliation is founded on convictions about God — that God is compassionate, loving and merciful, that God is not vengeful.

In and of itself, the sacrament of reconciliation makes a clear statement that God is a merciful reconciler. Pope John Paul II discussed this in a letter to the world's priests. God mercifully seeks people out to forgive and be reconciled with them, the pope suggested. We do not cause God to become merciful.

"We must not think that it is the sinner, through his own independent journey of conversion, who earns mercy," Pope John Paul wrote. Rather, "it is mercy that impels him along the path of conversion." Confession signifies "God's arrival at a person's home," the pope said.

But something quite interesting happens next. According to the pope, the sacrament

Sacrament of Confession

In the midst of Lent, priests assess state of confession

**By James Breig
Catholic News Service**

ALBANY, N.Y. — Msgr. Kevin Irwin says that hearing confessions is “one of the most humbling experiences of my priesthood.”

The dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, he recently reflected on the current state of the sacrament of penance. For years, surveys have shown infrequent — if any — use of the sacrament by Catholics. One recent survey found that 45 percent of Catholics who attend Mass weekly never go to confession.

Msgr. Irwin told Catholic News Service he suspects there are several reasons for that, including “fear of what the priest might say and shame at what one has done or failed to do.”

Father Rick Hilgartner, executive director of the USCCB's Secretariat of Divine Worship, believes that some Catholics stay away because of “fear or embarrassment about a particular sin.”

“I would offer, in reply, that there is no reason to be afraid. For others, there might be a false sense that confession is not really necessary, either because they don't think they have sinned, or they don't need forgiveness,” he said. “(But) each of us has sin in our lives; it is part of what it is to be human.”

Both priests see many reasons people should take advantage of confession. For one thing, Msgr. Irwin pointed out, it provides the opportunity “to assess where one is before God and each other” through an examination of conscience.

Other pluses of confessing, he said, include “naming what is good and wrong in one's life,” and the opportunity of “gaining insight into the ways one should look at life and live.”

Because they believe that priests are key factors in reviving the use of the sacrament, the two clergymen have advice for their peers.

“We need to reassure the faithful that

the point of the sacrament is not to be chastised or punished,” Father Hilgartner told CNS, “but to experience the healing love and forgiveness of Jesus. We need to be inviting and encouraging.”

Likewise, Msgr. Irwin encourages clergy to “invite penitents to use the options in the rite of penance more fully, for example, by asking them to bring a Scripture reading with them to discuss as a lead-in to confessing sins.”

He recommends that Catholics “go regularly to the same priest so that the rapport is easier, and the knowledge of failings and their severity can be assessed more adequately. When priests ask penitents what they might recommend as a penance, then what the penitent is asked to do fits their particular need.”

As a result, the penance assigned by the confessor becomes “an antidote to what one confessed. Contrition is the most important part of the sacrament.”

In preparation for confession, Msgr. Irwin suggested that Catholics “read and reflect on Chapter 12 of Paul's Letter to the Romans.”

Father Hilgartner pointed out that “there are lots of resources that can help guide the faithful through this process of reflection and examination. In general, it is good not only to reflect on the Ten Commandments, but also to look at significant relationships — with God, with others and with self — in order to identify what actions or inactions have been hurtful or sinful.”

Confessors, he continued, should “listen attentively and respond as Jesus would, which might include some advice or encouragement.”

Similarly, Msgr. Irwin urges priests to “act as a divine physician, diagnosing what is really wrong, guiding the penitent to see it



A priest hears the confession of a teenage boy in St. Publius Church in Floriana, Malta. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

and praying with the penitent over it.”

Lent, he continued, provides a way for Catholics who have been away from the sacrament of penance to experience it again. “Communal celebrations of the sacrament seem to have taken hold as features of Lent and Advent,” he noted. “These are often occasions for people who have not come for a long period to jump-start a return.”

In addition, such communal events help people “see that penance involves the community and is not just about themselves before God,” he said.

Msgr. Irwin believes that Catholics who return to confession might be surprised

at the changes that have occurred in the sacrament in recent years, such as the option of facing the confessor in the open, the reading of Scriptures, and “a declaration of thanks for God's mercy.”

His experience with penitents, Msgr. Irwin said, “is one of the most humbling experiences of my priesthood. When you hear of the burdens people bear, you are simply amazed, sometimes saddened, but always heartened that you can help to unburden them.”

James Breig is the former editor of The Evangelist, newspaper of the Diocese of Albany, New York.

of reconciliation can give birth to a life of reconciliation. How?

In Pope John Paul's view, receiving divine mercy freshens our awareness of God as a Father and prompts us — precisely as God's family members — to rediscover our connections to our “brothers and sisters.” Mercy “warms” us to the idea of loving our neighbor.

Archbishop Jose Gómez, of Los Angeles made a similar point in a pastoral letter that he wrote when he was archbishop of San Antonio.

The reconciliation “the entire world longs for begins in the confessional,” Archbishop Gómez said. For many saints and martyrs, he observed, the sacrament of reconciliation was “the great school of mercy” in which they “learned and received the strength to love their enemies and forgive their persecutors.”

The archbishop urged people to take home with them the mercy received in the

sacrament of reconciliation, since “love and mercy must begin in the family.” He wrote: “Let us make time to listen, to spend time together and to try to understand one another. Let us begin to practice forgiveness in all our relationships — as husbands and wives, parents and children, as neighbors and citizens.”

But not only should one's reborn instinct for reconciliation be taken home, it should be taken into the world at large too. “In a world that is angry and violent, in a culture of blame and revenge,” it is possible to become “apostles of reconciliation” by “living as children of the Father, who is rich in mercy,” Archbishop Gómez said.

Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans is another church leader who has spoken about the need for mercy and reconciliation. Observing that “violence and revenge and hatred have become acceptable parts of our society today,” he noted that

there are “families, parishioners, and priests who have not spoken to one another for years” due to such feelings.

Revenge was judged “easier and more popular than forgiveness” by Archbishop Aymond. He commented: “In many ways in our society we are not tolerant with people. We are certainly not patient and sometimes not even civil.”

It is “countercultural” today to encourage forgiveness and reconciliation, said Archbishop Aymond. But “we must forgive because we have been forgiven,” and “we must be reconcilers because Jesus reconciled and healed.”

What does a life patterned after the example of the reconciling God of mercy look like? Theologians, biblical scholars, catechists, and others who take up that question often explain that the God of mercy is faithful, kind, and good, while also a healer and peacemaker.

— The God of mercy wants the hungry fed, wants the homeless sheltered, wants hope reawakened among the brokenhearted.

— The God of reconciliation extends a welcome to those who are lonely or lost like the prodigal son. The God of love is ready to forgive.

Thus, and just for starters, to follow in the footsteps of the God of mercy and reconciliation is to be faithful, kind, and loving, to extend hope to others in whatever ways possible, to feed and clothe the poor, and to mend relationships by reaching out and allowing great angers to be consigned to the past.

Truth be told, this is a tall order. Fortunately, living in merciful, reconciling ways, results in a Christianity that is recognizable as such.

David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years..

Participants in Loreto House's end-of-life March 11 workshop learn that sometimes the most important form of ministry is just

Being With

those who are suffering and grieving

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

Camille Pauley said the most precious moments spent with her mother came unexpectedly.

The matriarch of her large, Italian family was just 62 years old when she suffered two strokes that put her on a respirator and near death. As nurses busied themselves caring for the comatose patient, Pauley and her five siblings carved out time around the medication schedule for private vigils with their dying loved one.

"Each of us had one hour, and it was the most beautiful, extraordinary hour of being with someone that I'd ever had up until that point," recalled the co-founder of Healing the Culture, a pro-life organization.

The unresponsive mother never reacted in any physical way to her daughter's soothing words or gentle strokes.

"But her presence was so strong I knew her spirit was there in a deep moment of love that I never experienced with my mother before," Pauley added. "It was profound."

The speaker shared details of her family's end-of-life drama and how it led to the formation of the "Being With" program during a March 11-12 workshop sponsored by the Loreto House in Denton. Founded in 2007, the North Texas non-profit charity serves the unborn and their mothers as well as the elderly and families dealing with terminal illness.

Projects promoted by Being With fit Loreto House's Catholic identity and charism, according to Executive Director Randy Bollig.

"Our mission also involves end-of-life issues," he said. "We're not just a crisis pregnancy center. We're the full Gospel of Life, so this program meets our needs perfectly."

Addressing workshop participants, Pauley said the events surrounding her mother's death — coupled by the growing acceptance of doctor-assisted suicide — made her think more fully about the intrinsic dignity of the human person.

"I grew up pro-life but never understood why," admitted the speaker. "I never really understood what freedom meant or what a human right really was. I never studied the deep meaning of human personhood."

Ten years of taking philosophy classes and pursuing independent study with Jesuit theologian Father Robert J. Spitzer led Pauley to design a program that helps people with debilitating physical and mental conditions understand they have meaning, purpose, and dignity through the presence of others.

"We created Being With to fill the void that people

RIGHT: Camille Pauley, founder of Healing the Culture, a pro-life organization, trains volunteers how to minister to those who are suffering, emphasizing the importance of being present.

BELOW: Camille Pauley answers questions during a training session held at the University of North Texas' Gateway Center sponsored by Loreto House in Denton.



feel when they become terminally ill and seek euthanasia or assisted suicide because they think they are unwanted, unappreciated, or a burden," she explained.

The program promotes deeper awareness of the meaning of human suffering and trains volunteers to visit with patients so they can offer true compassion and love to those with physical and mental limitations in hospitals, nursing facilities, assisted-living residences, hospices, and homes. Comforting someone who is uncommunicative or depressed is more challenging than it seems and requires special insight.

"There are two ways you can love," Pauley pointed out. "You can love by doing something for somebody, or you can love by simply being present to someone else, but it's difficult."

An untrained person might feel awkward, embarrassed, or think they should be doing something constructive instead of just sitting there.

"But the greatest moments of human love occur when we can simply 'be' with each other," she continued, adding that the act of presence offers hope, wantedness, belonging, and friendship.

During a discussion of Being With's core philosophy, known as the Life Principles, the pro-life educator explained how society's misunderstood notion of happiness shapes our ideas about "quality of life."

"Our culture teaches over and over again — in subtle and not so subtle ways — that happiness and quality of life, success and freedom come from independence, control,

power, achievement, self-esteem, being admired, material possessions, and having physical pleasure," Pauley said. "And that's why people don't think they have meaning at the end of life or when they're ill and debilitated."

Being With volunteers demonstrate the true meaning of happiness, success, love, and freedom.

"But it takes awhile to figure out how to integrate this philosophy so that you can teach it simply by who you are with someone," she added. "Being With is not about therapy. But it is about learning how to be comfortable in the presence of another, unique intrinsic, dignified mystery [person]."

The two-day workshop attracted people like Lynn Huchton, a parishioner from St. Peter in Lindsey, who wants to become more involved in hospital ministry. Knowing how to approach patients and what to say to them concerned the Gainesville resident.

"The role-playing we did in different skits showed how to talk to people in different situations and scenarios, so now I feel more prepared," he said.

Margo Davis, who works with geriatric patients as a home health occupational therapist, often deals with elderly, depressed clients. A 95-year-old woman recently questioned, "Why is God doing this do me? Why do I have all these problems?"

"I now have a better understanding of how people view God when they're suffering," she said. "The suffering itself isn't good, but it can lead to goodness. I'll encourage them to let go and trust God in that process."

Catholic Teaching

What does the Church say about that?

Institute hopes to begin with a full class

FROM PAGE 1

Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Code of Canon Law, and the writings and spirituality of the saints.”

Through the new institute, students can grasp a true understanding of pastoral theology, which is the ability to teach and apply the rich teachings of the Catholic Church to modern culture, helping fulfill the universal call to holiness to the whole Church, which is the challenge of renewal issued to the faithful by the Second Vatican Council.

“The IPT would be ideal for anyone who desires this kind of formation,” Pollice continued, “but would be particularly appropriate and beneficial to those who are serving in ministry in the Church. It is the hope of Bishop Vann that the IPT can serve a crucial role in the formation of those who do serious work and ministry in the diocese.”

While the IPT has its base at Ave Maria University’s Florida campus, a key player in its development has close ties to the Metroplex. Douglas Bushman, former director of the Institute for Religious and Pastoral Studies (IRPS) at the University of Dallas, is director of the IPT. His work at UD along with a growing national reputation for spiritual formation scholarship led to his being invited to establish a program for Ave Maria College in Michigan. When Ave Maria University was established in 2004, the IPT migrated to southern Florida. Bushman continues his work as director of the IPT’s Master of Theological Studies degree.

Timothy Herrman, associate director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University gave an overview of its major components.

“To earn the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree, students must take 36 credit hours of course work and master the fundamental principles of theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice,” he explained. “This degree program is rooted in the Catholic Tradition, faithful to the Magisterium, and designed for the non-traditional student. We say ‘non-traditional’ student because the IPT format was developed to accommodate students whose access to graduate studies in theology is restricted by job, family, or distance.

“Courses are offered in an intensive weekend format, Friday evening through Sunday afternoon one weekend per month, August through May. Students can complete the degree

in three years. Courses,” he said, “will be taught by our regular faculty; occasionally a course may be taught by a qualified adjunct [instructor].”

Tuition for students is \$575 per credit hour with students taking six hours per semester, and totaling \$6,900 per academic year. The institute’s program administrator Rachel McCauley said students could make monthly payments over the 10-month academic year. Students can also apply for financial aid to pay for up to 30 percent of tuition, and for student loans from the university.

“We are encouraging parishes to help [financially], especially if someone is from their staff,” Pollice said. He added that the diocese has also applied for a grant from the Kenedy Foundation to provide scholarships and financial assistance to who have applied to the IPT, though the grant’s status is pending.

Deadline for applications for the IPT is May 15. “It is now our hope to recruit enough students this spring to begin a cohort for the MTS degree program this coming fall semester,” said Herrman. “Should we be able to recruit a sufficient number of students, then the IPT will offer these students the full curriculum over the next three years.”

“Also, recognizing the importance of the Hispanic culture in the life of the Church of North Texas and continuing in developing and supporting this, IPT is working with us to establish a course of

academic work in Spanish as well,” said Bishop Vann.

“One of the great priorities in the Church today ... is the ongoing formation of those who are engaged in ministry and pastoral activity,” Bishop Vann continued. “We need to be strengthened both doctrinally and spiritually, especially in our modern-day culture, so infused with secularism and moral relativism that effectively handing on the faith is a much more difficult challenge, requiring adequate and diligent formation. As the *General Catechetical Directory* states, ‘Any pastoral activity for the carrying out of which there are not at hand persons with the right formation will necessarily come to nothing.’” (108)

For more information on Ave Maria University and the Institute for Pastoral Theology visit the website at www.ipt.avemaria.edu or contact Rachel McCauley, the institute’s program administrator at (866) 866-1100. Questions about the program in Fort Worth may be directed to Lucas Pollice, director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 560-2452, ext. 260.

Professor Douglas Bushman, STL, director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology, will offer information sessions March 28-29 for anyone interested in pursuing a course of study in the Institute for Pastoral Theology. Information about times, locations, and topics of each of these sessions follows:

THE CATHOLIC CENTER SESSION FOR CLERGY/PARISH STAFF

(Others who are interested are invited to attend as well)

Monday, March 28 2:30-4 p.m.

Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral Formation: Three Foundations for the New Evangelization

The Catholic Center

800 W. Loop 820 South

Fort Worth, TX, 76108

DENTON

Monday, March 28 7-8:30 p.m.

Pastoral Theology at the Service of Forming the Faithful for the New Evangelization

St. Mark Church

2800 Pennsylvania Dr.

Denton, TX, 76205

ARLINGTON

Tuesday, March 29 7-8:30 p.m.

Doctrine, Holiness, and Fidelity: Three Keys to Pastoral Theology and the New Evangelization

St. Maria Goretti Church

1200 S. Davis Dr.

Arlington, TX, 76013

For more information or to RSVP for one of the information sessions, contact Lucas Pollice, Diocesan Director of Catechesis at (817) 560-2452, ext. 260 or at lpollice@fwdioc.org.

Archbishop Dolan calls Obama’s decision on federal marriage law ‘alarming’

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Obama administration’s decision to no longer support the federal Defense of Marriage Act is an “alarming and grave injustice,” said New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“Our nation and government have the duty to recognize and protect marriage, not tamper with and redefine it, nor to caricature the deeply held beliefs of so many citizens as ‘discrimination,’” he said in a March 3 statement.

The archbishop’s comments were in response to a Feb. 23 announcement that President Barack Obama had instructed the Department of Justice to stop defending the federal law passed by Congress and signed into law in 1996 by President Bill Clinton.

The Defense of Marriage Act says the federal government defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman and that no state must recognize a same-sex marriage from another state.

A day after Archbishop Dolan’s statement, other Catholic bishops joined Protestant and Sikh religious leaders in urging the U.S. House of Representatives to fight for federal marriage law.

Attorney General Eric Holder said Feb. 23 that although the administration has defended the law in some federal courts, it will no longer continue to do so in cases pending in the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Unlike in the previous cases, said Holder, the 2nd Circuit “has no established or binding standard for how laws concerning sexual orientation should be treated.”

Holder’s statement said Obama “has concluded that given a number of factors, including a documented history of discrimination, classifications based on sexual orientation should be subject to a more heightened standard of scrutiny.”

Archbishop Dolan disagreed, saying the federal law “does not single out people based on sexual orientation or inclination. Every person deserves to be treated with justice, compassion, and respect, a proposition of natural law and American law that we as Catholics vigorously promote. Unjust

discrimination against any person is always wrong.”

He said the marriage law was not “unjust discrimination” but instead, legislation that “merely affirms and protects the time-tested and unalterable meaning of marriage.”

“The suggestion that this definition amounts to ‘discrimination’ is grossly false and represents an affront to millions of citizens in this country,” he added.

“On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I express my deep disappointment over the administration’s recent decision,” he said, noting that he has written to the president to express his concerns in separate correspondence.

Archbishop Dolan said he prays that the president and the Justice Department “may yet make the right choice to carry out their constitutional responsibility, defending the irreplaceable institution of marriage, and in so doing protect the future generations of our children.”

The administration’s decision “does not stand the test of common sense. It is hardly ‘discrimination’ to say that a husband and a wife have a unique and singular relationship that two persons of the same sex — or any unmarried persons — simply do not and cannot have,” the archbishop said.

“Nor is it ‘discrimination’ to believe that the union of husband and wife has a distinctive and exclusive significance worthy of promotion and protection by the state,” he continued. “It is not ‘discrimination’ to say that having both a mother and a father matters to and benefits a child. Nor is it ‘discrimination’ to say that the state has more than zero interest in ensuring that children will be intimately connected with and raised by their mother and father.

“Protecting the definition of marriage is not merely permissible, but actually necessary as a matter of justice,” he added.

In a March 3 letter to House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, Catholic, Protestant and Sikh religious leaders said they were “very troubled” by Obama’s decision to “no longer protect the traditional definition of marriage and defend existing law.”

Fullness of Truth Ministries to sponsor conference in Arlington exploring Gospel of Matthew April 30-May 1

By **Tony Gutiérrez**
Associate Editor

Fullness of Truth Catholic Evangelization Ministries will present “Thy Kingdom Come: Unlocking the Gospel of St. Matthew,” at the Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way in Arlington, April 30-May 1.

The conference will feature world-renowned Catholic speaker Scott Hahn, along with noted theologians John Bergsma and Michael Barber. Local presenters will include Lucas Pollice, director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, as master of ceremonies, and Marlon De La Torre, diocesan director of Marriage and Family Life, offering a presentation for the conference’s Spanish-language track, and

Father Isaac Orozco, priest secretary to Bishop Kevin Vann, offering a presentation during the youth track.

“This is a great opportunity for adults, catechists, teachers, and those involved in Scripture study, as well as a perfect experience for those who will have just recently entered the Church at Easter through the RCIA process,” said Bishop Vann in a letter inviting Catholics to attend the conference. “May this conference be an opportunity for all of us to come into a deeper knowledge and friendship with Christ by encountering Him in the Scriptures and may it also help promote and enrich the mission of catechesis and evangelization in our Diocese.”

Fullness of Truth is a Catholic evangelization apostolate

dedicated to Pope John Paul II’s call to a New Evangelization, said Fullness of Truth Director Joe McClane. The ministry, based out of Houston, has been organizing conferences throughout Texas and neighboring states since 2001. This will be Fullness of Truth’s second conference in the Diocese of Fort Worth, the first being held in 2008, also in Arlington, during the Year of St. Paul.

This year’s conference is based on the Gospel of Matthew, which is the Gospel being read in the Church’s current cycle of liturgical readings.

“The idea is for the Catholic sitting in the pew to delve deeper into the Liturgy of the Word,” said McClane. “When we’re sitting at Mass, the Word of God comes alive for us.”

“Thy Kingdom Come” will feature Hahn and the other speakers addressing various chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, interspersed with prayer services, including a Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, Divine Mercy Chaplet, and Mass.

McClane said that these conferences are intended for everybody, and are family-friendly. Childcare will be provided, and there will be a separate track for junior high and high school youth, which will include talks and praise and worship. Like the rest of the conference, the youth track will “take themes from Matthew and incorporate them into a style they’re accustomed to” so it won’t be straight commentary, making it more engaging for the teens, McClane said.

“We’re also hoping to cater to a group in the Church that is up and coming — young adults,” McClane added, saying that there will be a special event Saturday night for young adults as an alternative to the dinner with the speakers, planned for the main portion of the conference.

The conference will also have a Spanish-language track at the request of Bishop Vann. This track will have simultaneous translations of Hahn’s presentations, as well as presentations on various parts of the Gospel of Matthew from other

presenters, including De La Torre.

“We want Hispanics to know the faith and hand on that faith to others,” De La Torre said, emphasizing that Hispanics are an ever increasing part of the local Catholic population, and “it’s important that they know their faith and know it well.”

Pollice emphasized the diocese’s encouragement for the conference and the importance for the faithful to know Scripture.

“It’s a great opportunity for our diocese as a whole to come together and learn about something as important as the Gospel of Matthew,” he said. “The more we understand Sacred Scripture, the more we know Christ.”

Pre-registration for “Thy Kingdom Come” is \$45 for individual adults, \$20 for youth, \$125 for families, \$35 per person for a group rate of five or more adults, and \$10 per day for childcare. For more information, or to pre-register, call (877) 21-TRUTH, or visit the website at www.fullnessoftruth.org.

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“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU...” JEREMIAH 29:11 (NIV)



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U.S. Catholics Key To Bringing “Sweeping Positive Change” To Haiti’s Desperately Poor Rural Villages

After visiting the desperately poor families who live in the rural parts of Haiti, Msgr. Michael Flanagan has dedicated himself to rallying support in America for their urgent needs.

Msgr. Flanagan believes that he and other Americans can play a unique role in the recovery of Haiti’s impoverished countryside. He urges U.S. Catholics to seize this opportunity to help this sister parish overseas.

“In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus gave us a preview of the final judgment, and the power of those words burned in my soul as I walked through the rural villages of Haiti,” Msgr. Flanagan said. “When Jesus related the last judgment of mankind, he made the shocking revelation — that help given to the poor would equate to help given to him, and that those who ignored the poor would be judged as if they had ignored Christ himself. The connection to Haiti is obvious to all who will listen. These destitute villages are where Christ abides today. He is there among the poor, calling for our help.”

Flanagan also encourages Catholics to see the Judgment story in Matthew as a blessing rather than as a source of anxiety or fear.

“Who among us wouldn’t be joyful to serve our Lord if he were to appear here among us now? We shouldn’t see

our actions in Haiti as simply feeding a child here or building a home for a poor family there. We should see our outreach as a loving response to Jesus himself. That’s what’s so amazing about our Lord’s revelation in Matthew 25. He is showing us a tangible way to demonstrate our love for him here and now — in our modern world,” Flanagan said. “What could be more inspiring than that?”

Flanagan also pointed to other key verses in scripture that magnify the importance of the poor in God’s plan for blessing his people.

“Isaiah 58:5-11 is another powerful passage. It explains that we are most pleasing to God when we help the needy and bring relief to the poor,” he said. “And it contains a powerful promise to those who reach out in compassion — ‘then your light will break forth like the dawn and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!’ As Catholics, we rightfully respect the Eucharist and other Sacraments as important means of grace. Here, God is showing us another way we can be



Typical housing in Haiti’s Central Plateau — a leaky patchwork of canvas, old plastic and scraps of wood.

blessed — by responding in love to people in need.”

Ultimately, a generous response from American Catholics to the needs in rural areas of Haiti could have a tremendous impact, he added.

“If we rise to this occasion and help the poor in these troubled spots in Haiti, we can create sweeping positive changes in those villages. The sick can be healed, the hungry fed — lives

literally can be saved,” Msgr. Flanagan said. “Remember Matthew 25:31-46. When you feed the hungry and care for the sick in Haiti, you will be responding to Christ himself!”

To support Cross and its special outreach programs throughout Haiti, send your tax-deductible contribution to: Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00717, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

Cross Recognized, Endorsed by Nearly 50 U.S. Catholic Bishops

As Cross International Catholic Outreach (CICO) continues its range of relief work to help the poor overseas, its efforts are being recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S.

“We’ve received an impressive number of endorsements and letters of support from American Bishops and Archbishops — nearly 50 Catholic leaders at last count,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. “They’re impressed by the fact that we’ve done outreaches in more than 40 countries and that we undertake a variety of projects; everything from feeding the hungry and housing the homeless to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor.”

Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis sent one of the more recent letters of encouragement, writing: “It is my hope that this ministry will continue to flourish and reach as many people as possible. I will inform the priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis of the important work that Cross International Catholic Outreach does and elicit their prayerful and financial support for the service you provide to the less fortunate around the world.”

Bishop Kevin Vann of Fort Worth



Bishop Kevin W. Vann, a director on the board of Cross International Catholic Outreach, at a recent meeting with Pope Benedict.

was just as enthusiastic about Cross Catholic and its mission. “I also know that many of the Bishops in Texas think very highly and endorse the work and mission of Cross International Catholic Outreach — as well as do other Bishops whom I know from my days of graduate studies in Rome. Please know of my prayers and support for this vital work...”

In Archbishop Gregory Aymond’s case, the endorsement came with a personal note of thanks for the role Cross Catholic played in helping families hit hard by Hurricane Katrina.

“I’m happy to acknowledge that Cross International Catholic Outreach was of tremendous help to the Archdiocese of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina,” he said.

Bishop Thomas Rodi of Biloxi had similar praise.

“Your quick response to the needs of the people in south Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will always be remembered and greatly appreciated,” he said. “Thank you for all the good you do, and may God bless you and your ministry.”

In addition to praising the work CICO accomplishes, many of the Bishops and Archbishops are also impressed by the unique collaborative relationship Cross has with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum in Rome. This allows the charity to participate in the mercy ministries of the Holy Father himself. In his praise of CICO, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati underscored this unique connection.

“Cross International Catholic Outreach’s close collaboration with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum is a source of encouragement,” the Archbishop said. “The Holy See has unique knowledge of local situations throughout the world through its papal representatives in nearly two hundred countries and through its communications with Bishops and others who care for the poor and needy in every corner of the world.”

CICO president, Jim Cavnar, explained the significance of this connection.

“Our collaboration with Cor Unum allows us to fund outreaches in virtually any area of the world, and we have used that method in special cases — to help the victims of natural disasters, for example,” he said. “It only represents a small part of our overall ministry, but it can be a very important benefit in those special cases.”

Missionaries Seek Support For Their Efforts to Help Haiti's Poor

"Before God sent the missionaries here, we had lost hope," says Roland Dersaint, a 36-year-old father of three. "The children here in Kobonal were dying of sicknesses. Many families were surviving only by eating green mangos. But it wasn't enough to save the weakest. We often saw families walking down the road with tiny coffins — sometimes as many as five little ones would be buried in a single day."

A few years ago, Roland and Mary Dersaint pulled a tiny coffin of their own down the long dirt road. Inside was their nine-month old baby, Rosalie.

"Typhoid took her," Roland explains, looking away to hide his grief.

In the years before the missionaries came, circumstances like these defined life — and death — in Kobonal, Haiti. This isolated section of Haiti's Central Plateau is plagued by hunger, illness and the other marks of extreme poverty. In fact, before the missionaries came, as many as one out of three children died before reaching age five.

Roland and Mary Dersaint's story of loss is very typical in this part of Haiti, according to Father Glen Meaux. When Fr. Meaux and other members of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT) came to Kobonal from America more than 10 years ago, they were shocked by the severity of poverty in the Central Plateau. In fact, as the group was driving up to the Kobonal villages for the very first time, they passed a group of families with tiny coffins coming down from the mountains to bury their children.

"It was heartbreaking, but it was also an important experience for us because it humbled us and showed us how difficult life is for the poor. It taught us that our ministry to preach the Gospel must also include a significant outreach to the poor," Fr. Meaux explains.

In the years since, the missionaries have worked hard to bring both the Gospel's hope — and Christ's ministry of mercy — to the struggling families living in Kobonal. At times, they have faced serious, even life-threatening challenges.

"We had some extremely difficult days in the beginning," Fr. Meaux recalls. "The voodoo priests didn't want us in Kobonal, and the poverty we all lived in made it very hard for everyone involved. But this is where God wanted us, and we set our minds and spirits on doing His will," he says. "Today, voodoo is no longer practiced in the areas we serve, and the poor have new hope. God has been good! Because we made a commitment to Him and remained faithful, He has blessed the work of our hands. That's how we see it."

The fact that these missionaries have

given up comfortable lives in America to help the poor in Haiti is a testament to their strong faith and abiding love of Christ.

"God created us all — Americans and Haitians. And Christ died for us all. We are all brothers and sisters; His children. As brothers and sisters, we should love one another and share what we have with those in need," the priest explains. "That is what motivates us. And, frankly, it should motivate every Catholic. Expressing compassion and serving others are at the very heart of the Gospel. As Catholics, we preach it and we should be living it out."

When the Kobonal Mission was founded, Father Meaux first sought to eliminate the hunger and malnutrition that plagued Haiti's Central Plateau. His group launched a special program to provide food for the poorest of the poor, including vulnerable women and young children. That program was recently expanded through support from Cross International Catholic Outreach and its family of donors.

After responding to this basic human need for food, the missionaries looked for ways to create a lasting change in the area — ways to help the poor break the cycle of poverty and become self-sufficient.

"We discovered that many poor families wanted to grow crops, but they had no land of their own to cultivate. We looked for ways to acquire land and to supply these families with the help they needed to begin a small farm," the priest explains.

This idea impresses Cross International Catholic Outreach's president, Jim Cavnar, and he hopes to encourage American Catholics to support the project.

"When I heard about their plans to help these poor families, I immediately thought of that powerful passage in Isaiah 58, where the Lord promises to bless those who respond to the poor with compassion. From verse 6, it reads: 'This, rather, is the fasting I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.' The Kobonal Mission exemplifies this spirit of mercy in action," Cavnar says. "Cross seeks out partners like this — ministries that are clearly led by the spirit of God, and leaders who find innovative ways to address the needs of the poor."



Cavnar went on to explain the details of the Kobonal Mission farming project.

"Through this program, a poor family receives a half-acre plot of fertile land and a simple but sturdy house. They also get a small subsidy to purchase tools and seeds for the first few years, after which point the farm will allow them to be self-sufficient," Cavnar explained. "The amazing thing is the cost. The total budget for the package is just \$6,070 — that's all it takes to provide a family with a small home, land and the tools to begin a little farm."

On behalf of the Kobonal Mission, Cross International Catholic Outreach will be approaching American Catholics and U.S. parishes with this appeal, hoping to find enough sponsors to fund all 41 Haitian families that the missionaries have identified for help in the first phase of the project.

"You need not sponsor the full amount to make a meaningful difference. Every gift, large or small, is important to our goal. For example, a gift of \$40 covers the start-up expense for the farm, providing the seed and the use of the

oxen to till the land," Cavnar explains. "So you can give \$40 and know that your gift has had a big impact on the lives of these desperately poor families."

Broken down, the various parts of the outreach include: \$500 for the half acre of land; \$5,500 for the house; \$40 for the first year subsidy, and \$20 and \$10 for the second and final year's support.

"We're asking American Catholics to prayerfully consider making a substantial gift to help these Catholic missionaries," Cavnar says. "Father Meaux and his group have a wonderful heart and an amazing plan to help Haiti's poor, but they can't achieve their goals without our help. We need to do our part."

The priest raises his face to heaven, thankful that Cross International Catholic Outreach and its family of benefactors in the U.S. will continue to help the Kobonal Mission develop its outreach to the poor.

"Praise God!" he says. Then bowing his head as if in prayer, he quietly adds, "What a blessing this will be for Kobonal. These poor families have suffered for too long."

How to Help...

Your help is needed for Cross Catholic to bring Christ's mercy to the poorest of the poor. Use the enclosed postage-paid brochure to mail your gift or send it to Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00717, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063. **God bless you.**



Word = Life

Readings Reflections

“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack. In green pastures you let me graze; to safe waters you lead me; you restore my strength.”
— Psalm 103:2-3a



April 3, Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Psalm 103:1-6
- 2) Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel) John 9:1-41

By Jeff Hensley

Pearl Barton was a pearl indeed. She was my wife's grandmother, and a woman of advanced age when I first met her in my teens.

By that time, she had outlived her husband by decades. She was treasured as she spent time with first one of her daughters and then the other. They would practically fight over who could keep Mama in their home and for how long. She was much loved.

As she advanced even further into old age, she ceased being able to help much around the house or in the kitchen. To some, she would have appeared to be useless, to have no function, to have lived to be too old. But she had not.

She had been reduced to love. She spoke in a shaky, quivering voice, and called everybody "Honey" in a way that was as sweet as the word itself.

Tradition has handed on to us similar stories of the Apostle John. After his exile to the Greek Isle of Patmos and then taking up residence in Ephesus, having reached an advanced old age, John would be brought into the assembly of believers and set in their midst. There he would radiate love by his presence, saying only "Little children, love one another."

That was the way Grandma Barton was. She radiated love at the center of the home of whichever sister had the pleasure of her company at the time.

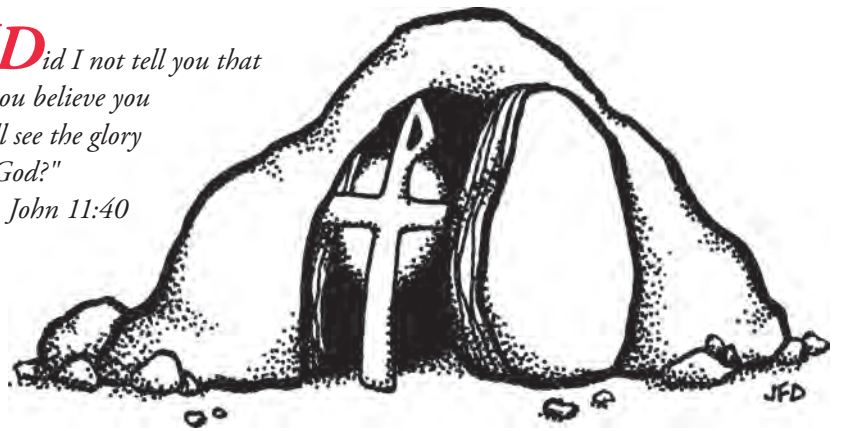
When her time to go to be with the Lord came, Pearl lay in the hospital bed, unable to communicate with anyone around her, but repeating the words of the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want..." At the center of her heart were the Scriptures she had put there many years before, Scriptures she had continued to read and meditate upon deep into her old age.

As we approach the end of Lent and await the Passion, death and resurrection of our Lord at Easter, we should seek to find in ourselves, the peace that comes from knowing the Lord's presence in our lives. Having emptied our lives of their excesses and our sense of self-satisfaction, let us be ready to see the light of Christ afresh in the joy of the coming season.

QUESTIONS:

What remains as a barrier between you and God that you can tend to in the remaining time of Lent?

“Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?”
— John 11:40



April 10, Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalm 130:1-8
- 2) Romans 8:8-11
Gospel) John 11:1-45

By Jean Denton

Nearly 30 years after the war in Southeast Asia, a former Vietnamese military photographer broke down in tears as he showed a visitor a particularly gruesome picture he'd taken. "I don't often show this photograph," he said of the image that caused his long-pent-up emotions to suddenly flow.

It showed a line of dead soldiers, blackened and half-buried by a bombing that completely destroyed their outpost. The photographer had been nearby, heard the bombing, and went immediately to the site where he saw only devastation. "Everyone was dead," he recalled painfully.

He had been a North Vietnamese soldier assigned to carry a camera instead of a weapon. His military duty was to chronicle the war in photographs for his government. In a decade-old National Geographic documentary I saw recently, he shared his story with a former British freelance photographer who returned to Vietnam to meet his counterparts from "the other side" of that war.

Gazing at the image, the Vietnamese photographer remembered, "It was so horrible, I didn't want to take any pictures. But I had to. I had to show people what war does, so it doesn't continue to happen." He pointed to the picture, "so they know this can't go on."

Peace and reunification soon did come to Vietnam, a nation that thrives today.

In the Gospel for the fifth Lenten Sunday, Jesus promises Martha that her dead brother Lazarus will rise. She professes belief in his resurrection "on the last day," but Jesus explains, "I am the resurrection and the life."

This passage tells us resurrection happens not only at what we call the end of time, but whenever Jesus is present. Life rises from the ashes of hurt and destruction among the living who carry Jesus' love and cry for justice in the existing world.

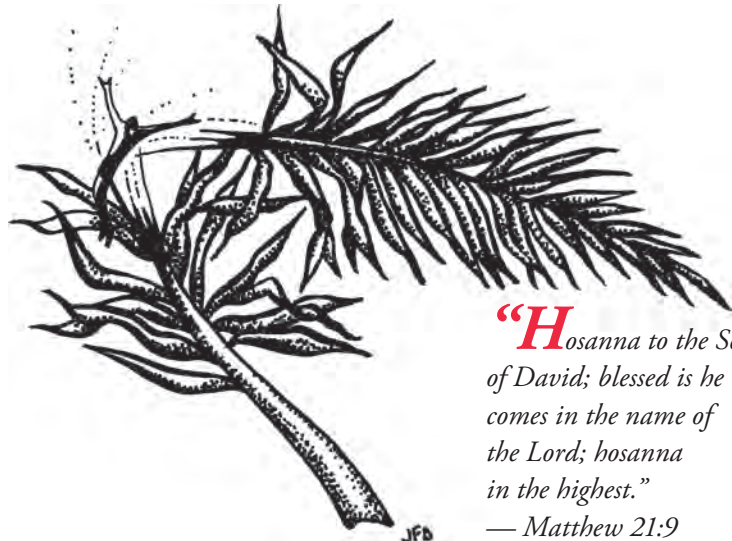
In Vietnam, those two photographers and others had shined the light on the horror of war. Years later, as they sat together recollecting their common experience and desire for an end to such human atrocity, they were surrounded by a new life in Vietnam, resurrected by Jesus, present in human compassion.

QUESTIONS:

When have you witnessed the presence of Jesus bring new life to a dire situation? How do you see resurrection happen among the living?

Word = Life

Readings Reflections



“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”
— Matthew 21:9

April 17, Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion.

Cycle A. Readings:

- Gospel) Matthew 21:1-11
 1) Isaiah 50:4-7
 Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24
 2) Philippians 2:6-11
 Gospel) Matthew 26:14 to 27:66

By Jeff Hedglen

We see it all the time: an actor or athlete who falls from grace. We celebrate the person on the way up the ladder of fame and happily gawk as they disgracefully tumble down to the bottom. The most recent example of this is Charlie Sheen, but he is not alone. He is not the first to win fame and have a huge following only to be left alone in his hour of need.

There is something strange in the human condition that allows us to celebrate the greatness of another person one week, and then stand by and watch the same person be beaten, stumble, fall, and sometimes even die while we enjoy the show.

This, of course, is nothing new. In fact, it goes back 2,000 years. Jesus' public ministry was an enormous success. In just three years, without the benefit of radio and TV, he had captured the imagination of a whole people.

Sure, some did not like how he upset the status quo; others were totally enveloped by his divine power in human form, and some were not happy with the type of Messiah he was shaping up to be. It was a love-him-or-hate-him kind of scenario.

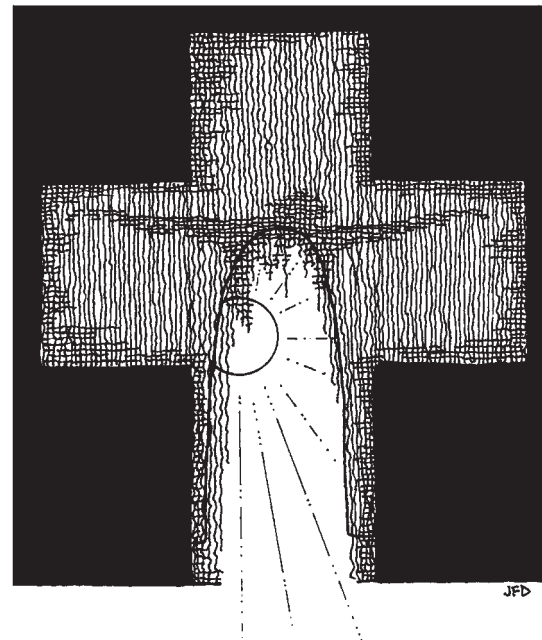
We know how the story plays out. One week Jesus is celebrated, and the next he is brutally beaten. The bystanders who wave their fists and shout, “Crucify him!” had only days earlier waved branches and sung, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”

And so it is with us each year on Passion Sunday. We, too, shout, “Hosanna,” and “Crucify him!” May we shout both with vigor as both are part of the pathway to our salvation. Throughout the journey of Holy Week, Jesus moves from glory to defeat to glory, and he takes us along for the ride. But this is no Charlie Sheen voyeur ride. This is a full and active participatory experience!

QUESTIONS:

In what ways do I sing “Hosanna in the highest!” by the way I live my life? In what ways do I shout “Crucify him!” by the way I live my life?

“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
— Colossians 3:3



April 24, Easter Sunday: The Resurrection of the Lord.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Acts 10:34a, 37-43
 Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
 2) Colossians 3:1-4
 Gospel) Matthew 28:1-10

By Sharon K. Perkins

It seemed like the bad news would never end. Fairly recently, our parish community was staggered by several announcements in a single week, of one untimely death after another — a motorcycle accident, a heart attack during the night, and a suicide. That same week a teenaged relative of mine died of cancer.

Having departed this life in their prime, these persons left us, their survivors, acutely aware of how unexpectedly death can come, and how fragile is the veil that separates our busy, unreflective lives from the reality of an eternal existence that we can scarcely understand or imagine but which looms near — perhaps nearer than we think.

For a Christian, this realization is both very comforting and very scary.

Most of us live our lives in a self-imposed bubble that shields us from thinking about our own deaths (at least until we are forced to deal with the death of a loved one). The Scriptures for this Easter feast get to the heart of the matter, “popping the bubble” and stripping away the veil.

Just as the apostle Peter acquaints the household of Cornelius with the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the Church reacquaints us with that same narrative, reminding us that Jesus' story is now our story. In fact, as St. Paul reminds us, we have already died to our old selves. Our lives are hidden indeed, but not by a veil of our own making. They are surrounded by and absorbed into the very life of God.

In the Gospel, the guards at the tomb were so shaken with the fear of their resurrection encounter that they “became like dead men.” The women at the tomb, also “fearful,” took to heart the words of the angel and also of Jesus, who proclaimed to them, “Do not be afraid!” Fear paralyzed the guards — but that same fear, transformed into joy, propelled the women into action, as they rushed to share the good news with their brother disciples.

Death is inevitable, and fear is a natural human response to what we don't know or understand. But, as St. Paul reminds us, we have been “raised with Christ” — and in focusing on “what is above,” we truly have nothing to fear.

QUESTIONS:

When has the death of a friend or relative led you to consider your own death? How can you allow the risen Lord to transform your own fears from paralysis into joyful action?

Nuestro Pastor Habla

La cuaresma: encontrar la cruz de Cristo, y arrepentirse

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo,

La temporada de Cuaresma está aquí, y este tiempo no es dado por la Iglesia cada año como una temporada de arrepentimiento y conversión, donde nos preparamos para la celebración de la muerte y resurrección de Cristo en Semana Santa. La temporada de Cuaresma es un gran regalo de la Iglesia, que nos llama a una seria conversión, mirar profundamente en nuestros corazones y vidas con la ayuda de la gracia del Espíritu Santo, para erradicar las fuentes de pecado en nuestras vidas y más radicalmente conformarnos a Cristo. La Cuaresma es una temporada de mucha seriedad, porque es un gran momento de gracia para todos nosotros si estamos dispuestos a responder a la llamada de Cristo, “arrepíentanse y crean en el Evangelio” (Marcos 1: 15).

Tenemos que examinar más de cerca esta llamada a la conversión y al arrepentimiento. La palabra *conversión* nos llega del griego *metanoia*, que significa literalmente *dar un giro hacia atrás*. *Conversión* o *metanoia* significa alejarse del pecado y, a su vez, hacia Dios; es una llamada a distanciarse, echar fuera todo lo que está dentro de nosotros o que nos rodea, que sea causa del pecado en nuestras vidas para que así podamos tener una relación más profunda con Dios.

Creo que a veces la tentación para nosotros durante la Cuaresma es hacer lo mínimo, a renunciar a algo bastante trivial, para tratar de rezar un poco más aquí o allá. ¿No es que estas cosas no son buenas en sí mismos, pero ¿tomamos la temporada de la Cuaresma como un momento de alejarnos en serio del pecado? ¿Examinamos con seriedad lo que hacemos y decimos, lo que observamos en la televisión o Internet, cómo tratamos a las personas, nuestras actitudes, el ejemplo que damos a los demás? ¿Discernimos con seriedad las cosas que pueden llevarnos a pecar y hacemos un esfuerzo por quitarlas de nuestras vidas? Este es el tipo de seria conversión que la época de la Cuaresma nos pide a todos.

El Papa Benedicto XVI, en su último mensaje de Cuaresma, nos enseña de lo que trata esta época santa y penitencial:

“En síntesis, el itinerario cuaresmal, en el cual se nos invita a contemplar el Misterio de la cruz, es «hacerme semejante a él en su muerte» (Flp 3, 10), para llevar a cabo una conversión profunda de nuestra vida: dejarnos transformar por la acción del Espíritu Santo, como san Pablo en el camino de Damasco; orientar con decisión nuestra



Monseñor Kevin Vann

existencia según la voluntad de Dios; liberarnos de nuestro egoísmo, superando el instinto de dominio sobre los demás y abriéndonos a la caridad de Cristo. El período cuaresmal es el momento favorable para reconocer nuestra debilidad, acoger, con una sincera revisión de vida, la Gracia renovadora del Sacramento de la Penitencia y caminar con decisión hacia Cristo”.

En primer lugar, nuestro Santo Padre nos enseña que la Cuaresma es encontrarse con la cruz de Cristo, la cruz que no sólo nos salvó, pero la cruz que también continuamente llama a morir con Cristo nuestro viejo *yo pecador*, para que resucitemos con Él una nueva vida como San Pablo nos enseña:

Por tanto, hagan morir en ustedes lo que es «terrenal», es decir, libertinaje, impureza, pasión desordenada, malos deseos y el amor al dinero, que es una manera de servir a los ídolos. Tales cosas atraen los castigos de Dios. Ustedes siguieron un tiempo ese camino, y su vida era así. Pues bien, ahora rechacen todo eso: enojo, arrebatos, malas intenciones, ofensas y todas las palabras malas que se pueden decir. Pónganse el vestido nuevo. No se mientan unos a otros: ustedes se despojaron del hombre viejo y de sus vicios y se vistieron del hombre nuevo que no cesa de renovarse a la imagen de su Creador hasta alcanzar el perfecto conocimiento.

—Colosenses 3: 5-10

Este tipo de conversión sólo es posible si estamos dispuestos, como San Pablo, de ser tumbados por Cristo, si estamos dispuestos a permitir que la gracia del Espíritu Santo nos purifique y nos transforme y nos lleve firmemente al camino de la rectitud y la salvación. Pero primero debemos estar

dispuestos a dejar morir con Cristo aquellas cosas que son obstáculos a la santidad y a nuestra relación con Cristo. Por esta razón estamos llamados al ayuno y sacrificio durante la Cuaresma. Estos son medios muy eficaces para reducir nuestras pasiones y deseos, de morir nosotros mismos, nuestros deseos y necesidades, para que podamos confiar más en la gracia de Cristo y conformarnos más a él y a la cruz.

En segundo lugar, el Papa nos recuerda que la conversión verdadera y seria sólo es posible a través de nuestra participación en el sacramento de la penitencia. Es a través de este gran sacramento de la misericordia de Cristo que la verdadera conversión tiene lugar: reconocemos nuestros pecados, asumimos plena responsabilidad por ellos, se los confesamos a Cristo y, a continuación, recibimos a través de la absolución sacramental la nueva vida de la gracia en Cristo. Cada confesión es como repetir *la parábola del hijo pródigo* (Lucas 15: 11-32). Mediante el sacramento de la penitencia, Cristo en su gran misericordia nos abraza, nos restaura y nos fortalece en su gracia, y hay gran regocijo en el cielo porque un pecador está verdaderamente arrepentido y está plenamente vivo en Cristo. A través de la confesión, literalmente nos vaciamos del pecado para que podamos estar llenos de la gracia de Cristo. Participación en el sacramento de la penitencia siempre debe ser una parte de nuestra vida como católicos, pero especialmente durante la temporada de Cuaresma, buscamos una profunda conversión a Cristo. Nuestras parroquias proporcionan muchas oportunidades para el sacramento de la penitencia durante la Cuaresma, con servicios penitenciales y tiempo adicional para confesiones. Asegúrese de consultar anuncios y boletines parroquiales para estos servicios.

La Cuaresma es también una época muy importante en muchas de las parroquias para aquellos que están comenzando su preparación final para ser recibido en plena comunión con la Iglesia a través del *Ritual de iniciación cristiana de adultos* (RICA). Tengo el privilegio al comienzo de la Cuaresma cada año de celebrar el *Rito de elección* y la *Llamada a la conversión* permanente con todas las personas de la diócesis que se están preparando para entrar en la Iglesia en Semana Santa. Este rito poderoso llama al electo, o aquellos que están a punto de ser bautizados, para seguir creciendo en su experiencia y conocimiento de Jesucristo como su Salvador y crecer en su comprensión de su propia necesidad de redención y su llamado a recibir la gracia de Cristo. El rito también llama a los candidatos, o aquellos que ya están con nosotros en el bautismo — pero se preparan para la plena comunión con

la Iglesia — que se conformen más a Cristo y se alejen de las tinieblas del pecado y hacia la gracia y la misericordia de Cristo. Sin embargo, una de las partes más importantes de la Iglesia pide a todos los que están allí que representan todas las parroquias, si están dispuestos a ofrecer un fiel testimonio de los electos y candidatos mientras se preparan para los sacramentos de la Pascua. Es muy importante que recordemos que la responsabilidad de quienes entran en la Iglesia no es sólo responsabilidad del pastor, o el director de RICA y catequistas. El proceso de RICA es una tarea de toda la parroquia, que constantemente da testimonio a los electos y candidatos de cómo la fe católica debe ser vivida en las condiciones normales de la vida, y cómo cada uno de nosotros está llamado a ser un testigo fiel de Cristo y a la verdad que Él le ha confiado a la Iglesia.

También muchos de ustedes serán testigos de algunos de los otros ritos de RICA en sus parroquias en las próximas semanas. En el tercero, cuarto y quinto domingo de Cuaresma, los tres escrutinios se celebrarán para los elegidos que se están preparando para el bautismo en Semana Santa. Cada escrutinio se basa en un pasaje del evangelio de Juan: la primero se basa en el encuentro de Jesús con la mujer en el pozo (Juan 4: 4-42), el segundo sobre Jesús sanando al hombre nacido ciego (Juan 9: 1-41), y el tercero se basa en la resurrección de Lázaro por Jesús (Juan 11: 1-44). Cada uno de estos pasajes de la Sagrada Escritura nos revela una historia conmovedora y de conversión, salvación y la potencia salvadora de Jesús, que viene a sacarnos de la oscuridad del pecado y la muerte y nos lleva a su luz maravillosa. Los escrutinios y el testimonio de quienes acuden a la fe católica son grandes recuerdos para todos nosotros que estamos llamados a este tipo de conversión, y que Jesús es verdaderamente “la resurrección y la vida” (Juan 11: 25). Los invito a tomar algún tiempo para reflexionar sobre estos pasajes como parte de su viaje de fe y santidad en esta época de Cuaresma.

Mientras tanto, tengan la seguridad de mis oraciones por ustedes mientras juntos buscamos a conocer más profundamente al Señor y su amor y misericordia durante esta época penitencial. Estoy deseoso de compartir con ustedes la alegría de la Pascua y la gracia de Cristo resucitado.

Kevin W. Vann

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

El ministerio *Plenitud de la verdad* patrocinará una conferencia en Arlington, explorando el evangelio de Mateo, del 30 de abril al 1° de mayo

Por Tony Gutiérrez
Editor Asociado

El ministerio de la evangelización católica *Plenitud de la verdad* presentará *Venga tu reino: abriendo el evangelio de San Mateo*, en el Centro de convenciones de Arlington, 1200 Ballpark en Arlington, el 30 de abril al 1° de mayo.

La conferencia contará con el orador católico de renombre internacional Scott Hahn, junto con los teólogos John Bergsma y Michael Barber. Presentadores locales incluirán Lucas Pollice, director de catequesis de la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*, como maestro de ceremonias, y Marlon De La Torre, director diocesano de matrimonio y familia, ofreciendo una presentación para la porción en español de la conferencia.

“Esto es una gran oportunidad para adultos, catequistas, profesores y todos aquellos envueltos en el estudio de las Escrituras, así como

una experiencia perfecta para quienes recientemente habrán entrado a la Iglesia en Semana Santa a través del proceso de RICA”, dijo el obispo Kevin Vann en una carta invitando a los católicos a asistir a la conferencia. “Esta conferencia será una oportunidad para que todos nosotros entremos a un conocimiento y amistad más profunda con Cristo al encontrarlo en las Escrituras, y también puede ayudar a promover y enriquecer la misión de la catequesis y la evangelización en nuestra diócesis”.

Plenitud de la verdad es un apostolado de la evangelización católica dedicado al llamado del Papa Juan Pablo II a una Nueva Evangelización, dijo su director Joe McClane. El ministerio, con sede en Houston, ha sido organizar conferencias a lo largo de Texas y los estados vecinos desde 2001. Esta será la segunda conferencia de *Plenitud de la verdad*, en la *Diócesis de Fort Worth*; el primero se celebró en 2008,

también en Arlington, durante el año de San Pablo.

La conferencia de este año se basa en el evangelio de Mateo, que es el evangelio que se está leyendo en el ciclo corriente de lecturas en la liturgia de la Iglesia.

“La idea es que los católicos sentados en las bancas de la Iglesia puedan su entendimiento de la liturgia de la palabra”, dijo McClane. “Cuando estamos sentados en Misa, la palabra de Dios toma vida en nosotros”.

Venga tu reino contará con Hahn y los demás oradores abordando diversos capítulos del evangelio de Mateo, intercalados con servicios de oración, incluyendo un rosario, la adoración eucarística, la coronilla de la divina misericordia y Misa.

McClane dijo que estas conferencias están destinadas a todo el mundo y toman en consideración la situación de las familias. Se proporcionará cuidado de niños, y

habrá conferencias para estudiantes de secundaria, que incluirán charlas y momentos de alabanza y adoración. Como el resto de la conferencia, las actividades para los jóvenes tomarán diversos temas del evangelio de Mateo que serán ofrecidos en un estilo más ameno para los jóvenes.

“También estamos esperando ofrecerle algo a los jóvenes adultos. Habrá un evento especial el sábado por la noche para ellos como alternativa a la cena con los oradores, prevista para la parte principal de la conferencia.

La conferencia también tendrá una sección en español a petición del Monseñor Kevin Vann. Esta sección tendrá traducciones simultáneas de las presentaciones de Hahn, así como presentaciones de varias otras partes del evangelio de Mateo de otros presentadores, incluyendo la conferencia ofrecida por De La Torre.

“Queremos que los hispanos conozcan su fe y que comuniquen esa fe a otros”, dijo De La Torre, enfatizando

en que los hispanos son una parte creciente de la población católica local, y que “es importante que conozcan su fe y la conozcan bien”.

Pollice hizo hincapié en el apoyo de la diócesis a la conferencia y la importancia de que los fieles conozcan las Escrituras.

“Es una gran oportunidad para nuestra diócesis para reunirse y aprender sobre algo tan importante como es el evangelio de Mateo”, dijo. “Mientras más entendamos las Sagradas Escrituras, más conoceremos a Cristo”.

Preinscripción para *Thy Kingdom Come / Venga tu reino* es \$45 dólares para adultos individuales, \$20 dólares para jóvenes, \$125 dólares para familias, \$35 dólares por persona para un grupo de cinco o más adultos y \$10 dólares por día para el cuidado de niños. Para obtener más información, o para registrarse, llame (877) 21-TRUTH, o visite el sitio Web en www.fullnessoftruth.org.

La violencia en la frontera aparece ente los asuntos tratados por los obispos de Texas y México

EL PASO (CNS) — Se discutieron preocupaciones comunes relacionadas con la violencia entre grupos de traficantes de drogas de México, y otros asuntos más extensos con respecto a la discriminación y violaciones en contra de los derechos humanos que perjudican a los inmigrantes, y sus efectos en la iglesia. La reunión, que duró tres días, se sostuvo entre los obispos de las diócesis aledañas a la frontera de Texas con México. La reunión terminó el 3 de marzo.

En su encuentro en El Paso, pasando la frontera de la Ciudad Juárez, México, lugar principal de la guerra de drogas en México y en donde miles de asesinatos ocurren anualmente, los 10 obispos también discutieron asuntos pastorales

relacionados con la celebración de los sacramentos, dijo el padre Juan Armando Renovato López, vocero de la *Diócesis de Piedras Negras*, que limita con Eagle Pass, Texas.

Los obispos estuvieron de acuerdo en coordinar prácticas en ambos lados de la frontera, facilitándoles a los residentes de EE.UU. celebrar matrimonio o lograr que sus hijos sean bautizados en México con la presencia de familiares a quienes se les hace difícil cruzar la frontera debido a la violencia, dijo el padre Renovato.

“Es importante que apliquemos los mismos requisitos a lo largo de la frontera en relación a la preparación del matrimonio. Eso ha sido un asunto importante para nosotros”, le dijo el obispo de Brownsville, Daniel E.

Flores, al canal de televisión KVIA de El Paso.

Las acciones drásticas del gobierno mexicano en contra de los grupos criminales y de traficantes de drogas han cobrado la vida de más de 35,000 personas en los pasados cuatro años. La violencia ha afectado principalmente a personas involucradas en actividades ilegales; pero la comisión estatal de Chihuahua de derechos humanos presentó recientemente un informe acerca de por lo menos 200 familias enteras que han sido asesinadas en venganza por acciones de familiares.

El padre Renovato le dijo al *Catholic News Service* que los obispos también querían explorar “cómo la iglesia puede ofrecer asistencia a migrantes, muchos de los cuales

carecen de dinero en absoluto”.

La migración rumbo al norte continúa a pesar de que la ruta que siguen las personas indocumentadas provenientes de Centroamérica — al cruzar México — se ha hecho todavía más peligrosa, con grupos criminales que participan del “negocio” de contrabando con seres humanos.

Los obispos celebraron una Misa especial para la paz y justicia en la catedral de San Patricio, el 2 de marzo, para rezar por la paz a lo largo de la frontera, y a ellos se les unieron docenas de parroquianos de todo El Paso.

“Espero que den verdadero fruto estas oraciones, que juntos recitamos, tanto en inglés como en español, para beneficio de todos”, dijo el obispo de Laredo, James A. Tamayo, para el

canal de televisión KVUE de El Paso.

La violencia en la frontera fue uno de los asuntos que el presidente mexicano Felipe Calderón y el presidente Barack Obama discutieron durante su pasada reunión en Washington.

El 4 de marzo, los dos dirigentes estuvieron de acuerdo en trabajar juntos aún más para combatir la violencia generada por el tráfico de drogas. Obama comprometió a los EE.UU. en el sentido de acelerar el paso para el entrenamiento y equipo de fuerzas mexicanas que luchan contra los grupos de criminales de drogas. También dijo que los EE.UU. debe limitar el flujo de dinero y armamento que entra a México y que va a parar en manos de maleantes de drogas.

Los Ángeles recibe arzobispo Gómez mientras cardenal Mahony se jubila

LOS ÁNGELES (CNS) — Más de 6,000 personas se reunieron para dos Misas el 27 de febrero en la catedral *Our Lady of the Angels* para observar una transición, histórica y rara, del liderato en la *Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles*.

El día que el cardenal Roger M. Mahony celebraba su 75° cumpleaños, edad en la cual se requiere canónicamente que los obispos

entreguen al Papa sus renuncias, el arzobispo Jose H. Gómez fue bienvenido como el nuevo líder de la iglesia de Los Ángeles.

El arzobispo Gómez fue nombrado arzobispo coadjutor para Los Ángeles por el Papa Benedicto XVI durante la primavera pasada. Había servido cinco años como arzobispo de San Antonio y previamente era obispo

auxiliar de Denver.

El 1 de marzo el Papa Benedicto XVI aceptó la renuncia del cardenal.

El cardenal Mahony, el primer angelino nativo en servir como arzobispo de Los Ángeles, fue instalado en septiembre de 1985 para liderar la arquidiócesis más populosa de la nación, ahora numerando casi 5 millones de católicos. El cardenal

era sacerdote de la *Diócesis de Fresno* cuando fue nombrado obispo auxiliar de Fresno en 1975, entonces obispo de Stockton, California, en 1980.

En la edición del 4 de marzo de *The Tidings*, periódico arquidiocesano de Los Ángeles, el arzobispo Gómez escribió que tiene cinco prioridades según comienza su trabajo: educación en la fe; promover las vocaciones

al sacerdocio y a la vida religiosa y consagrada; “ayudarnos a ver la belleza de la diversidad cultural de la iglesia”; “proclamar ante nuestra sociedad que la vida es sagrada desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural”; y “defender y fortalecer las instituciones naturales del matrimonio y familia basada en la unión permanente y exclusiva de un hombre y una mujer”.

Noticias

de la Iglesia

En su libro *Jesús de Nazaret*, el Papa presenta a Jesús como reconciliador y no como revolucionario político

Por John Thavis
Catholic News Service

LA CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — En su nuevo volumen *Jesús de Nazaret*, el Papa Benedicto XVI presenta la pasión y la resurrección de Cristo como eventos que cambiaron la historia y que responden a la incesante necesidad de la humanidad de reconciliarse con Dios.

El libro, escrito en 384 páginas y titulado *Jesús de Nazaret: Semana Santa — Desde la entrada a Jerusalén hasta la Resurrección*, fue dado a conocer oficialmente el 10 de marzo. El Papa había trabajado durante varios años con el texto, que es el segundo de una serie en la que se estudian los eventos principales del ministerio público de Jesús.

El Vaticano dijo que ya se había publicado un 1,2 millón de copias del libro, en siete lenguas, y que una versión electrónica estaba planeada también.

En el prefacio, el Papa dice que no se había propuesto escribir otra *Vida de Jesús* en forma cronológica; sino en lugar de eso, quería presentar la figura y el mensaje “del Jesús real” y no un revolucionario político ni mero moralista, sino el Hijo de Dios que inauguró un nuevo camino de salvación fundamentado en el poder del amor.

Por medio de su sacrificio en la cruz y su institución de la Iglesia, Jesús llevó a cabo una misión universal: “conduciendo al mundo lejos de la condición de separación de Dios y de sí mismo”. Es una misión que continúa hasta hoy en día, escribió el Papa.

“¿No es el caso que nuestra



Copias del nuevo libro del Papa Benedicto XVI, *Jesús de Nazaret. Desde la entrada en Jerusalén hasta la resurrección*, se pueden ver en la Librería editrice Vaticana, en Roma, el 10 de marzo. (foto CNS/Paul Haring)

necesidad de reconciliarnos con Dios, el Dios silencioso, misterioso, aparentemente ausente y sin embargo omnipresente, es el problema real de toda la historia del mundo?” dijo.

En el libro se analizan los eventos clave de los días finales de Jesús, incluyendo la limpieza del templo, la *Última cena*, la traición que recibió (Jesús), el interrogatorio ante el Sanedrín y Poncio Pilato, respectivamente, su crucifixión y sus apariciones ante sus discípulos después de su resurrección.

A través del texto, el Papa Benedicto examina la interpretación de las Escrituras de los padres de la primera Iglesia y de eruditos contemporáneos, rechazando algunos argumentos y afirmando otros o elaborando sobre ellos. En forma prominente se cita a Rudolf Bultmann, erudito del *Nuevo Testamento*, protestante alemán de finales del siglo XX.

El Papa dijo que era importante entender que los eventos narrados en las Escrituras estaban históricamente

fundamentados y que en verdad sucedieron y que no son simplemente historias o ideas; por ejemplo, dijo, si Jesús no les hubiera dado en realidad a sus discípulos pan y vino como su cuerpo y sangre, en la *Última cena*, entonces “la celebración eucarística de la iglesia estaría vacía; simplemente sería una ficción devota”.

Del mismo modo, dijo, la verdadera resurrección de Cristo entre los muertos es fundamental para la Iglesia. Sin ella, dijo, “La fe cristiana en sí misma estaría muerta”.

Al mismo tiempo, el Papa reconoció que el documento histórico de Jesús no está siempre completo y dijo que “si la certeza de fe dependiera de verificación científico-histórica solamente, estaría siempre abierta a revisión”. El Papa se refirió al movimiento “de un Jesús histórico” sostenido por algunos eruditos de las Escrituras, diciendo que “se enfoca demasiado en el pasado y se hace de esta manera imposible una

relación personal con Jesús”.

El Papa se refirió a estudiosos (de la Escritura) que le han dado una interpretación política a la pasión de Cristo y que han buscado presentar a Jesús como “agitador político”. Por el contrario, escribió el Papa, Jesús inauguró “un reino mesiánico no político” en un mundo donde la política y la religión habían estado en forma inseparable.

“Esta separación — esencial al mensaje de Jesús, separación entre política y fe, del pueblo de Dios y de la política, fue posible al final solamente mediante la cruz. Solamente por medio de la pérdida total de todo poder

externo, por medio del despojo total que condujo a la cruz, podría este nuevo mundo empezar su existencia”, dijo.

El Papa dijo que “la violenta revolución, la matanza de otros en nombre de Dios” no era el camino de Jesús.

“Jesús no viene empuñando la espada del revolucionario; viene con el regalo de sanación”, dijo.

En el libro, en general, se procuró evitar comentarios sobre asuntos contemporáneos; pero en el asunto de la no violencia, el Papa añadió que “las consecuencias de la violencia con motivos religiosos estaban demasiado evidentes ante la vista de todos”.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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



Los mineros chilenos, quienes permanecieron 60 días atrapados en una mina derrumbada cerca de Copiapó, Chile, antes de ser rescatados en octubre, tocan la piedra de unción en la Iglesia del sagrado sepulcro en la ciudad antigua de Jerusalén el 24 de febrero. La tradición cuenta que la piedra cargaba a Jesús cuando fue investido antes de su entierro. Los mineros visitaron la iglesia en el segundo día de su visita de una semana a Israel y los territorios palestinos. (foto CNS/Ronen Zvulun, Reuters)



this lent, make peace with your past

Come back to God, who is Love and Mercy



project rachel
Peace starts here

For confidential help — HopeAfterAbortion.org
888-456-HOPE (4673)

Japanese bishops to set up center to coordinate operations in Sendai

ROME (CNS) — Japanese Church officials are setting up an emergency center to coordinate humanitarian aid operations in Sendai, the area most devastated by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

Bishop Martin Tetsuo Hiraga of Sendai and the diocesan chancellor, Father Peter Shiro Komatsu will be the director and vice director of the center, and a Caritas worker will be stationed there to coordinate aid work, reported the Asian Church news agency UCA News. Clergy and laypeople from other dioceses may also join the work.

The center is expected to operate for six months, UCA News reported.

Fr. Komatsu said gasoline is the most needed commodity. "Since there is a shortage of petroleum and roads are blocked by debris, we have difficulties (reaching) affected areas outside Sendai city," he said.

Fr. Komatsu said March 17 that he had begun contacting several downtown parishes to find rooms for the displaced quake victims and added that the Church might offer shelter to relief workers.

The diocese had not yet received information about the coastal churches due to disrupted telecommunications.

Father Daisuke Narui, executive director of Caritas Japan, also attended the mid-March meeting.

"The biggest buildings in Sendai withstood the very strong earthquake. The greatest damage was caused by the tsunami. The panorama of destruction is striking. Now we'll have to roll up our shirt sleeves. People are expecting our help," he said.

Fr. Narui said he was encouraged by the enthusiasm of Japanese youth offering to help the displaced.

"Young people are continually coming to Caritas from all the dioceses to offer their availability as volunteers to bring aid to the areas most affected by the disaster," the priest told Fides, news agency of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. "This is an important sign that gives us hope for the future."

"Today the dominant feeling is fear," Fr. Narui said. "The biggest concern is that of the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. It is a ghost from Japanese history coming back to haunt us. But it must be said that the people are not indulging in panic; instead, they are reacting with poise and dignity."

He said although many people had been evacuated and others were being asked to stay in their homes, "in the worst-affected areas the main problem is the lack of food and fuel. As there is no fuel, people cannot move. And they are left feeling powerless in the face of this tragedy."

After the magnitude 9 earthquake, reactors at the Fukushima plant were hit by explosions, and Japanese officials were working to avoid leakage of radiation. They ordered evacuations for hundreds of thousands of people.



ABOVE: A Japan civil defense officer holds a 4-month-old baby girl who was rescued along with her family from their home in Ishimaki, northern Japan, March 14. Government officials had estimated that 10,000 people may have lost their lives in the March 11 earthquake and the tsunami it triggered.

BELOW: A woman who fled from the vicinity of the Fukushima nuclear power plant sits at an evacuation center in Kawamata, Japan, March 14. Japanese officials were fighting to contain two reactors at the plant and avoid a nuclear disaster in the area of the country hardest hit by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.



Earlier, Bishop Hiraga told Vatican Radio that many area residents, cut off without electricity and with some phone service just restored, were unaware of the worsening situation at the Fukushima plant.

"You living in other countries have a much better idea of the tragedy," the bishop told Vatican Radio.

"We are terrified," the bishop said. "We only have the government announcements, we have no other source of information. We don't even know what has happened to our parishes in the towns and villages along the coast. We have no way of contacting them. I can only hope that the people of my diocese can stand together and be strong enough to overcome this disaster."

Japanese officials estimate at least 13,000 people died in the disaster.

In days after quake, broken glass, freezing nights, confused patients

**Editor's note: Junko Ito, a reporter for the Tokyo-based CATHOLIC WEEKLY, filed this first-person report.*

By Junko Ito*

TOKYO (CNS) — March 11, when we had the earthquake, I was in Nasu, Tochigi prefecture, which is in an inland area of northeastern Japan. It is 100 miles away from the area that was seriously damaged by the tsunami and earthquake.

I asked for a bed at a convent, the Congregation of Sisters of Bethany, and stayed there for three days because train service was postponed and there was no public transportation. Window glass was broken, TV sets had fallen down, books and broken dishes were scattered all over the place. Electricity and gas supplies were cut off.

It was very cold at night; we even had a light snow. Sisters were moving around with flashlights, saying "I'm freezing!" The aftershocks continued all night and the

following days, too.

The next morning, the sisters went to the support facility for handicapped people, where they work. Members of the staff prepared and delivered emergency food. A sister said she found it difficult to take care of some of the handicapped because they were so confused with the unusual situation.

One sister drove to the neighbor's to check the damage. Most of the gas stations were closed, and people were anxious about how much gas remained.

The third day, March 13 was Sunday. People — about 30, the usual number — got together at the Nasu church for Mass. The chapel was not so damaged.

A contribution box for the most damaged area was set at the entrance. Two young men will be baptized at Easter so, during the Mass, people prayed for victims and the young men. They shared their experience about the earthquake and encouraged each other, too.

Archbishop Dolan assures Japanese prelate of US prayers, solidarity

WASHINGTON (CNS) — New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan has assured Japanese Archbishop Leo Jun Ikenaga of Osaka of the prayers and solidarity of the U.S. Catholic Church amid the ongoing rescue and relief efforts in his nation.

"I write today conscious of the terrible earthquake that has struck Japan. The first news reports of the preliminary estimates of suffering, loss of life, and physical damage challenge our ability to grasp the reality of such a massive event," Archbishop Dolan wrote March 14 as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The letter, released March 16, was addressed to Archbishop Ikenaga as head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan.

"My letter is to make a first contact with you to assure you of the prayers and solidarity of the bishops and faithful in the United States at this difficult moment," the USCCB president said. "We commend the church and the people of Japan to the intercession of Mary, the mother of Jesus, asking her to care for all of those left in conditions of suffering because of the quake and the aftershocks."

Japanese Church officials are setting up an emergency center to coordinate humanitarian aid operations in Sendai, the area most devastated by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. A Caritas Japan worker will be stationed there to coordinate aid work.

The U.S. bishops' Catholic Relief Services is responding to the tragedy by working with Caritas Japan and by receiving donations, said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, chairman of the CRS board.

"These will be used for the immediate humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable and support the local Catholic Church in its ongoing mission," Bishop Kicanas said in a statement.

Catholics interested in supporting CRS relief efforts can visit <http://crs.org/japan>.

In a March 16 posting on his blog, Archbishop Dolan noted that it was no surprise that "as international relief began to arrive in fractured Japan after the awful earthquake and tsunami, among the first were Catholic agencies."

"Religious communities provide the most massive private (nongovernmental) relief and care in the world, and first among the world's communities of faith is the Catholic Church," he said.

The archbishop said he was noting this "not as an act of pride" but as "an act of gratitude for our wonderfully generous Catholic people who rise to the occasion whenever there's an international need, like the one now in Japan, and as a word of encouragement to those splendid Catholic relief agencies that so effectively bring our aid to those most in need."

"Lent is a providential time to thank God for the heroic charity and generosity of the church, and to affirm our conviction that our international relief is so effective precisely because it is inspired by Jesus, flows through and from his Church, and is as close to the heart of Christ and his vicar on earth, the pope, as possible," Archbishop Dolan added.



Photo by Jenara Kocks Burgess

Members of the Midwestern State University Catholic Campus Center's choir provide entertainment for the evening at the Father Donlon Vocations Dinner.



Photo by Jenara Kocks Burgess

Monte McCarty (right) displays a clock being auctioned off by Frank Smith. The auction is a major source of funds raised in support of vocations.



Photo by Jenara Kocks Burgess

ABOVE: Bishop Kevin Vann offers thanks to the organizers and attendees at the 20th annual vocations dinner for their continued support of vocations. To the left is Holy Trinity Seminary Rector Msgr. Michael Olson, who has ties to the Wichita Falls community. To the right is Fr. Isaac Orozco, priest secretary to the bishop.

Vocations Dinner...

FROM PAGE 32

of vocations — but especially priests and religious vocations ... — is everyone's calling and everyone's business," he said. "That's why it's important to say to someone, sometime, in addition to praying and building our Catholic families, 'You know, have you ever thought about this?'" Bishop Vann said.

Bishop Vann said that one event in his own vocational story came when, working in a music store while still in high school, one of the organists there told him that she thought that he might become a priest.

"She saw something in me to tell me that. And I think that's our responsibility as well. To build a vocational culture, has to be worked at, prayed for, and built constantly with the good will of everyone here and the help of God. That's what was begun by Fr. Donlon and carried forth by all of you and especially Mike Brown and everyone here in Wichita Falls," he said. "You give such a wonderful example for our diocese because it is important for us here and it's important for the future of our diocese. We have an

increasing number of vocations in our diocese. And that's a blessing for us."

Bishop Vann said there are about 30 seminarians in formation this year, three of whom will be ordained to the priesthood this year, and two to the transitional diaconate. A number of seminarians are serving in pastoral internships this year, he said, including some in parishes in Wichita Falls and surrounding areas. Bishop Vann also spoke of attending first and final vows for four sisters in the Diocese of Fort Worth, and said that another sister will be making her final vows soon.

Bishop Vann said there are about 60 seminarians from dioceses throughout the region studying at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving.

Msgr. Michael Olson, rector of Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, said that he always enjoys visiting Wichita Falls because he attended the very first Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinner in 1992 when he was doing his pastoral internship as a seminarian at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Wichita Falls. He also said that he became a Knight of Columbus in the Council 1473 Hall in Wichita Falls as well as a second, third, and fourth degree Knight.

Msgr. Olson estimated that the cost each year for each seminarian at Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving is \$56,000, which includes the cost of the University of Dallas, room and board, as well as the formation program in the seminary itself.

Msgr. Olson thanked everyone for their prayers, good works, hospitality, and gratitude.

"You all have been supportive, and this dinner is just one sign and a very important sign of that support. But also in the work of formation, your hosting seminarians in pastoral years and internships is of inestimable value in the discernment and formation of young men toward the priesthood," he said.

Two current seminarians, Daniel Cochran from Sacred Heart Church in Muenster and Thomas Jones from St. Catherine of Siena Church in Carrollton, attended the dinner along with Bishop Vann, Msgr. Olson, and Father Isaac Orozco, priest-secretary to the bishop.

"We really appreciate the people coming here and the overwhelming support we get... It's really great that Wichita Falls can get together and put on a thing like this for all of us," Cochran said.

BELOW: Paul Macha and the late Fr. Donlon, who was born in Ireland, share a laugh as they don traditional Irish top hats in this file photo.

NTC Archive



Workers take pride in building 'T-shelters' for homeless Haitians

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Five days a week, Ginou Vincent makes the hourlong trek on exhaust-filled, congested streets to build prefabricated shelters for people, like herself, left homeless by last year's earthquake.

It's a long trek from Carrefour, west of Port-au-Prince, to the Varreux Yard in the city's Jacomin neighborhood. But Vincent knows if she fails to show up for work, a family might have to wait a little longer to escape one of the squalid settlements that sprouted after the magnitude 7 temblor forced 1.5 million people out of their homes.

"I'm very proud of the work," said Vincent, who lived in central Port-au-Prince at the time of the quake. "It makes me feel good. I give all I have to help those people."

The money Vincent earns helps put her four children, ages 9-15, through school. She said she tries to save a little to get a place of her

own, but it is hard because life has become expensive since the disaster.

Vincent is one of 146 workers producing transitional shelters, or "T-shelters," under a program coordinated by Catholic Relief Services and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The workers are divided into six teams. Together they produce about 40 shelter kits a day.

Since starting in May, the workers have produced about 2,500 of the 192-square-foot shelters, said Eddy Ambroise, the yard's manager.

The contract with USAID calls for 4,000 T-shelters to be produced. There's no word on whether the contract will be extended, Ambroise said.

On average, five people live in each unit.

The shelters are going up in five areas around the earthquake zone: Solino, Delmas 62, Mais Gate and Christ-oi in Port-au-Prince, and in the rural mountainous community of Saint-Rock.

Ambroise explained that the teams include carpenters who lost their jobs after the quake. Most employees, however, never worked in carpentry before and are learning valuable skills that can be useful to future employers as the rebuilding effort gains momentum, he told Catholic News Service.

"They're good workers," he said.

The teams work in the open air under a cover of corrugated steel that shades them from the hot Caribbean sun. The sound of whining saw blades cutting through pressure-treated lumber can be heard before entering the yard.

Inside, the workers' activity seems like almost synchronized motion. Two-by-fours are placed in preset jigs to assure that they are cut to the proper length every time. Employees drive nails into three-quarter-inch plywood as they assemble the walls.

Supervisory carpenter Bonhomme Joseph, 36, leads one



CNS photo/Bob Roller

Workers at a camp in Terrain Toto, Haiti, construct transitional shelters March 10 for those left homeless in last year's earthquake. The shelters, produced by Catholic Relief Services and funded by the U.S. government, are meant to last up to three years.

of the teams. He said his experience as a carpenter with the French Red Cross made him a valuable asset to the effort.

He said he tries to build up the spirits of his team members so they produce quality kits.

"I love it because it's work," he said.

Despite continuing to live in one of the hundreds of settlements that sprouted after the disaster, Michelove Laventure said she felt proud to help others move a step closer to getting a permanent home.

"I saw a lot of houses were destroyed," the 29-year-old mother

of three explained. "There are projects for people to have houses. Those people are suffering in the camps, so I'm very proud to help."

She described her camp experience as troublesome.

"We have a lot of difficulties. People are living in promiscuity. There's a lot of garbage. There's a lot of insects," she said.

Working under the program is allowing Laventure to save some of her wages so she can move her children into a safer home, but she worries about skyrocketing rents that put even a modest rental out of reach for the average Haitian.

Events Calendar

Around the Diocese and region

April Dates

2

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

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Colonial Country Club, 3735 Country Club Circle, Fort Worth. For information, contact Ann Carminati at (817) 988-2573.

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS LENTEN REFLECTION

1 p.m. - St. Peter the Apostle Church, 1201 S. Cherry Lane, Fort Worth. For information, contact Ellen Sowers at ellen_sowers@msn.com.

3

STEPHEN BREEN SPIRIT GAMES

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

3-6

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH MISSION

Confessions from 6 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. - Mission starts at 7 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle Church, 5508 Black Oak Lane, River Oaks. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 738-9925.

8

AN EVENING WITH JESSE MANIBUSAN

7 p.m. - St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Arlington. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 478-8206.

8-10

YOUTH 2000 EUCHARISTIC CENTERED RETREAT

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

RETRouvaille WEEKEND

Ministry group for troubled marriages. For information, call (800) 560-3300. All inquiries are kept confidential. More information on Retrouvaille can be found at www.retrouvaille.org.

9-10

OUR MOTHER OF MERCY LENTEN MISSION

Sister Jane M. Nesmith, SBS will speak following each Mass, 5 p.m., 8 a.m., and 10 a.m. at Our Mother Mercy Church, 1001 East Terrell Ave., Fort Worth. For information, call the parish office at (817) 335-1695.

Official Assignments

The following assignments have been made by Bishop Kevin Vann:

Rev. Thu Nguyen has been appointed as pastor of St. George Parish, Fort Worth, effective April 1.

Rev. Msgr. Charles B. King, P.A. has been appointed "Pastor Emeritus" of Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton, effective April 1

Rev. Timothy Thompson has been appointed pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton, effective April 1.

Rev. George Pallumbrayil has been appointed pastor of St. Mark Parish, Denton, effective April 1.

Rev. Ouseph Thekkumthala, has been appointed parochial administrator of Immaculate Heart Parish, Abbott, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Penelope, and Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Hillsboro, effective April 1.

TO REPORT MISCONDUCT

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

• Call **Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator,**

(817) 560-2452 ext. 201

or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org

• Or call the **Sexual Abuse Hotline**

(817) 560-2452 ext. 900

• Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext.102 and ask for the moderator of the curia, Father Stephen J. Berg

TO REPORT ABUSE

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

15-17

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE

The Catholic Conference Center, 901 S. Madison Ave., Dallas. For information, call (972) 601-4091, e-mail dfwbe@hotmail.com, or visit the website at www.beginningexperiencedfw.org.

16

NOLAN CATHOLIC BAND BOOSTER FLEA MARKET SALE BENEFIT

7 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Anne or Jim Yarmchuk at (817) 375-8786.

OUR MOTHER OF MERCY SIXTH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

1 p.m. - The Glen Garden Golf and Country Club, 2916 Glen Garden Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Howard Rattliff, Jr. at rattlhj@yahoo.com or Michael Barks at barkskully@sbcglobal.net, or visit the tournament website at http://www.tournevents.com/_tournament/?event=omm2011.

24

THE COUPLE TO COUPLE LEAGUE NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

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

28

DIVORCE AND BEYOND: PARISH-BASED SELF-HELP PROGRAM

Thursday evenings through June 16 from 7 to 9 p.m. St. Andrew Church, 3717 Stadium Dr., Fort Worth. For information, call Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383.

29

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

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

SINGLES SPRING RETREAT

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

30

FULLNESS OF TRUTH SEMINAR - UNLOCKING THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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

ST. ANDREW SCHOOL 13TH ANNUAL AUCTION

5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. - River Ranch, 500 NE 23rd St. Fort Worth (in the Fort Worth Stockyards). For information, contact Jeanette Sweany at (817) 798-0666, Cate Ronalder at (817) 999-0537, or the school office at (817) 924-8917.

ST. PATRICK KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

7 a.m. Registration - 8 a.m. Tee Off - Iron Horse Golf Course, 6200 Skylark Circle, North Richland Hills. For information, contact Ish Gonzales at (817) 557-2227 or iggolf@sbcglobal.net.

May Dates

13-15

PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY REGIONAL GATHERING

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth-Main Fort Worth Campus, 249 W. Thornhill Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Laura Sotelo at (817) 413-3904 or isotelo@cceofw.org; or Tina Baldera at (703) 236-6233 or tbaldera@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.

TEXAS CATHOLIC KOINONIA RETREAT WEEKEND

Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Hank Martin at (972) 420-1200 or hank1@thankshank.com, or Sandy Urlick at (817) 595-5899.

15

ST. ANN, BURLESON, SPRINGFEST

11:30 a.m.

St. Ann Church, 100 SW Alsbury Blvd., Burleson. For information, contact the parish office at (817) 295-5621.

27-28

HOME SCHOOL CONFERENCE

Friday, 2 to 8 p.m. - Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington. For information, e-mail dallas@hmcconference.org.

Classifieds

Facility Coordinator

St. Andrew Catholic Parish has an immediate part-time opening for a facility coordinator. This person would be responsible for ensuring that St. Andrew's facilities and related policies and procedures are functioning as intended; provide facility related support for all liturgies, parish-wide events and groups affiliated with the parish; manage and support facility rentals plus some custodial responsibilities required to keep facilities clean and functioning as intended. High School diploma is required. Qualifications preferred include: bilingual; two years facility management training or experience; working knowledge of facility scheduling, audio/visual and sound system technology and equipment; and knowledge of Microsoft Office products and facility management software. Holiday, Holy Day, evening, early morning, and weekend work will be required with this position. Work schedule (20 – 25 hours per week) will change weekly depending on facility usage schedule. Interested applicants should e-mail cover letter and resumé to resume@standrewcc.org.

Online News

 Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

Advertise on the North Texas Catholic website

For information, visit www.fwdioc.org/ntc or call (817) 560-2452 ext. 308

Good Newsmaker

Knights of Columbus Council 1473 in Wichita Falls has raised more than \$1.5 million over the last 20 years through its annual vocations dinner, a feat that began with a simple request from the late Father Aidan Donlon, SAC:

Do more for Vocations

**By Jenara Kocks Burgess /
Correspondent**

For 20 years, the Catholic community of Wichita Falls has come together every February to raise money for the education of seminarians for the Diocese of Fort Worth. And they've raised more than \$1.5 million dollars as the result of a simple suggestion from a priest who was originally from Ireland.

Mike Brown, a trustee of Knights of Columbus Council 1473 in Wichita Falls who has been the lead organizer of the Father Donlon Vocations Dinner since its inception in 1992, said in 1991, Father Aidan Donlon, SAC, told Council 1473 at their meeting that they should think about doing more for vocations.

"Both he and his good friend Father [Severius] Blank came to America when they were 17 to be priests and didn't have anything. He [Fr. Donlon] saw that the diocese was growing. He knew there would be a need for more priests, and [then-Bishop Joseph Delaney] would need help educating them," Brown said.

Brown, who met Fr. Donlon in 1979, told him that he would be in charge of that first dinner, and Brown has continued in that role for the past 20 years, even after Fr. Donlon's death in January 2009.

Fr. Donlon, who was known for his Irish brogue delivered with a Texas drawl, served 31 years as chaplain of Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls, which became the basis for the United Regional

Health Care System. Fr. Donlon also served as chaplain of Knights of Columbus Council 1473 from 1980 until 2009.

Brown said they do not charge people to attend the Fr. Donlon Vocations Dinner, but a lot of people buy tables of six to reserve them. "Everything else is done totally by donations," Brown said. "Most people give whatever they can," he said.

There are donation buckets throughout the hall on the night of the event, and funds are also raised by a silent auction, a live auction, and two raffles, Brown said.

Another important aspect of the vocations dinner is the SSS Club, a group of men and women who were friends of Fr. Donlon's



Photo by Jenara Kocks Burgess

and support the dinner by helping to raise funds throughout the year.

Every year, the dinner is wrapped up with awards to outstanding members of the Catholic Community in Wichita Falls, and a check presentation to the bishop.

Council 1473 and the SSS Club raised \$134,000 at this year's dinner, \$1,000 more than last year. Over the years, the amount raised has increased tremendously, starting with \$3,822 in 1992, gradually rising to \$130,000 in 2008.

George Morath, a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls who has been a Knight with Council 1473 since 1948, said he and his wife Betty have been attending the Fr. Donlon Vocations dinner for 15 years. He said the amount of money they raise every year is amazing.

Morath pointed out that this year's dinner was dedicated to Fr. Blank, who died in January. Fr. Blank, who served more than 30 years of his almost 52 years as a priest at St. Jude Thaddeus Church in nearby Burkburnett, was chaplain of Council 1473 from 1976 until May 1980.

"Fr. Donlon and Fr. Blank were always together. They were very instrumental in all of this," Morath said.

ABOVE: Paul Macha, grand knight of Knights of Columbus Council 1473 in Wichita Falls presents a check for \$134,000 to Bishop Kevin Vann and Msgr. Michael Olson, rector of Holy Trinity Seminary, at the council's 20th Annual Father Donlon Vocations Dinner.

BELOW: Paul Macha presents a check to Bishop Vann and the late Fr. Aidan Donlon, SAC, the dinner's namesake and the council's then-chaplain, at a previous dinner held in 2006.



Photo courtesy of Mike Brown

This year's silent and live auctions included a variety of items from handmade knives and guns to cookware, artwork, jewelry, grill sets, power tools, spa packages, and a handmade chess set.

Dan Shine, a parishioner of Queen of Peace Church in Wichita Falls who has been a member of Council 1473 since 1955, said he has attended the vocations dinner every year for the past 20 years. In addition to his family, his in-laws, the Ruddys, always attend.

"It's gotten to be a family

deal. At one time all the sisters from Bethania (Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth) would come, and it's amazing how many years the bishop has come," he said.

Bishop Vann, who has attended several of the dinners, said in his reflection that just as St. Paul says to the Corinthians that all are called to be holy no matter who their leader is, all the members of the Church today are important in building the Body of Christ and a culture of vocations.

"That means the promotion

SEE VOCATIONS DINNER, P. 30