

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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April 10, 2009



The resurrection of Jesus is depicted in a mosaic at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, is met by the Church's cries of "Alleluia, Christ is risen indeed!" (CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING)

40th anniversary series to highlight the development of the communion of Catholics in our 28 counties

The first article in the series appears on p. 20 of this issue. At right is the diocesan seal to be used during the 40th anniversary.



Bishop Vann to lead Stations of the Cross in downtown Fort Worth

Bishop Kevin W. Vann will lead a liturgy on Good Friday along Fort Worth's new downtown grand boulevard, Lancaster Ave., to commemorate the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Organized by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice, Bishop Vann will be joined by a gathering of people on Lancaster, between Houston and Jennings Streets, at 10 a.m. Friday, April 10, for the Stations of the Cross which recalls the final

hours of Jesus' life on Earth. The liturgy will use the Stations of the Cross written by Pope John Paul II.

The public proclamation of the Stations of the Cross is a reminder to Catholics and all Christians of Jesus' example of the power of prayer, especially at times when there are crosses to bear, diocesan Peace and Justice Director Deacon Len Sanchez said. "In walking the Stations of the Cross we

SEE STATIONS, P. 20

Bishops Vann, Farrell honored for 'exemplary pro-life leadership'

By María del Carmen Uceda and Jesús Gras Correspondents

DALLAS — Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell and Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann received a special award March 28 for their leadership and support in protecting the sanctity of life.

With more than 2,200 people in attendance at the 16th annual Catholic Pro-Life Dinner, Bishops Farrell and Vann received the Bishop Grahmann Award for Exemplary Pro-Life Leadership from the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of North Texas.

In his remarks, Bishop Farrell spoke about Pope John Paul II's "Gospel of Life."

"His sense was that we need to create a new culture of life and we do that

by building on our young. We need to transmit the value of life," he said. "Our young people do not live in a world in which most of us lived where human life was sacred, and we need to transmit that culture.

"It is a time when we need to make a special effort to promote a culture of life from conception to natural death among our young people," Bishop Farrell said.

Bishop Vann, in an interview, said that teaching is important for shepherds.

"The mission of a shepherd is that of a teacher, and you do what you need to do ... you teach," he said.

Like the bishops, the keynote speaker, Gianna Jessen, an abortion survivor who has cerebral palsy, talked to the youth about making faithful decisions. Jessen's

SEE BISHOPS, P. 20

Left to Right: Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell and Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann pose with the plaques they were awarded, signifying their receipt of the Bishop Grahmann Award for Exemplary Pro-Life Leadership from the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of North Texas at their 16th annual banquet March 16.

(TEXAS CATHOLIC PHOTO BY DAVID SEDEÑO)



The Resurrection of the Lord

Dear Friends in the Risen Lord,

Once again, with great joy and Faith, our local Church is united with followers of Christ around the globe to celebrate the triumphant Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the central mystery and foundation of our Faith. As St. Paul says in *Romans 6:9*,



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

We know that Christ raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

Why does St. Paul teach this in his letter to the Romans? Because Christ has the POWER OF LIFE! The Paschal candles of the Easter Vigil throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth are lights that proclaim to the world that our Lord Jesus Christ, the light of the world, is alive! He has the Power of Life and because of this the tomb is empty!

The meaning and true significance of power is often difficult to understand and live in today's world. For example, many believe that money is power, whereas those in the political realm believe it comes from the number of their adherents or the exercise of authority over others.

While all these examples may be true in their limited scope, they must be seen in the light of the power of life manifested in our Risen Lord in his victory over sin and death itself. Jesus Christ truly is the resurrection and the life as he himself said.

Easter (or more properly the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord) is our celebration of Christ's triumphant conquering of evil and eternal death. Easter is our proclamation of the infinite Power of Life clearly manifested through Christ's resurrection from the dead.

The Resurrection of Christ, which we celebrate during the 50 days of the Easter season, points every believer to salvation and eternal life. All those who unite themselves to Jesus Christ, The Way, The Truth and The Life through the living waters of baptism, as done during the Eas-

The clearest witness to God is love, in that the power of the Risen Lord is evident in our lives and how we live. If Christ is not risen, then "we are the most foolish of men" as St. Paul says in another place.

ter Vigil, participate in the new and everlasting life of the Risen Christ. St. Paul, whose year we are still celebrating, speaks of this power of God in the Risen Christ, by saying:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... (Romans 1:16)

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power... (1 Corinthians 6:14)

Pope Benedict XVI in his first *Urbi et Orbi* message in 2006 also emphasized this point of the power of life over death in the Risen Christ:

His resurrection becomes our resurrection, through Baptism which "incorporates" us into him. The prophet Ezekiel had foretold this: "Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel" (Ez 37:12). These prophetic words take on a singular value on Easter Day, because today the Creator's promise is fulfilled; today, even in this modern age marked by anxiety and uncertainty, we relive the event of the Resurrection, which changed the face of our life and changed the history of humanity. From the risen Christ, all those who are still oppressed by chains of suffering and death look for hope, sometimes even without knowing it.

I think it is important to remember that this, the power of life, comes only from God and is solely in his hands. No one but God has this power of life, and any effort to take the power of life into our own hands results in "playing God" with the attendant evil consequences. To promote and defend life is in its truest sense to promote the Easter message of respect for God's sovereign power over all life.

Many times English does not have the exactness nor the preciseness of the biblical languages. This is certainly true for the use of the word "power." For example, while St. Paul uses various words to speak to us of power,

his favorite Greek terms are the two words *dynamis* and *energeia*. It is from these Greek terms that we get words like dynamic and energy, words that convey a profound meaning especially when used to refer to the power of the cross and resurrection of Christ, which is shared with every member of the Body of Christ.

The Risen Christ also offers us a unique perspective regarding the true power of life. He shows us that this power of life is born out of weakness expressed by his humble death on the cross on Good Friday. Christ is an example to all of us of the connection between power and humility. He also shows us how power without humility does not promote life and many times can weaken and end it. This is not unlike some of the leaders in the Lord's day and our day as well, as we strive to live a culture of life in the face of challenges in our own culture and our own household, at times.

Salvation is the power of life which we celebrate throughout Easter. Sin and death have been given a fatal blow and have been defeated for all time. We need to joyfully celebrate and sing our Alleluias with *dynamis* and *energeia*! We need to give testimony by our lives that as people of the Resurrection, we live in hope and love.

I would like to bring my reflection to a close with the final words from Pope Benedict's *Urbi et Orbi* Message from 2006.

May the Risen Lord grant that the strength of his life, peace and freedom be experienced everywhere. Today the words with which the Angel reassured the frightened hearts of the women on Easter morning are addressed to all: "Do not be afraid! ... He is not here; he is risen" (Matthew 28:5-6). Jesus is risen, and he gives us peace; he himself

is peace. For this reason the Church repeats insistently: "Christ is risen — Christós anésti." Let the people of the third millennium not be afraid to open their hearts to him. His Gospel totally quenches the thirst for peace and happiness that is found in every human heart. Christ is now alive and he walks with us. What an immense mystery of love! Christus resurrexit, quia Deus caritas est! Alleluia!

May we live the truth of the power and love of the Lord's Resurrection in all of the Season of Easter. This "immense mystery of love" should be reflected in all aspects of our lives: our relationships, our speech, and how we treat each other in the Body of Christ and to all who come our way. The clearest witness to God is love, in that the power of the Risen Lord is evident in our lives and how we live. If Christ is not risen, then "we are the most foolish of men" as St. Paul says in another place.

Thanks to all in our Diocese and parishes who have worked so hard for the Lenten Days, the Triduum, the reception of the Easter Sacraments, especially our parish priests, catechists, teachers, and RCIA directors.

Safe travels to all this holy season. I ask your prayers and congratulations for my good friend Archbishop Dolan, who will be installed as Archbishop of New York on April 15 and for my parents who will be celebrating their 59th wedding anniversary that same day!

Christ is risen, He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia!

Gratefully in the Risen Lord

Kevin W. Vann

+ Bishop Kevin W. Vann
Bishop of Fort Worth



17 Years in a Row

North
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Catholic

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Catholics advocate life, family life issues at Texas Capitol



Jennifer Allmon from the Texas Catholic Conference, Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio, and Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, stand inside the state capitol in Austin.

AUSTIN — Over 400 Catholics from around the state, including more than 50 from the Diocese of Fort Worth, gathered in Austin to participate in the Life and Family Life Advocacy Day at the state Capitol on March 31. Donning blue t-shirts that read "One Catholic Voice — Life, Charity, Justice," volunteers from around the state made visits to legislative offices to address public policy priorities of the bishops of Texas.

"As a community of faith, we have a moral obligation to be involved in our political process," said Andrew Rivas, executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference. "We are called to share our Catholic Teaching with our civic leaders so that they can make the best decisions on behalf of our overall community, especially for the most vulnerable in our society, which includes those who cannot represent themselves."

The Advocacy Day began with prayer at Mass celebrated by Bishop Gregory Aymond of Austin, and concelebrated by Bishop Armando Ochoa of El Paso, as well as other clergy from around the state.

"We come here to speak of the value of family life, the value of human life, and we do so respectfully, with perseverance, and determination, knowing that God is working in us," Bishop Aymond said during his homily.

Aware of the rain clouds overhead, volunteers briskly walked the short few blocks from the cathedral to the state Capitol after Mass. Participants of the Advocacy Day were recognized in the House and Senate chambers, and Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio opened the Senate chamber with prayer.

"We are born into families. This was by your design, to reflect your marvelous wisdom, for you are a God of love, graciousness, and unity," said Bishop Cantú. "Give us clarity to discern your wisdom, an untiring resolve for justice, compassion for the weak, love for truth, and respect for every human

person."

After a quick lunch, volunteer groups began their Capitol visits. Over the course of the day, every single legislative office in the Capitol received a visit from concerned Catholics who discussed the importance of funding abortion alternatives providers, programs that encourage healthy marriages and families, abstinence education, "Choose Life" license plates, and adult stem-cell research, while opposing the use of the death penalty as well as any funding for embryonic stem-cell research, cloning, or comprehensive sex education. Diocesan directors and representatives made visits to the speaker's office and also visited with Governor Rick Perry.

Once the visits were complete, several volunteers were able to submit testimony on two house bills, HB 741 and HB 1567, which were being heard in committee that day. Both bills would reduce the focus on abstinence education during education on human sexuality. Twice as many witnesses testified against these bills as for them, a committee clerk told the Texas Catholic Conference the following day.

At a debriefing at the conclusion of the event, several volunteers stated that they had positive visits and felt that their visits helped shed light on the issues for which they advocated. Many also mentioned their intent to continue to follow up with their legislators back in their districts.

Diocesan staff and volunteers promoted the Advocacy Day as an opportunity to engage in public policy in the state and helped raise awareness for the Catholic Call to Faithful Citizenship. Several dioceses held advocacy day trainings to organize and prepare their volunteers for the day. In addition to advocacy days, the conference also sends out e-mail "Action Alerts" and e-newsletters to keep Texas Catholics informed legislatively.

For more information on the Texas Catholic Conference, visit www.TXcatholic.org.

*Responding
to God's Call*

*We must proclaim with
our words and actions,
Jesus is Risen!*

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

What do Christians believe about Jesus? Was Jesus simply a great teacher, a miracle worker, a prophet, or a servant? No, we believe him to be far more significant than any other human being. We believe that in his earthly life Jesus was fully human and fully divine. Jesus' teachings, miracles, and service are all unmatched in human history.

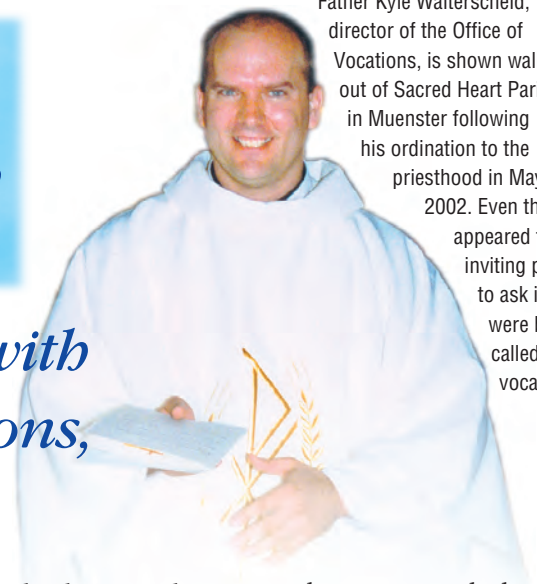
All the more, out of love for humanity and obedience to God the Father, we believe that he emptied himself of his divinity and brought about the only true atonement of the sins of the world by humbly accepting a most torturous death: he was severely beaten and scourged by whips; he was crowned with thorns; he carried a heavy wooden cross; and then he was crucified as his hands and feet were nailed to a cross; and he hung to death. We believe that he is the first to rise from the dead. Death did not have power over him as he won the favor, through obedience, of his heavenly Father and is thus forever exalted. We believe that he is the Son of God who chose to come into this world in human flesh to redeem all mankind from their sins. We also believe that he is the only way to heaven

for all mankind as he opened the doors to eternal life, as he opened up his hands on the cross and died for us.

Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Yes, as Christians we proclaim loudly our belief in our Redeemer and our Savior. Now we all have a reason to live. As St. Paul writes, "... I live, no longer I, but Christ who lives in me ... I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me" (*Galatians 2:20*).

Thus, as Christians we have a specific purpose for our existence. We live not for ourselves but for Christ and for the building of the Kingdom of God here on Earth. With faith in Christ, or rather, in faithfulness to Christ, we believe that we shall inherit eternal life. I make this distinction because many Christians, if not most, in our nation and throughout the world say they believe in Christ, but their works reveal their true beliefs which prove them liars. This sounds harsh, right? It sounds like I am being judgmental, right? It is neither harsh nor judgmental, rather, it is the truth.

We, the Christian majority of our country have slowly let the Christian values and the Christian principles, which this nation was founded on, be eroded away. Why? I am not sure why, but mainly because our focus and our faith in Christ have eroded away. The teachings of Christ are no longer being lived by the overwhelming majority of people who consider themselves Christian. At the same time, the perversions of this age that are now acceptable as mainstream social norms are unbelievable. How can any form of pornography, abortion, or contraception be a civil law protected as a right? These are all moral evils; they promote promiscuity and directly violate the teachings of Christ. They not only remove human dignity but create deep psychological



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

scars that may never be healed.

Likewise, the easiest battle I would think our society could overcome is drugs. We all know the facts. Drugs are an assault on every aspect of the person: the mind, the body, and the soul. Even as they remain illegal, our society's addiction is so strong it is now causing chaos in other countries. If we can't eliminate drugs from our society, then I say as a society we couldn't fight our way out of a wet paper bag. We need to turn to our Lord, and we need to turn to him now! Jesus is the only one who can save us; save us from our enemies and save us from ourselves.

Jesus has Risen! The apostles and the early Christian community testify to this. They saw him in his resurrected body many times after he was crucified. Jesus is real and he is here for you and me. He gives his Spirit to all who are baptized in his name. He is the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life that brings us to heaven. Our lives certainly depend on him, so let us strengthen our faithfulness to him.

Can we not work together in our communities to build up the body of Christ? Are we not called, as was St. Paul, to glorify God in our body and to help build the Kingdom of God on earth? Can we not renew a Christian culture in which parents are honored and children are seen as a blessing from God rather than a curse? Sisters, brothers, and priests come from Christ-centered families and Christ-centered families are to be strengthened by sisters, brothers, and priests. Together we are called to build a culture and spirit of life in Christ. Let us live by faith in the Son of God who has loved us and given himself up for us. Alleluia!

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

OMM prepares for first Spring Gospelfest

Our Mother of Mercy Church in South Fort Worth will host its first annual Spring Gospelfest Saturday, April 25 at 7 p.m. in its building at 1001 E. Terrell St.

"We are kicking off 2009 with one purpose in mind — to share God's unconditional love and Word with everyone; to express the true joy of the Lord in serving Him with fellowship, worship, praise, prayer, music, and dance," says a flier for the event.

Our Mother of Mercy will host multiple choirs and other groups from a variety of Christian denominations to join in its celebration in conjunction with the parish's 80th anniversary.

For more information, call Joie Bernard at (817) 565-6717.

St. John invites potential students to kindergarten and pre-k 'Round Up'

St. John the Apostle School, Tarrant County's only 2008 nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School, will host a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten "Round Up" on Saturday, May 2 from 9 to 11 a.m. This is open for all families who wish to learn more about the programs for the 2009-2010 school year.

Children who will be between ages 4 and 6 by Aug. 1 will be able to experience pre-kindergarten or kindergarten while parents focus on the curriculum and benefits of the program.

Siblings between the ages 1 and 3 are welcome to stay in the St. John Child Care at no cost. Reservations for childcare are required.

This free event will begin in the St. John School office located at 7421 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills. The office entrance is located on Frawley Street, off Glenview Drive.

For more information, call Linda Wheeler, admissions director, or Cindy Cummins, principal, at (817) 284-2228 or visit the Web site at www.stjs.org. Childcare reservations for children ages 1 to 3 must be made by Friday, April 24, to assure availability.

St. Ann Spring Fest April 26

The parking lot of St. Ann Church in Burleson will be transformed into Spring Fest, a festival with games for children, bounce houses, dunking booths, bingo, cake walks, food from different countries and regions, pastries, and auctions. The festival will be held Sunday, April 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets may be purchased on site. The public is invited to enjoy the food, fun, and fellowship. For more information, call the church office at (817) 295-5621.

Catholic historian to speak on Cardinal Newman's legacy

Dr. Patrick Foley will present a lecture entitled "John Henry Newman: Following in His Footsteps" from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 15, at St. Mary the Virgin Church's parish hall at 1408 N. Davis Dr. in Arlington. The event is sponsored by the Cardinal Newman Institute of Fort Worth.

Foley, a noted Catholic historian and editor emeritus of *Catholic Southwest*, a historical journal, is a member of Holy Trinity Church in Azle. Hospitality begins at 6:30 p.m. in the parish hall.

All lectures are free, though offerings will be accepted. For more information, visit the institute's Web site at www.cardinalnewmaninstitute.org.

'The Human Experience' pre-screening at St. Vincent de Paul

St. Vincent de Paul Church will host a free pre-screening of "The Human Experience" at 7:30 p.m. Friday April 24, and Saturday, April 25 at 5819 Pleasant Ridge Rd. in Arlington. Doors will open at 7 p.m.

The documentary chronicles two brothers who travel the world and interview people about what it means to be human.

For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300, ext. 257, or by e-mail at cruthkilgore@fwdioc.org.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



Eighth-graders from St. Rita School in Fort Worth helped Dcn. Tom Giovannitti (*far right*) burn palms, which were used on Ash Wednesday.

YOUTH 2000 retreat at Nolan April 17-19

The 2009 YOUTH 2000 Retreat, led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal of the Bronx, will be held the weekend of April 17-19 at Nolan Catholic High School at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth.

This eucharistic-centered retreat is for and by all youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 30.

"This is a unique experience that you won't forget!" say event organizers. "The talks are inspiring and will help you to grow in your faith!"

Registration is \$50 per person. Housing will not be provided.

Participants who wait to register at the door must have the YOUTH 2000 "Liability Release Form" and all diocesan required forms signed by a parent or legal guardian and will only be allowed entrance if space is available.

All minors must be accompanied by an adult, and all adults must have had the Safe Environment training of their diocese.

For more information, call (817) 558-9805, or visit the Web site for the event at www.fwdiocyouthretreat.org.

Golf tournament to benefit OMM School

Our Mother of Mercy School's fourth annual "Golf and Networking Event" will be held at Squaw Creek Golf Course April 18, at 1605 Ranch House Rd. in Willow Park. All are invited to participate as players or sponsors.

For more information, contact tournament co-chairs Howard Rattliff at rattlhj@yahoo.com, or Mike Barks at barkskully@sbcglobal.net, or visit the Web site www.tournevents.com/omm2009 to register.

Passionist priest to lead St. Paul Mission

St. Paul the Apostle Church in the River Oaks area of Fort Worth, will host a parish mission April 26-28, with Passionist Father Cedric Pisegna, CP, giving talks at 7 p.m.

Father Tom Wigginton, pastor of St. Paul, says that Fr. Pisegna is an "excellent retreat master and in the previous retreats has received a great response from people of all ages. He includes much humor in his talks and is down to earth."

Fr. Pisegna has been giving retreats for the last 19 years and will preach at all the Masses on the weekend of April 25-26. The parish mission will start on Sunday night with the topic "Happiness;" Monday night, with the theme "Change is Possible;" and Tuesday night with the theme "The Holy Spirit and Passion."

St. Paul the Apostle is located 5508 Black Oak Ln., in Fort Worth. The Mass schedule is Saturday at 5 p.m., Sunday at 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. in Spanish. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 738-9925.

IWBS Sisters host discernment weekend

The Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters will host a Discernment Weekend April 25-26 for single Catholic women from high school seniors through women 50 years of age at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria.

For more information, visit the Sisters' Web site at www.iwbsvictoria.org, or contact Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS, by phone at (361) 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com.

Divorce and Beyond program to be held at St. Andrew Apr. 16

St. Andrew Church will host a "Divorce and Beyond" program Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. April 16 through June 4 in its pastoral center at 3717 Stadium Dr. in Fort Worth.

Divorce and Beyond is an eight-week parish-based self-help program for people who are divorced or who have already filed for divorce, and is based on the premise that sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences with others in the same or similar situation is one of the most helpful ways to move beyond the pain of divorce to a life of wholeness and joy.

Topics for sessions include: "The Process of Divorce"; "Self-image, Self-esteem"; "Self-affirmation"; "Stress, Anger, Blame, Guilt, Loneliness"; "Forgiveness"; "Happiness"; "Pathway to growth"; and "The Catholic Annulment."

The cost for registration is \$15, and includes the cost of book and supplies which will be available the first evening.

Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, call Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or Delphine Exman at (817) 292-1453.

NTC deadlines for submission

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

Items for the April 24 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, April 15. Items for the May 8 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, April 29.

FertilityCare Center offers training for NFP teachers

The FertilityCare Center of North Texas will offer an informational luncheon May 30 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for individuals interested in teaching a natural form of family planning and women's health maintenance. The luncheon will be held at St. Maria Goretti Church, located at 1200 S. Davis Blvd. in Arlington. RSVP to Mandy Cox at fccont@att.net or at (817) 685-0756 or visit www.fwcreighton.com. The cost is \$6 per person.

"This is a great opportunity to learn more about what is involved in becoming a FertilityCare practitioner, instructing women and couples in a moral family planning method," say event organizers.

Silent retreat at Montserrat to be held May 14-17

Contemplative Outreach of Dallas's annual Four-Day Silent retreat will be held May 14-17 at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House located at 600 N. Shady Shores in Lake Dallas.

The annual retreat is for those interested in deepening their spiritual practice in an atmosphere of silence, solitude and community. Father Justin Langille, an experienced retreat director from San Diego, will return again as retreat leader.

Registration form and details are available at www.CellofPeace.com or by e-mail at CPDallas@CellofPeace.com or call, (972) 722-6029. Registration deadline is May 1.

Pax Christi Texas Annual Conference scheduled for April 18

Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, a peace activist organization opposed to the war in Iraq, will speak at the 2009 Pax Christi Texas annual conference in Houston April 18. The theme of her presentation is "Courage and Hope in a Violent World." Kelly has written a book titled *Other Lands Have Dreams*, which is available through www.counterpunch.org.

Pax Christi Houston and the Dominican Sisters of Houston will host the conference, which will be held in the Dominican Sisters meeting room at 6501 Alameda Rd. in Houston. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

For more information about registration or the conference, call (281) 955-0342 or e-mail fskeith@sbcglobal.net.

Pax Christi strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring, articulating and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. Pax Christi rejects war, preparations for war, and every form of violence and domination. It advocates primacy of conscience, economic and social justice, and respect for creation.

St. Rita includes Jamaica celebration with 100th anniversary festivities

As part of its 100th anniversary celebrations, St. Rita Church in Fort Worth will host the second annual Jamaica charity fair Saturday, April 25, beginning with a "Jamaica Mass" at 5 p.m. From 6 to 11 p.m., the celebration will include food, carnival rides, games, and entertainment, including a dance with a live band and DJ from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. St. Rita is located at 5550 E. Lancaster Ave. in Fort Worth. For more information, call the church office at (817) 451-9383.



ST. JOSEPH, RHINELAND — Thirteen candidates for the sacrament of first holy Eucharist participated in an all-day retreat Saturday, April 4, led by Mary Escamilla, who was assisted by Leno Hernandez, Marie Gonzalez, Josie Hernandez, and Gloria Mendez. Student helpers were Sonora Escamilla, Elida Hernandez, and Hilda Mendez. The candidates' first holy Communion will be celebrated Sunday, April 26 at 9 a.m.

The future is bright for the Diocese of Fort Worth!

We currently have 26 seminarians in formation considering the calling of priesthood, and we expect to have 30 as we begin the fall semester 2009. In recent years Catholic seminaries have significantly raised the bar in

the vetting process. Two years of philosophy are now required to be accepted into the Master of Divinity program. Seminarian formation now takes seven years for those with a bachelor's degree and 9 years without a degree. With your

prayers and support, we anticipate 15 of these men to be ordained in the next five years. God willing, we will begin to reverse the priest shortage in our diocese and have a pastor back in each parish.



These men are currently in formation for the priesthood to proclaim the Risen Christ to the people of the Diocese of Fort Worth...

Front Row, left to right: Amado Vallejo, Alfredo Barba, Richard Kirkham, Fr. James Pemberton, Fr. Richard Flores, Bishop Kevin Vann, Fr. Kyle Walterscheid, Philip Petta, Ronald Mercado, John Burton

Second Row and Higher left to right: Derek Histen, David Keith Garvin, Tom Kelley, Eduwin Floriano, Nghia Nguyen, Raúl Martinez, Stephen Hauck, Mike Galbraith, Keith Hathaway, Khoi Tran, Tommy Nguyen, James Wilcox, John Pacheco, Michael Moloney, Michael Greco

Not pictured are: Denis Curran, Angel Herrera, Juan Carlos de Jesus, Khiem Nguyen, Fernando Villegas Preciado

Let us thank the Lord for suffering and dying on the cross to destroy our enslavement to sin and for rising to restore our life. Let us thank the Lord that so many men and women from our diocese are choosing to glorify God in their body by consecrating their lives to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the religious life: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains a just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit" (*John 12:24*), as some "renounce marriage for

the sake of the kingdom of God (*Matthew 19:12*). For this reason the Church in her wisdom, following the consecrated life of Christ himself, requires her sons as priests to "remain as they are," celibate and chaste, as "an unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, but a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife..." (*1 Corinthians 7:32-33*).



To ensure a strong religious presence in our parishes in the future the Diocese of Fort Worth has established a Men's Monthly Discernment as well as a Women's Monthly Discernment. These sessions are for any single man or woman to further discern whether the religious life is for them. These gatherings are held at St. Patrick Cathedral the second Monday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The program includes a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration, an hour of discussion on discernment, and a free meal is provided by the Serra Club. For more information, please call Fr. Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300, ext.110 or kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org or go to Religious Vocations at www.fwdioc.org

Retired rail worker ordained to diaconate

Story and photos by
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

For 30 years, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway carried a locomotive engineer, Ruben Aguirre, on trip after trip. But it was his last trip back home to the Metroplex that meant the most because it returned him to the Diocese of Fort Worth where he would begin his second career as a deacon.

Ordained to the diaconate



Newly ordained Deacon Ruben Aguirre blesses his grandson Steven Davey during communion, while his daughter, Alicia Davey looks on.

March 29 at St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, Deacon Aguirre had taken his training for the diaconate in Longview, where he was transferred in 2000, he said, when his long-time job with the BNSF began to dwindle. His family lived in Hurst, where he and wife Carmen and their three children attended St. Michael Parish in Bedford, the new deacon said. So, when Aguirre took the work transfer, Carmen remained in Hurst, with her husband working in Longview, making regular two-and-a-half hour trips back home.

Aguirre became active in his Longview parish, where he volunteered to work in the flowerbeds. As he became closer to the church, Aguirre spoke to the pastor, who suggested he might have a calling, "and he told me the diaconate program orientation was the following Saturday. "I attended the orientation," Aguirre said, "and when they mentioned the length of time the program would take, I counted the years, and thought, 'That's when I retire.'"

So Ruben Aguirre began his deacon formation in Longview

for the Diocese of Tyler in 2000, and in December 2007, he retired from the BNSF, and made plans to return to the Diocese of Fort Worth, where he would begin a year's internship at St. John's.

"I used to tell the guys, 'I'm closing one door working on the railroad, and with the other foot I'm working for the Lord.'"

Dcn. Aguirre's ordination took place in front of a crowded sanctuary at St. John the Apostle, where the new deacon said the people not only accepted him, but embraced him from the first day of his pastoral year. "It was a blessing to be there," he said, "I learned so much and I was better formed because of it."



Deacon Aguirre assists Bishop Kevin Vann at the altar after his ordination.

His actual formation in Longview took seven years of twice-monthly all-day sessions, where the class received instruction from University of Dallas.

At his ordination, Bishop Kevin Vann spoke of the history that had returned the deacon to the diocese, noting the Gospel reading (*John 12:20-33*) where the people came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."

"Take those words," the bishop said, "and reflect on all the events that brought you to St. John's. Think of all the people that will come your way — it will be your job to help those people find the Lord."

"When I was lying on

the floor," Dcn. Aguirre said of the ordination liturgy, "I felt like I was on air. I could not feel the concrete. It is like marble — hard! But I could not feel anything.

"All the people singing the litany sounded so angelic," he remembered, "and later, when I lifted the chalice, I was teary-eyed. It was a big moment for me."

Dcn. Aguirre spoke of the actual moment of ordination, during the laying on of hands. "It was glorious. I thought I would feel a little shock or something, but it just felt like, 'I'm there now... The Lord has accepted me as a deacon.'"



Deacon Aguirre is vested by his wife Carmen, and Deacon Don Warner, director of the Office of Permanent Deacons for the diocese.

Your contributions to the Easter Sunday Collection

April 11-12, 2009

will support the education and training of seminarians and permanent deacons for service throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth.

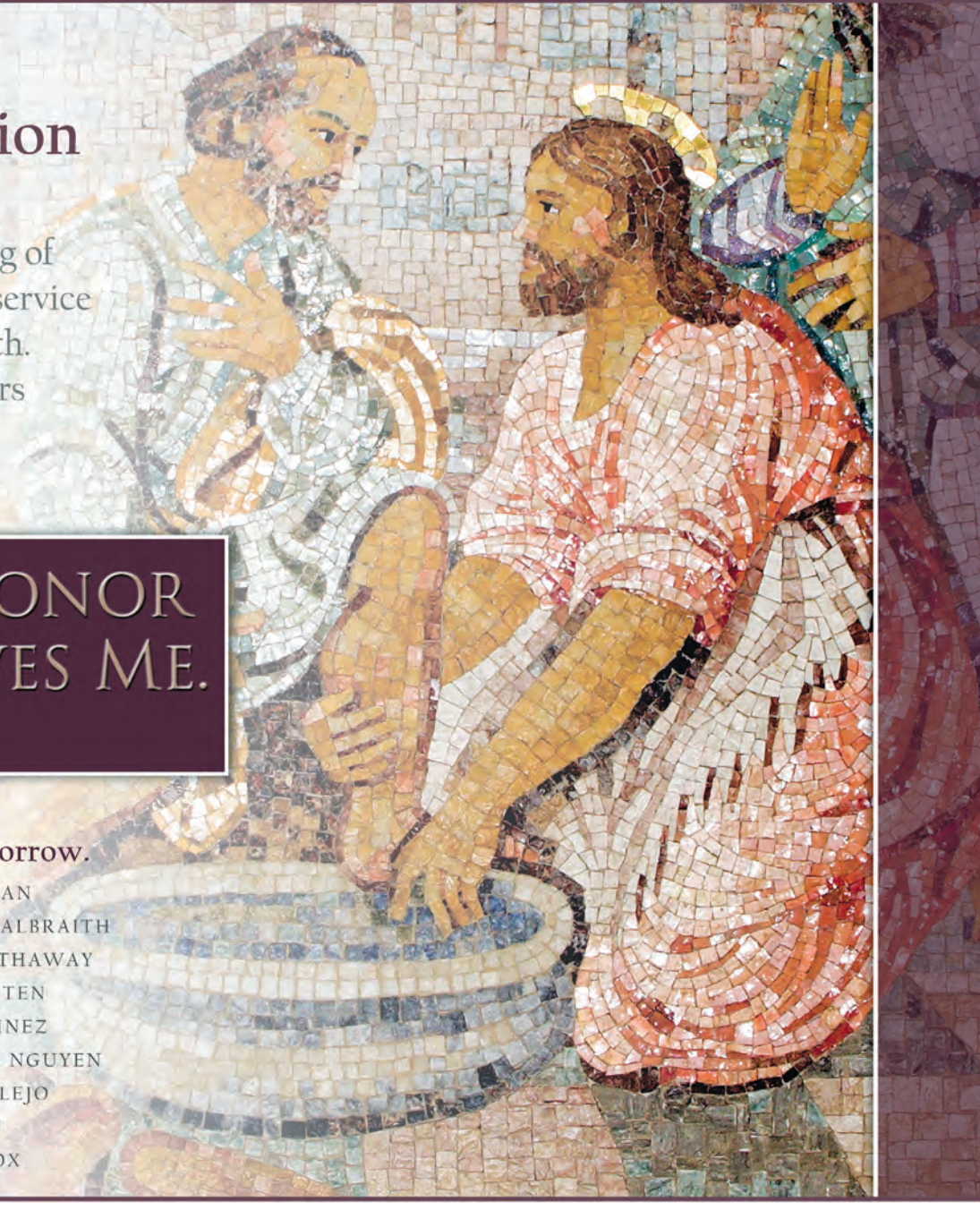
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—JOHN 12:26

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- RONALD MERCADO • DR. MICHAEL MOLONEY • KHIEM NGUYEN
- NGHIA NGUYEN • TOMMY NGUYEN • AMADO VALLEJO
- JOHN PACHECO • PHILIP PETTA • KHOI TRAN
- FERNANDO PRECIADO VILLEGAS • JAMES WILCOX



Diocesan

UTA Catholic Community to host diocese-wide art contest

The University Catholic Community at the University of Texas at Arlington is sponsoring a juried art competition entitled *Amor Vitae: Love of Life!* on Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26 at Artspace 111 in downtown Fort Worth.

The show is open to high school juniors and seniors and undergraduate college students throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth. Artists are asked to depict work that reflects Catholic Social Teaching to respect all forms of life including, but not limited to, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, human cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and contraception.

Entries should not exceed 24 inches by 36 inches in size and should be mounted with wire for hanging. A limit of three pieces per artist is allowed. Entries can be in all mediums and multi-dimensional. There is a \$5 entry fee for each piece submitted. Artists will also be permitted to offer their work for sale with a 25 percent commission collected by the UCC to support pro-life initiatives in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

There will be one first-place winner with a cash prize of \$100 and one second-place winner with a \$50 cash prize in each of the following categories: 1) high school juniors and seniors; 2) university freshman and sophomores; 3)

university juniors and seniors.

To receive an application, call the UCC at (817) 460-1155 or download it from the Web site at www.utacatholics.org.

Deadline to submit work will be Monday, April 20. Artwork, application forms and money can be dropped off Monday through Friday from 12 to 6 p.m. at the UCC, located at 1010 Bengue Dr. in Arlington, or at the Catholic Campus Center for the University of North Texas, located at 1303 Eagle Dr. in Denton, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Lisa Campbell at the UCC at (817) 460-1155 or by e-mail at lcampbell@fwdioc.org.



Size: No larger than 24" x 36"
Mounting: With wire for hanging
Limit: 3 pieces per artist
Mediums: Can be all mediums and multi-dimensional
Fee: \$5 for each piece submitted
Deadline: Monday, April 20
Categories:

- High school juniors and seniors
- University freshmen and sophomores
- University juniors and seniors

Prizes: 1st — \$100; 2nd — \$50
Drop-off Locations:

- University Catholic Center
1010 Bengue Dr., Arlington
12 to 6 p.m., M-F
- Catholic Campus Center
1303 Eagle Dr., Denton
10 a.m. to 5 p.m., M-F

Applications: Found at www.utacatholics.org

Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses team with University of Dallas for first North Texas Ministry Conference, Oct. 23-24

Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann and Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell announced April 2 that the two dioceses are teaming with the University of Dallas to create "a premier ministry conference for North Texas."

The conference will be held Oct. 23-24 at the Dallas Convention Center.

"By conducting one ministry conference for both dioceses that is led by the University of Dallas, we believe we will create one of the

preeminent ministry events in the country. We are asking our respective staffs to assist the university in order to make this happen," Bishop Vann said.

"The University of Dallas is a wealth of knowledge and the Diocese of Dallas is blessed to have this valuable Catholic resource so close to home," said Bishop Farrell. Catholic ministry leaders from across Texas and the Southwest will be able to use the conference to develop valuable tools that will

help them more effectively further the Church's evangelizing and catechetical mission, he added.

According to information from the two dioceses, The University of Dallas Ministry Conference will be the only ministry conference held in the dioceses of Dallas and Fort Worth in 2009. It is estimated that 3,000 persons involved in diocesan ministry offices, the Catholic schools, Catholic Charities, and lay people in their respective parishes will attend the October event.

Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl will be among several notable speakers to address the gathering. On Friday, Oct. 23, Archbishop Wuerl of Washington, will deliver the opening keynote address, and Christian contemporary musical artist John Michael Talbot will perform an evening concert.

Saturday, Oct. 24, is designed with the lay "Catholic in the pew" in mind and will feature John Allen, senior Vatican analyst for CNN. Breakout sessions will

include Spanish, Vietnamese, and English presentations.

The event will also offer more than 60 exhibitors, a display of religious artwork, and ample networking opportunities. This will be a great opportunity to learn more, listen to dynamic speakers, and celebrate faith, say the organizers.

Those interested in more information and registration may visit www.udallas.edu/ministry/conference.cfm or call (972) 265-5809.

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Nolan Catholic freshmen honor Mary Mother of Nations in annual celebration

Nolan Catholic High School freshmen recently celebrated their class patroness, Mary Mother of Nations, with a special festival. In keeping with the school's Marianist heritage, and since freshmen study world cultures in various areas of their curriculum, world cultures teacher Stephen Kai Nemeth, along with other freshmen teachers, chose this title and designed a celebration in her honor, which they do annually.

"Over the years, this festival has taken various forms," said Nemeth. "This year, we chose a special prayer service which included NCHS alumna and principal of St. Peter's Elementary School, Erin Vader portraying Mary." In her role as Mary, Vader, accompanied by a freshmen court of honor, led the service.

The celebration included various cultural presentations including a special dance by the Nolan Catholic Asian Club. Also per-



Nolan Catholic High School (NCHS) freshmen, participating in an annual school tradition, honored Mary as the Mother of All Nations in a prayer service for freshmen students, teachers, and their guests March 31. Mary was portrayed by NCHS alumna Erin Vader (center), principal of Saint Peter School in Fort Worth. The Nolan Catholic Asian Club and the NCHS band and choir also took part in the service, which emphasized global cultures.

forming in the celebration were the NCHS band and choir.

"This is a special blessing for our freshman students," said Ne-

meth. "It is a time to show class unity, to honor global cultures, and most important, to honor our beloved Mother."



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LOW MASS FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS



Diocesan

Mother Nadine Brown, founder of Intercessors of the Lamb invited to speak at Magnificat breakfast in Grapevine May 2

Mother Nadine Brown, founder of Intercessors of the Lamb, has been invited to speak at the Grapevine chapter of Magnificat's breakfast for Catholic women in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The breakfast will be Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the DFW Hilton Lakes Executive Conference Center and Hotel at 1800 Hwy 26 East in Grapevine, followed by a prayer and confession service from 12 to 2 p.m.

According to a flier provided by Magnificat, Mother Nadine spent 16 years as a contemplative with the Sisters of the Cross of the Good Shepherd Congregation, before she discerned God was calling her out of the cloister.

"She was to bring the rich heritage of this contemplative spirituality and its intercessory fruits to the broader Church, offering to all Christians the means

of achieving a relationship with God, which was formerly seen as only available to consecrated religious. She will lead us in meditative prayer at the conclusion of her testimony," the flier says.

The Intercessors of the Lamb were recognized as a Public Association of the Christian Faithful on May 27, 1998 and promotes contemplative spirituality by providing spiritual guidance in the development of individual relationships with God. Their primary ministry is contemplative communal intercession. More information about the Intercessors can be found at their Web site, www.bellwetheromaha.org.

Tickets are \$18 and are available at various Catholic bookstores in the area, including: Keepsakes Catholic Books and Gifts located at 2304 Park Row #20 in Arlington, which can be

reached at (817) 275-3727; St. Anthony's Bookstore located at 3121 McCart Ave. in Fort Worth and can be reached at (817) 924-7221; Little Angels Catholic Store, located at 600 E. Sandy Lake Rd., Ste. 108 in Coppell, which can be reached at (972) 304-5200; and Catholic Art & Gifts located at 2761 Valwood Pkwy. in Farmers Branch and can be reached at (972) 934-3553.

To obtain tickets or prepaid reserved tables by mail, send a self-addressed stamped return envelope to Nancy Ferri at 8921 Thornmeadow Ct., N. Richland Hills, TX 76180, (817) 498-7980, with a check made out to Magnificat-Grapevine Chapter.

Because the day is designed for women to be free of distraction, organizers request that children not attend. The cutoff date for tickets is Tuesday, April 28, and tickets will not be sold at the door.

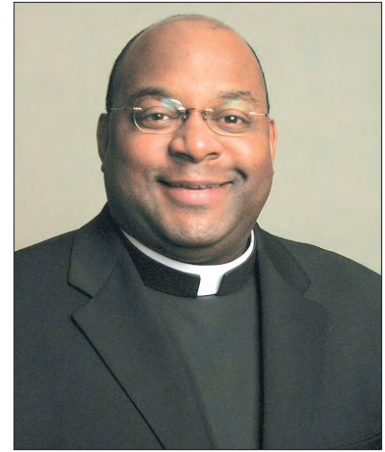
Queen of Peace Center invites Mariology expert to speak in diocese

Monsignor Carl Morris from the Archdiocese of Saint Louis will give a talk entitled: "The Blessed Virgin Mary: Pillar of Faith and Model of Truth" at St. Patrick Cathedral located at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth on Tuesday, April 28, beginning with Mass at 7 p.m.

He will also speak at St. Maria Goretti Church located at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington on Wednesday, April 29.

Msgr. Morris was born in 1965 and has been a priest in St. Louis since 1996. He served as a parish priest before eventually being assigned teaching positions first in a Catholic high school and then in the seminary. Currently, he is the director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, the director of the Saint Maximilian Kolbe House of Discernment, an adjunct professor of sacramental theology at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, a lecturer for the Paul VI Catechetical Institute, and the spiritual advisor to the Marian Catechists in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

In addition to these respon-



Msgr. Morris

sibilities, Msgr. Morris hosts a weekly radio program on WRYT, Catholic radio in St. Louis, and is considered an expert on Mariology. He frequently gives retreats and days of recollections both in St. Louis and around the United States. He received the title monsignor in September of 2008.

For more information, contact the Queen of Peace Center at (817) 244-7733 or (817) 558-9805. For information about the presentation at St. Maria Goretti, contact Cindy Alford at (817) 274-0643 ext 223.

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10:00AM Registration
11:00AM Mass with Bishop Vann
 Music by Ben Walther Band
12:00PM Keith Davis of the NFL's
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APRIL 17th, 2009

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APRIL 26 @ NOLAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Holy Family School remembers Easter through class activities



Kimberly Pierce and her sixth grade class at Holy Family School in West Fort Worth prepare for a re-enactment of Jesus' Last Supper, at which they celebrated the Jewish Seder meal of Passover.



Holy Family students also participated in an Easter food drive to assist the St. Vincent DePaul Society with Easter food baskets. Ellen Muffett's third grade class was assigned to collect rice and set the standard for the other classes by collecting the most rice.

Divine Mercy celebrations planned throughout diocese

Churches throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on April 19, the week after Easter. The desire for this annual celebration was expressed by Jesus to St. Maria Faustina and found recorded in her diary. The novena for Divine Mercy begins on Good Friday, and the Divine Mercy Chaplet is typically prayed at 3 p.m., which is considered the hour of mercy. Additional information on Divine Mercy, St. Faustina, the novena prayer, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy can be found on the Web site www.marian.org.

Celebrations in the diocese include:

Our Lady of Mercy — Hillsboro

107 Crestridge Dr.

2:30 p.m.

Father Baby George will preside over a prayer service that will include the Divine Mercy Chaplet, conclude the novena, and end with Adoration. For information and directions call the church office at (254) 582-5640 or Linda Alesi-Miller in the evenings at (254) 694-6188.

Saint Maria Goretti — Arlington

1200 S. Davis Dr.

Divine Mercy Novena

A Divine Mercy Novena will begin on Good Friday, April 10, after the Stations of the Cross at 12 p.m. Prayers for the second day will be held at 8 a.m., and because of large crowds during Mass on Sundays, participants should pray the novena on their own for the third day, say organizers. From the fourth day, Monday, April 13 to the ninth day on Saturday, April 18, the novena prayers will begin following the regularly scheduled 8 a.m. Mass. On Divine Mercy Sunday the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the 1 p.m. Mass until 3 p.m. and conclude with Divine Mercy prayers and Benediction. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 274-0643.

St. Mark — Denton

2800 Pennsylvania Ave.

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The event will include a 45-minute video presentation, a eucharistic holy hour, and singing of the Divine Mercy Chaplet with Knights of Columbus from Assembly 2043 serving as an honor guard for the image of Divine Mercy.

St. John the Apostle — North Richland Hills

7341 Glenview Dr.

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Pastoral music expert Joanne Werner to lead OCP reading session in Bedford May 2

Nationally-recognized Catholic music authority Joanne Werner will lead an Oregon Catholic Press reading session at St. Michael Church located at 3713 Harwood Rd. in Bedford. The two-hour workshop will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 2.

Werner currently serves as chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM), after eight years on the NPM as director of the Music Ministries Board. She is a faculty member for NPM's Cantor Express and has given workshops and presentations

to cantors throughout the country.

"A reading session isn't just about learning new music," says Shannon McNerney, OCP's Executive Manager of Events. "This is a master class for musicians. Our clinicians highlight the spiritual dimension of the music that participants will carry with them long after they leave."

The \$25 registration fee (\$20 for members of the NPM) includes time with the presenter, 25 octavos, discounted merchandise, a question and answer period with the clinician and other benefits. Werner

will teach 15 of the octavos in detail.

OCP, a not-for-profit publisher of liturgical music and worship resources based in Portland, Oregon, has been in operation for more than 80 years. Worship programs produced by OCP are used in two-thirds of Catholic churches in the United States and are distributed worldwide. For more information on OCP, visit OCP.org/about.

For more information on OCP reading sessions or to register for this reading session, e-mail events@ocp.org, or call 1 (800) 548-8749.

Catholic author to discuss proof of God May 16

World-renowned theologian Dr. Peter Kreeft will give two talks at St. Maria Goretti Church, located at 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday, May 16. The topics covered will include "A Refutation on Moral Relativism", and "Proofs of God's Existence."

"Both of these powerful talks will give the philosophical and theological arguments on how to refute the modern errors of moral relativism and atheism and help you develop sound reasoning and logic on how we can know God's existence with certainty, and also be certain about his moral truths," say event organizers in a press release.

Kreeft is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and is considered one of the best

Catholic philosophers currently residing in the United States. He is a regular contributor to several Christian publications, is in wide demand as a speaker at conferences, and is the author of over 45 books including *Fundamentals of the Faith*, *Everything you Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven*, and *Back to Virtue*. His ideas draw heavily from religious and philosophical tradition, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, Socrates, G. K. Chesterton, and C. S. Lewis.

The event is free, but donations will be accepted. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice, director of the Office of Adult Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300 ext. 260 or lpollice@fwdioc.org or John Cox at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226 or jcox@smgparish.org.

April marks Child Abuse Prevention Month

Catholic Charities offers abuse prevention resources through CARE

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

It was a sadly familiar story, the Catholic Charities social worker explained. "I went to meet this new client at her home," she recalled.

"This tiny, emaciated woman met me at the door. She looked like she had been in a war. She was so traumatized, so fragile, and very fearful. We sat down together, and she just fell to pieces. She told me it was such a relief to talk with someone who would not judge her, who would help her to know how to offer a better life to her children."

The caseworker's new client was a longtime victim of domestic abuse, she explained. Fears for the safety of her two young children had finally compelled the woman to flee from her husband after years of enduring his violent, controlling behavior.

With the help of services provided through the Catholic Charities Community Approach to Resource Empowerment (CARE) child abuse prevention program, she and her children embarked on an intensive 90-day process. During that time, the family received individualized counseling, food, clothing, and the help of an attorney who assisted the young mother in obtaining a restraining order against her husband. Through therapy, the woman

'At this point, we have a 100 percent success rate... None of our families who have been served by CARE have ended up being investigated or having children removed from their homes. We consider this a very proactive way of serving families and protecting children.'

— Heather Reynolds

Catholic Charities Fort Worth president and CEO

came to believe she was no longer a victim, but a capable mother with the ability to effectively care for her family.

"She, like so many victims of domestic violence, had felt powerless to leave the relationship, but ultimately she realized that she had to do so in order to protect her children," said Ed Mahan, lead case manager for the CARE program. "One of the best things about the CARE program is its flexibility. Our staff members are able to design programs that help each family to meet their particular needs. In this situation, our social worker was able to give the client the tools she needed to strengthen her family and to be a successful parent. CARE is really about breaking the cycle of abuse, which is generational."

Increasing public awareness of the need to ensure the safety and welfare of children led to the creation of the first National Child Abuse Prevention Month, held in April of 1983. Since then, child abuse and neglect awareness activities have been promoted across the country during the month of April each year, when current statistics on child abuse and neglect are released by the national Department of Health and Human Services.

This spring, local Catholic Charities officials hope to create greater awareness about the realities of child abuse and neglect within Tarrant County and to increase awareness of helpful resources within the community.

Several factors can indicate that a child is at risk of being abused or neglected, said Heather Reynolds, president and chief executive officer of Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc. In families experiencing stresses such as economic hardships, substance or alcohol abuse, isolation, domestic violence, or chronic illness, children often suffer from the results of adults' feelings of helplessness, rage, or pure exhaustion.

"That is what the CARE program is all about," said Reynolds. "We work to address the stress factors that, in our experience, can result in child abuse and neglect." Families who seem to be at risk are referred to Catholic Charities through Fort Worth Independent School District faculty and staff members, through social workers at homeless shelters, or by families who have successfully completed the 90-day program themselves.

"The only criteria for a person to access CARE

program services is that they must live in Tarrant County, have a child under the age of 18, and not already be in the [Child Protective Services] system," explained Reynolds.

The agency and the program's state funding sources have the goal that families served through the CARE program will obtain the tools they need to build strong families, thus staying out of Child Protective Services' system, she said. "At this point, we have a 100 percent success rate," she noted.

"None of our families who have been served by CARE have ended up being investigated or having children removed from their homes. We consider this a very proactive way of serving families and protecting children."

Don Shisler, president and chief executive officer of Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County, says that the CARE program offers invaluable help — such as parenting classes, assistance with budgeting, and accessing medical services — to the homeless families he sees every day in the emergency shelter.

"The CARE program social worker we have here on-site provides excellent, in-depth assistance to these families, who are all, obviously, in crisis," he explained. "These children in a homeless situation, they need every extra bit of care and help that they can get. I see the CARE program giving these families tools for self-sufficiency, to be successful when they transition out of our shelter. Children who are abused or neglected, these are the ones who end up with anger problems, and we often find them in the prison system later on. This



This file photo from Catholic Charities USA depicts a young mother with her child. April marks national Child Abuse Prevention month, and local Catholic Charities officials are seeking financial assistance and volunteer hours to help support the CARE abuse prevention program.

program stops the problems before they start."

The client who fled her abusive husband recently sent a glowing letter of thanks to Catholic Charities. "CARE does a great job of teaching parenting skills and modeling alternatives in disciplining your children," she wrote. "From the first day [the social worker] helped me and my girls to get us on our feet... The main service that CARE has provided is the opportunity to see that I can make it and that I am a great mother."

For every dollar raised in funds, volunteer hours, or in-kind donations, the state of Texas will provide three dollars to the CARE program. For more information on how to help to prevent child abuse, contact Catholic Charities at (817) 413-3926 or at sdeleon@ccdofw.org.

Freshmen could attend St. Mary's University tuition free

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — St. Mary's University in San Antonio announced a new financial aid program called "Access St. Mary's" to enable incoming freshmen who have excelled in high school and who have financial needs to get a tuition-free college education.

University officials said the program, announced Feb. 5, was created in response to the nation's current economic cli-

mate that could make college tuition an extreme hardship or simply out of reach for many families.

It was approved by Charles Cotrell, president of the Marianist-run university, and the alumni association. The program is for members of the 2009-10 freshman class.

"There is the misconception that St. Mary's as a private, liberal arts university is too

expensive, when in fact we are very affordable," said Cotrell in a statement.

"We don't want to be off the table when students are considering where to go, especially during these tough economic times," he said. "When students choose St. Mary's, they are getting a huge return on their investment because we have one of the highest graduation rates in Texas."

Prospective full-time fresh-

men for fall 2009 can qualify for the tuition program if they are eligible for a federal Pell Grant and qualify for the St. Mary's president's or trustee's academic scholarship. Recipients must plan to attend St. Mary's full time and live in university housing.

The school's annual tuition is approximately \$21,000. "Access St. Mary's" would be a four-year commitment for students who meet the requirements for renew-

ing the aid. With the full price of tuition covered, students will be able to apply other aid for which they are eligible toward room, board and other fee charges.

Students must complete the school's undergraduate admission application, available online at www.stmarytx.edu/finaid, and the U.S. government's free application for federal student aid, found online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Diocesan

Rachel Ministries conference to offer training and tools to help people heal

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

According to some researchers, women who terminate a pregnancy experience no negative emotional or mental effects after the procedure. They claim the term "post-abortion syndrome" is a myth fabricated by anti-abortion forces.

Don't tell that to Lee, a middle-aged mother of six. The Abilene resident suffered bouts of depression and suicidal tendencies for years after her 1976 abortion.

"We were both divorced, not married and had other children. A pregnancy would have been difficult to explain," Lee says citing the reason for the decision. "Things got worse right away. We separated but eventually married. Thirty-one years is a long time to carry shame and guilt."

Offering hope and healing to women like Lee is the focus of Pregnancy Loss & Unresolved Grief — an abortion recovery conference set for Friday, May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. Hosted by Rachel Ministries of

North Texas, the program is designed to give therapists, clergy, counselors, and others involved in abortion recovery the tools needed to help people deal with grief and loss. Theresa Burke, a licensed professional counselor and founder of Rachel's Vineyard Ministry, will conduct the workshop along with her husband Kevin Burke. Both are published authors and internationally recognized experts in post-abortion trauma and healing.

Cost of the conference before April 17 is \$65 and includes lunch. Late registration is \$85. The continuing education workshop is worth 6.5 credits.

Organizers say therapists who attend the conference will gain insight into recognizing and treating the symptoms of post-abortion syndrome. Despite reports to the contrary, 80 percent of women who terminate a pregnancy develop emotional and psychological problems, says Steve Kopor, a licensed professional counselor who serves as the clinical director for Rachel Ministries.

"Of those, approximately 20 percent have symptoms serious enough to be classified as post-traumatic stress disorder," he adds.

Problems can range from sleep disturbances and intrusive thoughts to eating disorders, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and marriage or family problems.

"Some women may avoid going places like parks for fear of

"The incredibly deep hurt they feel is matched only by how much they crave forgiveness. Coming in touch with what their pain is like makes it much easier to address their problems in a healthy way."

— Father Tom Kennedy

Rachel Ministries of North Texas retreat chaplain

seeing kids or babies," the counselor says. And the psychological distress can manifest itself in physical symptoms, like sweating and a faster heartbeat.

While ignored by many mental health professionals, abortion-related issues are becoming more and more prevalent in patients seeking help.

"Our therapists in the Fort Worth Diocese have a clear concern for their clients, and this conference will prepare them with the knowledge and skills they need to diagnose and treat post-abortion trauma," Kopor explains.

The conference will also explore issues relevant to the clergy's role in post-abortion ministry and the importance of connecting the post-abortive person to a larger support system.

Father Tom Kennedy, who serves as the chaplain for Rachel's Vineyard retreats in the diocese, didn't fully understand the pain felt by people affected by abortion until he began actively working in the pro-life ministry.

"The incredibly deep hurt

they feel is matched only by how much they crave forgiveness," says the priest, who offers spiritual direction and counseling to participants attending the abortion recovery weekends. "Coming in touch with what their pain is like makes it much easier to address their problems in a healthy way."

The presence of clergy at the retreat serves as a conduit for individuals estranged from their faith. Women and men troubled by abortion trauma often feel unworthy and create a wedge between themselves and the Church.

"This is a way to connect people with God and show how much the Church loves and cares for them," Fr. Kennedy says.

People receiving help with pregnancy loss and unresolved grief are freed from their guilt and often feel an intense spiritual connection to their child. That's how Lee and her husband, Truett, felt at the end of a Rachel's Vineyard retreat they attended in Fort Worth two years ago. During the weekend, the devout non-



Catholic churchgoers spoke with a professional counselor, prayed with clergy, and attended worship services.

Today the couple not only feels forgiven, but healed. They call the baby they aborted, Matthew.

"We could never find peace because of the loss of Matthew," Truett says. "It was that personal intimate experience with the living Christ that finally gave us a sense of resolution."

To register for the conference, visit www.racheltx.org and follow the link to "2009 Conference" or call (817) 923-4757.

Pastoral theologian to speak on diocesan anniversary theme

The diocesan Office of Adult Catechesis has invited Douglas Bushman, STL, director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University, to speak on Wednesday, April 22 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church's parish hall located at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine. In the talk, titled "The Spirituality of Communion: God's Gift and Our Task," Bushman will speak and reflect on *Communio*, the theme Bishop Vann has chosen for the diocese's 40th Anniversary Celebration.

"This is a great opportunity to learn more about this theme and how we are called to live in communion as a local and universal Church," say event organizers in a press release.

According to the release, the presentation will address how "communion is the inner mystery of God's own life and how in Jesus Christ the very life of God becomes a gift so that we can be

drawn into this life of communion. This communion is also the vital source of all mission and service in the Church."

Bushman's work in pastoral theology and the master's program he directs are recognized nationwide as faithfully developing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI. Besides numerous articles in Catholic magazines, he is the author of *In His Image: Program of Renewal through Education* (1990), introductions to a new publication of *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II* (1999) and several articles in the forthcoming *Catholic Encyclopedia of Apologetics and Evangelization*. In addition, he also appears regularly on Catholic radio and television.

There is no cost to attend. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice, director of the diocese's Office of Adult Catechesis at (817) 560-3300 ext. 260 or at lpollice@fwdioc.org.

Nolan Catholic hosts middle school summer band camp

Middle School band members from across the Metroplex are invited to attend the Nolan Catholic High School's ninth annual Middle School Summer Band Camp June 8-12 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Summer band camp provides opportunities to bring together young musicians from across the Metroplex and learn from some of the best music teachers in the area, according to a press release.

"Participants will be able to perform in both concert and jazz bands as well as attend master classes," said Camp Director Chuck Compher. "Summer band camp is a great way to help motivate students to practice during the summer months."

The camp is geared toward private and parochial school students who have completed at least one year of band and are entering the fifth grade

through completing the eighth grade. Band members from public schools are welcome to attend.

Camp will be held in the Music Hall of the Multi-Purpose Activity Center at Nolan Catholic High School located at 4501 Bridge St. in East Fort Worth. An end-of-camp concert will be held on June 12 at 11 a.m.

Cost of the camp is \$75 which includes five days of group, ensemble, and individual instrument instruction, and a concert experience. The cost is \$65 for those who register and pay by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 22, and an additional \$10 can be saved for each new student referred to this year's camp.

For more information and to register, visit the "Band" page on the school's Web site at www.nolancatholic.org or contact Melissa Korzekwa at mkorzekwa@nolancatholic.org, or at (817) 457-2920 ext. 1733.

Viewpoints

Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives purpose to our faith

By Lucas Pollice

As we continue to celebrate the Year of St. Paul, in which we commemorate the 2,000th anniversary of his birth, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on St. Paul's teachings on the Resurrection of Christ. St. Paul himself powerfully encountered the Risen Christ on the Road to Damascus, and this encounter changed his identity and mission forever. St. Paul has left us a treasury of teachings on the Resurrection itself and the profound consequences for the human family and for each of us in our own lives.

The first of Paul's powerful passages comes in his letter to the Romans where he speaks of Christ as the New Adam who reverses the sin and death of Adam. Through the mystery of his death and Resurrection, Christ brings life and grace to all:

Therefore, just as through one person sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all, inasmuch as all sinned — for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come. But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by that one person's transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one person Jesus Christ overflow for the many. And the gift is not like the result of the one person's sinning. For after one sin there was the judgment that brought condemnation; but the gift after many transgressions, brought acquittal. For if, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ.

— Romans 5:15-17

Thus, the Resurrection is at the very heart of the Christian faith. If Christ is not truly risen, then all is in vain. However, our hope as Christians lies precisely in that Christ is alive and is present and working in and through the Church. Our task is to live as if Christ is truly risen! Do we really believe that Christ is risen and has truly conquered sin and death? Do our lives truly reflect this? St. Paul challenges us to vibrantly live our lives alive in Christ:

For Paul, just as the disobedience of Adam brought death to all, the obedience of Christ through his death brings life to all in the Resurrection. In the same way that Original Sin affected all of humanity, the Resurrection changes and elevates the entire human family to a dignity beyond measure. Thus, Easter morning is truly the dawn of a new humanity, a new creation transformed and alive in Christ. What then, are the true consequences of the Resurrection of Christ? Paul concludes with this powerful passage:

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Romans 8:31-35; 38-39

Therefore, if Christ is truly raised from the dead and has truly defeated sin and death, then what do we have to be afraid of? This message is particularly important for us to remember this Easter as we presently face many moral, economic, and foreign threats in our world today. We need to remember that ultimately Jesus Christ is victorious, and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. We must also be convicted that we must work diligently to live and preach the Gospel in our own lives in order to bring about Christ's victory and not allow worry, stress, greed, or indifference to rob us of our share in the salvation of Christ.

We also see St. Paul's most explicit and developed teaching on the Resurrection of Christ in his First Letter to the Corinthians. Paul was writing his letter to the

Church in Corinth to correct both liturgical abuse and doctrinal error. One of the dangerous heresies circulating around Corinth was a denial of the resurrection of the dead. Paul forcefully corrects this error, explaining the consequences of such a teaching:

But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

— 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Paul then teaches us the reality of the Resurrection: that Christ is truly alive and has destroyed sin and death forever and that the mystery of the Resurrection transforms us from being dead to sin to being alive in Christ and complete sharers in his victory over death:

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

— 1 Corinthians 51-57

Thus, the Resurrection is at the very heart of the Christian faith. If Christ is not truly risen, then all is in vain. However, our hope as Christians lies precisely in that Christ is alive and is present and working in and through the Church. Our task is to live as if Christ is truly risen! Do we really believe that Christ is risen and has truly conquered sin and death? Do our lives truly reflect this? St. Paul challenges us to vibrantly live our lives alive in Christ:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory. Put to death, then, the parts of you that are earthly: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and the greed that is idolatry. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

— Colossians 3:1-5; 12-17

May we, through the intercession of St. Paul, encounter anew the life and grace of the Risen Christ and become more effective witnesses of the truth of the Resurrection. It is only through the grace, power, and conviction of the Resurrection that we can be the instruments that transform our culture into a culture of life and civilization of love so that all may come to know fullness of life in Christ. Happy Easter!



Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master's degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth. Lucas and his wife, Mary, have five children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, Christian, and Julia.

Stem Cell Decision

a step toward darkness

By Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

President Obama, on March 9, 2009, signed an important executive order that vastly expanded federal funding for human embryonic stem-cell research and crossed a significant and troubling ethical line.

This decision, and the rhetoric during the signing, encouraged scientists and researchers to enter the moral quagmire of taking some human lives in order to benefit others. During his signing speech, in order to support his decision, the president invoked the name of Christopher Reeve and other patients desperate to find cures for their ailments.

Desperation, however, rarely makes for good ethics.

I once heard a true story that brought this point home for me in a dramatic way. The story involved a father and his two young sons. They had a favorite swimming hole out in the countryside which they would visit on hot summer days. The father, however, had never learned to swim, while the boys had learned when they were younger and could swim moderately well.

Their father would sit on the shore while the boys would swim inside a line of bright red buoys that marked where the shelf on the floor of the swimming hole would drop off steeply. Each year, the father would tell his sons not to cross that line, because if they did, he would not be able to swim out and rescue them. Each year they would faithfully obey. This particular year, however, they decided to challenge their dad's authority and venture beyond the buoys.

As they swam beyond the line, their father saw them and called out to them to return, but

The president is offering Americans the prospect of using the powers of science to oppress, or more accurately, to suppress the youngest members of the human family to serve the interests of older and more wealthy members.

they feigned they couldn't hear him and continued to swim out even further. Their dad got nervous, and began to walk out into the water, as it got deeper and deeper, and suddenly he moved into the drop-off section and began sinking.

From a distance, the boys spotted him flailing around in the water, gasping for breath, trying to keep his head above water, and slapping the water with his hands. They suddenly realized he was drowning, and swam toward him. As they got near him, he yelled at them not to come any closer. He cried out, "Get away! Don't touch me!" In fear, they kept their distance until he stopped struggling in the water, and began to sink beneath the surface, with gurgling and bubbling.

As he slipped into unconsciousness, the boys approached him and grabbed him as best they could and dragged him back to shore, where he sputtered and revived and finally coughed out the water he had taken in. Later, the boys asked him why he shouted at them to stay away. He said he was afraid if he put his hand on them, he would drag them under the water with him. He knew that a desperate person would reach for almost anything nearby in order to save himself, maybe even his own children, and he didn't want to do that.

We must be similarly concerned in our society when scientists and desperate patients are tempted to put their hand onto our embryonic children in a bid to alleviate suffering or

even to save themselves. Sadly, the president's stem-cell decision encourages this kind of unethical behavior by an emotional appeal to patient desperation. The president's ethical mistake is further compounded by the fact that remarkable and powerful scientific alternatives exist, such as cellular reprogramming on the one hand, or the use of adult or umbilical cord stem cells on the other, neither of which requires ever laying a hand on a human embryo.

His stem-cell decision also manifests a troubling shift toward a more widespread and systemic form of oppression within our society. The president is offering Americans the prospect of using the powers of science to oppress, or more accurately, to suppress the youngest members of the human family to serve the interests of older and more wealthy members. He is offering Americans the prospect of reducing fellow human beings to cogs and commodities in the assembly line of the medico-business industrial complex.


Many Americans, however, seem only vaguely aware of what has transpired in the president's decision. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas once commented on the way that oppression can subtly arise in our midst: "As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there's a twilight where everything remains seemingly unchanged, and it is in such twilight that we must be aware of change in the air, however slight, lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness."

Some would suggest that perhaps the darkness is already upon us. But a few moments of twilight may still remain, in which Americans can turn back the moral darkness that threatens our society and our future.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.

*Nattie's note reminds us all:
We can ask for help too*

*Dear Jesus
Please help me to
run faster!
Do you think you could
do that?*



By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Like most five or six-year-old athletes, my granddaughter Natalie's major athletic concern is soccer field flora.

In addition to noticing grass or weeds, however, Natalie is interested in looking pretty out there. That intuitive description comes from her paternal grandfather, a longtime award-winning coach and athletic director whose true ecstasy is watching his grandchildren's childhood sports.

Natalie takes the field in pink uniform, pink cleats, French-braided hair with side-by-side pink hairbows and pink cheeks.

After the game, her grandfather, Papa, will give her his standard praise, the same words he says to each of his four grandchildren whose multiple events are our family's Saturday fare.

"I love watching you play," he will say, hug them, and beam.

Natalie, like her grandfather, glows happily at her games, which she plays with her aptly-named team, "Tickled Pink." I laugh inside when they kick off because Nattie always glances at her family in attendance, flashing a smile. She proceeds with the quality I love most about her, the quality she has shown since babyhood: unbridled joy.

Playing the game, Natalie skips a little, sometimes combining skip steps with sideways running that reminds me of sewing machine stitches: right, together, right, together, leaving a long connected mark of new cleat-steps on the recently-mown field.

And, like the other children, Nattie is frequently interrupted by the sight of the grass itself, the clover or dandelions nearby — or the fluffy weeds billowing at a distance, outside the fence that separates soccer from, well, everything else God made.

Like a true kindergartener, Natalie's attention is easily interrupted by the creations her Father in heaven placed there before he even placed her. So, she steals a glance, looking around at the sky, the flowers, his gifts of spring, his signs of life.

Sometimes Natalie's consciousness is broken with words: "Run, Natalie!" So, like Forrest Gump, she runs!

One night in early Lent, Natalie wrote a letter to God. It was on the evening after a soccer game at which the coach (Nattie's own dad) had encouraged her to hustle more — such a bore, such an interruption for a creative, fun-loving child — and he suggested, "practice your running."

That message stuck with Nattie.

So she took 10 minutes before bedtime, carefully

SEE HAMER, P. 30

Oils from Chrism Mass represent a symbol for priests of diocese to Recommit to ministry

Story and photos by
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

When Bishop Kevin Vann processed into St. Patrick Cathedral for the celebration of the 2009 Chrism Mass, a young St. Mary of the Assumption parishioner unofficially greeted him, reaching into the aisle to clasp his hand.

The gesture of that hand-clasp, between 12-year-old Brigid Condors and the bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, seemed to personalize what Bishop Vann called the yearly liturgy: "The Body of Christ in sacred assembly."

Brigid was one of the parish emissaries who presented holy oils and chrism during the offertory procession. St. Mary of the Assumption parishioners were bearers of the Oil of Catechumens, and representatives from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Fort Worth, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo, were bearers for the Oil of the Sick and the Sacred Chrism.

"It thrills Brigid to see the bishop," Brigid's mother, Pam McGehee said, explaining the child calls him "ship Vann."

"I do believe she is his greatest fan! She also loves Father David Bristow (the family's priest at St. Mary of the Assumption) and 'The Hope,' which is her name for the Holy Father."

In his homily, Bishop Vann said this year's Chrism Mass brought together four important elements: the diocese's approaching 40th anniversary celebration, the final months of the Year of St. Paul (June 2008-2009), the approaching Year of the Priesthood, dedicated to St. John Vianney (June 2009-2010), and the fourth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's death.



ABOVE: Deacons Simón Tórréz (left) and Rubén Castañeda process from the cathedral with blessed holy oil from this year's Chrism Mass.

LEFT: Bishop Kevin Vann prays over the sacred oils at the Chrism Mass, assisted on the altar by seminarian Stephen Hauck, a third-year philosophy student at the University of Dallas.

BELOW: All priests of the diocese gathered with the bishop on the cathedral's altar to renew their commitment to their vows of ministry.

"All these events taken together pull us out of the present moment of our lives to some sense of the timelessness and eternity in every eucharistic celebration, and together with every Chrism Mass that has been celebrated for nearly 40 years in our diocesan family," he said.

Looking back at the birth of the Church in North Texas, when French missionaries brought their faith to the area, the bishop said, "We are with all of them today, with the same Lord, to profess the same faith that they did. The blessing of these oils teaches how the Lord lives along with us still, and how he is still present in word and sacrament.

"This visible moment of solidarity and community stands as an eloquent, timeless witness to this culture and time that not only is indifferent to God, but tries to push us apart from the reality of the risen Lord," he said.

The annual Chrism Mass, historically celebrated on Holy Thursday morning, takes place in the Diocese of Fort Worth one week earlier, so that the holy oils may be distributed to every parish in time for the Easter vigil.

The solemn liturgy is the occasion not only for the blessing of the oils, but also for a public gathering of all diocesan priests to renew their commitment to the vows of ministry. The grand procession of clergy is a rare visual

experience for the community, beginning with their line-up on a busy Fort Worth sidewalk, and culminating with their gathering around the cathedral altar to concelebrate with the bishop.

Bishop Vann spoke of the priesthood in his homily, quoting *Extraordinary Lives*, a book that likens the priesthood to the story of Zaccheus, a diminutive tax collector in the Gospel of Luke. Zaccheus climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus as he passed by, the book described, and added, "Every priest is a Zaccheus."

Bishop Vann went on to explain, "In their ministry of preaching and teaching and sanctifying, which the oils remind us of today, priests share their unimpeded view of the Lord that they have after ordination, with all who come their way, so that God may indeed be visible, and known with love, in good times and in bad, in joy and sorrow, in



death and in life."

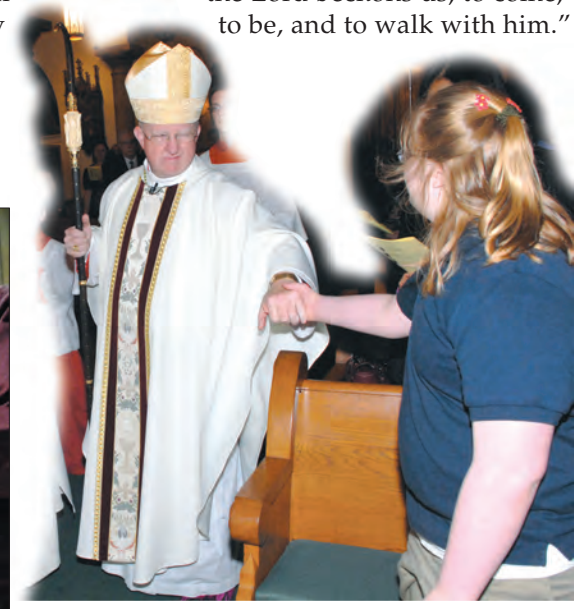
The Chrism Mass was a broadly supported effort, with representatives from all parts of the diocese. St. Andrew Church's Adult Choir, directed by Jerry Bierschen, provided the music and fourth-degree Knights of Columbus from the General Worth Assembly provided an honor guard.

"As we pray these prayers of

the Chrism Mass this day," Bishop Vann concluded, "as we cast our eyes and turn toward Holy Week, may the Lord bless our priests and all gathered here this day. May he bless in fact all of us, in these most sacred days which lie just ahead of us, in which the Lord beckons us, to come, to be, and to walk with him."



Fred and Mary Lopez, parishioners at St. Patrick Cathedral, help to prepare the holy oils for distribution to parishes throughout the diocese.



Brigid Condors, a young parish emissary from St. Mary of the Assumption Parish who presented holy oils and chrism during the liturgy, reaches out to greet Bishop Vann as he processed into Mass.

Parish leaders attend *Why Catholic?* launching workshops

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant
Photos by Donna Ryckaert

Menacing thunderstorms and heavy rains failed to dampen the enthusiasm of participants at the evening gathering held March 11 at St. Andrew Church in Southwest Fort Worth.

More than 150 Catholics met in teams representing pastors, staff members, and volunteer leaders from parishes across the diocese for one of the six English language "Launching Workshops" held in March as part of the *Why Catholic? Journey Through the Catechism* process.

"Evangelization Workshops" will also be held for the parish teams during the week of April 22-27 (see schedule, right).

The *Why Catholic?* process, now in its planning stages within the Diocese of Fort Worth, is presented by RENEW International, a Newark, New Jersey-based Catholic ministry organization, as a vehicle for adults to explore the richness of their Catholic faith and to apply it to their daily lives. Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, and Scripture, *Why Catholic?* is described by Father Carmen Mele, OP, diocesan coordinator of the *Why Catholic?* program, as "a dynamic adult faith formation program for the renewal of parish life."

Sister Marie Cooper, SJC, and Sister Patricia Thomas, OP, of RENEW International, served as workshop presenters at the March Launching Workshops. The purpose of the Launching Workshops was to help parish teams learn how to implement *Why Catholic?* to offer practical suggestions for inviting maximum participation in all parishes and to share resources on how to effectively lead the sessions.

Forty-eight sessions, held over a four-

year period, explore the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and offer in-depth information and insight into core beliefs, the sacraments, morality, and prayer. Sessions will be offered in English and in Spanish in parishes throughout the diocese.

"I know that about [15] years ago, the RENEW program was in this diocese," said Sr. Thomas as she welcomed workshop participants on March 11. "Over the years, RENEW has changed its process somewhat, but the emphasis upon the value of small communities and faith-sharing within those communities has remained. Small Christian community," she added, "is at the heart and soul of the process."

Workshop participants listened intently to information presented in the first half of the evening, then had an opportunity to take part in practice faith-sharing sessions. "It's really exciting to be here and to take part in this effort to revitalize our Catholic faith in Wise County," said Victor Gonzalez, a team leader representing St. John the Baptist Church in Bridgeport. "I've been involved in RCIA for quite some time and I really enjoy that ministry, which is why I decided to become involved with *Why Catholic?* Our pastor sees this as a great opportunity for evangelization within our parish."

The most important aspect of the process, however, is the opportunity "to build up the spirit of evangelization and give people the opportunity to grow deeper in faith," said Fr. Mele.

Lancarte, will host the event as longtime supporters of the high school.

Cassata High School, founded in 1975 with the name "Cassata Learning Center," offers small class sizes, a self-paced curriculum, and personalized instruction designed to meet the needs of students seeking an alternative to a traditional high school. The school was named for Bishop John Cassata, the first bishop of

the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"This unique educational institution serves far beyond the Catholic community," Cassata president Sal Espino, said, noting that the school welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds. "[We] have a track record of educating at-risk students," said Espino, noting that more than 3,500 students have graduated from the school since 1975. "Last year 68 students

graduated and are continuing their education at colleges, trade, or technical schools, are gainfully employed, or have enlisted in the military," added Espino.

Espino described the fundraising event as "an evening of feasting, entertainment, and prize awards in recognition of [our] non-traditional high school, frequently referred to as the 'high school of hope.'"

Prizes to be won during the

evening will include luxury dinners, hotel accommodations, and tickets to an evening at Bass Hall in downtown Fort Worth.

Tables for 10 for corporations or private parties are available at prices ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,000. To reserve a table, purchase individual tickets, or for more information, call the school's development office at (817) 926-1745 or e-mail to sflood@cassatahs.org.

Evangelization Workshops in English

Day	Date	Time	Church	City
Wednesday	April 22	11 a.m.	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Decatur
Wednesday	April 22	7 p.m.	St. Michael	Bedford
Thursday	April 23	10:30 a.m.	Catholic Center	Fort Worth
Thursday	April 23	7 p.m.	Most Blessed Sacrament	Arlington
Friday	April 24	7 p.m.	St. Ann	Burleson
Saturday	April 25	10 a.m.	Catholic Center	Fort Worth
Saturday	April 25	3 p.m.	St. Rita	Ranger
Sunday	April 26	3 p.m.	Sacred Heart	Wichita Falls
Monday	April 27	10:30 a.m.	St. Vincent de Paul	Arlington
Monday	April 27	7 p.m.	Immaculate Conception	Denton



Father Richard Flores, rector of St. Patrick Cathedral, works with cathedral parishioners Carla Gonzales (center) and Sarah Frost on plans for *WHY CATHOLIC?* sessions to be offered this fall.



Texas Christian University Catholic Community students Paul Petrie, Veronica Sandoval (center), and Kristin Pelzel discuss ways to encourage other college students from their to participate in *WHY CATHOLIC?* sessions.

Cassata High School hosts annual Noche de Gracias

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

The 12th annual celebration of *Noche de Gracias*, a "night of thanks" fundraising event benefiting Cassata High School in Fort Worth, will be held Tuesday, April 28 at Joe T. Garcia's restaurant, located at 2201 N. Commerce St. in Fort Worth. A social hour will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by a buffet dinner at 7:30 p.m. Joe T. Garcia's owners, Jody and Lanny

Lancarte, will host the event as longtime supporters of the high school.

Cassata High School, founded in 1975 with the name "Cassata Learning Center," offers small class sizes, a self-paced curriculum, and personalized instruction designed to meet the needs of students seeking an alternative to a traditional high school. The school was named for Bishop John Cassata, the first bishop of

the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"This unique educational institution serves far beyond the Catholic community," Cassata president Sal Espino, said, noting that the school welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds. "[We] have a track record of educating at-risk students," said Espino, noting that more than 3,500 students have graduated from the school since 1975. "Last year 68 students

graduated and are continuing their education at colleges, trade, or technical schools, are gainfully employed, or have enlisted in the military," added Espino.

Espino described the fundraising event as "an evening of feasting, entertainment, and prize awards in recognition of [our] non-traditional high school, frequently referred to as the 'high school of hope.'"

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evening will include luxury dinners, hotel accommodations, and tickets to an evening at Bass Hall in downtown Fort Worth.

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Jesus' Resurrection

shows us the fullness of New Life God has prepared for all who believe



"When the resurrected Jesus appears to the apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence," writes Benedictine Father Dale Launderville, a Scripture scholar. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

Food for Thought

The second reading for the Mass of Easter Day reminds us: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3-4).

What comforting words!

The sin of Adam still renders all of mankind spiritually dead.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ. ... For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:4-5, 8)!

Not only does God grant us salvation through Christ, he gives us the gift of faith to believe that Jesus is our Messiah!

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the lifeless man never could have responded had Jesus not also given him the power to obey.

So just as Jesus called Lazarus back from death, he likewise calls those who are his own — a gift from his Father before the foundation of time — giving us also the power to respond in faith.

Hallelujah!

Carole Norris Greene
ASSOCIATE EDITOR, FAITH ALIVE!

The resurrected Jesus encounters his apostles: Why their meetings were so critical

By Father Dale Launderville, OSB
Catholic News Service

When the resurrected Jesus appears to the apostles, he imparts to them a profound experience of his glorified, bodily presence. This encounter not only gives them courage but also moves them to reflect on who Jesus is.

During his earthly life, Jesus walked with the apostles and shared a wide range of experiences with them. These kinds of human interaction are the privileged places in which God quietly lets us humans know that he is with us.

The apostles were in the unique position of being able to make known the continuity between the earthly and the resurrected Jesus. They are the chosen ones who are to testify by their words and actions that Jesus is still present among them in the Spirit.

The resurrected Jesus' body is transformed, but still bears the marks of his earthly identity and experience, for he eats and drinks with his apostles.

This reality of Jesus' ongoing presence in the world is made known by the acts of faith, hope, and love of the apostles.

As Jesus' resurrected body becomes incarnated in the community of believers, it becomes the primary place in which we acknowledge God's desire to draw us into the sphere of divine love.

The apostles already saw Jesus' miraculous healings and the powerful impact of his preaching. But more importantly, they heard his prophecy that he had to suffer, die, and rise from the dead, and now saw it fulfilled!

Their earlier expectation for a triumphant, earthly Messiah who would crush his opponents was transformed into an abiding hope that the resurrected Jesus conquered death and is imparting to them a love that is stronger than death.

This conviction that Jesus has opened a way through death to new life is strengthened by the apostles' testifying to one another that this reality of the resurrected Jesus is a tangible reality and not simply a

figment of their imaginations.

The resurrection of Jesus' body not only gives hope of a life after death, it also raises the value that we ascribe to the human body.

This body is a privileged place in which we come to know God. God not only challenges us through physical trials but also communicates his love to us through our interactions with others and through our bodily perception of his divine presence.

With Jesus' resurrection, we learn that our bodies will be raised in a transformed state and will come to deeper communion with God. We do not simply discard our bodies at death but continue to exist with Jesus in a physically transformed way.

Our experience of aging raises questions about who we are and what will become of our bodies. At times, Jesus' dramatic triumph over death seems almost too good to be true. His resurrected reality seems to be a stumbling block along with his difficult message of loving one's enemies and his claim that God's kingdom is at hand and

breaking into our lives even now.

The earthly and the resurrected Jesus is a paradoxical figure; he challenges the sufficiency of the judgments of our common sense. His submission to the forces of violence goes contrary to typical ways of human behavior, and so he becomes a stone rejected by those who would build up their lives only with materials they can control.

But the truth of Jesus' paradoxical way of living is confirmed through his resurrection: The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner (Psalm 118:22).

We join in the apostles' Easter proclamation by embracing this Jesus who longs to be present with us. The truth of this proclamation becomes more vivid and persuasive as our way of life manifests the presence of the Spirit of Jesus and his Father.

Benedictine Father Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Christ the Lord, Risen to New Life

Resurrection: Not to be confused with resuscitation

By David Gibson
Catholic News Service

A father told me his child died for a few moments after falling seriously ill and being rushed to the hospital where the child's vital signs were revived. After a recovery period, the child's life journey resumed.

Such accounts no longer are rare. Contemporary medicine sometimes restores life, sometimes extends it. Patients are enabled to continue the life they've known.

Was Jesus' resurrection like that? Did life continue as before?

Not exactly.

The early Christians saw Easter as the day of new life. A new creation was born with Jesus' death — and resurrection!

The new creation even gained a label: "the eighth day." If a seven-day week characterized our world's original creation, the eighth day signified that time itself now was transformed.

Passionist Father Donald Senior, in a 2008 speech, discussed bodily resurrection — including the resurrection of the dead that all Christians anticipate. The U.S. biblical scholar said St. Paul, addressing the Corinthians, made clear that bodily resurrection should not be "confused with resuscitation." Bodily resurrection "is not some kind of rescue from a near-death experience; it is not more of the same."

"Easter

also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense," notes David Gibson. "Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose?" (CNS photo/Bill Wittman)

Christian faith affirms, Fr. Senior said, that "Jesus, who truly died, who lost his life, was transformed by the power of God and given renewed life, new corporeal, bodily life." Yes, this still was Jesus, but his "body-spirit is transformed and has new power."

No wonder the early Christians took the resurrection seriously!

Like Christians today, early Christians struggled with Easter's implications — what it meant for Jesus and them. But



they grasped that he'd risen and that they shared in his new, transformed life.

So Easter was to become an annual celebration not solely of what happened "to" Jesus long ago. Easter would celebrate his new life and how it transformed people and their world.

Easter also would become the premier time of year for baptisms, a development that makes complete sense. Isn't baptism the sacrament of new life in Christ, who died and rose?

St. Paul wrote that Christians were incorporated by baptism into Christ's body. Though members of the community differed in ethnicity or talents or wealth, each one was a valued, needed part of Christ's body.

That Christians are joined with Christ's body is no small statement to make. Christ's life, this suggests, gives baptized Christians vitality.

My wife and I photographed the "old creation" — stunning mountain settings, glistening waterways — when we visited Alaska recently.

The new creation, however, is visible whenever God, neighbors, and enemies are loved. Christ's new life is glimpsed when people sacrifice, live simply, act selflessly, or serve as healing agents in troubled situations.

The new creation's horizons are wide. Participants in Christ's new life, his body's members, are impelled to serve life, transform it, and not give up on it, even in highly difficult circumstances.

In the new creation, life often is restored, revitalized — but not just in order to continue as before.

David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years. When he retired as special projects editor at CNS, he was the editor of *ORIGINS* and the columns and *Faith Alive!* packages.

Sometimes God sends us a messenger

By Jeff Hedglen
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

Recently, while on a retreat, I saw a short movie that begins in a flower shop. An older gentleman is looking at cards and puts them back if they are too expensive. He is looking for a plant too, but tends to look mostly at the small potted ones. He looks worn out and very sad.

In comes a teenager with lots of energy. He goes straight for the fresh flowers and seems undecided about the medium or large size. He moves on to the cards and next to the balloons, where he chooses one that says "I love you." A young lady behind the counter is a bit envious of whoever he is buying all this for.

The older man sees the young man and says under his breath: "Wait 30 years, buddy." It is so clear that one man is bitter and wounded and the other is alive with hope.

The young man purchases his gifts and moves on. In the next scene we see the older man walking down a sidewalk. He comes to a short brick wall, and we realize he is headed to a cemetery. Now we know why he is so sad. He despondently looks into the burial ground, and his eyes get big as he sees the young man standing at a grave. He looks at his small withering plant, then back at the young man and turns to go back to the flower shop.

The lights come up and those of us on the retreat look at each other with wonder,

These two stories bring to life the message of Easter.

Death is not the end. Loss of life on this earth does not have to be eternally sad. Yes loss hurts deeply and grieving those who have died is real and important, but for those who believe in Jesus, grief is not only bitter, it is also sweet.

awe, sadness, smiles, and curiosity. Then the retreat leader says this: "What does this tell us about believing in the resurrection?"

The question penetrates my heart and bangs around inside my brain. Immediately I think, well the young man has it figured out, and the old man is too wrapped up in his loss to be joyful. Then I begin to wonder if the young man is really a messenger sent for the older gentleman.

Upon seeing the big flowers and "I love you balloon" of the young man, he looks at his meager gift and realizes that this is not a fitting expression of his feelings for his loved one who has died. So he turns around

to set things right. Of course I have no idea if that actually happens because the movie has ended.

One thing is certain, I have never brought balloons to my mom's grave, and now I am thinking about doing just that.

My wife's hometown is in the hills of southwest Germany. The cemetery in her town is one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. Each grave always has fresh flowers and greenery planted; some have candles burning. When I visit there I always see people on their hands and knees tending to the resting place of their loved one. It is a strange but faith-filled experi-

ence to see the place of burial for the dead teeming with life, color, and beauty.

These two stories bring to life the message of Easter. Death is not the end. Loss of life on this earth does not have to be eternally sad. Yes, loss hurts deeply and grieving those who have died is real and important, but for those who believe in Jesus, grief is not only bitter, it is also sweet.

Early in the morning, that first Easter, the women went to Jesus' tomb to continue their mourning. They are greeted and told that this is not a place to mourn, for Jesus has been raised. The shock and confusion had to have been staggering. Memories of Jesus saying he would rise again must have rushed into their heads. I imagine they were too afraid to believe that this might actually be true.

I think the old man in the movie had also forgotten the promise of Jesus, and seeing the young man, he too had the memories of long held belief come rushing back. I imagine him returning to the cemetery standing at the grave of his dearly loved bride, arms filled with flowers and heart overflowing with hope and love reaching to the heavens.

Alleluia Alleluia!

Jeff Hedglen, is youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth and chief organizer of Camp Fort Worth. He and his wife Monika are active parishioners at St. Bartholomew's.

Christ the Lord, Risen to New Life

Women: First witnesses of the resurrected Jesus

By Joseph F. Kelly
Catholic News Service

The Gospel narratives of Jesus' resurrection from the dead contain accounts of his appearances to several of his followers — those on the road to Emmaus, doubting Thomas. These stories are well-known.

Less well-known, however, is that all four Gospels recount that the initial witnesses to Jesus' resurrection were all women.

This may surprise some people today; in the ancient world, it would have stunned everyone.

Women played a diminished role in ancient society. They were considered weaker and less intelligent than men. They could not hold public office, nor could they bear witness in court by themselves. Their testimony had validity only if validated by their husbands or other men.

Yet the Gospels affirm that women were the first witnesses to the resurrection.

This leads to two other points about women in the Gospels.

— First, the Gospels speak of the Twelve Apostles, but they also speak generally of “disciples” whose ranks included women. These women played a great role in supporting Jesus and the apostles. The Gospel of Luke tells us, for example, that women “provided for them out of their own resources,” helped pay for the lodging and food that a group constantly on the move would need.

— The second and far more important point about women in the Gospels is that Jesus rose above the prejudices of his day, prejudices shared even by those closest



to him. In his account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, the evangelist John tells us that the apostles “were amazed that he was talking with a woman”! But to Jesus, all people were equal.

Luke's Gospel also emphasizes the role that Jesus' mother Mary played in the economy of salvation when she accepts the angel's announcement that she was to be the mother of the Lord. As such, a woman acted decisively when Jesus began his salvific mission to humanity, and the evangelists recount how several women acted decisively when Jesus completed his salvific mission, which he would soon turn

over to his church.

The four Gospel accounts do not agree exactly on all the details, but the combined accounts are of pious Jewish women who want to anoint Jesus' body, a ritual honoring the deceased. But instead of finding a closed tomb, they encounter an empty tomb and a heavenly being who informs them that Jesus has risen from the dead and that they should inform his other disciples.

Women were the first ones commissioned to accept and report the good news of Christ's resurrection!

Consider Mary Magdalene in John's Gos-

When the women go to anoint Jesus' body, they encounter an empty tomb and a heavenly being who informs them that Jesus has risen from the dead and that they should inform his other disciples. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

pel. Mary encounters Jesus but does not recognize him; she thinks he is a gardener.

This follows a central theme of John's Gospel: People like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, for example, do not initially understand Jesus, but in faith they come to know who he really is.

Thus Mary Magdalene represents all believers for whom accepting the risen Christ is a challenge. But God's gift of faith enables us to embrace that challenge.

Joseph Kelly chairs the Department of Religious Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

Easter's call to those Easter Catholics

By Dan Morris
Catholic News Service

The Catholic community has long been a bit conflicted about what they call Easter and Christmas Catholics. One school of thought seems to say, “Nice to see you, but where are you the rest of the year?”

Another school appears more hopeful and charitable: “Nice to see you at Easter Mass. We hope to see you again next week, and the week after that, and the week after that.”

Still, a soft condemnation or judgmental attitude colors the greeting. Unspoken is either, “But we kind of doubt we will,” or “You are less than we, if you don't.”

A lot of us find ourselves in both schools, say many parish leaders, notably pastors and others who are frontline evangelizers. They tell stories of hurt, disenfranchised, or poorly catechized Catholics who have found their way back to full participation in the life of the church, for example, as the Easter liturgy's light of love and hope illuminates their faith anew.

The conduits to grace

are mysterious and myriad, say pastors, catechists, and others. They consistently underscore that the potential impact of an Easter or Christmas homily cannot be overstated.

The keyholes to those moments are often associated with tangibles such as a homily, a children's choir, a warm and sincere greeting, a caring remark. The conduits to grace are mysterious and myriad, say pastors, catechists, and others.

They consistently underscore that the

potential impact of an Easter or Christmas homily cannot be overstated.

Now-retired Father Miles Riley of the San Francisco Archdiocese recalls vividly an Easter homily he delivered many years ago, before the advent of the cell phone.

“I was casting about for some modern symbol as a reminder of the risen Christ,” he said. “I came up with a telephone. A radio station engineer I know rigged the phone so that it would ring when I turned on a switch in the pulpit.

“I set it up by asking: ‘Wouldn't it be great if the risen Lord could actually contact us, talk to us, even call us on the phone?’”

Father Miles smiled. “And then the ‘God phone’ begins to ring, and I ask the congregation, ‘Should I answer it?’”

“And, of course, all the kids are cheering, ‘Answer the phone, answer the phone!’ And, eventually, I do.

“And in the hushed silence,” the priest continued, “I say, ‘Hello, Jesus, I hope you're not calling from Salt Lake City.’ And then Jesus and I proceed to have a great 10-minute conversation about everything

from baseball to church-going.”

He shakes his head. “I'm not kidding, people remember that sermon now 30 to 40 years later, and tell me that the humor and hope they experienced then renewed their faith in the oh-so-human church Jesus established 2,000 years ago.”

When he recalls the impact of that homily, Fr. Riley said, he often leaves out a touching postscript. A little girl of 7 or 8 came up to him after that Easter liturgy and asked, “Father, what did Jesus sound like?”

“She caught me completely off guard,” he laughed. “I stammered and then replied, ‘Well, he sounded Jewish’ which completely befuddled the little child, but it was the only answer I could come up with!”

Dan Morris is a veteran Catholic journalist, whose last stint as a diocesan editor was with CATHOLIC SAN FRANCISCO, newspaper of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He has also had two long runs as a humor columnist for Catholic News Service, each column as a different persona. Morris currently writes from Anacortes, Washington.

Christ the Lord, Risen to New Life

St. Paul refuted mistaken notions of the Resurrection

By Sheila E. McGinn
Catholic News Service

“Alleluia, Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia!”

This paschal acclamation of the ever-ancient, ever-new mystery of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ derives from the earliest Easter proclamation.

The heart of the Christian faith, this resurrection message forms the basis for the earliest and most fundamental of Christian creedal statements: “Jesus is Lord.”

Without the resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth would have been merely one more Jew killed by gentile rulers; Christianity would never have existed.

Christ’s resurrection changed everything.

Through the resurrection, God manifested to the entire world that Jesus is the Christ, the goal for which creation groans in labor and toward which the universe is being drawn enticingly, ineluctably, until it reaches its ultimate fulfillment in God.

Many of my students focus on Jesus’ death and more or less ignore the resurrection — his or ours. When reading the First Letter to the Corinthians, we often find that the Corinthians have redefined “resurrection” exactly as did that early church, spiritualizing a very “earthy” claim about the transformation of human life.

St. Paul corrects that view, emphasizing that Christ’s resurrection is a bodily event.

“Resurrection” does not mean afterlife of the soul or a disembodied heavenly ex-



The act of emerging from a cocoon

into a beautiful creature

makes the butterfly

a Christian symbol

of resurrection from

the dead. (CNS photo/

Crosiers)

istence; nor, for that matter, is it an event in which only the dead can participate. When Christ returns in glory, Paul says, even the living will be transformed: “in an instant, in the blink of an eye ... the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Several Pauline letters discuss the resurrection, which suggests that many early Christians needed help exploring its significance.

Most first-century Jews believed in resurrection, especially in light of the prophet

Ezekiel’s graphic vision of God raising the righteous dead (37); Paul’s pagan converts, however, would likely be confused by the idea. Two common misunderstandings would be that “resurrection” refers to the resuscitation of a corpse or a disembodied, spiritual afterlife. Paul refutes both mistakes.

A resuscitated person gains a temporary reprieve; eventually, inescapably, death will come. Resurrection involves a permanent, metaphysical change in a person’s mode of existence, and denotes existence on a dif-

ferent plane altogether.

Of course, here is where the second type of misunderstanding arises. How easy it is to jump from the (rather unusual) notion of a radically transformed human life to the (nearly ubiquitous) notion of an afterlife.

Greeks believed in the immortality of the soul for 400 years before Paul came to Corinth; the death of the body meant the escape of the soul to the spirit world, untainted by corporeal realities.

Belief in a disembodied, spiritual afterlife was the logical consequence of their profoundly negative view of the material world. Which, of course, is why the conflation of the resurrection proclamation with a disembodied afterlife of the soul is a profoundly anti-Christian move: “For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:16-17).

Resurrection is the profound mystery of the perfection of all life — human life, yes, but as part of the entire cosmos.

The material world is God’s creation and is fundamentally good. Resurrection is not an escape from embodied life, but rather its ultimate affirmation. Resurrection is the reality of a truly human life, body and soul, transformed and restored to the fullness of the divine image in Christ.

Think about that the next time you are saying the creed.

Sheila McGinn is professor of biblical studies and early Christianity at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

First the waiting, then the joy!

By Mary Eileen Andreasen
Catholic News Service

Easter Sunday’s Gospel reading (John 20:1-9) tells us that the stone that sealed the tomb of Christ is moved aside. He has emerged from the grave victorious! Centuries of waiting for salvation are over!

This means that the stones that sealed us in our own dark tombs have been removed as well, and we find comfort in that verse in Romans that says that those who die with Christ shall also live with him (8:6)!

Appreciation is certainly sharpened after a long wait!

Some 30 Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Norfolk, Nebraska, are about to finish what has been for them a particularly long wait. These hardy souls are living in temporary housing while their beloved home is gutted and refurbished into a newer monastery and spirituality center. It has taken about 18 months so far for the rebirth. But the waiting and enduring cramped living conditions on two floors of an apartment complex is almost over!

The sisters are a culturally diverse com-

munity whose members live and work in 18 countries on five continents. They seek to lead people to Christ by helping to build up and strengthen Christian communities, working in solidarity with the poor in particular.

I see the sisters in Nebraska as having lived a long Lent that was challenging to say the least. Their lives have been full of architects and contractors. New furnaces, boilers, and bathrooms were installed. The chapel was to get new tile, but the com-

pany sent the wrong color.

The community learned to wear hard hats over veils when visiting the renovation site. I chuckled at this sight one day as they were walking with the work crew down dusty, gutted hallways, wires hanging everywhere.

One elderly sister smiled and said to me very softly, “It will be so wonderful, you know, to finally go home.”

I paused a moment to ponder what she meant. She betrayed longing — even a hint of desperation.

Another sister who was placed in a nursing home during the renovation greeted every visitor with, “Is it ready yet?”

But now that the wait is almost over, a committee has gathered to plan the archbishop’s coming to join in rededicating the monastery. An invitation list has been started. The sisters have had a chance to get a first glimpse of their new rooms. And the maintenance crew is itching to start moving furniture back in. The new carpet smells wonderful.

For the sisters, their anticipated homecoming has given them a renewed desire to underscore God’s good news as they serve the rural community around them. Locals

too are eager to go to Mass once more in the monastery. Excitement builds when plans for the new spirituality center are discussed. The anticipation leaves people breathless.

It’s been a long, irritating wait, but worth every moment.

How appropriate it is that the sisters’ time of freedom has come around Easter, when we recall that, like Lazarus, we were dead spiritually, in need of God’s mercy and our Savior’s voice.

Jesus instructed those mourning Lazarus to “take away the stone.” The Lord shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” He urged spectators to “untie him and let him go” (John 11:39-44).

Likewise, Jesus calls to us to come forth from our private tombs, to blink in the sunlight and smell the fresh scent of the earth.

The wait is over! Like the Missionary Benedictine Sisters in Norfolk, Nebraska, we too can finally go home.

Mary Andreasen is the program coordinator for Immaculata Monastery & Spirituality Center in Norfolk, Nebraska, and the regional coordinator for Ignatian Volunteer Corps in Omaha.

North Texas Catholic to offer a look backwards in series celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Diocese

By Jeff Hensley
Editor

Remembering the past and anticipating the future are natural parts of any anniversary celebration, and the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the 28-county Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth will be no different.

In this issue of the *North Texas Catholic*, we will begin to look back on significant events and institutions and persons in the life of our diocese.

Bishop Kevin Vann, in announcing the commemoration said, "It is my hope that in our 40th year as a diocese, we can deepen our commitment to live more fully in spiritual union with our Savior and with one another, as our call to "communio" urges us." (*Communio* refers to what is the source, the means, and the goal of the Church's life: The Trinitarian communion that graciously will draw all of creation into its loving embrace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the Spirit keeps perennially present in the *communio* and its universal mission.)

In that spirit, the bishop announced that the *Why Catholic?* program with its examination of our spiritual roots in the teachings

of the Church and sacred Scripture, will serve as a cornerstone of the low-key year of celebration. Part of remembering and growing in *communio* is gathering in small groups within our parishes and specifically bringing to mind what it is that makes us unique, makes us who we are, gives us our identity as Catholics, part of the Communion of Saints, the one, holy, and apostolic Catholic Church.

When the diocese was established, being separated from the former Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth in 1969, and Bishop John J. Cassata was announced as the first bishop of the new diocese, it brought to birth a local church that counted a population of only 67,690 Catholics, around 5 percent of the population of the area. Catholics were a distinct minority. And they came together around their new bishop, a parish priest for 35 years in Houston before he was named an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth by Pope Paul VI.

Joining him to serve the Catholics of this frontier diocese — which would, during its first decades, still receive grants in aid from the Catholic Extension Society, as an area with a low and underserved, Catholic population — were the priests already in place in the parishes of the 28 counties, but also many young priests eager to implement the recently promulgated church documents of the Second Vatican Council.

The diocese, as today, was a varied mix of rural, urban, and suburban parishes. Some, like St. Patrick Cathedral, and St. Mary's in Gainesville, and Sacred Heart in Muenster had rich histories that stretched back well into

There are no strangers in the Church, there are no outsiders in the Church; all are included in her, and all are welcome.

That doesn't mean there is no friction, that there are no mistakes made, that we always get along. But that is the purpose of redemption, and growing in our sense of unity.

Learning to live with the differences among us, is the great purpose of growing in Communio.

the 19th century. St. Patrick was founded in 1876, St. Mary's, in 1879, and Sacred Heart, in 1889. Our Mother of Mercy was, as it still is, the only historically black Catholic Church, and if Mass was offered in Spanish, it was most likely in a parish that served only the Spanish-speaking.

St. Joseph Hospital was a thriving entity. Its emergency room, maternity and cardiac care, and the general quality of its care, among the best in the city of Fort Worth. It was a flagship institution of the Catholics in the city.

The Sisters of St. Mary of

Namur had already contributed to the founding of the University of Dallas in Irving, on the Dallas side of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth, folding the college portion of the Our Lady of Victory Academy and College on Hemp-hill Street in Fort Worth into the new co-ed institution, which received its charter in 1955.

Many things have changed since the founding of the diocese: Catholics were worshipping in English and Spanish in 1969, but seldom in the same churches. There were few Vietnamese in the area and no Vietnamese parishes. Now there are five Vietnamese churches in our diocese. The mission of St. Joseph Hospital — serving the least among us, those most neglected in the provision of medical care — is now carried forward by the St. Joseph Health Care Trust, which engages in preventive care and provision of medical services, funded largely by the endowment of the former St. Joseph Hospital.

But some things remain constant. Catholics still believe the Eucharist, as the Body of Christ, joins us all in a mystical union of all races, ages, ethnic groups, and incomes. Though the church has grown from 67,000 Catholics to near 550,000, and the diocesan staff has gone from Bishop Cassata and a secretary in the basement of the St. Patrick Cathedral rectory to a full diocesan staff in the Catholic Center, we still seek to know, love, and serve God, to show the face of Jesus to the world by our worship, our words, and our actions.

There are no strangers in the Church; there are no outsiders in the Church; all are included in her, and all are welcome.

That doesn't mean there is no friction, that there are no mis-

takes made, that we always get along. But that is the purpose of redemption, and growing in our sense of unity. Learning to live with the differences among us, is the great purpose of growing in *communio*.

The anniversary observance itself will begin on Sunday, August 9, 2009 with a diocesan Mass at the Fort Worth Convention Center and will conclude on Monday, August 9, 2010 with Evening Prayer at St. Patrick Cathedral.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE DIOCESE

The Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth was established August 9, 1969, after being a part of the Diocese of Dallas for almost 80 years.

On October 21, 1969, Bishop John J. Cassata, a native of Galveston, was installed as the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. From 1969, when the Diocese of Fort Worth was established, to 1986 the Catholic population in the diocese increased from 67,000 to 120,000.

Pope John Paul II named Joseph P. Delaney the second bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. He was installed on September 13, 1981. During his tenure, new Catholic elementary schools opened, new parishes were established, and The Catholic Center was built, bringing together under one roof all pastoral and administrative offices of the diocese. His leadership of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth spanned 24 prosperous years, and the diocese grew to 400,000 Catholics.

Pope Benedict XVI named Kevin Vann as the third bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Bishop Vann was installed as the bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth on Wednesday, July 13, 2005. Today, the diocese has an estimated 550,000 Catholics.

The diocese has 88 parishes throughout the 28-county region served by 97 priests.

Bishops...

FROM PAGE 1

cerebral palsy was caused by swallowing saline solution when she was subjected to a saline injection abortion. She breathed in the salt water solution in the womb, depriving her brain of oxygen for 17 hours. Doctors believed she would never be able to raise herself to a seated position, much less walk. Progress was slow, but therapy and prayer brought her to be able to walk with braces at age 4. In April 2005 she completed her first marathon.

"To the young people I say ... we live in an age where we are be-

ing taught that every decision we make is ours alone, and it does not affect others," she said. "I bear the mark of someone else's decision and gladly! Make great decisions because you are affecting everyone around you."

Lisa Garcia, in a trembling voice, told the audience about her own sacrifice and the difficulty of putting her daughter, Gabriela Marisol, up for adoption. She said she is happy and that there are alternatives to abortion.

"I did it for her. I feel proud of myself to have chosen adoption for my baby," Garcia said about her decision.

In the 36 years since *Roe vs. Wade* was upheld by the Supreme Court, abortion has claimed

nearly 50 million lives.

Bishop Farrell, in an interview, reiterated that the young people were the most important guests at this dinner.

"They are our hope for the future. We need to prepare them. It is very important that they get involved," he said. "We need to teach them that they have to be a part of what is going to define the future of our nation."

Several other awards also were handed out during the evening. Proceeds from the dinner benefit the Catholic Pro-Life Committee and its nine ministries.

María del Carmen Uceda and Jesús Gras are free-lance writers for Texas Catholic.

Stations...

FROM PAGE 1

ask God to help us to remain faithful to a holy way of life and to guide us to the inheritance that he has promised," Sanchez says. All are invited to join Bishop Vann in the procession, which recounts the torture and crucifixion of Jesus.

The liturgy will take place only a few blocks from St. Patrick Cathedral where at 3 p.m. Friday, Bishop Vann will lead a Good Friday service. St. Patrick's is located at 1206 Throckmorton St.

The Good Friday service, known as the "Veneration of the Cross" recalls the day that Christ suffered, was crucified,

and died on the cross, an observance that dates to the early years of the Christian faith. No Mass is celebrated on Good Friday. In the Seventh Century, the Church in Rome adopted the practice of Adoration of the Cross from the Church in Jerusalem where a fragment of wood believed to be the Lord's cross had been venerated every year on Good Friday since the Fourth Century.

Adoration, or veneration of an image or representation of Christ's cross, does not mean that Catholics actually adore the material image, but rather what it represents. Bishop Vann will celebrate the risen Lord with an Easter Vigil Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, April 11.

Reaction to Notre Dame's choice of Obama for commencement continues

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Bishops from across the country continued to express their disapproval of the University of Notre Dame's choice of President Barack Obama as the May 17 commencement speaker.

Their comments, in publicly released letters to Holy Cross Father John Jenkins, president of the Indiana university, have used words such as "travesty," "disappointment" and "scandal" that Obama would not only address graduates but would also be given an honorary degree.

Critics of Obama said his support of legal abortion and embryonic stem-cell research make him an inappropriate choice to be commencement speaker at a Catholic university.

In criticizing Notre Dame's decision, announced March 20, most of the bishops referred to their 2004 document, *Catholics in Political Life*, which states in part that "the Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors, or platforms which would suggest support for their actions."

Bishop John D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend—the diocese where Notre Dame is located—said he would not attend the graduation in protest of Obama's policies regarding life issues.

Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted called the university's decision "a public act of disobedience to the bishops of the United States."

Some U.S. bishops have urged Father Jenkins to rescind the offer to Obama. Among them are Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Bishop Edward Slattery of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Bishop Thomas Doran of Rockford, Illinois.

Father Jenkins has not issued any statements beyond what he said March 23, when he said the invitation to Obama "should not be taken as condoning or endorsing his positions on specific issues regarding the protection of human life, including abortion and embryonic stem-cell research."

He also said the university community sees "his visit as a basis for further positive engagement."

Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said April 3 that he has had private discussions with the university, but that "unfortunately those discussions are now complicated because of the publicity" on the issue.

He made the comments at Vincentian-run DePaul University where he was delivering an address about education and the Latino community. Before he began his formal talk, he discussed the Notre Dame situation. A video of those remarks was

posted on YouTube.com.

In the video, he said that, at a recent family and pro-life conference, he was asked what he was doing about Notre Dame and Obama, and his reply was: "What are you doing? The bishops don't control the University of Notre Dame, and if it is doing something that you don't like, it's not enough to put the responsibility on the bishops to say something. ... Take your responsibilities in hand and you write to them."

However, in the Catholic community what one person does affects everybody, he added. "No university, no bishop, no parish can (make) a decision unilaterally and then be surprised by the reaction ... particularly around a profoundly, deeply divisive issue such as the protection of human life in mothers' wombs."

No one questions the good faith of Father Jenkins or Obama, Cardinal George said, adding that he has great respect for the U.S. president and his office, and "he knows that." They agree on other issues, but on abortion they profoundly disagree, he said in the video.

"I and many others, not only because of Catholic teaching but for other reasons as well, even outside the Catholic community ... think it is a crime to kill an innocent human being even though he or she is not yet born," he said, but added that he hoped discussion on the issue can return to one

of mutual respect.

Retired Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco questioned whether a rescinded invitation would do more harm than good.

In a March 30 editorial in Jesuit-run *America* magazine, he said: "We must weigh very seriously the consequences if the American bishops are seen as the agents of the public embarrassment of the newly elected president by forcing him to withdraw from an appearance at a distinguished Catholic university."

"It is in the interests of both the church and the nation if both work together in civility, honesty, and friendship for the common good, even where there are grave divisions, as there are on abortion," he added.

Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg, Florida, said in a March 27 blog entry on the diocesan Web site that the university "may have acted way too early and too generously" in its invitation to Obama.

However, he said he was "more alarmed that the rhetoric being employed is so uncivil and venomous that it weakens the case we place before our fellow citizens, alienates young college-age students who believe the older generation is behaving like an angry child and they do not wish to be any part of that, and ill-serves the cause of life."

A March 27 editorial in the Catholic magazine *Commonweal*

said that for many the issue was about giving an honorary degree to Obama, seen as "tantamount to an *imprimatur*."

The magazine's editors disagreed with that view, saying: "Honorary degrees signify an institution's admiration for the accomplishments of the recipient. They do not signify blanket moral approbation."

As of April 6, the Cardinal Newman Society—a Manassas, Virginia-based Catholic college watchdog group—had received more than 245,000 signatures for an online petition calling for Notre Dame to rescind its invitation to Obama.

On campus, about a dozen student groups formed a coalition called Notre Dame Response to express their opposition and held a prayer rally April 5.

Charles Rice, professor emeritus of law who is on the law school faculty, wrote in the March 31 issue of Notre Dame's student newspaper, *The Observer*, that "on-site demonstrations would be counterproductive" and urged those against Obama's presence at the school to pray the rosary at the campus Grotto during the commencement.

The Associated Press reported that less than a week after the university announced its commencement speaker Notre Dame's student newspaper received more than 600 letters—almost equally divided among alumni and current students—about it.

Seventy percent of the alumni letters said they opposed the invitation to Obama and 73 percent of students supported it. Of the 95 seniors who wrote to the paper, 97 percent supported the school's decision.

Head of Holy Cross order asks Obama to rethink position on abortion

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

ROME — The head of the Holy Cross religious order that founded the University of Notre Dame has written to U.S. President Barack Obama and asked him to rethink his positions on abortion and other life issues.

U.S. Father Hugh W. Cleary, Holy Cross superior general in Rome, said that when Obama receives an honorary degree from the Indiana university and delivers the commencement address in May, he should take to heart the objections of Catholics who have been scandalized by the invitation.

Father Cleary asked the president to use the occasion to "give your conscience a fresh opportunity to be formed anew in a holy awe and reverence before human

life in every form at every stage — from conception to natural death."

The 13-page letter, dated March 22, was made available to Catholic News Service in Rome. Father Cleary also prepared an abridged version of the text as an "open letter" to the president, which was expected to be published on the Web site of *America* magazine.

Father Cleary's letter began by congratulating Obama on being awarded an honorary doctorate from Notre Dame, and said the university was honored to have him deliver the commencement address.

The visit should be a "teachable moment" for all involved, Father Cleary said.

He asked the president to take advantage of the occasion

to "rethink, through prayerful wrestling with your own conscience, your stated positions on the vital 'life issues' of our day, particularly in regard to abortion, embryonic forms of stem-cell research and your position on the Freedom of Choice Act."

Father Cleary repeatedly quoted Obama's words at the National Prayer Breakfast in February: "There is no God who condones taking the life of an innocent human being." Sadly, the priest said, legalized abortion implies that a person's choice for personal freedom supersedes this obligation to protect and nurture human life.

"An 'unwanted' child comes in many forms: an untimely presence; a disabled or deformed creature; an embryo of the wrong sex; a child conceived out of wed-

lock; a child conceived through a hideous crime," he said.

Father Cleary said the United States has a history of defining the parameters of human life "when it suits our self-interest." One example was slavery, justified by denying that a black human being of African descent was fully human, he said.

Father Cleary noted that many U.S. Catholics today feel their beliefs are dismissed without the serious attention they deserve. Catholics recognize that they live in a pluralistic society, he said, but also believe they have something vital to say about life issues.

"We want to be taken seriously. We insist on taking ourselves seriously; that is why there has been so much protest and turmoil in regard to your presence at Notre

Dame," he wrote.

He suggested that at his Notre Dame appearance Obama speak about how Catholics "can be taken seriously for our faith convictions without being dismissed offhandedly and shunned; it is too offensive to be ignored, it is unacceptable."

Father Cleary said in his letter that he had been deluged with angry e-mails regarding Notre Dame's invitation to the president. He explained that he has no authority over the decision-making by the university, which is directed by a board of fellows and a board of trustees.

Priests and brothers of the Holy Cross order continue to serve at the university, and the university's president—at present, Father John I. Jenkins—is always a Holy Cross priest.

NATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

North Dakota bishop praises schools, parishes for flood preparations

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Days before the predicted rise of North Dakota's Red River, Bishop Samuel J. Aquila of Fargo said he was already impressed by how Catholics in the diocese were helping people prepare for expected flooding. When Fargo's Veteran Affairs Medical Center evacuated March 24, the Cathedral of St. Mary of Fargo provided vans to take patients to their temporary quarters in St. Paul, Minnesota. Students from Fargo's diocesan Catholic schools were among teams of volunteers who spent days sandbagging around the city to prevent flood damage, and Fargo's Catholic Charities employees were preparing for potential food and shelter needs, the bishop told Catholic News Service in a March 26 phone interview. "There is a tremendous spirit among the people here," he said, adding the "people are watching out for one another" even while waiting to see how extensive the damage could be. "The unknown is always unsettling, but at same time there is a very real preparedness among the people and the city has done a great job in reaching out to people," he said. The bishop noted that the "most important thing of course is prayers and asking for God's protection at this time."

Bishop won't attend pro-life banquet with GOP's Steele as speaker

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (CNS) — Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger of Evansville said he will not attend an April right-to-life dinner where Michael Steele, chairman of the Republican National Committee, is scheduled to speak because he objects to comments the GOP leader made about abortion. The bishop's decision followed a widely circulated March *GQ* magazine interview in which Steele, a Catholic, was asked if he thinks women have the right to choose abortion. He answered, "Yeah. I mean, again, I think that's an individual choice." Following publication of the interview, Steele issued a statement, saying "I am pro-life, always have been, always will be." He went on to say that "the Republican Party is and will continue to be the party of life." He said he supports the Republican platform that calls for a Human Life Amendment. After speaking with Steele on the phone March 20, and after examining the statement issued by Steele after the *GQ* interview, Bishop Gettelfinger wrote in a letter to the head of the organization sponsoring the dinner that his "early decision not to attend still stands." He said Steele's answer seemed to emanate "from a political stance, not a principled one."

Media effort draws 92,000 inactive Catholics back home to church

PHOENIX (CNS) — Maybe TV isn't so bad after all. An estimated 92,000 inactive Catholics in the Phoenix Diocese have come back to the church in the last year thanks in large part to a groundbreaking television advertising campaign called Catholics Come Home. The promotional spots featured people and locations from around the Phoenix Diocese to promote the church during prime-time television. The cornerstone of the campaign, the Catholics Come Home Web site, addresses often misunderstood aspects of the faith. "For those who had fallen away from the practice of their faith, it let them know that we want them to come home," Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted said. The commercials, which ran during Lent in 2008, detail the good works of the Catholic Church throughout history. They also offer real-life testimonials of local fallen-away Catholics explaining what turned them away and what drew them back.

Washington Archbishop Wuerl honors Communion stances of local bishops

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington is following the lead of local prelates regarding the reception of Communion by Catholic elected representatives and government officials whose views may conflict with church teaching.

The archbishop's stance, first explained in a May 1, 2008, column in the *Catholic Standard*, newspaper of the Washington Archdiocese, garnered some attention as the U.S. Senate March 31 opened confirmation hearings on the nomination of Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, a Catholic, as Department of Health and Human Services secretary.

A long-standing supporter of legal abortion, Sebelius has been asked by Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, not to present herself for Communion unless she repudiates her support for keeping abortion legal. The state capital, Topeka, is in his archdiocese.

In a March 6 interview with Raymond Arroyo on the Eternal Word Television Network, Archbishop Naumann said he had no knowledge of the governor seeking to receive Communion since his request nearly a year ago.

Sebelius could not be reached for comment.

Writing in the *Catholic Standard*, Archbishop Wuerl said he would adhere to the 2004 statement by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops which concluded that it was each individual bishop's responsibility to decide the proper application of Canon 915 regarding the reception of Communion.

"[Archbishop Wuerl feels] it's appropriate to respect whatever pastoral decision is made locally," Susan Gibbs, director of communications for the Archdiocese of Washington, told Catholic News Service March 31.

Archbishop Wuerl declined a request for an interview through Gibbs.

"Bishops may arrive at different conclusions based on their local situations," Archbishop Wuerl wrote last May.

"A critical role of the bishops is to teach, to try to persuade and convince others of the truth of the church's teaching and the implications of that teaching in their lives and to encourage Catholics to live out their faith," he explained in the column.

"A decision regarding the refusal of holy Communion to an individual is one that should be



In a luncheon talk following the March 22 Rose Mass in Bethesda, Maryland, Washington Archbishop Donald Wuerl holds up a copy of a bill in Connecticut that would have taken financial control of parishes away from bishops and pastors. He said religious freedom is also at the heart of efforts to rescind protection of the conscience rights of health workers. (CNS photo/Christopher Newkumet, John Carroll Society)

made only after clear efforts to persuade and convince the person that their actions are wrong and bear moral consequences," the archbishop continued. "Presumably this is done in the home diocese where the bishops and priests, the pastors of souls, engage the members of their flock in this type of discussion.

"In the case of public figures who serve in Washington as representatives of other parts of the nation, this dialogue and any decisions would take place within their home diocese," he wrote.

In the EWTN interview, Archbishop Naumann said he felt it was best to "put the burden" on Sebelius not to present herself for Communion rather than for the sacramental minister to deny her Communion.

"And, to this point I must say, that she has, after the second request I made of her, she has been observant of it, so there is

not a problem to my knowledge of her presenting herself for Communion," he said.

Archbishop Naumann said he spoke with his counterpart in the nation's capital about his discussions and correspondence with Sebelius regarding her public stance on abortion and her vetoing of two bills that had sought to regulate abortion clinics and enforce Kansas law for late-term abortions.

He also acknowledged that Sebelius could move to a neighboring diocese where Archbishop Wuerl would have no jurisdiction. He did not say if he would approach other prelates about his meetings and correspondence with the governor.

In vetoing the bills, Sebelius cited constitutional issues and questioned whether the proposals would reduce abortions as supporters claimed. Archbishop Naumann publicly criticized Sebelius' action.

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSBRIEFS

People pray near candles on the fourth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul II at the Vatican April 2. The candles form the initials of the late pontiff. (CNS photo/Emanuela De Meo, Catholic Press Photo)

Torch of faith, hope was Pope John Paul's legacy, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The heritage Pope John Paul II left to the church, and especially to its younger members, was a torch of faith and hope to lead them and the world through the darkness, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Celebrating Mass with young people April 2, the fourth anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul, Pope Benedict said his predecessor "was able to communicate a strong feeling of hope founded on faith in Jesus Christ."

"If Christ's word remains in us, we can spread the flame of that love that he ignited on the earth; we can carry high the torch of faith and hope," the pope told the young people who were preparing for the April 5 celebration of World Youth Day as they remembered Pope John Paul.

At the end of the Mass, young people carrying oil lamps led Pope Benedict into the grotto of St. Peter's Basilica, where they all knelt and prayed at the tomb of Pope John Paul.

During his homily, Pope Benedict said the torch of faith and hope was what Pope John Paul "left us as a heritage. He consigned it to me, as his successor, and this evening I pass it on once again to you, the young people of Rome, so that you would continue to be sentinels of the morning, vigilant and joyful."

"How many vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, how many young families committed to living the Gospel ideal and aiming for holiness are tied to the witness and preaching of my venerated predecessor."

— Pope Benedict XVI
in his homily April 2 on
the fourth anniversary
of the death of
Pope John Paul II

Throughout his life Pope John Paul "did not hesitate using all his energy to spread the light (of Christ) everywhere," the pope said. "He was not willing to compromise when it came to proclaiming and defending Christ's truth. He never tired of spreading his love," he said.

The fruitfulness of Pope John

Paul's life and ministry, he said, is seen in the faces of the young men and women who crowded into St. Peter's Basilica for the anniversary Mass.

"How many vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, how many young families committed to living the Gospel ideal and aiming for holiness are tied to the witness and preaching of my venerated predecessor," the pope said.

"How many young men and women converted or persevered in their Christian journey thanks to his prayers, his encouragement, his support, and his example," Pope Benedict said.

"At the hour of his agony and death, this new generation wanted to show him they understood his teaching by gathering silently in prayer in St. Peter's Square and many other places throughout the world," the pope said.

While Pope Benedict did not make any mention of the process to beatify and canonize Pope John Paul, he did end his homily by praying that the late pope "never ceases to accompany us and intercede for us from heaven."

After praying in the grotto and before leaving St. Peter's, Pope Benedict stopped to greet Angelo Gugel, Pope John Paul's Vatican valet, and the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart Sisters from Poland who ran the papal apartment and cared for Pope John Paul during his final illness.

Pope tells reporters he felt sense of God's family in Africa

ROME (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said he felt a great sense of family and respect for the sacred during his weeklong trip to Africa. Speaking to reporters aboard his plane back to Rome March 23, the pope thanked everyone involved in the visit, including the journalists who covered it. "I was particularly struck by two things: on one hand, an impression of this friendliness, of almost exuberant joy, Africa in celebration. And it seemed to me that in the pope they saw the personification of the fact that we are a family of God," he said. "On the other hand, I was impressed by the spirit of concentration in the liturgy and a strong sense of the sacred," he said. There was no "self-presentation and self-animation" by participating groups at Mass, but a focus on the divine presence, he said. The pope again expressed his sadness at the deaths of two girls trampled before the start of a papal youth rally in Angola and noted that one of the girls still had not been identified. "Let us pray for them and hope that in the future things are organized so that this will no longer happen," he said.

Pope pleads for women's equality in Africa, praises 'silent heroines'

LUANDA, Angola (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI strongly defended women's rights and praised the many "silent heroines" of Africa who are holding families and society together. African women in particular are working under adverse conditions that are often caused by the "behavior and attitudes of men," the pope said in Angola March 22. "History records almost exclusively the accomplishments of men, when in fact much of it is due to the determined, unrelenting and charitable action of women," he said. "Think of all the places afflicted by great poverty or devastated by war, and of all the tragic situations resulting from migrations, forced or otherwise. It is almost always women who manage to preserve human dignity, to defend the family, and to protect cultural and religious values," he said. The pope's remarks touched on a huge issue in Africa that has increasingly drawn church attention. He spoke to members of Catholic movements working for women's promotion in St. Anthony Church in Luanda, where a mostly female audience greeted him with lively African singing.

Vatican orders apostolic visitation of Legionaries of Christ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican has ordered an apostolic visitation of the institutions of the Legionaries of Christ following disclosures of sexual impropriety by the order's late founder, Father Marcial Maciel Degollado. The announcement of the unusual investigation was posted on the Web site of the Legionaries of Christ March 31, along with the text of a letter informing the Legionaries of the pope's decision. The letter, written by the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, said the pope wanted to help the Legionaries of Christ deal with its present problems with "truth and transparency." It said the visitation would be carried out by "a team of prelates," who were not identified. Apostolic visitation is a form of internal church investigation ordered by a pope and undertaken by his delegate or delegates. The pope sets the jurisdiction and powers of the visitation, which usually ends with the submission of a report to the Holy See. In February, Legionaries of Christ officials in Rome disclosed that Father Maciel had fathered a child. Sources in Rome said the order was also looking into accusations of financial irregularities by Father Maciel.



April 12, Easter Sunday.
Cycle B. Readings:

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

By Sharon K. Perkins

A proverb attributed to the late President Abraham Lincoln asserts: "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Wise words, especially if one lives in a culture which is obsessed with holding death at bay. Human history is filled with the stories of persons fruitlessly attempting to prolong the years allotted to them. Even today, countless products costing millions of dollars are marketed with the goal of preserving youthfulness and slowing down the aging process. Even so, no one yet has found the secret of increasing his or her length of life or escaping physical death.

Easter — the feast that defines us as Christians — tells us that even with the sure progress of aging and the inevitability of our mortality, life does not end. This belief comforts many who have lost loved ones with whom they hope to be reunited. However, the celebration of Christ's resurrection prompts us to claim not only the

"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."

— Psalm 118:17

promise of eternal life beyond the grave, but the fullness of life that is given here and now.

Ironically, many people who still have a pulse experience their lives as those who are already dead (just ask anyone who has suffered from severe depression). On the other hand, many people with terminal illnesses maintain that they have never been more alive. Clearly, the way one perceives one's own life and death depends on the perspective one takes. Death, in this view, is not really something to be feared or avoided — and life is a gift to be embraced and shared as fully as possible.

This is what St. Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Colossians: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." For the believer in Christ, the years in one's life matter less than the life in one's years. Let the celebration of life begin.

QUESTIONS:

In what ways have you tried to avoid death or measure your years?

What can you do today to fully embrace the life promised in Christ's resurrection?



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In midst of conflict, church can bring peace, pope says at audience

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Working in areas of conflict and misery, the church has an important duty to be an instrument of peace and reconciliation, Pope Benedict XVI said.

But countries also must recognize the right of their citizens to share in their nation's wealth, if there is to be truly lasting peace, he added.

The pope used his April 1 general audience in St. Peter's Square to review his March 17-23 visit to Cameroon and Angola.

Even though his first papal trip to the African continent was limited to two nations, the pope said he "ideally wanted to embrace all of the people of Africa and bless them in the name of the Lord."

Today, the church is accompanying a new Africa, which is working "to strengthen its political independence and national identity in a globalized world," he said.

"Being in the midst of numerous and dramatic conflicts that unfortunately still torment different regions of the continent,



A woman applauds as Pope Benedict XVI arrives at the Cardinal Paul Emile Leger Center in Yaounde, Cameroon, March 19. The pope addressed a small audience at the treatment facility for those with disabling diseases or injuries. (CNS photo/Alessia Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)

the church knows that it must be a sign and instrument of unity and reconciliation by putting into practice the teachings of the Gospel so that all of Africa may together build a future of justice, solidarity, and peace," he said.

Angola is one country that has just emerged from a long

civil war and is in the process of rebuilding and healing divisions, said the pope.

"But how can this reconciliation and reconstruction be made authentic, if they come at the expense of the poorest who have the same right all people do to share in the resources of their nation?" he asked.

For this reason his apostolic voyage to Africa was also meant to be a sign of encouragement for those promoting the common good in society, he said.

"All is lost with war; everything can be revived with peace. But tremendous moral stamina is needed to rebuild a nation and here, once again, the role of the

church ends up being important as it is called to educate by working thoroughly in renewing and forming consciences," he said.

Only Christ can truly transform people and society, Pope Benedict said; "therefore, returning to God, converting oneself to Christ means moving forward toward the fullness of life."

At the end of his general audience talk, the pope met with two Italian nuns who had been held captive for more than 100 days in Kenya.

Sister Caterina Girardo, 67, and Sister Maria Teresa Oliviero, 61, were seized by armed men Nov. 10 in northeastern Kenya near the border with Somalia and were freed unharmed Feb. 18.

Pope Benedict had appealed twice for their release.

Cardinal Severino Poletto of Turin, who accompanied the sisters when they greeted the pope, thanked the pope for his appeals.

The nuns are from Cuneo, near Turin, and are members of the Contemplative Missionary Movement of Father Charles de Foucauld. They have both served in Kenya since the early 1970s.

Scripture Readings



April 19, Divine Mercy Sunday.
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
- 2) 1 John 5:1-6
Gospel) John 20:19-31

By Jeff Hedglen

Mary Faustina lived a life of simplicity as a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy. She joined them in 1925 at the age of 19 and spent her life working as a cook, gardener, and porter in three of their houses. She died just 13 years later from tuberculosis. It is in the life of this humble servant of the Lord where we find the foundation for Divine Mercy Sunday.

Faustina regularly received visions that she recorded in a journal. One was a vision of Jesus with two lights emanating from his heart. She explained that these lights represent the water and blood that flowed from Jesus on the cross and are emblematic of God's endless mercy for us pouring from his heart.

The mercy of God flows to us all. For my wife and me it was never more needed then when we

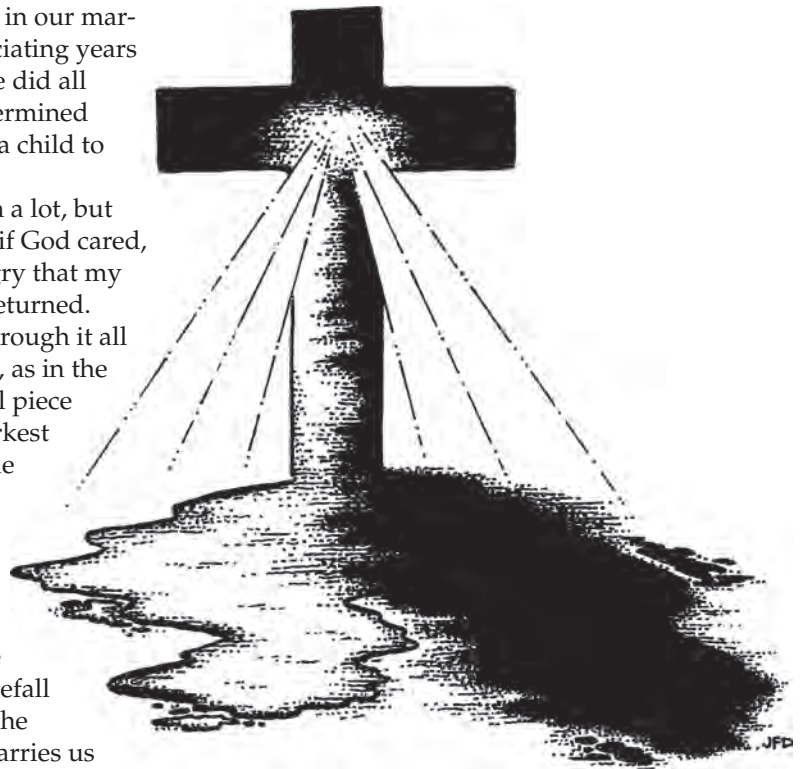
experienced six miscarriages. Early in our marriage we went through three excruciating years of trying to sustain a pregnancy. We did all we could, but in the end it was determined that we would not be able to bring a child to full term.

My faith had carried me through a lot, but this seemed too much. I wondered if God cared, doubted his existence, and was angry that my faithfulness to him was not being returned.

But in spite of my misgivings, through it all I felt the mercy of God carrying me, as in the scene described by the inspirational piece "Footprints in the Sand." In my darkest hour I no longer was walking beside Jesus; I was being carried by him.

The psalmist exhorts us: "Let those who fear the Lord say, 'His mercy endures forever.'" We are not called to say, "I understand all that the Lord does," or "Because I love the Lord no hard times will befall me." Rather we are reminded that the mercy of God endures and in fact carries us forever.

On Divine Mercy Sunday we remember that no matter what we face there is one thing that can sustain us — the mercy of God flowing from the heart of Jesus. St. Faustina, pray for us.



**"Let those who fear the Lord say,
'His mercy endures forever.'"**

— Psalm 118:4

QUESTIONS:

How would you describe the mercy of God? Was there a time in your life when you felt that Jesus was carrying you?

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Like Simon we can help **carry others' crosses**

By Jeff Hedglen

Simon was a very devout man. He followed his religious beliefs very closely, never missing a major feast day, even though the obligation was sometimes hard to fulfill. This particular year he made all the preparations to celebrate the ancient mysteries of the faith and was on his way to the festivities when he was stopped by throngs of people protesting in the streets.

He and his family tried to stay out of the way, but people were everywhere and they were verging on riot. Before he knew it he was swept up in the hysteria. Then he saw it, the object of the scorn of this swarming mass of people was a man badly beaten carrying a heavy cross.

The man could hardly walk; each step was a struggle until he fell to the ground right in front of him. Before he knew it one of the Roman guards grabbed him and told him to carry the cross. He tried to protest, but there was no escap-

Suffering is not a stationary experience.

It is not a place to put down roots and grow old in; it is an experience to journey through. The actual destination is hope and redemption.

ing the unpleasant task. So he reached down and picked up the heavy, bloody cross and began to walk with Jesus to his destiny.

I have often wondered what was going on in Simon's mind when he was pulled from the crowd. He was just trying to partake in the prescribed Pass-over celebration when all of a sudden he became a part of the sacrifice of a different Lamb.

It is no accident that the road tradition says Jesus walked on his journey to Golgotha is called the *Via Dolorosa*. The street name when translated means the "way of suffering."

It is almost impossible to imagine what it must have been like to walk next to the Lord while he suffered. Though it is very different, I suppose we all gain a bit of insight into this when we walk the way of suffering with our friends.

When we help friends carry the crosses in their lives, we in our own way play the part of Simon the Cyrenian. Usually we do little except walk beside them, listening and praying, sitting and talking. Sometimes it doesn't feel like we are doing much. The times I have been allowed to share another's suffering I am always struck by

the privilege it is to be allowed into such an intimate and raw time in their life.

As difficult as it was for Simon to walk the way of the cross with Jesus or for us to journey with a friend through their troubles, there is also, underlying the pain and suffering, a promise of hope.

We must remember, Jesus walked the way of suffering not the place of suffering. Suffering is not a stationary experience. It is not a place to put down roots and grow old in; it is an experience to journey through. The actual destination is hope and redemption.

When we walk the way of suffering with our friends and family, we enter into the Passion in a very real way. Thus it is important for us to remember and encourage the belief that, even when all that can be seen is the pain, the hurt, the confusion, the cross, beyond these things hope and redemption are waiting.

Easter is certainly a day to celebrate Jesus' triumph over the grave, but it is also a day

of significance for all who are going through a hard time in life. Jesus is not unaware of our trouble. In fact in John's Gospel he says "In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).

The hard part comes in realizing that for most of us we have to wait longer than from Friday to Sunday to experience our Easter. For this reason it is vital that we take our place alongside our friends and walk with them on their *Via Dolorosa*.

The continued onslaught of suffering can cause anyone to fall, just like Jesus under the weight of his cross. Alone we can only get up so many times, but with the help of friends, we can make it through the way of suffering all the way to Kingdom come.

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.

¡La Resurrección del Señor!

Estimados amigos en el Señor Resucitado,

De nuevo, con gran alegría y fe, nuestra Iglesia local se une con los seguidores de Cristo alrededor del mundo para celebrar la triunfante Resurrección de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo, el misterio central y fundamento de nuestra fe. Como nos dice San Pablo en Romanos 6:9,

Sabemos que Cristo, después de resucitar, no muere más, porque la muerte ya no tiene poder sobre él.

¿Porqué es que San Pablo nos da esta enseñanza en su Carta a los Romanos? ¿Porqué Cristo tiene el PODER DE LA VIDA! ¡Los cirios pascuales de cada vigilia pascual a través de la Diócesis de Fort Worth son luces que le proclaman al mundo que nuestro Señor Jesucristo, la luz del mundo, esta vivo! ¡Él tiene el poder de la vida y debido a esto, la tumba está vacía!

El significado y el verdadero sentido de poder es a menudo difícil de entender y de vivir en el mundo de hoy. Por ejemplo, muchos creen que el dinero es poder, mientras que aquellos en el ambiente de la política creen que poder viene del número de sus adherentes o del ejercer autoridad sobre otros.

Mientras que todos estos ejemplos pueden ser verdad en manera limitada, deben ser considerados a la luz del poder de la vida manifestada en nuestro Señor Resucitado en su victoria sobre el pecado y la muerte misma. Jesucristo es en verdad la resurrección y la vida como Él dijo de sí mismo.

Pascua (o más correctamente la solemnidad de la Resurrección del Señor) es nuestra celebración de la conquista triunfante de Cristo sobre el mal y la muerte eterna. Pascua es nuestra proclamación del infinito poder de la vida manifestada claramente por la resurrección de Cristo sobre la muerte.

La Resurrección de Cristo, que celebramos durante los 50 días de la época de Pascua, le señala a cada creyente el camino hacia la salvación y la vida eterna. Todos aquellos que se unen a Jesucristo — *El Camino, La Verdad y La Vida* — por medio de las aguas vivas del bautismo, según lo ocurrido durante la vigilia pascual,



Monseñor Kevin W. Vann

Cristo Resucitado también nos ofrece una perspectiva única con respecto al verdadero poder de la vida. Él nos demuestra que este poder de la vida nace de la debilidad expresada por su humilde muerte en la cruz el Viernes Santo. Cristo es un ejemplo para todos nosotros de la conexión entre el poder y la humildad.

participan en la nueva y eterna vida de Cristo Resucitado. San Pablo, cuyo año todavía estamos celebrando, nos habla de este poder de Dios en Cristo Resucitado, al decirnos:

Yo no me avergüenzo del Evangelio, porque es el poder de Dios para la salvación de todos los que creen... (Romanos 1:16)

Dios, que resucitó al Señor, nos resucitará también a nosotros con su poder... (1 Corintios 6:14)

El Papa Benedicto XVI, en su primer mensaje de *Urbi et Orbi* en el 2006, también acentuó este punto del poder de la vida sobre la muerte en Cristo Resucitado:

Su resurrección, gracias al Bautismo que nos "incorpora" a Él, es nuestra resurrección. Lo había preanunciado el profeta Ezequiel: «Yo mismo abriré vuestros sepulcros, y os haré salir de vuestros sepulcros, pueblo mío, y os traeré a la tierra de Israel» (Ez 37, 12). Estas palabras proféticas adquieren un valor singular en el día de Pascua, porque hoy se cumple la promesa del Creador; hoy, también en esta época nuestra marcada por la inquietud y la incertidumbre, revivimos el acontecimiento de la resurrección, que ha cambiado el rostro de nuestra vida, ha cambiado la historia de la humanidad. Cuantos permanecen todavía bajo las cadenas del sufrimiento y la muerte, aguardan, a veces de modo inconsciente, la esperanza de Cristo resucitado.

Pienso que es importante recordar que éste, poder de la vida, viene solamente de Dios y que está solamente en sus manos. Nadie mas que Dios tiene este poder de la vida, y cualquier esfuerzo de tomar el poder de la vida en nuestras propias manos da lugar a "jugar a Dios" con las malévo-

las consecuencias que lo acompaña. Promover y defender la vida es en su sentido más estricto el promover el mensaje de Pascua de respecto por la soberanía de Dios sobre toda la vida.

Muchas veces nuestros idiomas no tienen la exactitud ni la precisión de los idiomas bíblicos. Esto es ciertamente verdad para el uso de la palabra "poder". Por ejemplo, mientras que San Pablo utiliza varias palabras para hablarnos de poder, sus términos griegos preferidos son dos *dynamis* y *energeia*. Es de estos términos griegos que conseguimos palabras como dinámico y energía, palabras que nos ofrecen un significado muy profundo, especialmente cuando son utilizadas para referirse al poder de la cruz y de la resurrección de Cristo, algo que se comparte con cada miembro del Cuerpo de Cristo.

Cristo Resucitado también nos ofrece una perspectiva única con respecto al verdadero poder de la vida. Él nos demuestra que este poder de la vida nace de la debilidad expresada por su humilde muerte en la cruz el Viernes Santo. Cristo es un ejemplo para todos nosotros de la conexión entre el poder y la humildad. Él también nos demuestra cómo el poder sin humildad no promueve la vida y muchas veces puede debilitarla y terminar con ella. Esto no es tan distinto a varios de los líderes en los días del Señor y en nuestros días también, mientras que nos esforzamos a vivir una cultura de la vida ante tantos desafíos en nuestra propia cultura y, ocasionalmente, en nuestros propios hogares.

La salvación es el poder de la vida que celebramos a través de la Pascua. El pecado y la muerte han recibido un golpe fatal y han sido derrotados para siempre. ¡Necesitamos celebrar con júbilo y cantar nuestras aleluyas con *dynamis* y *energeia*! Necesitamos dar testimonio por medio de nuestras

vidas, que como pueblo de la Resurrección, vivimos en esperanza y amor.

Quisiera terminar mi reflexión de cierre con las palabras finales del Papa Benedicto XVI en su mensaje *Urbi et Orbi* del 2006.

Que el Señor Resucitado haga sentir por todas partes su fuerza de vida, de paz y de libertad. Las palabras con las que el ángel confortó los corazones atemorizados de las mujeres en la mañana de Pascua, se dirigen a todos: «¡No tengáis miedo!...No está aquí. Ha resucitado» (Mt 28,5-6). Jesús ha resucitado y nos da la paz; Él mismo es la paz. Por eso la Iglesia repite con firmeza: «Cristo ha resucitado – CHRISTOS ANÉSTI». Que la humanidad del tercer milenio no tenga miedo de abrirle el corazón. Su Evangelio sacia plenamente el anhelo de paz y de felicidad que habita en todo corazón humano. Cristo ahora está vivo y camina con nosotros. ¡Inmenso misterio de amor! CHRISTUS RESURREXIT, QUIA DEUS CARITAS EST! ¡ALELUYA!

Vivamos la verdad del poder del amor de la Resurrección del Señor durante toda la época de la Pascua. Este "inmenso misterio del amor" debe ser reflejado en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas: nuestras relaciones, nuestro hablar, y la manera en cómo nos tratamos en el Cuerpo de Cristo y como tratamos a todos los que lleguen a nosotros. El testimonio más claro de Dios es su amor, y ese poder del Señor Resucitado es evidente en nuestras vidas y por la manera en que vivimos. Si Cristo no ha resucitado, entonces "somos los más absurdos de hombres" nos dice San Pablo en otro lugar.

Gracias a todos en nuestra Diócesis y parroquias que han trabajado tan fuertes durante los días cuaresmales, el Triduo, la recepción de los sacramentos pascuales, especialmente nuestros sacerdotes de parroquia, catequistas, profesores, y directores de RICA.

Un viaje seguro les deseo a todos los que viajan durante esta época. ¡Pido sus oraciones y felicitaciones por mi buen amigo el Arzobispo Dolan, que será instalado como Arzobispo de Nueva York el 15 de abril y para mis padres que están celebrando su 59 aniversario de boda el mismo día!

Cristo ha resucitado. Ha Resucitado de veras. ¡Aleluya!

Agradecidamente en el Señor Resucitado

+ Kevin W. Vann

+Monseñor Kevin W. Vann
Obispo de Fort Worth

Líderes de parroquias asisten a talleres de ¿Por qué ser católico?

Por Nicki Prevou
Asistente editorial

Amenazantes tormentas eléctricas y fuertes lluvias no lograron abatir el entusiasmo de los participantes de la reunión la noche del 11 de marzo, en la iglesia de *Saint Andrew*, al suroeste de Fort Worth. Más de 150 católicos se reunieron en equipos que representaban pastores, personal, y líderes de voluntarios de todas las parroquias de la diócesis, para uno de seis "talleres de lanzamiento" en inglés, comenzando en marzo. Esto forma parte del proceso de *¿Por qué ser católico?: un viaje a través del catolicismo*.

RENEW International, una organización católica radicada en

Newark, New Jersey, presenta el proceso de *¿Por qué ser católico?*, ahora en planificación dentro de la diócesis de Fort Worth, como un proceso en el cual adultos exploran la riqueza de su fe católica y la aplican a sus vidas diarias. Fundamentado en el *Catecismo de la iglesia católica*, *El catecismo católico para adultos de los Estados Unidos*, y las escrituras sagradas, el Padre Carmen Mele, OP, coordinador diocesano del programa *¿Por qué ser católico?*, lo describe como "un dinámico programa de formación de la fe para adultos, con énfasis en la renovación de la vida parroquial".

Las hermanas Marie Cooper, SJC, y Patricia Thomas, OP, de

RENEW International, cumplieron con su función de presentadoras en los talleres de lanzamiento de marzo. El propósito de estos talleres fue ayudar a los equipos de las parroquias a implementar el programa *¿Por qué ser católico?*, ofrecer sugerencias prácticas para invitar una participación máxima en toda parroquia y compartir recursos efectivos sobre el liderazgo de sesiones.

Cuarenta y ocho reuniones, propuestas durante un período de cuatro años, exploran los cuatro fundamentos del catecismo de la iglesia católica y profundizan la información, ofreciendo un conocimiento a fondo para llegar más cerca de las creencias, los

sacramentos, la moralidad y la oración. Las sesiones serán ofrecidas tanto en español como en inglés en las parroquias a través de la diócesis.

"Sé que aproximadamente hace [15] años, el programa de RENEW existía en esta diócesis", comentó la hermana Thomas mientras daba la bienvenida a los participantes de los talleres el 11 de marzo. "A través de los años, RENEW ha cambiado un poco su proceso; sin embargo, el énfasis en el valor de las comunidades pequeñas, y en la participación de la fe dentro de estas comunidades, permanece. La pequeña comunidad cristiana", añadió, "sigue siendo el cuerpo y alma de este proceso".

Participantes de los talleres escucharon intensamente la información proporcionada en la primera parte de la noche. Luego, tuvieron oportunidad de colaborar en sesiones de práctica sobre el aprendizaje de la fe compartida. "Es verdaderamente emocionante estar aquí y tomar parte de este esfuerzo para revitalizar nuestra fe católica en el condado de Wise", dijo Víctor González, un líder de equipo representando la Iglesia de San Juan Bautista (*St. John the Baptizer*), en Bridgeport. "He estado involucrado en RCIA

por bastante tiempo y de veras disfruto de este ministerio, razón por la cual decidí participar en *¿Por qué ser católico?*. Nuestro pastor ve esto como una gran oportunidad para la evangelización dentro de nuestra parroquia".

El padre Mele observó cómo el proceso de *¿Por qué ser católico?* es algo oportuno para todas las parroquias. "En 2005, el 37 por ciento de católicos pensaba que se podría ser 'buen católico' sin creer en la presencia verdadera de Cristo en la Eucaristía y el 67 por ciento asumía que podría ser 'buen católico', aún cuando su matrimonio no estaba consagrado por la iglesia. Obviamente, hay tanto un compromiso retrasado como una confusión cada vez mayor dentro de todo católico en los Estados Unidos hoy en día".

El aspecto más importante del proceso, sin embargo, es la oportunidad de "aumentar el espíritu de evangelización y dar a los feligreses una oportunidad de crecer con una formación sólida en la fe", dijo el padre Mele. Finalmente, añadió: "Nuestra meta es el desarrollo de la vida espiritual de los feligreses, aumentando su comprensión de la fe y el catecismo de la iglesia católica".

Traducido por Ana M. Fores

Talleres de Evangelización (en español)

miércoles	22 de abril	7:00 p.m.	St. John the Apostle	Fort Worth
jueves	23 de abril	10:30 a.m.	St. Peter the Apostle	Fort Worth
jueves	23 de abril	7:00 p.m.	St. Joseph	Arlington
viernes	24 de abril	7:00 p.m.	St. Ann	Burleson
sábado	25 de abril	10:00 a.m.	St. Rita	Ranger
sábado	25 de abril	3:00 p.m.	Catholic Center	Fort Worth
domingo	26 de abril	3:00 p.m.	Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe	Wichita Falls
lunes	27 de abril	10:30 a.m.	St. Matthew	Arlington
lunes	27 de abril	7:00 p.m.	Immaculate Conception	Denton

La inmigración a la vista del público: Detenciones, ciudadanos, hijos de inmigrantes

WASHINGTON (CNS) — En un par de informes dados a conocer en marzo, se despliegan los datos que están tras los esfuerzos de lograr cambios en la política de acción de inmigración, mucho antes de que el Congreso se reúna para considerar otro proyecto completo sobre inmigración.

Este acierto de tiempo oportuno se presenta mientras los dirigentes religiosos y defensores de los inmigrantes en el Congreso y en otras partes cabildan en la administración de Obama para que se terminen las redadas en los lugares de trabajo y se hagan cambios en el plan de acción para decidir quién queda bajo custodia en la cárcel y a quién se le permite esperar en su domicilio mientras se pronuncia el fallo en los respectivos casos de inmigración.

Hace casi un año, la iglesia católica de Santa Brígida en Postville, Iowa, se convirtió en hogar temporal o por lo menos comedor familiar para cientos de niños, la mayoría de ellos ciudadanos de Estados Unidos, cuyos padres habían sido arrestados en una

redada tendida por inmigración en la planta empacadora de carne *Agriprocessors*, localizada en la población.

Allí, y en otras comunidades que recibieron el castigo violento de inmigración, las familias que contaban con uno de la familia que encaraba deportación lucharon con la decisión de dejar a sus hijos ciudadanos de Estados Unidos solos, aquí en el país, el único que habían conocido, para que un pariente o alguien de la familia extendida los cuidara.

La alternativa que algunos escogieron fue la de conservar a la familia junta y llevar a su respectivo cónyuge e hijos nacidos y educados en Estados Unidos, a vivir a Guatemala, México o El Salvador, en donde todo sería poco familiar y la vida más difícil.

En uno de los informes sobre los aspectos del embrollo de inmigración en el país, el *Instituto Urbano*, y una firma de abogados que tiene sus oficinas centrales en Minnesota, relataron docenas de historias de lo que es conocido como familias de "estado mixto",

con uno o más miembros de la familia sujetos a deportación, mientras los otros miembros de la familia tienen residencia legal o ciudadanía de los Estados Unidos.

En *El rompimiento de una cuerda vital: El descuido de ciudadanos menores de edad en la aplicación de (las leyes de) Inmigración* se describe el caos que algunas familias encuentran después de que la persona que trae el pan a la casa ha sido arrestada durante las extendidas redadas de inmigración en los últimos años, en Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi y Massachusetts.

Se contaba la historia de un niño de segundo año de escuela en Worthington, Minnesota, que regresó a la casa, de la escuela, y encontró a su hermanito de dos años de edad solo y abandonado. Los padres del niño habían sido arrestados en una redada que inmigración llevó a cabo en una planta de Swift & Co. y que hicieron sin tomar medidas para que alguien cuidara a los niños, ambos ciudadanos de Estados

Unidos. El niño cuidó a su hermanito hasta que un pariente llegó a cuidarlo.

En el informe se decía que cuando "Miguel" regresó a la escuela, su maestra les dijo a los investigadores de la firma Dorsey & Whitney, que representa a muchos inmigrantes, que el niño, que previamente se mostraba alegre, se había vuelto "absolutamente catatónico". Su asistencia a clases fue variable. Sus calificaciones bajaron tremendamente. Al final del año escolar, Miguel no pudo pasar al tercer año con el resto de sus compañeros de clase".

Por otro lado, en un informe de *Amnesty International USA*,

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

Encarcelado sin justicia: Detenciones de inmigración en los Estados Unidos, se estudian las prácticas de detención llevadas a cabo por inmigración. Y se hace notar que la cifra de inmigrantes detenidos se había triplicado, de 10,000 en 1996 a más de 30,000 en 2008.

A un costo de cerca de \$95 por persona al día, la mayoría de detenidos están en cárceles del estado y de los condados, que funcionan bajo contrato con el gobierno de los Estados Unidos. Y el tiempo de detención puede ir de algunos días hasta años, se hacía notar en el informe.

Entre las recomendaciones de *Amnistía* se incluían remedios legislativos, como también cambios en los planes de acción, tales como la consideración de alternativas viables en lugar de detención, especialmente para familias con menores de edad.

jlocke@fwdioc.org

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

Arzobispo Wuerl de Washington honra posturas de Comunión de obispos locales

WASHINGTON (CNS) — El arzobispo Donald W. Wuerl, de Washington, está siguiendo el liderato de los preladados locales respecto a la recepción de la Comunión por parte de representantes católicos y funcionarios gubernamentales electos cuyas opiniones puedan estar en conflicto con la enseñanza eclesial.

La postura del arzobispo, explicada originalmente en una columna del 1 de mayo de 2008 en el *Catholic Standard*, periódico de la Arquidiócesis de Washington, ganó algo de atención según el Senado de Estados Unidos abrió el 31 de marzo las audiencias de confirmación sobre la nominación de la gobernadora de Kansas, Kathleen Sebelius, católica, como secretaria del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos.

Partidaria de muchos años del aborto legal, a Sebelius el arzobispo Joseph F. Naumann, de Kansas City, Kansas, le ha pedido no presentarse para la Comunión a menos que ella repudie su apoyo para mantener el aborto legal.

En una entrevista del 6 de marzo en *Eternal Word Television Network*, el arzobispo Naumann dijo que no tenía conocimiento de que la gobernadora buscara recibir la Comunión desde su petición hace casi un año.

No pudo haber comunicación con Sebelius para comentarios.

Escribiendo en el *Catholic Standard*, el arzobispo Wuerl dijo que él se adheriría a la declaración del 2004 de la *Conferencia estadounidense de Obispos católicos*, la cual dijo que es responsabilidad de cada obispo decidir la aplicación apropiada de la ley canónica respecto a la recepción de la Comunión.

“(El arzobispo Wuerl cree que) es apropiado respetar cualquier decisión pastoral que sea tomada localmente”, dijo Susan Gibbs, directora de comunicaciones para la Arquidiócesis de Washington, a *Catholic News Service* el 31 de marzo.

El arzobispo Wuerl declinó una solicitud de entrevista.

“Los obispos podrían llegar a diversas conclusiones basadas en sus situaciones locales”, escribió el arzobispo Wuerl en mayo pasado.

“Una decisión respecto a la denegación de la sagrada Comunión a un individuo es una que debe ser tomada solamente



Durante una charla de almuerzo después de la misa de Rosas en Bethesda, Maryland, el arzobispo Donald Wuerl muestra una copia de un proyecto de ley de Connecticut que les quitaría control financiero a los obispos y pastores de parroquias. Dijo que la libertad religiosa también está al corazón de los esfuerzos para revocar la protección de los derechos de conciencia de trabajadores de la salud. (Foto CNS/Christopher Newkumet, John Carroll Society)

después de esfuerzos claros de persuadir y convencer a la persona que sus acciones son erróneas y que conllevan consecuencias morales”, continuó el arzobispo. “Se presume que esto es hecho en la diócesis hogar donde los obispos y los sacerdotes, los pastores de almas, entablan a miembros de su rebaño en este tipo de discusión.

“En el caso de las figuras públicas que sirven en Washington como representantes de otras partes de la nación, este diálogo y cualquier decisión ocurrirían dentro de sus diócesis hogares”, escribió.

El arzobispo Naumann dijo que habló con el arzobispo Wuerl sobre las discusiones y la correspondencia del mismo con Sebelius respecto a su postura pública en cuanto al aborto, y el que ella haya vetado dos proyectos de ley que habían intentado regular las clínicas de abortos y hacer cumplir la ley de Kansas para los abortos, tarde en el embarazo.

Él también reconoció que Sebelius podría mudarse a una diócesis vecina donde el arzobispo Wuerl no tendría jurisdicción.

En África el Papa dice que el Evangelio es la respuesta a problemas del continente

YAOUNDE, Camerún (CNS) — Llegando a África el Papa Benedicto XVI dijo que el mensaje de esperanza y reconciliación de la iglesia es dolorosamente necesario para un continente que sufre desproporcionadamente de pobreza, conflicto y enfermedad.

En una ceremonia de bienvenida el 17 de marzo en Yaounde, el Papa dijo que estaba haciendo su primera visita a África para responder a los muchos hombres y mujeres que “anhelan escuchar una palabra de esperanza y confort”.

En la lucha de los africanos contra la injusticia, dijo, la iglesia es su aliado natural.

“Ante el sufrimiento o la violencia, la pobreza o el hambre, la corrupción o el abuso de poder, un cristiano nunca puede mantenerse silencioso”, dijo el Papa.

El pontífice de 81 años de edad estaba parado en una plataforma en el aeropuerto de Yaounde al lado del presidente camerunés Paul Biya, quien dio la bienvenida al Papa en una tarde caliente y húmeda. Grupos de niños escolares cantaban y vitoreaban, ondeando banderas de papel con los colores del Vaticano.

El Papa dijo que vino a África como pastor, no como político, a un continente donde el mensaje salvador del Evangelio necesita ser “proclamado alta y claramente”. El encuentro con el cristianismo, dijo, puede transformar situaciones de sufrimiento o injusticia.

Citó los conflictos regionales en África que han dejado miles de desamparados, destituidos y huérfanos, así como el contrabando humano que se ha convertido en una nueva forma de esclavitud, especialmente para mujeres y niños.

“En tiempos de crisis global por escasez de alimento, tumulto financiero y patrones preocupantes de cambio climático, África sufre desproporcionadamente: más y más personas están cayendo presas del hambre, la pobreza y la enfermedad. Gritan por la reconciliación, la justicia y la paz y eso es lo que le ofrece la iglesia”, dijo.

“No formas de opresión económica o política, sino la libertad gloriosa de los hijos de Dios. No la imposición de modelos culturales que ignoran los derechos del que está por nacer, sino el agua curativa pura del Evangelio de la vida”, dijo.

En vez de amarga rivalidad étnica o interreligiosa, la iglesia ofrece la rectitud y la paz de la “civilización del amor”, dijo.

El Papa describió Camerún



El Papa Benedicto XVI le aguantó las manos a Marie-Madelaine Avouzoa, 12, en el Centro nacional para la rehabilitación de los incapacitados en la capital de Camerún, Yaounde, el 19 de marzo. Amputaron hasta las rodillas las piernas de la niña y también perdió las yemas de los dedos después de una transfusión de sangre contra la malaria, que le infectó sus extremidades. (Foto CNS/Finbarr O'Reilly, Reuters)

como una “tierra de esperanza”, señalando que el país ha aceptado refugiados de países vecinos y ha intentado resolver disputas fronterizas con diplomacia paciente.

Camerún es también una “tierra de vida, con un gobierno que habla abiertamente en defensa de los derechos de los que están por nacer”, el Papa dijo.

Un Nuevo Pentecostés
"2009"

Grupo de Oración
"Rios de Agua Viva" de la
Iglesia de Todos los Santos

Conferencistas:
Padre Pedro Nuñez
de New Orleans, LA
Dr. Carlos Barillas
de New York
Alabanza
Juan Carlos Garcia

Nolan Catholic High School
4501 Bridge St.
Fort Worth, Tx 76103

Viernes, 29 de Mayo
7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Sábado, 30 de Mayo
8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Misa, Hora Santa y Vigilia

Domingo, 31 de Mayo
8:00 a.m. - ?

Costo de conferencia \$20 incluye comida
No habrá cuidado de niños

Para Mas Información y Boletos: 682-647-0550
817-306-3528

In the immigration spotlight: Detention, immigrants' citizen children

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A pair of reports released in March lay out some of the data behind efforts seeking changes in immigration policies, long before Congress gets around to considering another comprehensive immigration bill.

Their timing comes as religious leaders and advocates for immigrants in Congress and elsewhere are lobbying the Obama administration to end workplace raids and make changes in policies for deciding who is locked up and who is allowed to wait at home while their immigration cases are adjudicated.

Almost a year ago, St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville, Iowa, became a temporary home or at least a soup kitchen for hundreds of children, most of them U.S. citizens, whose parents had been arrested in an immigration raid at the town's Agriprocessors meatpacking plant.

There, as in other communities hit by immigration crackdowns, families with one member facing deportation struggled with the decision to leave their U.S. citizen children behind in the only country they have ever known to be cared for by one parent or extended family.

The alternative chosen by some was to keep the family together and bring spouses and children born and raised in the U.S. to live in Guatemala, Mexico, or El Salvador, where everything would be unfamiliar and life more difficult.

In one report on aspects of the country's immigration muddle, the Urban Institute and a Minnesota-based law firm related dozens of stories of what are known as "mixed status" families, with one or more members subject to deportation, while others have legal residency or U.S. citizenship.

Severing a Lifeline: The Neglect of Citizen Children in America's Immigration Enforcement described the chaos that some families encountered after a wage earner was arrested during large immigration raids in the last few years in Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Massachusetts.

It told of a second-grader in Worthington, Minnesota, who returned from school to find his 2-year-old brother alone. The boys' parents had been arrested in an immigration raid at a Swift & Co. plant and were unable to make provisions for someone to care for the children. The boy took care

of his brother alone for a week until their grandmother was able to take over caring for the two children, both U.S. citizens.

The report said that when "Miguel" returned to school his teacher told investigators from the Dorsey & Whitney law firm, which represents many immigrants, that the previously happy child had become "absolutely catatonic." His attendance became spotty at best. His grades plummeted. At the end of the school year Miguel was not able to advance to the third grade with the rest of his class.

The Pew Hispanic Center estimates the population of about 12 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. includes the parents of about 3.1 million U.S. citizen children. The Urban Institute estimates that for every two adults arrested for suspected immigration violations, one U.S.-born child is affected.

Severing a Lifeline also described home raids in Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, and New York where sometimes dozens of heavily armed immigration agents identified themselves as "police" and swooped into homes. In the typically early-morning incidents cited, officers questioned, handcuffed, and detained whoever happened to be in the home, including minors, even when the individual for whom they had a warrant was not present.

The report recommended immediate changes to policies such as the standards used to determine the best interests of citizen children with a parent facing deportation and how home raids are conducted when children are present.

Meanwhile, a report by Amnesty International USA, *Jailed Without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA*, looks at immigration detention practices. It notes that the number of immigrants in detention tripled from 10,000 in 1996 to more than 30,000 in 2008.

At a cost of about \$95 per person per day, the majority are held in state and county jails operating under contract to the U.S. government. Their length of detention can range from a few days to years, and 84 percent of immigration detainees are unable to arrange for an attorney to represent them, noted the report.

Because immigration law violations are civil offenses, people facing immigration charges are not entitled to legal representation regardless of ability to pay,



Chicago Auxiliary Bishop John R. Manz, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George and Elena Segura, director of the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform for the Archdiocese of Chicago, pray during an interfaith prayer forum at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Chicago March 21. Cardinal George urged President Barack Obama and his administration to stop immigration raids and deportations that are separating families and to work toward more comprehensive immigration reform. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, Catholic New World)

as they would be in criminal courts.

Amnesty's recommendations included legislative remedies as well as policy changes, such as ensuring that affordable alternatives to detention are always considered, particularly for families with children.

Amnesty also urged the U.S. government to adopt human rights standards for all jails and detention centers being used for immigration detainees.

Family situations like those detailed in the reports are the focus of a series of interfaith prayer services being held around the country this spring, co-sponsored by local religious leaders and promoted by Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill.

At such a service March 21, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George called on President Barack Obama to stop raids and deportations that break up families.

A comprehensive legislative approach to immigration problems could come up in Congress later this year. Advocates for comprehensive reform have been working with congressional staff to draft legislation that could be introduced as soon as late summer.

Obama told the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and an audience in California in March that he would support a comprehensive reform bill. He told the caucus he would host a White House sum-

mit on immigration this spring.

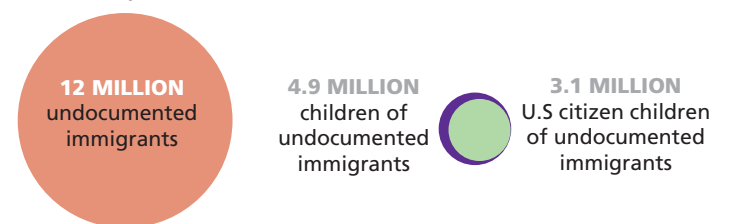
On March 24 Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a sweeping approach to cracking down on increasingly violent international drug trafficking, which has begun to move north across the Mexican border area.

The plan involves various enforcement agencies, many of which currently focus at least in part on illegal immigration. Specifics, such as whether the focus on drugs would mean fewer resources devoted to immigration violations, have not been announced.

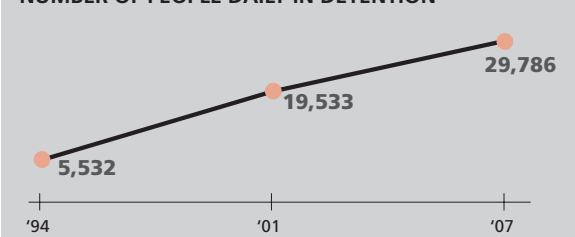
U.S. Citizen Children of Immigrants

A report highlights effects of immigration arrests and detention on the U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants.

IN THE U.S., THERE ARE...



NUMBER OF PEOPLE DAILY IN DETENTION



7 YEARS

current wait time for visas for Mexican spouses and children of legal U.S. residents

21

age at which U.S. citizens may apply for their parents to have legal immigration status

500,000

annual number of jobs for unskilled immigrant workers

5,000

annual number of visas available for unskilled workers

Pope challenges Africans to examine lives in light of the Gospel

FROM PAGE 32
Synod of Bishops, delivered by the pope to African bishops, said globalization "infringes on Africa's rights" and tends "to be the vehicle for the domination of a single, cultural model and a culture of death."

The pope hit hard on African wars and ethnic conflicts and repeatedly held out Christianity as the answer. If Africans grasp that the church is "God's fam-

ily," he said in Cameroon, there is no room for ethnocentrism or factionalism. In effect, he presented the church as the only institution capable of bringing Africans together in a way that goes beyond political or economic expediency.

Although the pope had two one-liners about corruption, typically portrayed in the West as the quintessential "African" problem, he did not engage

in finger-pointing — even in Cameroon, which is usually at the top of the corruption charts of human rights organizations. Indeed, he called Cameroon a "land of hope" for Africa.

The reason is that he knows local African church leaders are already on the front lines in denouncing political corruption. In Cameroon, for example, a year ago Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi of Douala took the

unprecedented step of publicly opposing President Paul Biya's constitutional meddling that allowed the president to serve yet another seven-year term — a position the cardinal reiterated during the pope's visit.

Significantly, the pope treated corruption not as a problem to be eliminated in return for foreign aid, but as a practice incompatible with the demands of the Gospel. He added, however, that Africa deserves a similar change in attitude from the developed world — not "more programs and protocols" but "conversion of hearts to sincere solidarity."

His visit to the sick in Cameroon illustrated that the church must invest its resources in love and care for the needy, but with

a special focus: Human suffering can only make sense in light of Christ's crucifixion and his "final victory" over death, he said.

Even the pope's defense of women's rights in Africa was very much a "Benedict" approach, based not on human rights declarations but on the biblical account of creation. Here, too, his point that men and women have "complementary" roles will no doubt find critics.

The pope's method in Africa was not to lay down the law but to lay down a challenge, asking people to examine their own lives and their relationships in the light of the Gospel. He believes that Christianity is a perfect fit for Africa but that, in view of cultural trends, it won't necessarily be an easy fit.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 13
composing a note. "Dear God, please help me to run faster. Do you think you could do that?"

Natalie left the note on her bedside table, an accidental gift to all her family, I think, because it spoke, not of soccer, but of faith.

Later, we laughed together at the innocence, the ability to let go to her heavenly Father, who, yes, assuredly can intervene to improve running skills.

Then, quietly, individually, each of us remembered, "He can help us too." We smiled with reinforced childhood wisdom.

Watching our parish's Passion Play this year, Natalie and Sam both cried. Their tears were not complaining tears of fatigue or hunger, as astute parents recognize. They were tears of pure grief, quite the opposite of the happiness they both display at Saturday morning soccer.

"They cried as Jesus carried his cross," their mother Meredith told me, "because they understood what it was about."

The play, whose cast is eighth graders, is a somber and tender reenactment, with dramatic vocal accompaniment from the parish's adult choir. Yearly the church echoes with sniffles — much more sniffing than comes from early spring allergies!

Some years the evocative-ness is more intense than others, perhaps because of

viewers' own life stories. Tears are heartfelt for parents, who sense familial grief at the loss of Jesus. For me, an awareness of my own part in his death brings pangs of regret and resolution.

The actors, just a bigger version of Natalie's soccer team, portray Jesus the Son of God, and Mary his grieving mother, with a passion they have no way of comprehending.

It is the only time these children have ever acted this play, and probably they will never do it again. Yet they use all their senses, bringing young hearts and souls to the difficult and demanding roles that will mark their lives forever, and have already marked their history.

To fully portray Jesus' final week on earth, they give everything they have.

In journalism school, there was a study element I learned, and kept as a sort of life lesson: Go with everything you've got. Don't hold back information; don't save a great quote to use another time; don't reserve a good idea for a subsequent story.

Use it now. Give everything you've got.

Last week was my granddaughter Emma's third birthday party, and I had prepared six presents for her. As I wrapped them I came across a doll I might have saved for Christmas, but somehow I couldn't. Everything about Emma's birthday was important to me; there was nothing I wouldn't do for her, or give to her. So I decided not to hold

back anything — to give her everything I'd bought, each gift a sign of love.

I regret the times in my life I have not practiced that rule with God. I should have given him everything I had, every moment, no matter what effort it took, or what else I cancelled to achieve it. This was the life he gave me, there should have been no moment I did not give it back to him.

For those oversights, I cried during the Passion Play, along with Samuel and Natalie, whose small faces showed grown-up understanding.

When Natalie wrote a note to God, asking him for improved soccer skills, there was no question the Lord would answer her request. He can do anything he wants to do.

He gave us his only Son, who was born for one purpose: to show us, by the heartbreaking sadness of his death, that, like Natalie looks forward to running faster, we can look forward to eternal life.

Jesus, Please teach us how to live forever. Could you do that?

He could do that for us. And he did.



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby.

Last May, her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy's column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

Turtle given by Pygmies to pope will stay in Africa

LUANDA, Angola (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI and Vatican aides decided that the live turtle given to the pope by a group of Pygmies from Cameroon should stay in Africa. Although Vatican officials initially spoke about finding a home for the turtle in the Vatican Gardens, in the end they asked staff members of the Vatican Embassy in Luanda to find it a proper home, said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman. A group of 15 Pygmies from the Baka ethnic group came to the pope's residence at the apostolic nunciature

in Yaounde, Cameroon, March 20 as the pontiff was preparing to leave for Angola. They built a ceremonial hut out of leaves in the garden of the residence, and the pope came out to greet them. The Pygmies, including grandparents, parents and children, sang songs and danced to the beat of drums, then gave the pope three gifts: a basket, a cloth mat and the turtle, which is a symbol of wisdom in Cameroon. The Baka Pygmies inhabit rain forests in southern Cameroon. A hunting and gathering people, they number fewer than 30,000.

The FLOCK



By Jean Denton

Copyright © 2009, Jean Denton

Umbert the Unborn



by Gary Cangemi



Calendar

UTA CATHOLIC ART SHOW

The University Catholic Community at the University of Texas at Arlington is sponsoring a juried art competition entitled *Amor Vitae: Love of Life!* on Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26 at Artspace 111 in downtown Fort Worth. The show is open to high school juniors and seniors and undergraduate college students throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth. Artists are asked to depict work that reflects Catholic Social Teaching to respect all forms of life. To receive an application, call the UCC at (817) 460-1155 or download it from the Web site at www.utacatholic.org. Deadline to submit work will be Monday, April 20. Artwork, application forms, and money can be dropped off Monday through Friday from 12 to 6 p.m. at the UCC, located at 1010 Bengel Dr. in Arlington, or at the Catholic Campus Center for the University of North Texas, located at 1303 Eagle Dr. in Denton, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Lisa Campbell at the UCC or e-mail her at lcampbell@fwdioc.org.

DIVORCE AND BEYOND

St. Andrew Church will host a "Divorce and Beyond" program Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. April 16 through June 4 at its pastoral center at 3717 Stadium Dr. The cost for registration is \$15, and includes the cost of book and supplies which will be available the first evening. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register, call Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or Delphine Exman at (817) 292-1453.

IWBS DISCERNMENT WEEKEND

The Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters are hosting a Discernment Weekend for single Catholic women from high school seniors through women 50 years of age on April 25-26 at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria. For more information, visit the Web site at www.iwbsvictoria.org, or contact Sister Mildred Truchard by phone at (361) 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Our Mother of Mercy School's fourth annual "Golf and Networking Event" will be held at Squaw Creek Golf Course April 18 at 1605 Ranch House Rd. in Willow Park. All are invited to participate as players or sponsors. For more information, contact tournament co-chairs Howard Rattliff at rattlhj@yahoo.com, or Mike Barks at barkskully@sbcglobal.net, or go to the Web site www.tournevents.com/omm2009 to register.

To Report Misconduct

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may

- Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 102 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

To Report Abuse

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

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the chapel of Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be Saturday, May 2. Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing Eucharist, discussion, and fellowship. For more information, call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768 ext. 105.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Divine Mercy Sunday celebrations will be held April 19 at various parishes in the diocese, including Our Lady of Mercy Church at 107 Crestridge Dr. in Hillsboro, St. Maria Goretti Church at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington, St. John the Apostle Church at 7341 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills, and at St. Mark Church at 2800 Pennsylvania Ave in Denton.

THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

St. Vincent de Paul Church will host a free pre-screening of "The Human Experience," documentary about two brothers who travel the world and interview people about what it means to be human, at 7:30 p.m. Friday April 24, and Saturday, April 25 at 5819 Pleasant Ridge Rd. in Arlington. Doors will open at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257, or by e-mail at cruth-kilgore@fwdioc.org.

ST. PAUL MISSION

St. Paul the Apostle Church in the River Oaks area of Fort Worth, will host a parish mission April 26-28, with Passionist Father Cedric Pisegna, CP, giving talks at 7 p.m., with the topics "Happiness" on Sunday; "Change is Possible" on Monday; and "The Holy Spirit and Passion" on Tuesday. St. Paul is located at River Oaks, 5508 Black Oak Ln., in Fort Worth. For more information, contact the church office at (817) 738-9925.

YOUTH 2000

The 2009 YOUTH 2000 Retreat, led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal of the Bronx, will be held April 17-19 at Nolan Catholic High School at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. This retreat is for youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 30. Housing will not be provided. Registration is \$50. For more information, call (817) 558-9805, or visit the Web site for the event at www.fwdiocyouthretreat.org.

JAMAICA CELEBRATION

As part of its 100th anniversary celebrations, St. Rita Church in Fort Worth will host the Second Annual Jamaica charity fair on Saturday, April 25, beginning with a "Jamaica Mass" at 5 p.m. From 6 to 11 p.m., the celebration will include food, carnival rides, games, and entertainment, including a dance with a live band and DJ from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. St. Rita is located at 5550 E. Lancaster Ave. in Fort Worth. For more information, call the church office at (817) 451-9383.

NTC DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

The *North Texas Catholic* is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published. Items for the April 24 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, April 15. Items for the May 8 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, April 29.

DEAF MINISTRY

The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter to help with CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation) services. The Deaf Community celebrates a special Deaf Community Mass on the first Sunday of each month at 1:45 p.m. at San Mateo Church near downtown Fort Worth. The ministry would like to provide CART services for deaf persons who do not sign so they can read the simultaneous transcriptions and be a part of the special liturgy. To help with this service, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 284-3019 (Voice and TDD) or mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller; at 1301 Paxton Ave. (Padre Pio House) in Arlington; and at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton at 2255 Bonnie Brae St. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.com, or e-mail to Mark at seasmenspurity@yahoo.com.

RACHEL MINISTRIES

Rachel Ministries, a program that offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath, is expanding its outreach to include programs and services in Spanish. The expanded outreach program is currently seeking volunteers who can read and speak Spanish to help build the Spanish program. The ministry is also seeking Spanish-speaking licensed counselors to volunteer during the Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats. There are also opportunities for volunteers to be included on the referral list. Training will be provided to all volunteers. Anyone who is bilingual and is interested in this ministry is asked to contact Betsy Kopor at (817) 923-4757 or by e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

OMM PICNIC IN THE PARK

The Friends of Our Mother of Mercy organization will host a "Picnic in the Park" 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday, April 19 at Hillside Park and Gym, whatever weather conditions are. Activities will include three-legged races, kickball, a live DJ, bingo, dominos, a Wii tournament, card games, and other activities. Prizes will be awarded to the OMM School class with the most classmates in attendance. The day will end with a karaoke contest with a cash prize given for the best performance. For more information, contact Mike or Marie Barks at (817) 568-9640 or call the rectory at (817) 335-1695.

Classified Section

OLG TEACHERS

Our Lady of Grace Catholic High School in Roanoke, TX is seeking the following positions for fall 2009: Full-Time or Part-Time Math/Science, Theology, 6-man football coach (stipend only position). Please e-mail olghsdonohue@gmail.com or call (817) 833-6516.

ASST DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Diocese of Fort Worth Texas seeks a full-time Assistant Director of Finance & Administrative Services at the Catholic Center. Principal duties will include managing the day-to-day relationship between the parishes, schools and other diocesan entities and the finance/accounting function of the Central Office and assisting the Director of Finance and Administrative Services in overall management of the temporal needs of the diocese. Qualifications include practicing Catholic with knowledge of the Catholic Church organization and function; college graduate, preferably in Finance or Business; minimum five years experience in Finance and Accounting; strong project management skills; excellent collaborator; and computer program expertise. Bilingual in English/Spanish is preferred. For a full job description and application, visit www.fwdioc.org. The Diocese of Fort Worth offers excellent pay and benefits to our employees. If interested in this position, e-mail a résumé, a completed job application and cover letter to msimeroth@fwdioc.org or fax to 817-244-8839, to the attention of Mark Simeroth, Director of Human Resources. Application due date is May 1, 2009. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

ST. MARY'S PRINCIPAL

St. Mary's Catholic School, Gainesville, TX is seeking a strong academic and spiritual principal to lead its elementary school (PK-8; 193 students). The position is available for the 2009-10 School Year. Qualifications: a practicing Catholic, Master's Degree and 18 hours in Administration, and 3 years experience in a Catholic School. Administrative experience preferred. Please submit a letter of interest, resume, references and a request for an application to: Catholic School Office, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, TX 76108-2919, 817/560-3300 ext. 253.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

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

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Little Apostles Nursery School at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Lewisville has an opening for a Preschool Director; 12-month position, 30 hours/week with benefits. Little Apostles is a state-licensed preschool serving children 6 weeks to not yet in kindergarten with an average enrollment of 140 students. Will manage all aspects of preschool including curriculum, staff development, business planning, finances, and communication, and will supervise 35+ employees. Current director will assist with transition. Job description at www.stphilipcc.org, Job Board page. Resumes and cover letter to office@stphilipcc.org; deadline 4/15/09. No phone calls please.

PARISH SECRETARY

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church is currently seeking a full-time Parish Secretary for our Parish. Qualifications: College Degree: Associates or Higher; Experienced in Microsoft Office-Outlook, Word, Power Point, Excel; Experience with business correspondence; Excellent grammar skills; Knowledgeable and currently practicing the Catholic faith. Please contact the church office at 972.436.7617 to schedule an interview, or fax your resume and salary requirements to 972.221.3430, or E-mail ladyofl@verizon.net.

INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Diocese of Fort Worth Texas seeks a full-time Auditor for our Internal Audit program at the Catholic Center. Principal duties will include reviewing and testing the compliance with laws, accounting procedures and policies, and administrative procedures and policies as they relate to the temporal affairs of entities of the Diocese of Fort Worth. Qualifications include a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or related field, 2-5 years experience in auditing or related field, expertise in computer usage, and knowledge of the Roman Catholic Faith. Knowledge of the workings of the Diocese of Fort Worth is helpful. English/Spanish bilingual applicants are preferred. For a full job description and application, visit www.fwdioc.org. The Diocese of Fort Worth offers excellent pay and benefits to our employees. If interested in this position, e-mail a résumé, a completed job application and cover letter to msimeroth@fwdioc.org or fax to 817-244-8839, to the attention of Mark Simeroth, Director of Human Resources. Application due date is May 1, 2009. Qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

ACCOMPANIST

Accompanist with experience at three-manual pipe organ needed for three weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with up to two choirs weekly, holy day Masses; availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year is preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send a résumé to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth 76107 or e-mail to dkain@holymfamilyfw.org. For more information, call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104

LITURGY & MUSIC DIRECTOR

A North Dallas Suburban Parish in transitional growth is seeking a full-time director of liturgy and music to lead the assembly in worship and song as a member of our pastoral team. A collaborative person is needed to initiate and grow a comprehensive liturgical music ministry; to guide parish liturgical ministries, plan and accompany weekend liturgies, holy days, weddings, funerals, special liturgical celebrations, direct and rehearse choir and cantors and interface with existing Spanish Choir. Requires close collaboration with staff and parishioners. Needs strong piano and conducting skills, good vocal skills, knowledge of Catholic liturgy and must be a practicing Catholic with a degree in liturgy or music, or equivalent years of experience. Salary and diocesan benefits commensurate with education or experience. Send letter, résumé, salary requirements and three current/verifiable references to: Search Committee Liturgy and Music, 352 Cascata Drive, Frisco, TX 75034.

FITNESS COACHES

Looking for 20 fitness coaches for revolutionary new home based business. For info call 817-249-3371.

KOFC FIELD AGENT

Are you a professional Catholic man who has been laid off or is looking for a new career opportunity? The Knights of Columbus is currently seeking career minded individuals in the Dioceses of Dallas and Ft. Worth for the position of Field Agent. Ideal candidates will have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree or equivalent sales/business experience, however all Catholics eligible for membership in the KofC are encouraged to apply. It is not necessary to already have membership with the KofC to be considered for this position. To obtain Knights of Columbus membership requirements, please see the membership section of www.kofc.org. The position provides the following benefits: Unlimited earning potential, Expense Allowance, Quality Production Commission, 100% Paid Pension, 401K, Aetna PPO/HMO, Health Benefits, Dental Benefits, Disability, Life Insurance, and Paid Continuing Education. For consideration, please forward your résumé to john.regan@kofc.org or you may fax it to 804-377-9111 or mail to Knights of Columbus, Regan Agency, 4425 Tradition Trail Plano, TX 75093. Interviews for qualified candidates will be held soon. If you have questions regarding this opportunity, please call metro 817.265.2967 or 972.599.2803.

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On his Africa trip, Pope Benedict doesn't point a finger, but just as in the West, he challenges attitudes and cultural trends, while proclaiming

'The Lord Jesus is the one mediator and redeemer'

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service
LUANDA, Angola

Pope Benedict XVI's in-flight statement opposing condom distribution in AIDS prevention drew sharp criticism and was seen by many as a distraction from his main message in Africa.

But a closer look reveals that very little of what the pope had to say during his March 17-23 African journey was easy or accommodating. On issues ranging from abortion to corruption, from women's rights to economic development, he preached the Gospel in a way that took issue with common practices and prevailing attitudes.

His conviction, expressed on his first day in Cameroon, is that Christianity is the answer — the only real answer — to the chronic problems plaguing Africa. His fear is that Africa, caught up in economic and cultural globalization, will follow the secularized West and lose touch with its own best values.

Condom campaigns are, to Pope Benedict, a small but very real part of this threat. But his concern extends to virtually every area of social, economic, and political life.

"At a time when so many people have no qualms about trying to impose the tyranny of materialism, with scant concern



Clockwise from Top Left:

- Pope greets women and children in Angola's capitol, Luanda, March 21. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters)
- People wait for Pope Benedict to pass outside St. Antonio Church in Luanda, March 22. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)
- Pope waves from his popemobile as he arrives for an outdoor Mass on the outskirts of Luanda, March 22. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)
- Women sing during the outdoor Mass with Pope Benedict XVI, March 22. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)



for the most deprived, you must be very careful," he told Africans in Cameroon.

"Take care of your souls," he said. "Do not let yourselves be captivated by selfish illusions and false ideals."

News accounts usually leave out the words than inevitably followed these papal warnings, but for the pope they were the most important part of his message in Africa: "Only Christ is the way of life." "The Lord Jesus is the one mediator and redeemer." "Christ is the measure of true humanism."

The transformation the pontiff asked of Africans was, as he described it, one that must

begin with a radical conversion to Christ that redirects every aspect of life.

"The Gospel teaches us that reconciliation, true reconciliation, can only be the fruit of conversion, a change of heart, a new way of thinking. It teaches us that only the power of God's love can change our hearts," he said at an outdoor Mass in Angola.

The pope kept reminding listeners that, in his view, inside and outside Africa the Christian message lived to the full is profoundly countercultural.

That was eminently clear when he addressed young people in an Angolan soccer

stadium, telling them that their power to shape the future was directly dependent on their "constant dialogue with the Lord."

"The dominant societal culture is not helping you live by Jesus' words or to practice the self-giving to which he calls you," he said. In fact, he said, today's "individualistic and hedonistic" values prevent young people from reaching maturity.

At his Mass the next day, the pope continued in the same vein, saying that "living by the truth" was not easy in the face of the "hardened attitudes" of selfishness that dominate much of contemporary social relations.

Abortion was very much on the pope's mind in Africa. His first speech on the continent reminded Africans of their traditional values and said the church was the institution best able to preserve and purify them — unlike agencies that want to impose "cultural models that ignore the rights of the unborn."

In a speech to foreign diplomats, he laid down a direct challenge to international organizations that, in his words, were undermining society's foundations by promoting abortion as a form of reproductive health care. The working document for next October's

SEE POPE, P. 30

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Inside... This issue of the NTC

Ruben Aguirre made good use of his final years with BNSF, growing closer to God and his church, preparing to serve as a deacon here in his home diocese while working in East Texas. **6**

The Chrism Mass expresses the unity of the local church. Representatives of each parish gather as the bishop blesses and distributes the sacramental oils to be used for the year. **14**

Jesus rose to new life, not his old life in his old body. His resurrection sanctified the human body, while showing his followers what awaits them eternally. Read about that new life, **16-19**