

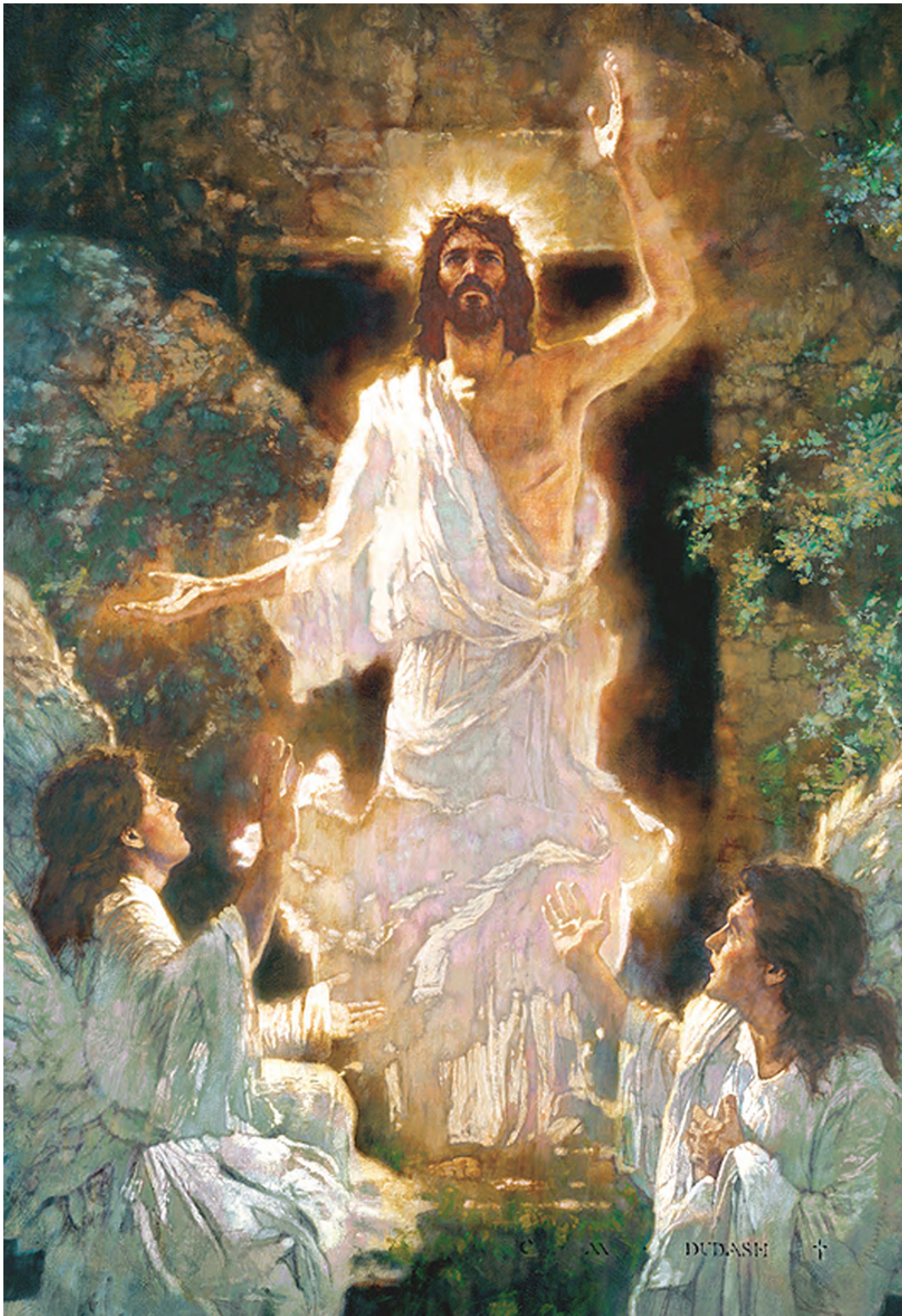


NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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He
is
risen!

He
is
risen
indeed!

Alleluia!

*Traditional Easter
greeting and response,
appropriate at Easter and
throughout the 50-day
season of Easter*

*"Triumph of Life" by
C. Michael Dudash*

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Our Shepherd Speaks

Lent calls us to a more profound relationship with Christ through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing you today from Rome where I am preparing to participate with the Bishops of Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma in our *ad limina* visit to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI. Every five years or so, Bishops are called to Rome to give a report to the Holy See of the state and life of their Diocese, and to receive from the Pope encouragement and guidance in their ministry as Bishops. Due to the Papal transition in 2005, it has been eight years since the US Bishops have participated in an *ad limina* visit, and this is my first visit as a Bishop. I look forward to meeting with the Holy Father and sharing with him the many blessings of our Diocese as well as our challenges, especially as one of the fastest growing Dioceses in the United States. The *ad limina* visits are a reminder that we are not only a part of our local Diocesan Church, but also part of the Universal Church under the leadership of the Pope as the successor of Peter the Prince of the Apostles, and Christ's Vicar on Earth. This time in Rome is a particular blessing not only for me, but for all of us in the Diocese as we continue to work together to build up the Body of Christ, the Church, both locally and universally.

This time also finds us once again in the holy season of Lent. This special season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving calls us to a deeper and more profound relationship with Christ and the Church. It is a time in particular that we are led to participate more deeply in the Paschal mystery of Christ through which we die to our old sinful self and rise to new life in Christ. In particular, Lent calls us out of ourselves, to not so much focus on the "I" but to focus on the other, those who are in need both materially and spiritually. This is the focus in particular of the Holy Father's Message for Lent this year recalling the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews, "Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24).

Using this focus of the Holy Father for this Lenten season, I would like to reflect upon the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as not only the means to a greater holiness and conversion to Christ, but in particular how each of these call us out of ourselves to focus on the other and to help us to grow in works of charity.

First, Lent certainly calls us to deeper prayer, and we cannot have a loving relationship with God without prayer. Prayer and the Christian life are inseparable, not only in helping



Bishop Kevin Vann

us to truly love God, but also truly love our neighbor. In fact, prayer has to be at the very source of our works of charity, for we cannot love others as Christ demands us to without being constantly in prayer. Without prayer good works can be reduced to mere activism, or one may be too quickly tempted to become discouraged with the immense burden of need. However, charity and good works united to prayer become works of God, and are transformed not by mere human love, but by the love of Christ which conquers all: "The love of Christ urges us on" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) speaks of this importance of prayer in carrying out the Church's social teaching:

When we consider the immensity of others' needs, we can, on the one hand, be driven towards an ideology that would aim at doing what God's governance of the world apparently cannot — fully resolving every problem. Or we can be tempted to give in to inertia, since it would seem that in any event nothing can be accomplished. At such times, a living relationship with Christ is decisive if we are to keep on the right path, without falling into an arrogant contempt for man, something not only unconstructive but actually destructive, or surrendering to a resignation which would prevent us from being guided by love in the service of others. Prayer, as a means of drawing ever new strength from Christ, is concretely and urgently needed. People who pray are not wasting their time, even though the situation appears desperate and seems to call for action alone. Piety does not undermine the struggle against the poverty of our neighbors, however extreme. In the example of Blessed Teresa

of Calcutta we have a clear illustration of the fact that time devoted to God in prayer not only does not detract from effective and loving service to our neighbor, but is in fact the inexhaustible source of that service. In her letter for Lent 1996, Blessed Teresa wrote to her lay co-workers: "We need this deep connection with God in our daily life. How can we obtain it? By prayer." (36)

The holy season of Lent also calls us to fasting. The practice of fasting goes back even to Old Testament times as an act of repentance and turning back to the Lord as seen, for example, in the people of Nineveh who responded to the calls to repentance by the prophet Jonah by acts of penance and fasting. In the New Testament, Jesus himself prayed and fasted in the desert for 40 days before being tempted by Satan and in preparation for his public ministry. The practice of fasting has always been present in the life of the Church, but unfortunately in our modern day culture, fasting has lost its meaning in many ways. Thus, the practice of fasting needs to be rediscovered by many in the Church as a powerful means of penance and conversion both inside and outside the season of Lent.

We are called to fast particularly during Lent because by depriving ourselves of the good of food and nourishment for a time, it helps us to better order our passions and resist bodily and spiritual temptations. As Pope Benedict XVI teaches:

The faithful practice of fasting contributes, moreover, to conferring unity to the whole person, body and soul, helping to avoid sin and grow in intimacy with the Lord. Saint Augustine, who knew all too well his own negative impulses, defining them as "twisted and tangled knottiness" (Confessions, II, 10.18), writes: "I will certainly impose privation, but it is so that he will forgive me, to be pleasing in his eyes, that I may enjoy his delightfulness" (Sermo 400, 3, 3: PL 40, 708). Denying material food, which nourishes our body, nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by His saving word. Through fasting and praying, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God. (Message for Lent 2009)

The Holy Father goes on to also say that fasting, in a particularly unique way through our act of self denial, opens our eyes and hearts to the needs of others and calls us to a deeper desire for works of charity and helps us to come

to a more profound realization of the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ:

At the same time, fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live. In his First Letter, Saint John admonishes: "If anyone has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, yet shuts up his bowels of compassion from him — how does the love of God abide in him?" (3,17).

Voluntary fasting enables us to grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, who bends low and goes to the help of his suffering brother. By freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger. It is precisely to keep alive this welcoming and attentive attitude towards our brothers and sisters that I encourage the parishes and every other community to intensify in Lent the custom of private and communal fasts, joined to the reading of the Word of God, prayer and almsgiving.

We finally turn our attention the Lenten call to almsgiving which is the particular focus of the Holy Father's Lenten Message for 2012. By the giving of alms or acts of charity, we are called to turn our attention to those who are in need, not only those who are in material need, but also to those who are in spiritual need — the poorest of the poor. Almsgiving above all is the call to the very heart of the Christian life, the life of active charity, which is most profoundly expressed through the Church's tradition in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

However, in our culture today, there seems to be more and more a loss of sensitivity to those who are in need. In a society that so fosters individualism and materialism, the plight of the poor, the weak, and the most vulnerable can be lost in the loudness of our increasingly secular culture. The Lenten call to almsgiving for us as Catholics is to live and make known the great gift and treasure of Catholic Social Teaching in order to, as the Holy Father encourages us, "be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Today more than ever, the Church is engaged in a struggle for the meaning of life and the dignity of the human person. As Blessed Pope John Paul II so often proclaimed, man is the way of the Church, for the Church exists to defend and promote the dignity of each and every person, and to announce to the entire world that humanity is loved by God! The Church witnesses this truth most explicitly through her

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NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

PUBLISHER: Bishop Kevin W. Vann

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS: Pat Svacina

EDITOR: Jeff Hensley

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Tony Gutiérrez

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Judy Russeau

WEB DESIGNER: Chris Kastner

CIRCULATION: Rita Garber

REGULAR COLUMNISTS:

Denise Bossert
Jean Denton
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Jeff Hedglen
Jeff Hensley
David Mills
Mary Regina Morrell
Sharon K. Perkins
Lucas Pollice
Father Kyle Walterscheid

CONTRIBUTORS:

Michele Baker
Crystal Brown
Jenara Kocks Burgess
Jerry Circelli
Juan Guajardo
Kathy Cribari Hamer
John Henry
Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Mike McGee
Wendy Pandolfo
Donna Ryckaert
Kristin Zschiesche

Editorial Office: 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, (817) 560-3300; FAX (817) 244-8839.

Circulation Office: Rita Garber, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth, Texas 76108, (817) 560-3300.

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20 Years in a Row

Resurrection changes everything

When my dad became a Christian at age 16, it changed my family's direction and created a future of hope, 26 years before I was born. Somewhere in each of our lives or in the lives of our forbears, someone decided the Resurrection of Jesus changed the way they saw the world, and they (or you) became a follower of Jesus, seeking to live out his love in their (or your) daily life.

Without Jesus rising from the dead, there would be no need for a Church structure built on the Rock of Peter and the faith of the Apostles, a faith still celebrated in unity by the bishops who take *ad limina* journeys to Rome about every five years as Bishop Vann and his fellow Bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas did in March. You can read a bit about that journey and its meaning on **Pages 6 & 7**.

If you really want to find out the scoop on that journey of connectedness with the Universal Church, you'll definitely want to go to the **Bishop's Blog** at www.fwdioc.org. Bishop Vann has stories, pictures, videos, and homily texts at the

blog, and the little Web trip is well worth your time.

For kids tempted to give in to addictions that would pull them away from healthy friends and their families, perhaps even stop following God in safety, the Breaking Free workshop provided encouragement to stay on the path. You can read about that in-reach conference on **Page 18**.

On the other end of the age scale, for those facing their mortality, Jerry Circelli's story about the Health Transition Workshop put on by Father Tom Kennedy on **Page 20** could be helpful in learning about Catholic teaching and end of life issues. Catch the quote at the end of the article. It makes it worth your while to read the whole article, even if you're not interested in the topic.

Miss the NTC between issues? Catch us at "North Texas Catholic Newspaper" on Facebook or at fwdioc.org/NTC for fresh news.

Jeff Hensley
Editor

works of charity, when each and every member of the Church truly is concerned for the other and is urged on by the love of Christ. As the Holy Father exhorts us:

These words of the Letter to the Hebrews (10:24) urge us to reflect on the universal call to holiness, the continuing journey of the spiritual life as we aspire to the greater spiritual gifts and to an ever more sublime and fruitful charity (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13). Being concerned for one another should spur us to an increasingly effective love which, "like the light of dawn, its brightness growing to the fullness of day" (Proverbs 4:18), makes us live each day as an anticipation of the eternal day awaiting us in God. The time granted us in this life is precious for discerning and performing good works in the love of God. In this way the Church

herself continuously grows towards the full maturity of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:13). Our exhortation to encourage one another to attain the fullness of love and good works is situated in this dynamic prospect of growth... In a world which demands of Christians a renewed witness of love and fidelity to the Lord, may all of us feel the urgent need to anticipate one another in charity, service and good works (cf. Hebrews 6:10) This appeal is particularly pressing in this holy season of preparation for Easter. (Message for Lent 2012)

Therefore, may this holy season of Lent, through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving open our eyes and hearts to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need, and enable us to become instruments of the Lord's love and mercy to those who need hope, to those who

need to know that they are loved, and to those who seek the true meaning of human life that can only be fulfilled in Christ.

You and your families remain in my prayers during this Lenten season and I look forward to celebrating with you the joy of the Easter.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+ BISHOP KEVIN W. VANN, JCD, DD
DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH





Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York addresses reporters during a news conference on the front steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York March 17. Cardinal Dolan announced plans for the restoration of the exterior and interior of the cathedral and the launch of a fundraising campaign to finance the project. St. Patrick's Cathedral was dedicated in 1879. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Restoring St. Patrick Cathedral to cost \$175 million, take five years

By Beth Griffin
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — St. Patrick's Cathedral, "America's parish church and the soul of the capital of the world," will undergo a \$175 million, five-year restoration project that is necessary for its survival, according to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York.

Cardinal Dolan made the announcement on the steps of the cathedral March 17, hours before reviewing the 251st St. Patrick's Day Parade up Fifth Avenue. He said the 133-year-old landmark is a "supernatural home" for Catholics, all believers and people with no explicit religion "who come here for a hint of the divine and assurance of help."

The ambitious project is not a cosmetic facelift, Cardinal Dolan said, but a sorely needed response to crumbling bricks, splitting windows, aged heating, a leaky roof and a grit-encrusted facade.

Cardinal Dolan said \$45 million was raised for the first part of the three-phase project, which will begin before the end of March. The initial work will repair, restore and clean the soot-darkened exterior and clean the stained-glass windows "inside and out," he said.

The cardinal acknowledged the daunting task of raising \$175 million in a tight economy. "The dare of the campaign could chill us" if not for the pride and passion evident in the New York community, he said.

As he donned a red hard hat after the announcement, Cardinal Dolan quipped, "This hat's gonna cost me a lot more than one in Rome did."

At a festive Mass between the announcement and the parade, Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien encouraged worshippers to support the renovation. Cardinal O'Brien, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, is a native New Yorker who served the

archdiocese for 30 years. He and Cardinal Dolan were elevated to the College of Cardinals in February.

In his homily, Cardinal O'Brien challenged people to make sacrificial offerings in thanksgiving for the religious freedom they enjoy. To applause, Cardinal O'Brien said religious freedom was imperiled by not-so-subtle government strangulation.

He said the history of St. Patrick's Cathedral, from its inception in 1859 by Archbishop John Hughes, New York's first archbishop, to its dedication by Cardinal John McCloskey in 1879, was a tribute to Archbishops Hughes' foresight and the commitment of Irish immigrants both to their faith and to their new country.

Popular lore holds that the cathedral was built with the modest contributions of Irish immigrant domestic servants. Msgr. Ritchie said the campaign to fund the restoration would "look to John and Mary Doe" and others who appreciate the religious, architectural, and cultural significance of the cathedral. He said donors will be able to contribute funds and follow the progress of the renovation on a dedicated website.

Helen Lowe, archdiocesan development director, said the first \$45 million came from early donors and grants from the archdiocese and the trustees of the cathedral. The campaign to raise the remaining \$130 million will include direct-mail solicitation, national and international outreach, and solicitation of the cathedral's 5.5 million visitors annually, she said.

Lowe said potential donors are horrified and intrigued by a box of stones displayed in her office. All fell from various parts of the cathedral. She likened the considerable fundraising challenge to medieval times when churches were built as a sign of praise for God.

Msgr. Ritchie said the last large-scale renovation was completed in the 1940s.

Briefly

Church, National, & International



Pope Benedict XVI looks at a book of drawings done by young people during a visit to the Church of St. John Baptist de la Salle in Rome March 4. (CNS photo/Giancarlo Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)

Ken Hackett, former CRS director to receive 2012 Laetare Medal

NOTRE DAME, Ind. (CNS)—Ken Hackett, who retired in December after 18 years as president of Catholic Relief Services, will receive the University of Notre Dame's 2012 *Laetare* Medal.

Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, university president, announced the honor March 18. Given annually since 1883 to a Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the church and enriched the heritage of humanity," it will be presented at Notre Dame's 167th commencement ceremony May 20.

"Ken Hackett has responded to a Gospel imperative with his entire career," Father Jenkins said in a statement. "His direction of the Catholic Church's outreach to the hungry, thirsty, naked, sick and unsheltered of the world has blended administrative acumen with genuine compassion in a unique and exemplary way."

Born in West Roxbury, Mass., Hackett joined the Peace Corps shortly after his 1968 graduation from Boston College. After completing his Peace Corps assignment, Hackett joined CRS, the U.S. Catholic relief and development agency, in 1972. He started his career in Sierra Leone, where he managed a nationwide leprosy program and a maternal and child health program.



Ken Hackett

Subsequent positions took him to various posts in Africa and Asia, as well as in CRS' Baltimore headquarters. As regional director for Africa, he managed the agency's response to the Ethiopian famine of 1984-85. He also supervised CRS operations in East Africa during the crisis in Somalia in the 1990s. Hackett was appointed president of CRS in 1993. During his tenure, he established a division focusing on outreach to dioceses, parishes, Catholic organizations and colleges and universities.

Catholic Relief Services now operates in more than 100 countries, with a global staff of nearly 5,000.

The *Laetare* Medal is named for the fourth Sunday of Lent on the church calendar, known as *Laetare* Sunday, when it is announced each year.

Among the previous recipients of the *Laetare* Medal are Catholic Worker founder Dorothy Day, novelist Walker Percy, Chicago Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin, labor activist Msgr. George G. Higgins and jazz composer Dave Brubeck.

Report documents anti-Christian prejudice, including laws, in Europe

By Jonathan Luxmoore
Catholic News Service

OXFORD, England — A church-backed report has documented rising anti-Christian prejudice in Europe, despite calls for fairer legislation and measures to curb discrimination.

"Studies suggest 85 percent of hate crimes in Europe are directed against Christians—it is high time for the public debate to respond to this reality," said Gudrun Kugler, director of the Vienna-based Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians.

"A restrictive application of freedom of conscience is leading to professions such as magistrates, doctors, nurses, and midwives as well as pharmacists slowly closing for Christians. Teachers and parents get into trouble when they disagree with state-defined sexual ethics," Kugler said March 19.

Her agency's 53-page report, published the same day, said incidents in 2011 had included a resolution by European legislators calling for a reassessment of legislation with "negative ramifications for Christians," and a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that Christian crosses could remain in Italian schools after a constitutional challenge.

It said "countless individuals and institutions" had warned of increasing anti-Christian intolerance and that the observatory had documented acts of vandalism, desecration, defamation and the exclusion of Christians from public and social life.

"Intolerant and discriminatory behavior results from opposition to individual traits of the Christian faith or moral positions that are intrinsically part of the Christian faith, as well as from a negative, categorical bias against Christians or Christianity as a whole," the report said. "This behavior causes various sectors of society to be used as vehicles of intolerance and discrimination against Christians."

Church leaders have urged better protection for Christian rights after complaints of prejudice across Europe.

In October 2010, the Council of European Bishops' Conferences urged local bishops to help collect data on anti-Christian acts and "awaken public opinion."

In a summer 2011 hate-crime report, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said violent anti-Christian discrimination had been monitored in Albania and Kosovo, but also in Austria, Belgium, France, and Spain.

The observatory, founded in October 2010, monitors intolerance from media

Among cases this March, the report said a left-wing German group, Antifa Freiburg, had called for Christian places of worship to be burned, while a parish church had been attacked by arsonists at Herblay, France. A French government report had registered 522 Christian sites, a 96 percent increase over two years.

sources and victim testimonies; it briefs international governmental organizations such as the 54-country OSCE and the European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights.

Among cases this March, the report said a left-wing German group, Antifa Freiburg, had called for Christian places of worship to be burned, while a parish church had been attacked by arsonists at Herblay, France. A French government report had registered acts of desecration at 522 Christian sites, a 96 percent increase over two years.

The Vatican's website was temporarily taken down by an anti-Catholic group, the report added, while the British government ruled that Christians had no right to wear a cross at work.

Welcoming the report, the Switzerland-based Council of European Bishops' Conferences said it was "behind those who do not see their rights respected."

"Values and fundamental rights proper to Europe, such as freedom of religion and legal recognition of churches, are far from being an established reality in some nations," Bishop Andras Veres of Szombathely, Hungary, said in a statement on the council's website.

Editor's Note: The report is posted online at www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu.

Mexican immigrants seek favor from Cristo Rey before heading north to seek work in the U.S.

SILAO, Mexico (CNS) — The Hernandez brothers set out in the predawn hours, cycling nearly six hours across Guanajuato and summiting the Cerro del Cubilete, site of an enormous Christ the King statue that overlooks a General Motors truck factory and a park where Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass March 25.

Many of the pilgrims climbing to the statue, known as Cristo Rey, come to remember the martyrs of the 1920s Cristero Rebellion and visit a monument dynamited by the forces of an anticlerical government in 1928. The brothers came from San Felipe, 235 miles northwest of Mexico City, for other reasons, though: to

request favor in their attempts at crossing the U.S. border to find work. Migration has a long history in the state of Guanajuato. Remittances sent home by migrants such as the Hernandez brothers long have propped up downtrodden places such as San Felipe, where the men say jobs are scarce and agriculture underpins

the economy.

Equally common is making a pilgrimage to Cristo Rey to ask for favor before leaving or participating in a pilgrimage to San Juan de los Lagos in neighboring Jalisco state or even heading a little farther to visit the shrine of St. Toribio Romo Gonzalez, patron saint of migrants.

"We're going again, that's why we're here," said Rogelio Hernandez, a father of two, who has worked construction jobs in Texas on-and-off for most of his adult life. But going again is difficult, especially with the U.S. border becoming increasingly fortified and laws against illegal immigrants making their stays

in the United States more demanding. An underperforming U.S. economy — marked by a slumping construction sector that used to depend on labor from undocumented migrants — only makes things tougher.

"They don't want us like before," Hernandez said. "They demand papers."

New Holy Cross Catholic School in Frisco enrolling students for 2012-13



Photo Courtesy of Level 5 Design Group

An artist's rendering of the new Holy Cross School in Frisco set to open in August of this year.

**By John Henry
Correspondent**

The explosive population growth within the Diocese of Fort Worth extends to every portion of its boundaries.

And, believe it or not, it includes the western portion of Frisco, where the diocese and Holy Cross Church are reacting to the dramatic demographic change of the last 10 years.

Currently, the church is in the Colony, but a capital campaign is under way to build a new structure some eight miles north and east in Frisco. Church leaders' vision for a new school, however, will become a reality in August, when Holy Cross Catholic School becomes the 20th active school in the diocese. Holy Cross is currently accepting students.

"I think Catholic education has always been very important," said Marie Pishko, the school's principal who began her work at Holy Cross in December. "In today's world, it is even more important.

"The parents are always the primary educators, and we work together as partners to help in that process in building those young people," to become more than simply prayerfully involved in their Catholic faith, but to become "leaders in our world and our country," she said.

The goal is to build servant leaders through the mantra of "faith, family, and future," she said.

Holy Cross Catholic School will initially be located at 303 King Road in an existing structure that work crews are busy remodeling into a school with eight classrooms, office space, and a cafeteria, among the many other elements of a school building.

The school will start with Pre-K 3, Pre-K 4, and Pre-K 5 for students who miss the Sept. 1 birthday deadline for kindergarten. Kindergarten and first grade, for students who turn 6 by Sept. 1, round out the classes for the first year.

Pishko said school and church officials will consider adding a second grade for the first year if there is sufficient interest. Otherwise, the school will add a grade each year until it is kindergarten through eighth grade. Where all those classrooms for those grades will be is a work in progress.

The new church at the corner of Lebanon and Teel will also contain classrooms. So, the school might be in two locations at some point for a period of time, Pishko said.

The school is the culmination of 30 years' worth of dreams. Church leaders' hopes for a school were dashed at the birth of the parish because there was not enough Catholic population in the area to support a school at that time.

That all changed in the last 20 years,

particularly between 2000 and 2010 when Frisco's population surged by 247 percent, to 116,000.

In Frisco, Catholics represent the biggest portion of the population. The school will primarily serve Catholic families in Frisco, Little Elm, and The Colony. The several hundred families in the area who already have their children in Catholic schools primarily send them to Prince of Peace, St. Mark's, or All Saints, all of the Dallas Diocese, Pishko said.

The challenge early on, she said, has been getting the word out that the school is opening. A meet-and-greet for prospective families will take place from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 26 and again April 9 at the church cafeteria at 700 Morning Star Dr.

"The other [challenge] is families that are already established in their school communities," Pishko said. "So, you're looking at the family that wants to stay together. If they have children in third or fourth grade, and they have a younger one, that's a big decision for them in terms of, do they split the family."

Pishko's vocation has been Catholic schools. She has more than 20 years experience, having taught or been an administrator at every level, beginning as a teacher in the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas.

Pishko, who has a master's degree in counseling and certification in administrative leadership from Newman University in Wichita, has held administrative positions in the dioceses of Mobile, Alabama; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Little Rock, and most recently in Dallas, as principal of All Saints. She said she moved to the Denton County area to be closer to her children and grandchildren. Then, Holy Cross Catholic School became a reality.

"I have a great deal of faith that God has his hands in everything, and He's saying this is the direction I needed to go," Pishko said. "My family is understanding that I'm involved in another part of my life in the school here."

Bishop Kevin Vann has reaffirmed time and again his support of the ministry of Catholic education, which "leads ... students to the loving presence of our God and directs them toward a commitment to a lifetime of service to others."

"Nothing is more supportive of outstanding academic achievement than a school which is authentically Catholic," the bishop has said in the past.

Technology will also be a part of the daily school routine, Pishko said. Every student will have use of an iPad.

"With all the things that are happening in the world so quickly and dual-income families, you need a real stable force in the children's life," Pishko said. "The Catholic schools offer that."

Briefly

Local & State

Former Anglican priests begin formation to be ordained priests in Catholic Church



Photo by Donna Ryckaert / North Texas Catholic

Former Anglican priests from within the Fort Worth Diocese (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) Joshua Whitfield, Timothy Perkins, Louis Tobola, and Charles Hough, IV, sing in the choir during the Feb. 12 Mass of Institution for the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter in Houston.

**By Jonah Dycus
TEXAS CATHOLIC HERALD**

HOUSTON (CNS) — Forty-two former Anglican priests from across the country have officially begun their training to become Catholic priests, including six from within the Diocese of Fort Worth.

It was both a long-awaited milestone and the beginning of a new journey as they gathered in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for the first formation weekend in late January at St. Mary Seminary and Our Lady of Walsingham Church in Houston.

The group included the wives of the Catholic clergy-in-training, so there was a total of 76 participants. The six seminarians from Fort Worth include Charles Hough, III, of Granbury; his son, Charles Hough, IV, of Keller; Timothy Perkins of Arlington; Christopher Stainbrook of Fort Worth; Louis Tobola of Keller; and Joshua Whitfield of Mansfield.

More than 100 former Anglican priests have applied to become Catholic priests for the U.S. Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. To date, 42 have been accepted into the program.

The application process for each candidate included a criminal background check, psychological evaluation, and recommendations from the Catholic bishop where he lives and from his Anglican ecclesiastical authority, if possible.

Based in Houston, the ordinariate is similar to a diocese, but national in scope. It is the first U.S. ordinariate established by the Vatican earlier this year to facilitate and shepherd communities of former Anglicans wishing to join the Catholic faith while retaining elements of their Anglican heritage and traditions.

Our Lady of Walsingham serves as the principal church of the ordinariate. St. Mary's Seminary is housing the nine-month program of formation.

On Feb. 12, a Mass of Institution officially inaugurated the ordinariate. At the same time, Monsignor Jeffrey N. Steenson officially became its head.

Seminarians currently enrolled

at St. Mary's served as hosts during the opening day of the first formation weekend in January.

"I think the seminarians at St. Mary understand how significant this is and they have been incredible," Msgr. Steenson told the *Texas Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. "They are so energized about this — they know it is historical."

He credits the "extraordinary efforts and help" and "time and resources" of the archdiocese and Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo with bringing about "exactly what Pope Benedict hoped for — the close relationship with the local diocese and the new ordinariate."

Topics covered during the first formation weekend included "The Life and Work of the Catholic Priest," "Pope Benedict's Vision of the Anglican Ordinariate," and a keynote address and conversation with Marcus Grodi of the "Journey Home" program on the Eternal Word Television Network.

More formation training comes in the spring, covering subjects such as "The Petrine Ministry and Catholic Ecclesiology," "Catechesis and the Stewardship of the Catholic Tradition," and "The Catholic Approach to Scripture."

There also will be sessions on marriage; baptism/initiation; anointing of the sick; and the sacrament of reconciliation and instruction on the culture of the Catholic Church — from priestly manners to the ecclesial movements. Formation will conclude with individual theological assessments.

Several of those in formation lead Anglican-use Catholic communities throughout the country.

"I'd been an Episcopal priest for over 30 years and many of us started together, ended in the Episcopal Church together, and are now starting again together, moving into the fullness of the church," said Charles Hough, III. "It is an incredible time for us. We have worked so hard, and this is the culmination of a long journey, but it is the beginning of a new era for all of us to be in union with the See of Peter."

Catholic Charities Fort Worth awarded Four Star Rating, Charity Navigator's highest rating

Editor's Note: This story is adapted from a press release distributed to local media by Catholic Charities Fort Worth.

This month, Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) was awarded the highest rating offered by leading independent charity evaluator, Charity Navigator. This four star rating honors the select among America's largest charities for excellence in financial health, transparency, and accountability.

The Charity Navigator's four star rating was awarded to 1,432 nonprofits in the United States, and only five in Fort Worth. These organizations are identified as those that exceed industry standards and outperform most charities in their classification. Charity Navigator's objective is to help givers give intelligently and support the work of excellent charities.

Since 1910, CCFW has served Tarrant County and the surrounding areas by providing help, creating hope, and promoting justice, with the ultimate goal of ending poverty in this community.

"Our designation as a Four Star Rating on Charity Navigator is a result of our efforts to have prestigious experts review our organization in detail, noting our continued commitment to transparency and good stewardship," said Heather Reynolds, CEO and president of Catholic Charities Fort Worth. "This recognition has been earned by every single employee who has worked hard to support our faith, service, and forward driven organization."

By focusing on being faith-driven, service-driven, and forward-driven, CCFW has made it a priority to represent the highest standards in non-profit giving. Ninety cents of every dollar donated to the agency goes directly to client services and 100 percent of the net profit earned by the agency's business ventures — Translation and Interpretation Network and WORN scarves — is reinvested into the agency. Efforts like these have prioritized and improved CCFW's overall financial health, transparency, and accountability for donors, partners, and clients alike.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School students participate in Read-a-thon for Honduras



On Friday, Jan. 27, the students of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Keller, were honored with a visit by Bishop Kevin Vann. During their fifth annual "Read for Honduras Read-a-Thon," the participants succeeded in earning almost \$5,000, providing full scholarships for 25 boys and girls in their sister parishes, *Nuestro Señor de la Agonía in Manto*, and *Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria in Salamá*, both in the Diocese of Juticalpa, Honduras. The top readers of each homeroom (those who read the most minutes), enjoyed a special afternoon in the school's library, listening to Bishop Vann read them *JOSEPH AND CHICO*, a story about the life of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, through the eyes of his cat. Bishop Vann is pictured above with the students and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton pastor Monsignor James Hart.

Texas cuts funding to Planned Parenthood; other state legislatures limit abortion

Editor's note: This story is adapted and updated from its original version to focus on legislation affecting Texas and surrounding states.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Various proposals to regulate or limit abortions or abortion funding continued to move through state legislatures in early March.

The Texas Catholic Conference in a March 7 statement expressed support for that state's decision to drop Planned Parenthood from its Women's Health Program, which the Obama administration said puts at risk the federal funding of its Medicaid program.

There are only 44 Planned Parenthood participants in the Women's Health Program among more than 2,500 certified providers statewide, the conference statement noted.

"By insisting that the state of Texas

cannot direct funds to thousands of providers statewide who offer true, comprehensive women's health care — and instead require Medicaid funds go to prop up 44 Planned Parenthood clinics — the federal government risks removing preventive health care from hundreds of thousands of women in Texas," it added.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry has said he will find state funds to continue the Women's Health Program without federal support, if necessary. The Department of Health and Human Services cut funding for the program March 15.

In Oklahoma March 6, by a vote of 34-8, the state Senate approved a bill requiring doctors to tell women they have the right to hear the fetal heartbeat before an abortion. The Senate also passed the Personhood Act, which says a person's life begins at the moment of conception, by the same vote Feb. 15.

Ad Limina Apostolorum

Ad limina visits are occasion to grow in unity, says San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — *Ad limina* visits are an occasion for bishops to confirm and strengthen their unity with one another and with Pope Benedict XVI in order to give a more effective witness to the Gospel, said the archbishop of San Antonio.

In the mission to evangelize, “our unity is an imperative,” Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller told other bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas during his homily March 15 as the bishops began their *ad limina* visits by celebrating Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The visits to Rome, required on a regular basis of the heads of dioceses around the world, are formally called *ad limina apostolorum*, which means “to the threshold of the apostles” Peter and Paul, who were martyred in Rome. The visits include meetings with the pope and with Vatican officials to share information and concerns, but they are structured around Mass and other moments of prayer.

During his homily at the Mass in St.

Peter’s, Archbishop Garcia-Siller drew lessons from the Gospel reading in which Jesus tells the crowd, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste.”

The archbishop told his fellow bishops, “In the super-charged environment in which we minister today, my brothers, let us not allow others to divide us, to set us against one another.”

“Here in the Eternal City, let us renew our bond of charity with one another and with the entire college of bishops with and under the headship of the successor of Peter, Pope Benedict,” he said.

The archbishop said that “the dream of Jesus” was that his followers would be one so that the world would believe, and the prayer and pilgrimage aspect of the *ad limina* visits would give the bishops an opportunity to solidify their unity.

He prayed that Mary would help the bishops grow in communion “so that through us many more will come to believe Jesus is Lord and that the truth he lived and proclaimed is in our midst *ad limina* in the church.”

All of the Catholic bishops in the world return to the Holy See approximately every five years for an AD LIMINA (literally to the threshold of the Apostles) visit to the pope and various Vatican officials. The United States bishops began their current cycle of visits in November 2011.

Bishop Kevin Vann made his Ad limina visit with the other bishops of Region X, bishops of the dioceses of Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma March 14 to March 20. He and his fellow bishops established once more their own unity with the See of Peter and the universality of the Roman Catholic Church.

Pope Benedict XVI meets March 16 with bishops from Province of San Antonio, headed by Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, on their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican. Seated at right are: Bishop Patrick J. Zurek of Amarillo; Bishop Kevin W. Vann of Fort Worth; James A. Tamayo of Laredo; Placido Rodriguez of Lubbock; and Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo. Seated at left are: Auxiliary Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop Mark J. Seitz of Dallas; Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio; and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)



Pope Benedict XVI greets Fort Worth Bishop Kevin W. Vann during a March 16 meeting at the Vatican. Bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas were making their “ad limina” visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio gives the homily during Mass concelebrated by bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas at the Altar of the Tomb in the crypt of St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican March 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Pope Benedict XVI poses for a photo with Texas bishops from the Province of the Archdiocese of San Antonio during a March 16 meeting. From left are: Auxiliary Bishop Mark J. Seitz of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel of Dallas; Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Dallas; Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio; Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio; Pope Benedict; Bishops Patrick J. Zurek of Amarillo; Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo; James A. Tamayo of Laredo; Kevin W. Vann of Fort Worth; and Placido Rodriguez of Lubbock. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)





Forth Worth Bishop Kevin W. Vann, center, concelebrates Mass with bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas at the Altar of the Tomb in the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican March 15. The bishops were making their *ad limina* visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas parade through St. Peter's Basilica on their way to celebrate Mass in the crypt of St. Peter's at the Vatican March 15. The bishops were making their *ad limina apostolorum* visits to the Vatican to report on the status of their dioceses. This Mass would carry them, quite literally to the threshold of the apostles, the literal meaning of *ad limina apostolorum*. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio concelebrate Mass March 19 at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome with the other bishops from Region X, which includes the diocese of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



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Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City celebrates Mass March 19 with bishops from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. Also pictured at the altar are Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Don't miss the blog

For extensive photos and personal narratives from Bishop Vann about his *ad limina* visit to Rome, including photos of Vatican City, video clips of the sights and sounds of Rome, details about visits with our two seminarians at the North American College, the homily Bishop Vann delivered on Laetare Sunday and more, click on the Bishop's blog at www.fwdioc.org

Diocesan Day of Communio draws hundreds to explore Vatican II



Christopher Carstens, director of the Office of Worship at the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, gives his keynote address on the importance of Vatican II. Hundreds of diocesan and parish staff workers from throughout the diocese attended the Diocesan Day of Communio on March 1. The event, held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Fort Worth, focused on Vatican II.

**By Michele Baker
Correspondent
Photos by Juan Guajardo**

On March 1 diocesan staff and staff from parishes throughout the diocese gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in North Fort Worth for the annual Diocesan Day of *Communio*, a day of fellowship, breakout sessions, addresses, and shared prayer.

“One of the challenges we face as a large diocese is that we don’t often get to see one another,” said Bishop Vann in his homily at the opening Mass. “But we can give thanks for this day, a source of strength for us, because this is a chance for us to be together, at least

for a day.”

This year’s theme, “Rediscovering the Gifts of Vatican II,” found voice in the addresses of special guests Bishop Walker Nickless of the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa, and Christopher Carstens, director of the Office of Sacred Worship for the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Blessed Pope John Paul II said in his apostolic letter, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, “... Now that the Jubilee has ended, I feel more than ever in duty-bound to point to the Council as the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century: there we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the



Bishop Walker Nickless of the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa, talks about the importance of Vatican II and the renewal of the Church.



Father Stephen Jasso, TOR, pastor of All Saints Parish, takes part in a guided parish discussion on how to integrate the mission and message of the Second Vatican Council into parish life.



Matt Warner gives a presentation on spreading the faith through electronic communications.

century now beginning.”

Carstens used this quote as the jumping off point for an animated, passionate recounting of the events leading up to the Second Vatican Council, the Council itself, and the implementation of the work of the Council since its close in 1965. Over the course of two keynotes, Carstens explained key theological ideas in layman’s terms, punctuating his insights by giving examples of the lives of holy men and women like Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati to connect the issues of the Council to the lives and faith walks of his audience. Far from being a dry, academic discussion, Carsten’s experience as a lay minister and lecturer brought the theme to life.

“I thought he did an excellent job of presenting the information,” said Father Gerald Gordon, TOR, of St. Andrew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth. “It was truly engaging and inspiring.”

That inspiration comes from within Carstens himself. Asked what he hoped his audience would

take away from his presentation, he said, “Among parish ministers, I’d want them to read the texts of Vatican II. There’s something about the actual texts that’s worthy of a read.” Still, he feels that the purpose of his lectures go much deeper than that. “When we work for the Church, our ultimate goal is to foster a more intimate experience of faith in Christ,” he said.

Bishop Walker Nickless, who spoke at a breakout session entitled “The Church is Always in Need of Renewal” (after his pastoral letter of the same name), recognizes that the intimacy so fervently sought by the faithful must be supported by the clergy.

“One of the reasons I felt the need to write this pastoral letter is that there’s a certain fatigue among priests and people living the faith. Left unchecked, this erodes the faith.”

Citing examples from his own diocese, Bishop Nickless spoke of the importance of renewal at the parish level and how that renewal is rooted in strengthening Catholic

identity. To this end, he has put forth five pastoral directives to guide his diocese: renewal of devotion to the Eucharist; strengthening catechesis especially among adults; fostering faithful families; encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life; and embracing the missionary characteristics of the faith.

“The crisis in our Church is not a mystery,” he said. “It is a crisis of faith; a crisis of saints. But I have great faith in parish life because of the new priests who are receiving excellent training and guidance to address the issues we face in parishes.”

However, while the Day of *Communio* provided numerous opportunities for catechesis, perhaps the spirit of the day was most evident in the laughter, warm embraces, and welcoming buzz that permeated the parish hall at Our Lady of Guadalupe. For all the profound insight in Church history and teaching, the most common quote of the day was, “Oh! How wonderful to see you!”

Michael Messano brings 30 years of experience as diocese’s new director of Advancement

**By Michele Baker
Correspondent**

Staten Island native Michael Messano has joined the staff of the Diocese of Fort Worth as director of Advancement.

“Basic fundraising tends to focus on specific campaigns and projects,” Messano explained. “Advancement is about creating an ongoing fundraising culture. We’re looking to grow the Advancement Office, so that we can better serve the diocese.”

Warm and gregarious, Messano brings more than 30 years of non-profit fundraising to his new position, along with a passion for living his faith that was instilled in him from an early age. His mother, Connie, a single parent who worked full-time

and put her two sons through Catholic schools, always found time to volunteer in their local parish whether with Our Lady’s Guild, serving as president of the Altar Society, or collecting for the needy.

“We used to go out to collect for Catholic Charities when I was a kid,” Messano remembers with a smile. “That was my first church job.”

But it wasn’t his last. Serving his parish community was simply a way of life for Messano as he grew up. He was an altar server, a member of the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization), and even coached the CYO basketball team in college. Yet when it became time for him to choose a profession, fundraising couldn’t have been further from his plans.



NTC File Photo

Michael Messano

“I always wanted to be a teacher,” Messano said. “From the time I was 16 that’s what I wanted to be.”

At St. John’s University he was the only male student seeking an elementary education degree, but when he graduated in 1979,

teaching positions in New York were difficult to come by. Messano ended up taking a job with the American Cancer Society, working first in their field office and moving into corporate fundraising in Manhattan, eventually going on to work as a fundraising consultant.

“About a third of the organizations I worked for were religious and another third hospitals, with the last third or so being other types of organizations,” Messano said.

Even with a busy traveling schedule, Messano remained active in the Church through the Knights of Columbus. And he allowed his love for teaching to find expression as a fifth grade religious education instructor.

“Fifth-graders are wonderful,” Messano gushed. “They’re still

very teachable and eager to learn. And for me, since I had only so much time to give outside of work, it was natural to give it to the Church. That’s what I’d seen my mother do.”

Now a Fourth Degree Knight, Messano has been married for 20 years to the love of his life, Erin, and is the father of (by his own admission) three wonderful children, Rebecca, Matthew, and Jessica. Messano sees his position with the Diocese of Fort Worth as a convergence of his life’s work and his faith.

“This is the most appropriate way for me to finish my career,” he said, his ever present smile widening. “I got such a strong foundation from my mom. Her faith has left such an impression on my life.”

Why Catholic? faith-sharing program based on Catechism in its third year in diocese

By Michele Baker
Correspondent

Why Catholic?, a four-year diocese-wide small community catechetical and evangelization program, is in its third year in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Offered through RENEW International, *Why Catholic?* is designed to help the faithful grow in their knowledge of the faith through study of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in small faith-sharing groups. Materials provided by RENEW serve as guides for discussion.

"The workbook we use provides a good basis to get our discussions going," said Betty Jansen of St. Frances Cabrini Parish in Granbury. "It gives us a topic, describes the life of a saint or famous person and how they dealt with a particular situation, and then we talk about how we might respond today."

Each of the four years has a theme. This year's theme, morality, is based on the third section of the *Catechism*, "Life in Christ."

Jansen said that this year's topic has led to some interesting conversations in her group. "You know, we all grow up a certain way with a particular way of seeing things that we think is the right way. But here you meet other people who've been taught differently. It gives you a chance to look at things from a different perspective."

Received enthusiastically among people of the diocese in general, this year's fall sessions were delayed due to the adoption of



Photo Courtesy of Ed Leal

Father Carmen Mele, OP, director of the John Paul II Institute's School of Lay Ministry, was the guest speaker for a *Why Catholic?* group at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller March 11.

the new English translation of the *Roman Missal*.

"English-speaking parishes had the option of using a program for the new missal and most took it," explained Father Carmen Mele, OP, Director of Hispanic Adult Catechesis for the diocese. "So they're a couple of months behind, but we're still right on target to complete the program during the Year of Faith."

Beginning in October 2012 and ending in November 2013, the Year of Faith, declared by Pope Benedict XVI, is to be a year focused on evangelization and continued conversion. Not coincidentally, the year begins on the 50th anniversary of the convening of the Second Vatican Council and coincides with the

20th anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

"It will tie in beautifully with *Why Catholic?*," Fr. Mele said. "Because the Year of Faith has three thrusts: catechetical awareness, spiritual renewal, and apostolic witness. That's exactly what *Why Catholic?* is all about."

Those guiding principles have ensured an enthusiastic reception of the *Why Catholic?* program, even for those who feel they have a strong foundation in the basics.

"I've learned more in this program than in 12 years of learning catechism in Catholic school," Jansen said. "Because this makes the teachings of the Church more relevant to life as we're living it today."



Catholic Charities Spotlight: Veteran Services Program



Photo by Juan Guajardo / North Texas Catholic

Veteran Kerry Vanadore (left), with the help of caseworkers Alana Banks (center), Rosa Dominguez (right), and CCFW Veteran Services program, was able to get into housing and receive other assistance.

For 10 years, Kerry Vanadore, 63, carried a backpack at all times, ensuring that his most essential worldly possessions — including his only piece of identification, his birth certificate — could never be taken from him. "No one ever saw me without that backpack," says Vanadore. "It was almost like a part of me." These days, however, thanks to Catholic Charities Fort Worth (CCFW) and the agency's Veteran Services program, the Vietnam veteran's load is much lighter. Homeless since 2001, Vanadore moved into his own efficiency apartment in December of last year. He now delights in the nightly comfort of his own bed and in the quiet security of his new home.

Calling himself "a stubborn old goat," Vanadore, a former grounds supervisor at the Tarrant County Convention Center, recalls his years of survival under a bridge near downtown Fort Worth. "I had so much pride," he says. "People wanted to help me, but I wouldn't let anyone do anything for me... I had a small part-time job cleaning a convenience store at night, and that was all that kept me from starving to death."

CCFW staff members Rosa Dominguez and Kim Trickett first met Vanadore through the agency's Street Outreach Service (SOS) in 2010. CCFW partners with several area organizations, including the Fort Worth Police Department, the Recovery Resource Council, the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition, and local universities and churches, in their mission to assist some of the city's most vulnerable.

"We work with many veterans who are homeless," explains Dominguez. "They are survivors. They have a lot of dignity... We want them to know that they deserve help because they served our country, and we are grateful for their service."

They have a lot of dignity... We want them to know that they deserve help because they served our country, and we are grateful for their service."

Past struggles with drugs and alcohol indirectly resulted in his homeless status, says Vanadore, recalling that life on the streets became increasingly difficult as his eyesight deteriorated and as last year's brutal summer temperatures claimed the lives of several homeless.

The SOS team finally convinced him to seek housing assistance, he says, and CCFW case manager Alana Banks welcomed him into Catholic Charities' Veteran Services program in October of last year. Banks helped him arrange medical appointments, procure a cell phone and photo ID, draw up a budget, and, most importantly, find a safe and affordable apartment.

"Kerry is extremely independent and motivated to help himself," she said. "All we have done is help him cut through some red tape. This is a transitional program, which means that we prepare our clients for a life of self sufficiency. Kerry is a true success story."

Vanadore, in turn, praises his "personal angels." "Alana, Kim, and Rosa have opened so many doors for me," he says. "They taught me that sometimes it's okay to ask for help. And when I did ask, Catholic Charities was there for me."

The goal of Veteran Services is to promote housing stability among very low-income veterans and their families. Services are provided to eligible participants residing in Tarrant, Dallas, Collin, and Denton Counties. For more information, call 1 (877) 414-8345 or visit www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org.

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To Report Abuse

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

Vocations

Father Isaac Orozco to serve as diocese's new Vocations director

By Michele Baker
Correspondent



Father Isaac Orozco

"I find it worthwhile to seek God's presence in the secular world," said Father Isaac Orozco in a recent interview. "That's part of being a secular priest."

To some, "secular priest" may simply be the formal term for diocesan priests, distinguishing them from those who belong to religious orders. However, for Fr. Isaac, who assumes the position of director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth this July, the term itself speaks volumes about the way his own faith journey has unfolded.

A fifth generation Texan with strong ties to his Mexican heritage, Fr. Isaac grew up in Irving with his younger brother and sister. His parents, though fully initiated Catholics, took the family to a non-denominational church, sending him to Cistercian Preparatory School for junior high and MacArthur High School.

"When my parents were young they were very religious," Fr. Isaac said. "They inspired me to love God."

Yet by the time he was in high school, the family had stopped

attending church altogether, and in the midst of several family crises, including his parents' divorce, Orozco was left with a lot of questions and struggles with his faith. In the process of pursuing his lifelong ambition to serve in the military — yes, in the secular world — God's plan for him began to emerge.

"I originally accepted a nomination to attend the Naval Academy and served nine months as a midshipman candidate at the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, Rhode Island," explained Fr. Isaac. "During that time I had an opportunity to go to church, and I was

able to finally give all the questions and confusion and hurt to God. I got involved in the Catholic midshipman's program, and I started to seriously consider the priesthood as an option."

In the background, though, his family continued to struggle, and the promising would-be Naval Academy student found his heart divided.

"I felt like my family was falling apart," he said. "And I felt that I needed to be with them."

In a stunning leap of faith and devotion to his family, Orozco walked away.

"When I left the Navy, I didn't really have a plan," he remembers. "By then my family had moved to Arlington. I worked for a year, attended St. Matthew Parish there, then entered Holy Trinity Seminary at the University of Dallas."

Following graduate studies at the Pontifical North American College in Rome and ordination, Fr. Isaac has served as parochial vicar at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller, with his most recent position being priest secretary to Bishop Kevin Vann. But Fr. Isaac is looking forward to his new appointment as Vocations

director with enthusiasm and a crisp, clear approach to ministry.

"I have a burning desire to see the secular priesthood and the lay faithful collaborate to produce modern-day saints," he said. "Secular priests

invade our world, countries, and neighborhoods with the presupposition that Christ belongs in the world. Our priesthood is to be lived among the laity, intermixing and showing the light of Christ in our society."

Good Shepherd Sunday April 29-29

The Diocese of Fort Worth will celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday April 28-29 to support our seminarians. In the Diocese, we have been truly blessed to have a total of 27 men currently studying for the priesthood. In addition, 9 more have applied to begin their studies in the Fall. Our seminarians come from 17 parishes across our Diocese.

They are currently studying in such places as:

- Assumption Seminary, San Antonio
- Holy Trinity Seminary, Irving
- Pontifical North American College, Vatican City
- Residencia de Alumnos de la Universidad Pontificia de Mexico
- Sacred Heart School of Theology, Hales Corners, Wisconsin
- Seminario Hispano de Santa Maria de Guadalupe de Mexico
- St. Joseph Seminary College, St. Benedict, Louisiana
- St. Mary Seminary, Houston
- Theological College, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

Each year, the Diocese provides approximately \$1 million to provide tuition, room and board, and health insurance for all of our men in formation. As their numbers continue to grow, the Diocese must be ready to meet this need. During all of the Masses that weekend, a special collection will be taken to help defray these costs. You have been most generous in the past, and it is our prayer that you will continue your generosity.



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

We are blessed with 27 seminarians and 9 applicants for 2012.
Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support!

Good Shepherd Sunday • April 28-29, 2012
Special Collection to Support Our Seminarians

Catechesis

What God Has Joined: A Catholic Teaching on Marriage.

By Lucas Pollice

All the recent news and discussion of the HHS mandate has provided the Church a providential and perfect opportunity to clearly and lovingly teach about why contraception is morally wrong and why it is destructive to marriage. It is one of those “teaching moments” that does not come along very often. In light of this, I thought it would be most appropriate to share with you an excerpt from Bishop Vann’s book *What God Has Joined: A Catholic Teaching on Marriage*. As the chief catechist of the diocese, Bishop Vann gives a very clear and beautiful teaching on this most important issue:

What is the relationship between marriage and sexuality?

Each individual, male or female, is created in the image of God. And the purposes of the gender differences are deeply realized in the union of a husband and wife in the sexual embrace. When a husband and wife give themselves to each other in the sexual act, they are an image of Christ’s love for his Church (see *Ephesians 5:22–33*).

That it is natural for marital love to be total and unconditional is most powerfully evidenced in the conjugal act. The *Catechism*, quoting Pope John Paul, states:

Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter — appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility. In a word it is a question of the normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new significance which not only purifies and strengthens them, but raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian values.

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1643; Familiaris Consortio, 13*

People must not disconnect the human sexual act from marriage or from the sacramental grace through which God is supposed to get to be present and working. To do so is to distort the sexual act and abuse its nature and purpose.

What is wrong with contraception?

At the altar, before the vows of marriage can be exchanged, the couple must make three solemn assurances: first, that they have come freely, without reservation, to give themselves totally in marriage; second, that they will be faithful to each other till death; and, finally, that they will “accept with love the children God may send you....” All three assurances must be given because marriage has a twofold purpose: the good of the spouses and the procreation

of children. These purposes are equal to one another and must be respected throughout the marriage.

Sex is, as it were, the incarnation of these vows. Every time spouses engage in sex, they implicitly reaffirm the promises they made to God and to each other on their wedding day. For that reason, too, they should in every sexual act keep both purposes respected.

Any direct attempt to remove the possibility of the conception of a child is a violation of that double purpose of procreation and the good of the spouses. Contraception acts as a barrier not only to life, but to love as well. Rejecting a certain aspect of one of the spouses’ basic nature does severe damage to the marital love. Saint Paul tells us that the love of husband and wife is meant to be a sign of Christ’s love for his Church (see *Ephesians 5:22–33*). A conjugal act in which contraception is used models in no way Christ’s complete giving of himself to his bride, the Church. It also does not model the life-giving aspect of Christ’s love for the Church, that love which in the Sacrament of Baptism is always resulting in a new “child of God.” This is not a mere theological concept, or just an ideal; it is the truest meaning of the sexual act in marriage. Pope John Paul stated it powerfully:

When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as “arbiters” of the divine plan and they “manipulate” and degrade human sexuality — and with it themselves and their married partner — by altering its value of “total” self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.

— *Familiaris Consortio, 32*

Besides the breaking of the marital promises that the sexual act is supposed to reaffirm, contraception also has many other negative effects. These include a general lessening of respect for sex itself which leads directly to the mere using of the spouse as a means for physical gratification. There is also a connection between contraception and the decline in viewing children as blessings from God, though a child is the greatest fruit bestowed upon a marriage. Finally, contraception damages the gift of self that the spouses are called to make; it renders it less than total. Many of these effects were foreseen by Pope Paul VI; he warned about them in 1968, in *Humanae Vitae*.

What is Natural Family Planning? Isn’t it just Catholic birth control?

Every married couple is called to be open to the gift of children in their marriage. But that doesn’t mean they must have as many children as humanly possible. Included in that call to openness is the call to responsible parenting of the children God gives the couple. The husband and wife must, while always trusting in the providing care of their heavenly Father, carry out their own responsibilities of providing for their children. To do so may at times entail abstaining, for serious reasons, from sex, so as to avoid pregnancy.

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is an umbrella term for Church-approved methods that can be used either to achieve pregnancy or to avoid it. These methods are ways that couples can remain open to life while following their call to responsible parenthood. Each of them is based on observation of various biological signs that show when a woman is in a time of fertility. Being able to identify times of fertility and infertility makes it possible for the couple to decide, on the basis of their intentions, when to have sex.

The likely next question is, of course, this: If the intention of the couple is to avoid pregnancy, does it really matter whether they use NFP or some form of contraception? The short answer is YES, it matters greatly! Contraception is intrinsically immoral and degrades the sexual act. With NFP the sex is not compromised; it is still a complete union of the spouses. They are not violating nature; they are cooperating with it, and remaining open to the possibility of life. Contraception cuts off the natural gift of fertility so that the couple is no longer open to life. Whereas NFP allows the spouses to stay intact and respect in totality themselves and each other, contraception is an active rejection or withholding of their reproductive faculties. NFP maintains the natural order of each spouse’s body and its functions, whereas contraception does not. Finally, a couple using NFP is allowing for the possibility of conception at whatever time they are choosing not to abstain, while a couple using contraception is disrupting the natural process so as to prevent conception of a child.

Isn’t NFP a source of tension and a killer of romance?

In a society practically obsessed with sex, the idea of a couple choosing to not engage in the sexual act seems foreign. However, statistics indicate that our society does not grasp the true depth of human sexuality. In the United States, the divorce rate among average couples is currently about 50 percent. Among couples who use NFP, the divorce rate is less than 2 percent.

Couples who use NFP to avoid pregnancy often find that after abstaining for the recommended amount of time, they experience a “honeymoon” effect when they engage in sex

once again. NFP has the potential to increase the romance in the marriage, because neither spouse feels used as a means of sexual gratification. During times of abstinence, the spouses have the opportunity to grow in other aspects of their relationship, and thus enhance their love and respect for each other.

Along with an increase in feelings of desire, couples also gain a greater appreciation of the profound nature of the sexual act. First of all, sex has the ability to solidify the unity that the couple develops over the life of their relationship. Second, sex has the power to create new life. When a couple engages in the conjugal act knowing that they may be co-creating with God, their sense of wonder at the gift of sexuality is increased. Pope John Paul speaks of the “discovery” of this gift:

When...by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as “ministers” of God’s plan and they “benefit from” their sexuality according to the original dynamism of “total” self-giving, without manipulation or alteration...

[The difference between contraception and NFP] is a difference which is much wider and deeper than is usually thought, one which involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality. The choice of the natural rhythms involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is, the woman, and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control. To accept the cycle and to enter into dialogue means to recognize both the spiritual and corporal character of conjugal communion and to live personal love with its requirement of fidelity. In this context the couple comes to experience how conjugal communion is enriched with those values of tenderness and affection which constitute the inner soul of human sexuality in its physical dimension also. In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension and is never “used” as an “object” that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God’s creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person.

— *Familiaris Consortio, 32*

NFP allows the couple to go beyond what the world offers and see what God offers. Sex finds its proper place in marriage when God is at the center of the relationship. It reaches its potential when it is in service of the love of the spouses, not when it is set up as its foundation.



To obtain a copy of Bishop Vann’s book, call Basilica Press at 1-888-570-5182.

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

If we do not love others, our devotions won't save us

About a year ago, I ran across this quote by St. John of the Cross. "At the evening of life, we will be judged by our love" (CCC 1022). It was one of those quotes I just couldn't shake off. Sometimes, the words of the saints are like that. If they convict, they stick.

God did not say, "Don't hate." If He had, I would probably come out all right. He did not say, "Love me and treat everyone else as you see fit." If He had, I might be okay in that last great evaluation.

He did not say that it was okay for me to love only those I understand, only those who never hurt my feelings, only those who make my life a bit easier.

He said to love the unreasonable. The unpredictable. Those who make my life harder and sometimes practically impossible. When I love the unreasonable, unpredictable and impossible ones, I come closest to loving the way Jesus Christ loves me.

I'm commanded to love them. Even on nights when I'm tired. Even in mornings when I've spilled coffee on myself. Even when the dog throws up on the carpet, and the laundry room smells like there's a gas leak, and the engine light in my car is going off again — and that's when they decide to try my patience even further. Even then.

Even when old hurts resurface. Even when I did everything right and things still turn out really, really rotten.

One day, I'll be judged by Love on how much I loved even in these moments.

I can get my theology right. I can learn how to pray the rosary and genuflect. I can go to Confession monthly and attend Mass weekly — or even daily. I can read the Daily Office, pray the Angelus, and recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

I can show up for an hour of Adoration and read every book my spiritual advisor recommends.

I can even write a column about how wonderful it is to be Catholic.

But if I don't have love, I am nothing. St. Paul describes the loveless Christian as a clanging cymbal. I might garner some attention, but it's pointless — ridiculous even — if I fail to love as Christ loves me.

All of these good and holy things that I do are a tragic waste if I refuse to let them change me. I must respond to grace, respond to divine love and let that love flow from me to others. If I don't get that lesson mastered, everything that I've said, written, or done won't matter.

He said to love the unreasonable. The unpredictable. Those who make my life harder and sometimes practically impossible.

When I love the unreasonable, unpredictable and impossible ones, I come closest to loving the way Jesus Christ loves me.

In the evening of this life, we will be judged by the One who is Love on whether or not we have loved each other as He has loved us. Now that's a sobering thought.

Even so, it is not a reason to despair. We are fully capable of learning how to love as Christ has loved us. The saints have shown us that our faith can change us. We can learn this final and most important lesson. These things — the Mass, our prayers, the Sacraments, Lent, sacrifice, pilgrimages, and Sacred Scripture — these are the things that change our hearts.

They are venues for grace.

They have turned sinners into saints before. And, by the grace of God, they can change even me.

Denise Bossert is a convert to Catholicism. She lives near St. Louis and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in New Melle, Missouri. Read more of Denise's writing at www.catholicbygrace.blogspot.com

The Passover lamb:

Jesus ties us to Jewish tradition, faith

'Guess what I heard?" the man asked my friend. Someone, said the man, laughing the way you'd be laughing if someone tried to convince you that the Pirates won the World Series last year, said that Jesus was Jewish. "Jesus is Jewish," my friend said. The man's face fell.

And he was some kind of Christian, too. He was completely clueless, of course, but a lot of Christians know the story better than he did but still think the way he does. There's all that Jewish stuff, they think, and then there's Jesus and Christianity. The Old Testament tells some great stories and provides some useful moral lessons, but that's about it. The entire history of the Jewish people recorded in the Old Testament was a kind of warm-up act for the main attraction, and if you wanted, you could certainly come late and skip the warm-up act.

Which is not the Catholic teaching. As Pope Pius XI famously put it, responding to Nazi and Fascist anti-semitism in 1938: "Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and forefather. . . . Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we are all Semites."

The Church's bishops said something similar at the Second Vatican Council, in their declaration *Nostra Aetate*. The Church, they declared, "cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament" through the Jews, nor "that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself."

We — those of us with names like Mills and Aquilina and Kelley and Vann — are the wild shoots grafted onto the well-cultivated tree. Their roots are now our roots, which means their history and Scriptures are now our history and Scriptures. The history and revelation recorded in the Old Testament isn't the warm up act for Christianity but the foundation.

It's the first half of the book. Trying to understand Christianity without it is like trying to understand a long mystery story when you start halfway through. You'll know who did it because you've got the last half of the book, but you won't know exactly why he did it, and how he did it, and why the other characters did what they did. You'll have the solution to the puzzle without all the information that makes the puzzle interesting.

Here's a simple example, given to me

'Through Christ and in Christ

we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham.

Spiritually, we are all Semites."

— Pope Pius XII

by Taylor Marshall, a young scholar who's written a fascinating book called *The Crucified Rabbi: Judaism and the Origins of Catholic Christianity*. When St. John the Baptist sees Jesus coming, he tells the people listening to him, "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." We repeat these words ourselves when we say the *Agnus Dei* (Latin for "lamb of God") at Mass.

Why did John use this image? Some scholars and preachers explain that John was saying that Jesus was pure, like the sacrificial lambs in the Old Testament, and gentle and meek, like the lambs we see in the field. John is saying "Look at Jesus, who is going to die for you." That's what most of us naturally think, since our knowledge of lambs comes from television and petting zoos.

And that's true, of course, but it's not the whole truth. John, Taylor points out, was speaking to Jews who knew the history of their people and the whole sacrificial system. They knew John wasn't comparing Jesus to lambs in general but to the Passover lamb in particular.

The treatment of the Passover lamb has three parts: killing the lamb, spreading his blood, and then eating him, Taylor says. The third part is crucial. It tells us that in dying for us, Jesus makes himself part of us. He doesn't just save us in a legal sense, he changes us. As he does in the Mass.

Whether John knew something about the Mass or God had him say more than he knew, in calling Jesus "the lamb of God," he proclaimed part of the good news — but if you're a wild shoot, you have to know the old tree to understand it.

David Mills is the executive editor of FIRST THINGS (www.firstthings.com). Taylor Marshall's blog and information about his book can be found at www.taylormarshall.com.

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Perusing the 'Warm Fuzzy' file and discovering the joy of remembered SSMN jubilees

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Everybody should have a “warm fuzzy” file, or so said my friend, boss, and editor, Jeff Hensley, of the *North Texas Catholic*. I always tried to put into practice the things he advocated, so, on that day, a couple of decades ago, I purchased a folder and began stashing warm fuzzies in it.

Today, in a different millennium, the folders (grown to four) contain cards my children made, clippings and letters from friends, former friends, and even strangers.

Everything in the file is warm; none, however is actually fuzzy.

Let's face it, on a bad day, putting your hand in a file and finding the contents are not papery but furry, would probably not cheer you up at all. Rather it would jar your startled hand out of the worn folder and — (oooooh what WAS that?!) — your fingers would scramble to rejoin the rest of your body, escaping the drawer, the desk, the office, the stairway, and the front door.

I don't think that sort of hysteria is valuable.

My own warm fuzzy file is not like that. It is a happy collection: the congratulatory card Kathleen Thompson sent, after my first column was published; the notes I received from Joan Supino, after she and her husband Deacon Burt moved out of our diocese to live nearer their children.

There are special items like my friend Beth's Christmas letters (best ever), and a note from my college roommate's aunt, who discovered my by-line in their diocesan newspaper. Those are certainly not pet mice, or even fuzzy pom-poms. They are simply wonderful mementos. Meaningful stuff. Warm “fuzzies.”

This afternoon I was glancing through that WF file. It was packed with aging paper and faded ink, but among those I found some compelling items.

First, dated 2003, was a printed card with the following quote from St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower: “Holiness is not a matter of this or that pious practice,” she said. “It consists of a disposition of the heart which makes us small and humble in the arms of God, aware of our weakness, yet confident — boldly confident — in the goodness of our Father.”

Certainly this was not a note sent directly from St. Thérèse, a patron saint of the Carmelite nuns. Instead it was a holy card placed on my computer monitor and read from time to time, when my heart was drawn to it, until, finally it landed in my

This afternoon I was glancing through that WF file. It was packed with aging paper and faded ink, but among those I found some compelling items.

warm fuzzy file.

Also on my paper expedition I found a fascinating note, once tossed on the floor after a Sunday Mass. It was a thank-you someone had written or received during Mass; it had been forgotten and left behind. Dusty with shoe prints, the note begged to be trashed, but I had rescued it from the floor one morning and brought it home.

Living in my WF file now, the dirty, discarded treasure says, “Dear Sir, Thank you for the beautiful flower and the nice card. Thank you for being my friend.” Who was “Sir” and who wrote the note to him? The concept fascinated me because of the printed proof it was, of both caring and being cared for.

I like to think the card was from God. Or perhaps to Him.

Among my finds today was another folded card, about like the one preceding it. Instead of “Thank You” on the front, however, it was printed with a formal seal, under which was the following type: Sisters of St Mary of Namur, Fort Worth, Texas.

Below that, it was dated: “Jubilee, 2007.”

I held it, unopened, and wondered whose jubilee it announced. “How many jubilees have I attended?” I quizzed myself. Dozens: Sister Jane Frances Dunnam, Sister Marion Celeste Cimo, Sister Cecile Faget, Sister Dorothy Ann Flori, Sister Martin Joseph Jones, and Sister Mary Elizabeth Snyder. Sister Jo Anne Becker, Sister

Anselma Knabe, Sister Josephine Stewart, and Sister Barbara Wilson.

There were Sister Gertrude Moore, Sister Catherine Marie Houston. Sister Agnes Endres, Sister Mary Alberta Meyer, Sister Mary Charles Payne, Sister Alice Claire Forsyth, Sister Mary Irma Endres, Sister Mary Devota Sweeny, Sister Mary Patricia Hennessy, Sister Margaret Rose, and Sister Mary Frances Serafino.

And more.

But whose jubilee invitation was in my hand — unopened? Might it, ironically, have a connection with the book I had just read? *A Little Good?* Might it have been connected with the sister who herself had authored that bit of history?

So I opened the very small, inexplicably meaningful SSMN invitation. It did not disappoint my imagination. It was a memento I had saved — a Mass commemorating the 50th jubilee of Sister Mary Merdian and the 65th jubilee of Sister St. John Begnaud.

Concelebrating the Mass with Bishop Vann was Monsignor Joseph Schumacher, who composed the forward of the book Sr. St. John would write during the following five years. Also concelebrating was the sisters' friend, the late Father Robert Wilson.

Sr. St. John is one of the most brilliant women I have ever known, her intelligence coupled with creativity and a sense of humor. I have not known her long or well like my friends, who received the great blessing of an SSMN education. But I have had the good fortune of long conversations with her, and an early reading of her wonderful book.

The three printed pieces I found today in my warm fuzzy folder were meaningful to our lives, especially during the season of Lent, and what it leads us out of: the dregs of our sometimes shallow hearts.

Also, the pieces reminded me of what we are being led toward: the warm fuzzy feeling of Heaven, after accomplishing at least some of what God sent us here to do.

And what enrichment it is for me, this Lent, this year, this millennium, to have, in my little chronicle of things remembered, something small and special: a piece of the history of the Sisters of St. Mary.

Kathy Cribari Hamer and her husband are members of St. Andrew Parish near TCU in Southwest Fort Worth. In May 2009 her column received the second place award for best family life column from the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada for the second time in two years. In 2005, Kathy's column received the first place award in the same category.

Great tragedy turned into great triumph

By Jeff Hensley
Editor, *North Texas Catholic*

None of us likes to fail. It just isn't in human nature to rejoice and be happy when a project goes south or we suffer any of life's long list of setbacks.

But in life God has a way of taking what seems to be tragedy and using it as the raw material for incredible triumph.

When my mom developed congestive heart failure a little before she turned 80, it meant she faced a great number of limitations on her health and activity.

Mom didn't stop doing the laundry. She didn't take to bed and feel sorry for herself. She kept doing what she could for as long as she could.

But she did require more help and consideration from my dad than she ever had before.

We began to notice my dad going out of his way to be considerate, to do sweet things for my mom.

When we went to the shopping mall with my folks, he would drop her off at the door and then go park the car. Little things. But it turned into a pattern.

In time, he developed nurturing skills he had never had before. He became kinder, more attentive. He developed an appreciation of the things my mom had always done for him and for the rest of our family.

By the time of my mom's death, my dad was a different person, a better, kinder person.

He lived on another six years, and died as a new man, quite different from the man who had been my father, growing up.

Tragedy breeding triumph.

It's not the way we like to see good things come about, but when they do, we can appreciate them, and the genius of God in being able to accomplish them.

It has lately occurred to me that I cannot fathom the depth of sorrow and grief that Jesus' mother and his disciples must have experienced when he was crucified.

It was a cruel, cruel, brutal way to die. Mary's heart pierced by a sword; what an apt way to express the pain.

But as painful as the loss was, how much greater was the joy to find at Easter that the laws of the universe had changed.

Incredible tragedy, incredible triumph, incredible joy. Jesus had risen from the dead, and the world, including my own family, became better because of unimaginable pain, his life given for ours.

Features

Explaining Confession to our Protestant friends

By Jeff Hedglen

Living in the “Bible belt” is not always easy for us Catholics. Many other denominations do not understand why Catholics do what we do. What makes matters worse is that many non-Catholics are very well versed in Scripture and have well developed arguments against the very things we hold dear. Even worse, all too often we do not know what to say back to them to defend our beliefs. A recent late-night conversation with one of our priests has given me fodder for one of the most popular questions asked of Catholics

Why do Catholics have to go to a priest to have their sins forgiven? It isn't good enough to say, “That’s what they taught me in second grade CCD” or “That's the way we've always done it” or “Because the Pope said so.”

A good quick answer could be: Only God forgives sin, yet through ordination, priests and bishops are given the power to forgive sins. When you sin you offend God and the Body of Christ (the Church). Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation you are reconciled with God and his Body, as well as fulfilling the instruction to confess your sins to one another. Then quickly reference *John 20:22-23* where Jesus gives the Apostles the power to forgive sins and *James 5:16* where we are commanded to confess our sins to one another and add *2 Corinthians* which speaks of Jesus giving us the ministry of reconciliation. If you are really ambitious you could memorize paragraphs 1441, 1461, 1444 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, simple enough right?

If you're like me, you realize that that's not only a mouthful, it's a lot to commit to memory. I have been looking for an easier way to explain the need for and the power of this sacrament. As luck would have it I was recently sharing a late night snack with Father Hoa Nguyen

from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, having just returned from a reconciliation service at an Awakening retreat for Midwestern State University students.

As we were talking about the evening's events Fr. Hoa shared why he thinks confessing our sins is so important. He explained that when we speak our sins out loud we “name” them. When we name them we then “claim” them. Only by doing this can we “tame” them, and through the sacrament we can now be “aimed” in a new direction. He went on to say that if we fail to confess our sin, we do not name or claim our sin, and thus they're not tamed, and our life isn't re-aimed. Instead all we are left with is blame.

His explanation of this sacrament really struck a chord with me. There really is power in saying a sin out loud, for in naming the sin I'm admitting to myself, another person, and God the truth of what I've done. If I keep the truth locked up inside me I'm trapped. Once the sin is named I

In naming the sin I'm admitting to myself, another person and God the truth of what I've done.

can claim it as a truth in my life, and once it is out in the open Jesus is free to tame it through the power of forgiveness. Lastly with the grace of God, advice from the priest, and a penance, my life has a new aim.

It's quite miraculous that one minute we enter the confessional plagued by sin that's driving us to hell, and we emerge, moments later, on a fast track to heaven.

The simple formula of Name, Claim, Tame, and Aim is a good way to express the power of Confession. In a conversation with a non-Catholic it might be nice to also be armed with some of the Scriptures mentioned above, but the overriding reason for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is that it heals, restores, and reorients our life.

Quite possibly the best response to a non-Catholic about why we go to a priest for forgiveness is your own testimony of how this sacrament has helped you to name, claim, and tame your sin, and how it has helped keep you aiming for heaven.

Jeff Hedglen is campus minister at UTA and associate director of Young Adult Ministry. He remains active with Camp Fort Worth. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at Jeff.hedglen@gmail.com.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring) Natalia Tsarkova celebrates after using a replica of a Gutenberg printing press at the *Verbum Domini* exhibit of rare biblical texts and artifacts at the Vatican Feb. 29. She was assisted by Clifford Keister of the Green Collection. The new interfaith exhibit showcases 150 items from the third century B.C. to the 17th century.



(CNS photo/courtesy of Boys Town) Father Edward Flanagan is surrounded by young men in his office at Boys Town in Omaha, Neb., in this 1942 photo. He is at the desk made for him by some boys at the home in the mid-1930s. Father Flanagan founded Boys Town in 1917, devoting his life to the care of troubled and abandoned boys. The Archdiocese of Omaha has begun an investigation into the priest's life opening the first phase in the rigorous process toward sainthood.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring) Seminarians from the Pontifical North American College celebrate after their only goal during a soccer match against *Redemptoris Mater* in the Clericus Cup in Rome March 3. The U.S. seminarians won their first game 1-0.

Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

1. Companion of St. Paul
2. Incompetent
3. Pleasant Valley
4. Preferred Bunk
5. Strict

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THE GIANT EASTER EGG SIGNIFIES... UH, A HUGE CHICKEN?

HOPE FOR...

NEW LIFE!

...THREE OMELETS, TOPS. SKOOT OVER.

DENTON

When Sacred Heart parishioners raised money to help build a church in their pastor's mother's hometown in Vietnam, for pastor Father Hoa Nguyen, it was a

Mission for his Hometown



Fr. Hoa Nguyen, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, Jessica Morath, Gene Douglass, Thao Nguyen (Fr. Hoa's father), Larry Berend, Thuy-Tien Le (Fr. Hoa's mother), and Peggy Berend stand at the entrance of Nhat-Tay Church in Vietnam after its dedication ceremony on Jan. 12.

By Jenara Kocks Burgess / Correspondent

Photos courtesy of Sacred Heart Church

When Father Hoa Nguyen attended the dedication Mass of a newly built church in his mother's home village of Nhat-Tay, Vietnam, with his family members and parishioners of Sacred Heart, he knew why the villagers stood tall with big smiles on their faces that day.

"They are very proud because the percentage of the Catholics is very small," said Fr. Hoa, "— only two to three percent (in Hue, where Nhat-Tay is located), but the church was beautiful." Fr. Hoa is pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls.

"Part of the church itself is not just the building where you go worship, but it truly is the face and the witness of the presence of Christianity. By the church being strong with a building like that, it indicates to the village that the Catholic Church is very strong," Fr. Hoa said.

Several years earlier, Sacred Heart was looking for a foreign mission project it could do as a parish, said Larry Berend, longtime parishioner, who was on the finance committee at the time.

At about the same time, Fr. Hoa and his family discovered that the church in Nhat-Tay, was barely useable after all the damage from the Vietnam War as well as from other wars and typhoons. Fr. Nguyen said Sacred Heart parishioners looked at foreign missions in Honduras and Mexico, but the Diocese of Fort Worth deemed them both too dangerous due to a revolution and drug cartels in those countries. So they decided to help with the church in Nhat-Tay.

"That was the whole idea. We wanted to help someone somewhere else," said Berend.

Sacred Heart groups sponsored various fundraisers (like parish breakfasts), and they also asked individuals to donate funds for it, Fr. Hoa said.

The total cost of the new church was \$200,000, and Sacred Heart Church donated a total of \$185,000 of it.

The villagers actually built the church

themselves, and since they are a farming community, they had to work around planting, harvest, and all their regular duties, Fr. Hoa said. On May 17, 2007, they laid the first stone. The whole process of building a church that seats 300 took four years.

"The farmers did everything by hand — even mixing the concrete. No machines were used," he said.

"I was amazed," said Berend. "For \$185,000, you don't expect a lot, but it was as big as Sacred Heart."

According to Fr. Hoa, before the missionaries came to Vietnam, the villagers were all pagans who worshiped different gods and their ancestors in their place of worship. When the missionaries came, many people in the village became Christians. When the community center where they had worshiped collapsed, the first church was built.

That first church was in the village for about 150 years. During the war, it was badly damaged, so the church they just completed is only the second church ever built there, Fr. Hoa said.

Fr. Hoa Nguyen, his parents, Thao Nguyen and Thuy-Tien Le; his uncle, Thi Nguyen, and four Sacred Heart parishioners, Gene Douglass, Jessica Morath, and Larry and Peggy Berend attended the Jan. 12 dedication of Nhat-Tay

Church.

"It was a beautiful ceremony. We didn't understand what all was said, but our Masses are the same, so you could tell what they were doing," said Peggy Berend, Larry Berend's wife.

The Berends said there were a lot of priests present at the dedication Mass, two bishops including Fr. Hoa Nguyen's uncle, Archbishop Stephen The Nhu Nguyen of Hue, and lots of nuns, as well as Nhat-Tay parishioners.

"It was definitely a big deal for them, and they were proud of what they had done," Peggy Berend said. "A lot of people didn't fit, so they had to stand outside, and they watched when the shutters were open."

Morath pointed out that the villagers had invested a lot into their new church.

"Here, we put up the money to build a church, but they, their hands and everything went into working for that," said Morath. "You could tell they were very proud and gave all that they had, pretty much, to have that celebration. They put on their best and had a huge feast afterwards, and you knew, this is what the village had to offer you Everyone was so happy. It was raining, but it didn't matter," she said, laughing.

Peggy Berend said the church dedication was the main reason they all went to Vietnam, but they also did some sightseeing, with Fr. Hoa as their guide.

Larry Berend and Gene Douglass both said that this was their second trip to Vietnam because they had both been to Vietnam during the war 41 years ago, and they both had had thoughts of visiting Vietnam since the war.

"I could never imagine how that would happen," said Douglass. "Who would I go with? Surely I wouldn't go by myself. But when this came up, it was just perfect."

Douglass talked a lot about the sight-seeing they did. From visiting a cave system that was featured in the National Geographic in 2011, to the Citadel in Hue, to the sites of two Marian apparitions in Lavang, Quang-Tri, (1798) and in Tra-Kieu, Dang, (1885) and to the Perfume River in dragon boats to visit the tombs of various kings of the Nguyen Dynasty, and to the various cemeteries to pay respects to the ancestors of Fr. Hoa Nguyen's family.

To Morath, Douglass, and the Berends, it seemed like many of the people they met were related to Fr. Hoa Nguyen. Fr. Hoa said in Vietnamese culture, they do not use the word "cousin" — all family members are considered closer than that and are called uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters. He said they are a very close-knit family.

"Catholics are the minority in Vietnam but we were with Father and his family so my personal experience was that we were surrounded pretty much by Catholics the whole time," Morath said. "The first two weeks, his cousins fed us three meals a day and made sure we were fed and that everything was okay. The hospitality was amazing as well as the cohesiveness of the culture, of the family," she said.

Morath and Douglass said they both attended the week-long celebration starting Jan. 6 of the 50th anniversary of the ordination



This church is the second church to be built in Nhat-Tay village in Vietnam, where Fr. Hoa Nguyen's mother grew up.



While working around the planting and harvesting seasons, the farmers of Nhat-Tay, Vietnam, build their new church.



At center, Archbishop Stephen The Nhu Nguyen, Fr. Hoa's uncle, of Hue presides at the dedication ceremony of Nhat-Tay Church in Vietnam. Pastor of the church, Fr. Hoa Quang Le, assists him on the right.

of Archbishop Stephen The Nhu Nguyen, the brother of Thuy-Tien Le, Fr. Nguyen's mother.

Both Larry Berend and Douglass talked about how Fr. Nguyen could trace ancestors on both his mother's and father's side who were among the 118 Vietnamese martyrs named as saints by Blessed Pope John Paul II. Fr. Nguyen even took them to visit the tomb of St. Tran Van Trong, the ancestor of Thao Nguyen, Fr. Nguyen's dad.

"The trip was really exciting and happy for us besides the accomplishment of [Sacred Heart] to see how we can help the people in the village continue to live their faith," said Fr. Hoa, "but also, part of it was a reconciliation for Larry and Gene to see that the country is not like it was during the war, and for the younger generation like Jessica to experience the culture — that it is different than what you hear about Vietnam — the war, the ugliness and all that" Fr. Hoa said.

Jesus' Resurrection

predicted of old, still powerful today



(CNS photo/J.D. Long-Garcia, CATHOLIC SUN, Diocese of Phoenix)

A crucifix hangs before a mural depicting the Resurrection in the sanctuary at St. Timothy Parish in Mesa, Arizona.

Lent and Easter are one event

In a 2007 pastoral letter on the meaning of Lent and Easter, Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Illinois, examined the relationship between Christ's death and his resurrection, saying:

"Theologically speaking, the resurrection of Christ is not a separate event that follows after his passion and death. ... The resurrection is the full manifestation of what took place in the death of Jesus."

In light of this, Bishop Braxton said, "Good Friday and Easter Sunday (death and resurrection) must be seen as two aspects of a single and united reality."

He said, "Though we are surrounded by the cold of winter and weighed down by the distressing anxieties of war and conflict in our world, the death and resurrection of Christ renews our hope and pours a balm of Gilead on our suffering."

"The Lenten season and Eastertide are like a brilliant golden nugget cast by the Holy Spirit into the baptismal waters of the church's life."

Resurrection: love conquers death

By Father Dale Launderville, OSB
Catholic News Service

When a loved one is on his or her final journey home to God, we who keep vigil recognize that a momentous event is happening before us. As believers, we live in hope that this journey will bring the loved one to a better place. We regard the dying process as the one by which a believer is born into eternal life.

As communication with the loved one fades, it is as if a veil descends between the dying person and those gathered. This fading of communication marks the transformation of the loved one's earthly body into a heavenly one.

Christians can face death with confidence because we believe that Jesus Christ has conquered death.

After Jesus died on the cross, he was buried, only to rise on the third day. The disciples were persuaded that Jesus had gone against all odds and risen from the dead. They had seen the tomb empty, and many testified that the resurrected Christ had appeared to them.

By passing through death and rising to new life, Jesus overcame death not only for his body but also for those who would join themselves to him. St. Paul explains

to believers that they have been baptized into Christ's death so they might be raised to new life (*Romans 6:3-4*). The victory that Christ has won for us weaves itself into the ups and downs of life.

A family that keeps vigil with a dying father recognizes that he symbolizes their bonds with one another. A father lays down his life for his family in numerous ways. This self-sacrificial love imitates the love that God showed for us when Jesus died for us.

Such love does not end in death but breaks forth into a new, more abundant life. Self-giving love brings new life not only to those who receive it but also to the one who gives it. A family honoring a dying father gives thanks for the love that brought them to life.

As Jesus on the cross breathes his last, the Roman soldier nearby proclaims: "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (*Mark 15:39*).

The way Jesus approached death seems to have triggered this awareness in the soldier. He understands who Jesus is more profoundly than the disciples who have been with him for three years.

When Jesus rises from the dead, the truth of the centurion's proclamation will be evident to others. Now his testimony resounds through the generations wherever

the Gospel of Mark is read.

This claim that Jesus is the Son of God contradicted the foundational belief of monotheistic Judaism because it appears to make him a rival to the one God. Jesus' admission before the high priest that he is "the son of the Blessed One" (*Mark 14:61*) opens the way for the high priest to charge him with blasphemy.

Jesus elaborates on the high priest's identification of him by saying: "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (*Mark 14:62*).

When Jesus dies and rises, he defeats the power of death and stands ready to bring this victory to full expression when he returns at the end of time.

Those invested in the Jewish monotheistic views of their time would be much slower to accept the identification of Jesus as the Son of God.

To do so, they would need to reinterpret their exclusive fidelity to YHWH ("the Lord"; *Deuteronomy 6:4*) in light of Jesus' dying and rising.

Christians would later identify themselves as followers of Christ by proclaiming that "Jesus is Lord" (*1 Corinthians 12:3*), a statement they could make only by the presence of the Holy Spirit within them.

When Christians hear the saying, "For you are dust and to dust you shall return," they believe that the death and decomposition of the physical body point to a more profound transformation of this body into a spiritual body (*1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-57*).

Believers can take courage from St. Paul's words: "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (*Romans 5:5*).

This same Spirit leads us to cry out, "Abba, Father" (*Romans 8:15*). As children of God and co-heirs with Christ, the life given to us is not confined to our individual bodies but is part of a cosmic whole.

St. Paul explains that the sufferings Christians must undergo between Jesus' resurrection and his second coming are minuscule in comparison to "the glory about to be revealed for us" (*Romans 8:18*).

He goes on to explain that the sufferings of all the cosmos are a form of birth pangs that will result in a new and glorious freedom — a new creation.

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

Old Testament offers insight on the Resurrection

By Father Gerald O'Collins, SJ
Catholic News Service

"For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead."

— John 20:9

It is hard to overstate the importance of the inherited Scriptures for the earliest followers of Jesus. When they recalled what Jesus did, said, and went through, they turned to these Scriptures, or to what we often refer to now as the Old Testament.

Through that biblical lens, they tried to understand and interpret what they had experienced of Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection from the dead.

The Crucifixion proved a horrifying experience for the first disciples. But Jesus had led them to scriptural passages that threw some light on that hideous and humiliating execution. On the cross he quoted the opening words of *Psalm 22*: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

When they told the story of Jesus' passion and death, they borrowed language from that (and other) psalms.

Likewise, some of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper (*Mark 14:24; Luke 22:15*) and earlier (*Mark 10:45*) might have prompted the earliest followers of Jesus to interpret his death in the light of *Isaiah 53*.

This dramatically powerful fourth "servant song" also became a key text when presenting the suffering of Jesus on behalf of others and the redemption it brought.

The New Testament contains 11 quotations from and at least 32 allusions to this final servant song. Right down to the present and the liturgy of Good Friday, *Isaiah*



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Torah begun in 13th-century Spain, and Torahs burned during the Holocaust and by communists are seen in the VERBUM DOMINI exhibit of rare biblical texts and artifacts at the Vatican Feb. 29. The references to Jesus contained in the books of the Old Testament represented here, emphasize the unity of God's revelation in the Holy Books of both faiths.

53 has retained its central importance in the way Christians understand the death of Jesus on the cross.

But where could the first disciples turn for scriptural insight into Jesus' resurrection from the dead? The *Psalms*, *Job*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and other books of the Jewish Scriptures have much to say about suffering and, in particular, the suffering of innocent persons.

But it is only in books such as *Daniel* and *Wisdom*, written toward the end of the Old Testament period, that we find a little clear

teaching on resurrection from the dead. Where are the Scriptures that could have helped the earliest followers of Jesus when they thought about his resurrection?

In the letters of St. Paul, the first Christian writer, we find a confession of the death and resurrection of Jesus that goes back to the very beginning of the church. The apostle reminds the Christians in Corinth of the heart of their faith: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures ... and was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (*1 Corinthians*

15:3-4).

But this ancient creed does not cite any particular biblical passages. It simply says Christ's death and resurrection happened according to that great scheme of things willed by God to which the inspired Scriptures witness.

St. Luke found a hint of Jesus' resurrection when the psalmist says to God: "You will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption" (*Acts 2:27*, quoting *Psalm 16:10*).

Jesus was and is "the holy one of God" (*Mark 1:24*). It was unthinkable that his existence would end with his body quietly corrupting in the tomb.

Even more significant was the next verse that Luke quoted: "You have made known to me the paths of life" (*Acts 2:28*, citing *Psalm 16:11*).

The resurrection had brought Jesus from the state of death into that of a new, glorious life that would last forever and which he wants to share with all the children of God.

In a debate over the resurrection of the dead, Jesus himself appealed to the Scriptures in support of his vision of God, as "not God of the dead but of the living" (*Mark 12:18-27*).

It was a lesson his followers had to learn: God has the last word and that last word is life: glorious, transformed life. It was a lesson that was not confined to specific biblical passages but one that came through the Scriptures everywhere.

Jesuit Father Gerald O'Collins has taught theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. His latest book is BELIEVING IN THE RESURRECTION; Paulist Press.

Even death can allow the Resurrection to shine Jesus' light into our lives

By Jeff Hedglen
North Texas Catholic

It is never easy when someone dies, even when we know that the person has been sick for years. When the time comes that the illness overtakes their body and death comes, it is a hard thing. This is exactly the situation my family faced when my sister-in-law passed away recently from Muscular Dystrophy, at the age of 54.

Sabine seemed just fine at Christmas, but by mid-January her condition had deteriorated too quickly to even get to the doctor. She died suddenly the day before her appointment. Her husband, Benno, my wife's brother, was devastated, as were we all.

In addition to the typical grief we were all suffering, my wife's mother had an additional burden.

You see, Benno and Sabine had left the Church, and in Germany where they live, this means no chance for a Catholic funeral. She fretted over whether she should ask her son if he would allow the local priest to come say some prayers at the funeral home.

Of my wife's family only her mother and two sisters are still involved in their faith. The other siblings are either indifferent or vocally against the Church.

Benno's history had him in the "vocal



(CNS photo/Karen Callaseay, CATHOLIC NEW WORLD)

Father Claudio Diaz Jr. lights a fire outside Mission St. Juan Diego in Arlington Heights, Illinois, during the Easter Vigil of 2011. Sometimes the fire that is lit, signaling the Resurrection of not only the body, but of faith, is lit not by a match, but the warmth of the human heart, moving in compassion, as shown in Jeff's story here.

dissent" side of things. It was this history that caused my mother-in-law to fret over asking about the prayer. In the end she figured it would not hurt to ask, so she did. Benno said, "That would be nice."

Quickly she called the priest, who was a good friend to her. He said that officially

he was not allowed to do anything, then he hemmed and hawed and finally said, "but I cannot see any reason why a family friend cannot come to the funeral home to say goodbye to them and say a few prayers for the deceased; if the rest of the family happens to be there at the same time, what can I do about that?"

After some coordination, the whole family gathered at the funeral home that night. The priest came in and said some prayers then traced the sign of the cross on Sabine's forehead with holy water and invited the whole family to do the same.

Then he went around the circle and stopped at each person, even my 7-year-old niece, and said a few private words.

Lastly he had the family hold hands around the coffin and pray the Our Father. The power of the Spirit in the room that night was electric. Tears flowed, hearts were warmed, a family bonded even deeper, and healing began.

When the impromptu service was over, one of my wife's other brothers said, "We have a great priest." The use of the word "we" spoke volumes, especially because he is one of the siblings who has been away from the Church.

Benno followed the priest out of the chapel to express his gratitude and had a conversation with him. When he came back

in we found out that he had let the priest know that in the last six months he and Sabine had been considering coming back to the Church, and when the funeral and everything was behind him, he would be calling the priest to start the process.

I was simply amazed at the impact the death of my sister-in-law had on this family, but then I remembered the power of Good Friday and Easter Sunday never ends. It continues to transform families and individuals daily.

Death is ever a doorway to resurrection. Sorrow leads to joy. Tears turn into dancing. And estranged Catholics are enfolded into the loving arms of the Church.

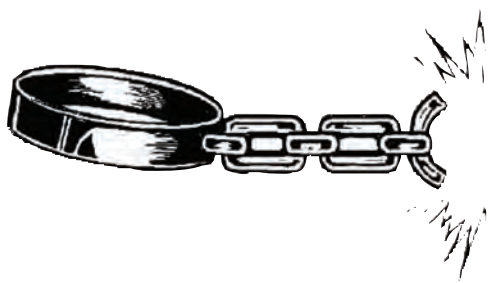
Jesus' death and resurrection inspired, and continue to let the words of St. Paul ring out: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (*1 Corinthians 15:55*).

Yes, Sabine's death is a sure loss for those of us who miss her. But even in her passing God finds a way to breathe new life.

Alleluia Jesus is risen and alive in his Church!

Jeff Hedglen is a long-time columnist and contributor to the North Texas Catholic. Jeff is campus minister at UTA and associate director of Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Biannual Youth for Life-sponsored rally helps teens to



BREAK FREE



from habits that keep them from God

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN / CORRESPONDENT

Fr. Agostino Torres, CFR, knows what it's like to break free from a troubled life. As a young boy growing up in South Texas, the Franciscan Friar of the Renewal watched drug abuse destroy his family. Despite the trauma and chaos created by his father's addiction, the gray-robed priest admits that as a teenager, he was tempted to follow in the same self-destructive footsteps.

"By the grace of God, I never touched drugs," Fr. Agostino assured high-schoolers attending the Breaking Free Life Revival youth rally offered by the diocese Feb. 25 in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's Formation and Ministry Building. "But there were



Fr. Agostino tells the teens gathered at the Breaking Free Rally that true love is the love of Christ that is sacrificial.



Gabe Gutiérrez, St. Elizabeth high school youth minister, leads the youth in worship during the Feb. 25 rally.



St. Elizabeth parishioners Johanne Conover (left), and Lexi Walton lean on each other during a participatory song.

other difficulties."

Standing before parish youth groups from across the diocese, the speaker admitted a youthful propensity toward violence and anger. There was also an attraction to sex, alcohol, and the need for popularity and peer acceptance.

"The Lord pulled me out (of the situation) and said, 'No. You're called to follow me,'" Fr. Agostino said, describing his conversion experience. "And because I know what the Lord did for me, I have to share that with other people. The message is too important."

What wisdom did the 35-year-old priest impart to his impressionable audience?

"You are loved! Believe it," he said, delivering the simple yet powerful message in a booming voice. "God loves you and He does not care about your appearance."

Young people today confuse love with the way someone looks or "feelings" they may have for another. Their expectations are based on lies perpetuated by an image-driven society.

"It's no wonder some people feel so isolated they have to find ways to feel connected," the friar said, referring to the pressure to use drugs or alcohol to "fit in." "We have to reclaim what love means," he said.

Like Christ dying on the cross for us, true love is sacrificial. It generates joy, kindness, peace, patience, self-control, and understanding.

"The Lord is right here," Fr. Agostino said, pointing to a crucifix projected over the stage. "And He wants to show you what love is."

The Breaking Free Youth Rally, sponsored every other year by the Diocese of Fort Worth Youth for Life ministry, gives teenagers an opportunity to explore personal behaviors and addictions that can isolate them from friends, family, and the Church.



Fr. Agostino Torres, CFR, prays over the gathering of youth at the Breaking Free Life Revival Youth Rally held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller Feb. 25.

Talks, prayer, music, and personal narratives presented during the rally are intended to give young people the tools to "break free" from the chains of body image, alcoholism, sex, drugs, and other problems keeping them from becoming the person God wants them to be.

"Satan operates in darkness," explained Gabe Gutiérrez, one of the event organizers and presenters. "That's where addictions flourish. We try to counter that with the light of Jesus Christ."

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton high school youth minister used a familiar analogy to help his young listeners understand the surreptitious nature of evil. Cockroaches will congregate on the countertop of a darkened kitchen. When a light is turned on, they scurry away.

"Evil works the same way," he told the crowd. "When we close ourselves off from God and allow darkness in, the devil can work on us."

He encouraged the teens to go to confession for healing.

"They call it the sacrament of conversion for a reason," Gutiérrez added. "In the Eucharist we let God's love and light reign in our hearts. That's how you overcome darkness and addiction."

A growing problem affecting today's youth is body image. The desire to achieve society's standard of beauty can lead to obsessive behavior in both young women and men, according to Maria Graham, a Houston behavioral therapist.

Women are diagnosed with eating disorders more often, but men also deal with self-esteem and body issues.

"They'll abuse exercise or steroids to build the perfect physique," explains the former St.

Elizabeth youth ministry volunteer. "Eating disorders take over and control your life. They affect the way you think and spend your time."

A survivor of anorexia nervosa, an eating disorder characterized by self-starvation and excessive weight loss, Graham shared her personal battle with the disease and how she used faith to break free from the destructive patterns and thoughts that tormented her for 11 years. She believes many young people use standards set by advertisers and the media to determine their value and worth.

"I tell teenagers they should receive their value from God who loves them unconditionally," she said. "He accepts us regardless of how we look or our performance."

During her recovery, the Franciscan University graduate replaced negative thoughts about her self worth with positive truths from the Bible.

"Faith was a critical part of my healing, but God also sent me a good doctor and counselor," Graham said.

Hearing the personal testimony of speakers impressed Brooke Allen. The 18-year-old college student from Weatherford has heard Fr. Agostino speak at other rallies.

"I like the stories he tells and the way he talks about his own experiences," said the St. Stephen parishioner.

Each presentation addressed different issues affecting young people in today's society.

"So many kids struggle with being wanted and accepted," she said. "I think if people were loved the way they should be loved or loved themselves, they would make better choices."

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Respect Life

At all stages

Health Transition Workshop provides valuable guidance and resources for end-of-life decisions

By Jerry Circelli
Correspondent

When is the best time to begin making decisions and documenting how you would like to be treated during your final days on earth?

Ask Father Tom Kennedy, pastor of Holy Angels Church in Clifton, and he will tell you the time is now. Fr. Kennedy showed people just how they could get started, during a Feb. 25 “Health Transition Workshop” at the Knights of Columbus St. Jude Council 6269 Hall, in Arlington. It was the fifth year Fr. Kennedy has teamed up with Knight Jerry Hauck and his council to share his insight and Catholic teachings on end-of-life decisions.

Before he discussed the end, however, Fr. Kennedy started the workshop from the beginning, with readings from the Book of Genesis, which tells of God’s creation of all living creatures, and then of human beings — both male and female. God told them to be fruitful, multiply, and have dominion over all plants, animals, and all living things on the earth. When God looked at everything he had made, he was pleased.

“When we as Catholics talk about the sanctity of human life, this is where it comes from,” said Fr. Kennedy. “God created us specifically out of love, to love.”

End-of-life decisions center on teachings about the sanctity of human life and the freedom to make choices guided by our Catholic faith. Informed choices, however, begin with education on the Catholic Church’s teachings about how we should be treated at the end of life and how we should treat others.

Two workshop reference materials, recommended by Fr. Kennedy and supplied by the Knights of Columbus St. Jude Council 6269, included:

- *A Will To Live: Clear Answers on End of Life Issues*, a booklet authored by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles.
- *A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions*, a pamphlet that includes Health Care

Proxy and Advance Medical Directive forms, produced by the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC).

Fr. Kennedy’s discussion touched on 30 critical questions discussed by Archbishop Gomez in his book. These ranged from “What is life?” and “What is Death?” to “What does a dignified death mean for a Catholic?” and “What attitudes should a Catholic have when confronted with death?” In between those questions and answers in the booklet are challenging discussions about health conditions that develop at the end of many of our lives and how the Church teaches us to deal with them.

Several key points are also discussed in the NCBC *A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life*. In that document of Church teachings, “obligatory” and “optional” moral means of dealing with end-of-life issues are discussed. Catholics are bound to perform morally obligatory treatments but may omit, at their discretion, those that are morally optional. “Ordinary” and “extraordinary” are terms used to make the distinction, according to the NCBC.

Ordinary means of sustaining life do not involve “any grave burden for oneself or another,” according to a quote from Pope Pius XII’s “The Prolongation of Life” address to the International Congress of Anesthesiologists, as



Photo by Jerry Circelli / North Texas Catholic

Jerry Hauck (left) and his Knights of Columbus St. Jude Council 6269 have sponsored materials and hosted the Health Transition Workshop for five years. Father Tom Kennedy (right), pastor of Holy Angels Church in Clifton, presents Catholic teachings, offers personal insight, and answers questions at the workshop.

cited by NCBC.

“Extraordinary” means, which are not obligatory, involve medical procedures that have little hope of benefit for the individual.

In order to make sound moral decisions, NCBC stresses that patients must receive all relevant information about their condition. This includes details about any proposed treatment and its benefits, possible risks, side effects, and costs.

According to NCBC, “There should be a presumption in favor of providing food and water to all patients, even those in a comatose state . . .” When the body can no longer assimilate food and water, however, they may be withdrawn, since they provide no benefit.

There are many difficult decisions both patients and their loved ones make on what may be considered ordinary or extraordinary means, according to Fr. Kennedy. The decisions are especially complicated when advice

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of medical personnel or popular opinion runs contrary to Catholic teachings.

In dealing with those tough challenges, however, Fr. Kennedy said Catholics should not feel alone.

"You have a wonderful resource, no matter where you are. You always have a priest you can go to."

Fr. Kennedy stressed that during critical times, people should seek second opinions. He said most hospitals have ethical panels and patient advocates who can offer advice, reiterating that priests can provide the valuable insight on Church teaching as it relates to each situation.

When a patient is not physically able to direct his health care provider to make decisions based on Catholic teachings, the NCBC Advance Medical Directive is a powerful document. "This is intended to give you a voice in those moments when you can't speak," said Fr. Kennedy.

While it is impossible to plan for every unforeseen circumstance, the document specifically directs that those caring for an individual not do anything that is contrary to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Specific references are

made to moral directives published in specific Catholic published materials, including some by Pope John Paul II.

Some examples of Catholic teachings are spelled out in the directive. For example, one of the paragraphs states:

"I want those making decisions on my behalf to avoid doing anything that intends or directly causes my death by deed or omission. Medical treatments may be forgone or withdrawn if they do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit to me or if they entail excessive burdens or impose excessive expense on my family or the community. In principle, I should receive nutrition and hydration so long as they are of benefit to me and alleviate suffering. In accord with the teachings of my Church, I have no moral objection to the use of medication or procedures necessary for my comfort even if they may indirectly and unintentionally shorten my life."

In addition to the directives outlined in the document, individuals may add their own requests. For example, they may wish to donate tissue and organs after their death, in keeping with the teachings of the Church. Or they may want to make a specific request to die at home or in a hospice with a home-like setting, if

possible.

Fr. Kennedy said when people take the time to complete an Advance Medical Directive, they not only can take comfort that their wishes will be carried out, but they save their loved ones the difficult task of trying to guess what their intentions might have been.

The NCBC document provides instruction for filling out the form, designating a Health Care Proxy to make decisions on the person's behalf, and obtaining necessary signatures to complete it.

Mary Ann Groff, a parishioner of St. Maria Goretti Church in Arlington, attended the workshop and said she and her husband are in the process of completing their Advance Medical Directive and Health Care Proxy forms.

Helpful Resources

A Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions

National Catholic Bioethics Center

Website: ncbcenter.org

Select "Publications," then "End-of-Life Guide"

A Will To Live: Clear Answers on End of Life Issues

Written by the Most Reverend José H. Gomez

Published by Basilica Press

Website: www.basilicapress.com, Phone: (888) 570-5182

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decisions for loved ones or for themselves.

"It was nice to know that we have these resources and that we can always call on a priest for advice."

Fr. Kennedy said he hopes that at each of his workshop discussions all in attendance begin to think about and plan for the end of their lives with Catholic teachings in mind.

"The purpose is to help people understand health care and end-of-life decisions from the Catholic perspective," Fr. Kennedy said. "It's something that's a mystery for many people."

One thing that should always be understood, he stressed to the group attending his most recent workshop, involves a fundamental teaching of the Catholic Church.

"For us, the end of life is the beginning of eternity. It's what we live for."

(For a complete discussion of end of life issues from a Catholic perspective, go to the National Bioethics Center Web site <http://www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=347>).

Like many others, Groff did not know the materials existed.

The workshop, she said, helped her to understand Catholic views on the subject and made her feel better that documents are available to provide specific Catholic directives for care.

"It is helping us make our decisions," Groff said. "And we just felt after attending the workshop that a load had been taken off our shoulders."

She said it also provided great comfort that people are not alone at critical times of making important

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Caregivers workshop provides support for relatives of homebound

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Caring for a sick, elderly parent is an act of love that can generate overwhelming stress. No one understands that better than Vonne Velez, a Holy Family parishioner whose mother was diagnosed with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS disease in August, 2009.

Shortly before her mother became ill, Velez' home burned to the ground. The single parent and her son move into her mother's house — a decision that proved providential.

"In the past year, her conditions became worse," explained the caregiver who took a leave of absence from work to tend to her mom's growing needs. "My mother is the most incredible person in my life and there's no question about my taking care of her."

Juggling the roles of employee, parent, and dutiful daughter became a pressure cooker. The petty problems she handled as manager of a human resource department didn't compare to her mother's loss of speech.

"Something had to give," she confessed. "It couldn't be my son or mother so I left the job I loved."

Velez found solace and support during "A Day of Renewal for Caregivers" hosted by Holy Family Church on March 3. Cheryl Craig,

a member of the parish's Stephen Ministry who works with the homebound, organized the event. She's witnessed firsthand the mental, emotional, and physical strain of caring for a loved one while balancing other responsibilities.

"It's the caregivers who get all used up. They give and they give," Craig explained. "So many times caregivers are so stressed, they die before the person who is sick."

The workshop not only provided practical tips and camaraderie, but was also designed to offer spiritual resources.

Burnout, spiritual renewal, and self-care were some of the issues addressed by guest speaker Sister Mary Fran Serafino, SSMN, during the workshop's opening presentation. The long-time pastoral minister and retreat facilitator said that caregivers are gifted people who know how to love and lift the spirits of others.

"But the worst way caregivers fail, is they don't know how to receive," she pointed out. "Caregiving is a gift and a call. It's about two sides of a door. You have to be able to move from one side of the door to the other."

Joy, tears, smiles, and laughter are important components of the ministry. So is prayer.

"When we walk into an assisted living center or nursing home, God



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / North Texas Catholic

Corey Beardon (standing) presents "Six Steps to Healthy Caregiving: Caring for Persons with Dementia," during a caregivers workshop held at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth March 3. Beardon is a dementia care specialist at the North Central Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. He educates, supports, and counsels family caregivers through the REACH program which offers in-home support services to family caregivers in Tarrant County.

gives us the grace to respond to that moment," she said. "You are called to rewrite the gospels with your life. You're the 'good news' that helps [the sick and elderly] feel their richness, loveliness, and value."

With the senior citizen population increasing, ministering to older people is a growing need that is easily overlooked, the presenter continued. The pragmatism of the Western world reinforces the belief that if you're not productive, you're not valued. Caregivers can help the elderly realize they still have something to offer society.

"They are in their wisdom years

and we don't want to miss that wisdom while they are here to share it with us," Sr. Mary Fran pointed out.

She asked audience members to remind elderly patients of their generative responsibility to families and the community.

"It's their responsibility to teach the younger people in our society how to live with love and hope," the speaker added. "Tell them they're needed."

And when moments of limitation and frustration make a caregiver feel he or she has nothing left to give, just walking into a room can be enough to make a patient's day, she encouraged.

"You free the people who are

imprisoned in body, soul, mind, and spirit just by your loving presence," Sr. Mary Fran continued. "You bring the spirit of God and his light as you open those doors."

To combat the stress and monotony of continuous caregiving, the former teacher told workshop attendees to take walks, meditate, read, or pursue a hobby. There are limitless ways to tap into God's energy.

"Take care of yourself. We can only be as compassionate to others as we are to ourselves," Sr. Mary Fran advised. "I'm compassionate enough to myself to let God love me, and I invite you to do the same thing."

During small group sessions, participants had the opportunity to learn about hospice, a prayer shawl ministry, caring for persons with dementia, self support for the caregiver, unattended grief, and planning a Catholic funeral.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioners Martina and Alfonso Martinez found the workshops helpful. The couple, who work with elderly Hispanics said information learned during the sessions will improve their ministry to the homebound.

"We know there's a need. We spent 12 years taking care of our own parents," Martina explained. "We have that experience but this prepared us even more."

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Catholics, 'all people of faith' urged to pray for religious liberty

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. bishops are urging Catholics and “all people of faith” across the nation to join them in prayer and fasting for religious freedom and conscience protection.

Among current threats to religious liberty, they said, is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate that forces employers, including religious ones, to provide coverage of contraception/sterilization in their health plans.

The bishops have asked Catholics and others to join them in “prayer and penance for our leaders and for the complete protection of our first

freedom — religious liberty — which is not only protected in the laws and customs of our great nation, but rooted in the teachings of our great tradition.”

Prayer and other resources have been posted on the USCCB website, www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/conscience-protection/resources-on-conscience-protection.cfm.

“Prayer for Religious Liberty” cards are available on the site as a downloadable PDF file. The cards are in English and Spanish and feature three different images: Mary as the Immaculate Conception, patroness

of the U.S.; Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the unborn; and St. Thomas More, the patron saint of the legal profession who was martyred for standing up for his religious beliefs.

“Prayer is the ultimate source of our strength — for without God, we can do nothing; but with God, all things are possible,” the bishops said in a March 14 statement titled “United for Religious Freedom.”

Meanwhile, the Pro-Life Action League, based in Chicago, and Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, based in Michigan, organized a Nationwide Rally for Religious Freedom that was

scheduled to take place in more than 120 cities at noon, March 23.

An announcement said the rally was to take place outside federal buildings, congressional offices, and historic sites. Religious leaders and other public figures were scheduled to be among the speakers at the various sites. The website <http://standupforreligiousfreedom.com> included general information about the rally and locations across the country.

The event, described as “a peaceful, family-friendly, nonpartisan, ecumenical event,” has its theme “Stand Up for Religious Freedom — Stop the HHS Mandate!”

Though not sponsored by the Diocese of Fort Worth, participation in the local rally was encouraged by the diocesan Respect Life Office. Coverage of the Fort Worth Rally in front of the Fritz Lanham Federal Building in Downtown Fort Worth will be posted on the *North Texas Catholic* website (fwdioc.org/ntc) as soon as it becomes available.

Editor's Note: Bulk packages of “Prayer for Religious Liberty” prayer cards will soon be available from the USCCB. They can be ordered at www.usccbpublishing.org and will be ready for shipping in April.

Myths abound about HHS contraceptive mandate; here are the facts

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Exaggerations and outright misrepresentations about the Department of Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate have been appearing in White House “fact sheets” and mainstream media. Here are some of the more frequently cited claims and the facts to counter them:

MYTH: Self-insurance is a seldom-used method of providing health insurance to employers, used mainly by church organizations to avoid having to pay for abortions or birth control.
FACT: A majority of Americans who have private health insurance are in self-insured plans, according to separate reports by the Congressional Research Service and the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research & Educational Trust. The percentage was 44 percent in 1999, 55 percent in 2008 and had increased to 60 percent by 2011.

Employees in large companies (those

with 200 or more employees) were even more likely to be covered by a self-insured plan. Eighty-two percent of workers at large firms — and 96 percent of those who work for a company with 5,000 or more workers — were in a self-insured health plan. There is no precise count of how many of the employees working for Catholic organizations or institutions are in self-insured plans.

MYTH: Twenty-eight states already require employers to cover contraceptives for their employees, so the situation in those states will not change.

FACT: Self-insured plans are excluded from state contraceptive mandates, but not from federal requirements. In addition, all but three states — California, New York and Oregon — include a broader religious exemption than the HHS one, which sets four criteria for an exemption: that an employer's purpose is to inculcate religious values, that it primarily hires and serves people who share its religious tenets, and that it is a nonprofit organization under certain sections

of the tax code.

Twelve states do not require that the organization's purpose be the inculcation of religious values, 12 do not mention a requirement to hire people who share the organization's religious tenets and 13 states have no requirement that the exempt organization serve only those who share its religious tenets. Sixteen states do not mandate that the exempt organization meet the tax code criteria.

Eight states exempt virtually any religious employer with moral objections to providing coverage of contraceptives to its employees. Illinois and Missouri extend that exemption to nonreligious employers who object. Other states have passed laws that do not define what constitutes a religious organization or have declined to enforce existing laws.

MYTH: Adding contraceptive coverage to health plans will be net cost-neutral, because those covered by the mandate will have fewer unintended pregnancies.

FACT: Pharmacy directors disagree.

An online survey by New Jersey-based Reimbursement Intelligence of 15 pharmacy directors representing more than 100 million employees or their dependents found that nearly 50 percent thought the mandate would increase costs, 20 percent thought it would be cost-neutral and none predicted that it would save money. More than 30 percent said they didn't know what the effect would be. Several respondents also raised the question of whether the mandate to provide contraceptives free of charge would require them to give away brand-name medications, even when generics are available.

In addition, the assumption that greater contraceptive use results in fewer pregnancies and fewer abortions has not been proved. A 2003 study in the journal *International Family Planning Perspectives* purported to show such a link, but found that levels of abortion and contraceptive use rose simultaneously in Cuba, Denmark, Netherlands, the United States, Singapore, and South Korea. Abortions went down as contraceptive

use increased in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Bulgaria, Turkey, Tunisia and Switzerland, the study found.

MYTH: Ninety-eight percent of Catholic women have used contraceptives.

FACT: The figure comes from an April 2011 Guttmacher Institute report based on the 2006-2008 National Survey of Family Growth. Twenty-five percent of the respondents to the survey self-identified as Catholics, but 40 percent of those said they never attended Mass or attended less frequently than once a month.

The survey looked at women between the ages of 15 and 44 and asked about contraceptive use only among those who had had sex in the three months prior to the survey and were not pregnant, postpartum or trying to get pregnant. Ninety percent of those women — and 98 percent of the Catholic respondents — said they had used some form of contraception at least once in their lives. The survey did not ask the women about their current contraceptive usage.

Cardinal Wuerl mulls saints who might serve as patrons for religious freedom

By Mark Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

BETHESDA, Maryland — Today's Catholics can look to the saints as role models as they stand up for religious freedom, and as they care for the poor and sick in the healing professions, participants at the Archdiocese of Washington's March 18 Rose Mass were told.

The annual Mass — held to seek God's blessings on those in the health professions — and the luncheon that followed were sponsored by the John Carroll Society, and held at the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda. Washington

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl was the principal celebrant of the Mass and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, was the homilist.

At the luncheon, Cardinal Wuerl asked attendees who they would choose to be the patron saint of religious freedom. After mentioning several possible candidates throughout history, the cardinal asked consideration of St. Patrick, the fifth-century bishop and apostle of Ireland whose feast day was celebrated the day before the Rose Mass.

“The faith proclaimed by Patrick is the faith that comes to us from the apostles,” said Cardinal Wuerl.

“He's one choice (as the patron saint for religious freedom) because of his courage to speak the truth, his fidelity to the Gospel, to the church and to the pope,” in the face of what today would be described as an indication in the polls that he would not be successful. Cardinal Wuerl alluded to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' mandate and its narrow exemption that would redefine what it means to be a religious organization and what constitutes ministry. While most houses of worship would qualify for the exemption, Catholic hospitals, universities and social services could be forced to provide employee health plans that would pay for steriliza-

tions, abortion-inducing drugs and contraceptives.

The cardinal mentioned several other saints throughout history who could be regarded as patron saints for religious freedom, all of whom remained faithful to the Gospel and to church teaching, remaining true to their consciences even to the point of being martyred for their faith.

Among those he mentioned were St. Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury executed in 1170 after opposing, as a matter of faith, the policies of King Henry II; St. Thomas More, lord chancellor of England, executed in 1535 after opposing King Henry VIII's illicit marriage;

Blessed Miguel Pro, a Jesuit priest executed by firing squad in 1927 after opposing the Mexican government's policy of religious persecution; and St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish Franciscan priest executed at the Auschwitz death camp.

Those holy men, Cardinal Wuerl said, stood for religious freedom when it was not popular, and held fast to their beliefs even in the face of death. Their example, he said, should inspire today's Catholics to stand up for religious freedom, even as government policies compromise that freedom and even as they are mocked by late night TV hosts and others for their beliefs.



Tony Vasinda talks with the middle school youth during the rally.



Morgan Eldridge, of Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster, hangs a notecard showing one thing she planned to do to grow closer to God.



The youth at the rally thought up one thing they could do to grow closer to God and wrote it down on a notecard.

Early adolescent youth learn to

PLACE GOD FIRST

at diocese's first Middle School Rally

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
JUAN GUAJARDO / CORRESPONDENT

During the homily of the closing Mass at the Diocese of Fort Worth's first Catholic Middle School Rally, Father Jeff Poirot stood up and told the 520 middle school youth and youth ministers in attendance that to "make things easy," he would post his homily to his Facebook page and to the Holy Family Parish Twitter feed, so they could check it out there instead. He then sat back down, as the entire congregation remained silent, eyes fixed on him. After several seconds, Fr. Poirot stood up and asked, "Now how many of you are thinking this priest has lost his mind?"

Known for his vibrant homilies, the pastor of Holy Family in Fort Worth then discussed how social media and technology, very much a large influence in the lives of youth and teens, can be a good thing but also detrimental.

That was one of the primary messages that the middle school rally team led by coordinators Larry and Cheryl West, both of Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, and diocesan Youth Ministry Director Kevin Prevou wanted to get across to the middle and junior high students attending the diocesan-sponsored rally at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish Feb. 18. With the theme, "No one before me," inspired by *Exodus 20:3*, presenters and Fr. Poirot offered the gathering their thoughts on how to place God first and play a role in positively influencing their peers, and how electronics and social media can be used as means to do that and to grow in faith.

Fr. Poirot explained that while gadgets such as cell phones, computers, or iPads can be wonderful, "at the same time, there's also a way in which technology can be something that distances us from others. It can be something that we use to sort of form our own little world, that we use to insulate ourselves from other people..."

Tying technology in with the Gospel reading (*Mark 2:1-12*) where Jesus heals a paralytic who is lowered through the roof by his friends, Fr. Poirot continued, "In so very many ways, today's Gospel is challenging us to look at our own lives and to see how it is that



Youth from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington pray and think up one thing they can do to get closer to God, after the rally. Hundreds of youth attended the diocese's first Catholic Middle School Rally on Feb. 18, at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Arlington. The rally featured keynote talks, breakout sessions, music, and Mass.

we use things around us to do extraordinary things. Do we allow technology to be something that helps us to reach out and do extraordinary things like staying in contact with our friends, learning more about our faith, sharing our faith with other people?

Fr. Poirot told the students they have the opportunity to do extraordinary things as people of faith who can share that faith with others, "by doing that, you can reach out to the people who, much like the paralytic, want to come close to Jesus, but for one reason or another are having a difficult time doing so."

The theme of putting God first was present throughout the day, including the keynote presentations by Doug Tooke, and experienced musician David Casey, both from Monarch Catholic Ministries.

Tooke, using a lively and humorous style, also drew from the Mark 2 Gospel reading and encouraged the kids to ask themselves who they were in the Gospel story: the paralyzed man, the Pharisees or scribes, the bystanders, or the friends who tore open the roof to get the paralytic to Jesus.

"Really what Mark chapter 2 has to teach us today is, 'Get off your butt!' Move to those in need, lift them up with your strength and a hope-filled heart and walk them to Christ,

and if you can't get to Him from the doorway, rip the roof off!" Tooke, who is also the youth ministry coordinator for the Diocese of Helena, Montana, continued, as the audience of students listened attentively.

The rally, which took approximately 18 months to plan, was designed specifically for middle-school age kids, Prevou said. Coordinated by the Wests, and planned by the diocesan youth council, which is headed by youth ministers and includes 125 junior high and high school youth, the idea for the rally sprang out of an interest to do more to reach out to early adolescents.

The rally differs from retreats for high-school youth in that it offers participants a variety of activities that keep them bustling throughout the day, so the kids' bountiful energy is given an outlet. With no presentation lasting longer than 30 minutes and with a variety of breakout sessions given by local youth ministers on everything from saints, to a crash course in Scripture, to hands-on sessions where kids learned to make rosaries and how to pray the Rosary, the middle-schoolers remained engaged, Prevou added.

"We saw kids engaged all day long, even going to the closing liturgy where they were

so reverent and so respectful in the church," Prevou said. "We think that next year we're going to be able to grow this thing, because the evaluations from the kids and from the adults were that this was a very special event."

As one of the final activities of the day, the youth were able to participate in an interactive presentation by Tony Vasinda and Scott Dougherty of Perpetual Motion Ministry in Dallas, a ministry that focuses primarily on serving youth and young adults.

Vasinda discussed with the kids how they could share God's love even by just sending a text message to somebody they know. Asking them what they would text their peers, Vasinda received answers like "God is awesome," "God loves you," "Have faith," "Love life," "Jesus is there for you," and "God created you in his image."

After a moment of prayer and reflection, Vasinda and Dougherty encouraged the children to write their personal message they wanted to share on a note card and tie it to a series of long strings radiating out from a huge broadcast tower built by Perpetual Ministry, giving the impression that the kids could broadcast their message of faith to the world and their peers and serving as a living prayer and commitment to live out God's message for them in the world.

Another youth minister, Genni Sayers, of Holy Family Parish, agreed. She said that it also got the youth thinking more about how to live out their faith.

"[For] most of the kids that I brought, this was their first time attending a youth event at the diocesan level and so they were very nervous coming in," Sayers said. "Within a few minutes of being here and the interactive games and the inflatable's they were [saying] 'This is like the best thing ever!'"

Megan Brett and Chloe Levins, both of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Arlington found the rally spiritually refreshing for them and their peers.

"It really went through my head how to act and how to be more like a good Catholic, a good Christian, and I just want to be the best person I can be," Megan, 12, said.

Chloe, 12, added, "I think I'll be closer to Christ and God in a way that I've never been before and I think I'll just pray a lot more."



Photo Courtesy of SSMN Western Province Archives

The St. Ignatius Annex, which later became the first Holy Name School, was on the corner of Kentucky Avenue and Hattie Street. It is now an abandoned lot.

A Little Good...

FROM PAGE 32

baritone.”

“When I was in Lockport, I saw the church where they had their first school,” said Sister Louise Smith, SSMN, archivist for the Western Province of the sisters, who consulted on the book. “It was still in existence. And they established their school down in the basement — the hard dirt floor, you know.”

The sisters cleaned the basement, vigorously, Sr. St. John writes, “because that was their tradition; they prayed vigorously

because that was their faith; and they welcomed children, because that was what they had come to do.”

The sisters stayed in Lockport 10 years before heading to Texas, where divine guidance was again at work. That chapter of SSMN history was, as Sr. St. John writes, where “two strands of history intertwined.”

“On the surface the story is simple,” the tale goes on. “The sisters in Lockport received an invitation from the Bishop of

Galveston to establish a boarding school in his diocese. But why these sisters? And why that diocese?”

The answer is pictured on the cover of the book: Sister Mary Angela, (Jennie Healy), one of the intertwined strands, was one of two nuns who made the second voyage to the States. Her older sister, Margaret Mary, had travelled to the USA with their father, after their mother had died. Margaret Mary had married the mayor of Corpus Christi.

“Sr. Mary Angela, and her sister stayed in correspondence...” Sr. St. John explains, so the mayor and his wife knew the Sisters of St. Mary had a school in Lockport, New York. They traveled to Lockport to take their daughter to the boarding school.

“The reunion of Sr. Margaret Mary and Jennie must have been special,” the book reads, “since there is no record that the two had seen each other since they were separated as children.”

Margaret Mary and her husband begged the Bishop of Galveston to invite the Sisters to establish a school in Texas so they wouldn’t have to make the long trip to take their daughters to Lockport!

“The bishop of Namur agreed to talk to the superior general, Mother Delphine, who was not nearly so interested in founding in America as Mother Claire had been. Nevertheless, when the bishop said this would be a good thing to do, they did.”

So the sisters came to Texas, ultimately opening schools in Corsicana, Ennis, Denison, Sherman, Fort Worth, Wichita Falls, and Dallas — but the first was in Waco when it was still very

much a frontier town.

A week after their arrival, the sisters announced the opening of a new school. “There was no building,” says the book, “but there were no students either.”

One man though, Tom Bloomer, a 50-year resident of Sherman, insisted later that he was there the first day, and “the sisters let him go home early.”

All those many years, Sr. St. John says the SSMN spirit resonated in a recurring theme. She writes:

“There is an unmet need. Resources to confront the need are inadequate.

Someone nevertheless makes an audacious attempt to meet the need.

Once begun, the effort draws others into the work.”

“What I found as I wrote the book,” she says, “is that there are impossible situations in which most of us just throw up our hands — ‘Nothing we can do about that.’

“But somebody says, ‘Well, we can do something.... We can’t do much, but we can do something.’ And then that works, and the something starts to succeed.”

Sr. St. John speaks of the first community, the Pious Ladies of St. Loup, who, in 1819, started out by giving sewing lessons. “And the parents would say, ‘I know you teach them sewing and you teach them catechism, but can you teach them to read and write?’

“And so now,” she says, “you can still visit that school — which is a flourishing school of a couple of thousand students.... We have one sister who serves on the board, but we turned it over to other people, as they could do it. That’s



Photo Courtesy of SSMN Western Province Archives

Mother Emilie Kernen led the first group of Sisters of St. Mary of Namur from Belgium to the U.S. in 1863.



Photo Courtesy of SSMN Western Province Archives

Thomas Bloomer was the first pupil at Sacred Heart Academy in Waco in 1873.



Photo Courtesy of SSMN Western Province Archives

Sr. St. John Begnaud, SSMN, in a photo taken of her in the mid-1950s when she began teaching at the University of Dallas.

kind of the way it went.

“That’s what I’ve really discovered — that is our history. If you look at the schools — if you look at the chart in the back of the book, you see we had a lot to do with most of the Catholic schools in Fort Worth. As soon as someone else could do it, we moved on.

“And our community has always emphasized the education of the sisters. You know, they [the order] were having trouble paying the mortgages, and yet they were sending us to places like Catholic University and Notre Dame and the University of St. Louis.

“This was what their priorities were, because if we were going to be teachers, then we needed to know what we were teaching. Most of those schools are still operating,” the author says, “even if we are not there — because that’s what you do.

“You prepare somebody else to do it and then you see what else has to be done.”

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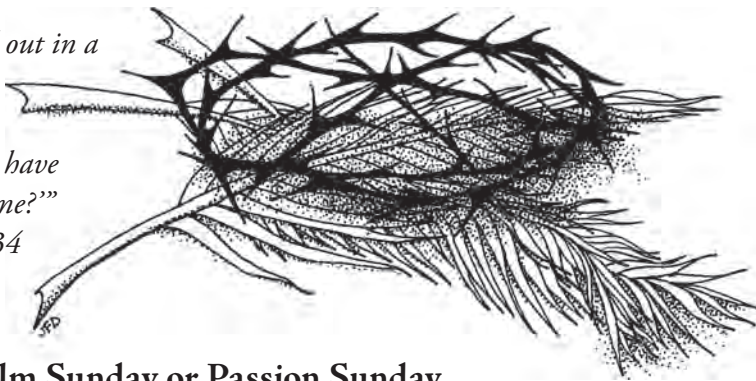
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Word = Life

Readings Reflections

“Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ... ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”
— Mark 15:34



April 1, Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday. Cycle B. Readings:

Procession with Palms: Mark 11:1-10
1) Isaiah 50:4-7
 Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24
2) Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel) Mark 14:1-15:47

By Jeff Hensley

Who can approach these readings without a sense of both awe and sadness? I confess, I only read the Passion Scriptures at this time of year, to avoid the depth of feelings they engender.

But even with their extremes of exultation and suffering, we may feel that we can identify, at least in part, with some of the sufferings that Jesus experienced.

Certainly the cycle of riding high in the estimation of others represented by Palm Sunday and then the crashing fury of the arrest, trial, scourging, Way of the Cross, and Crucifixion must all seem somehow familiar in the ways our society first elevates, then castigates public figures.

But the differences are great. Even Pilate is forced to ask, after the crowd has chosen the release of the rebel Barabbas over the release of Jesus, “Why? What evil has he done?”

Jesus went about preaching the good news, healing the sick, and doing good. What harm was there in him?

The ecclesial Focolare movement, as one of the defining elements of its spirituality, asks its members to seek to identify in prayer with Jesus as he spoke these words from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

As with his sinlessness, we cannot see in any other figure a similar sense of isolation and abandonment. Out of obedience to his Father, having become the lamb of God, on whose shoulders all the sins of humankind are laid, Jesus then experiences the isolation — beyond understanding — of being one with God and yet totally separated from God. For our sake.

Is it any wonder that these moments in the liturgies of both Passion Sunday and Good Friday call for kneeling and a silent pause?

How else can we appreciate the magnitude of Jesus’ sacrifice but in a moment of awed, appreciative silence?

QUESTIONS:

When my own troubles — or those of people I love — seem to be overwhelming, how can I find solace in the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross?

“Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”
— Mark 16:3

April 8, Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord. Cycle B. Readings:

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

By Jean Denton

Sammy is 13, so one should take his grouching about his restrictions at home with a grain of salt. There are a lot of rules at Sammy’s place, partly because his home is a room he shares with his mother and four siblings at a Christian-based family shelter.

Sammy listed the punitive consequences of having food in one’s room, leaving the building after hours or skipping evening chapel. Then, striking a satirically incredulous pose, he said, “And they call themselves Christian!”

It was a humorous complaint: The restrictions he told me about were not unreasonable, given the circumstances.

But his point, however flawed in the specific instance, reminded me of how we Christians sometimes seem content to simply languish in the consequences of sin rather than believing in the hope of change and new life.

It’s like staying in the tomb.

We help build schools and clinics in impoverished communities but “complete the task” without assisting the local people to develop a sustainable funding stream to pay teachers or medical staff, leaving them in the tomb of poverty — likely meaning we’ll need to help again.

We force the shutdown of a clinic that performs abortions because we’ve made it unprofitable for the physician to work there, not because he’s had a change of heart. While we exult in gaining hope for unborn babies, we abandon the doctor in a tomb of cultural darkness.

This is Easter Sunday. The Scriptures direct us out of the tomb to truly believe in conversion to new life. “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above ... not of what is on earth,” Paul says to the Colossians.

We must not believe in the power of earthly obstacles, his words tell us, whether it is accepting that poor communities will always need us or taking pleasure in the demise of a sinful man or woman. Life doesn’t stop at the stone covering the tomb. Jesus really is powerful enough to move it away.

Mark’s Gospel reading for the Easter Vigil tells us how Christians are called to belief and life with Christ beyond the sinful human condition that holds us in the tomb: “He has been raised; he is not here.”

QUESTIONS:

What are some examples of people or situations that you don’t believe can change? What must you do to change your attitude and actions to live by a belief in resurrected life with Jesus?



Word = Life

Readings Reflections

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.’”
— John 20:29



April 15, Second Sunday of Easter. 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

When I was 19 and still living with my parents, my favorite cousin came to live with us. He was a couple of years older than me and, as a child, he was somewhat of an idol to me. He always seemed so cool and on top of things and generally the kind of guy I wanted to be.

A few years earlier my family had moved from Michigan to Texas, and I had lost touch with this favorite cousin, so I was ecstatic at the idea of sharing a room with him. Pretty quickly, I figured out that in our years apart we had each changed and really did not have that many things in common. He was interested in going out to clubs and chasing women; I was interested in going to church and young adult Bible study. We had a lot of conflicts about this, but I became determined to change his heart.

One night we were in our bunk beds, and I was trying my best to explain to him why I loved God and why he, too, should love God. He got a bit frustrated and said, “The only way I will believe in God is if he comes down here and shakes my hand.” I can remember praying very hard that night that God would do just that.

My cousin’s doubts about God were not that different from St. Thomas’ in this Sunday’s Gospel. Thomas wanted tangible proof that Jesus really had risen from the dead. That desire for a physical experience of Jesus as a requirement for belief is very common. As the saying goes, “Seeing is believing.”

Few of us have ever had God come down and shake our hand, or have we? Each time we receive the Eucharist, we touch God, and each time we encounter another human being, we encounter his image. Still, for these moments to be encounters with the living God takes some faith. This is why Jesus says, “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

We may never have a “doubting Thomas” kind of moment, but in some ways not seeing and still believing has a deeper impact.

QUESTIONS:

What are some encounters you have had with Jesus that have affected your belief? Have you ever doubted the existence of God? What was that experience like?

“The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments.”
— 1 John 2:3



April 22, Third Sunday of Easter. Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Acts 3:13-15, 17-19
Psalm 4:2, 4, 7-9
- 2) 1 John 2:1-5a
Gospel) Luke 24:35-48

By Sharon K. Perkins

In the late 1950s, a trio called the Teddy Bears recorded a song that has been rerecorded by artists in every decade since. The refrain goes, “To know, know, know him ... is to love, love, love him.” Beneath that catchy tune and the simplicity of the lyric is a rather profound statement that has a lot to do with this week’s readings.

The apostle Peter is speaking in the temple portico to the religious descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, making the point that they killed the Author of Life because of their ignorance. In other words, they thought they knew the Holy and Righteous One but did not recognize him among them. Thus their lack of knowledge led to lack of love for the One they had crucified — and a subsequent need for conversion and repentance.

The two disciples of today’s Gospel passage recounted to their companions that they — who had certainly had the opportunity to get to know Jesus during his ministry — did not recognize him on the road to Emmaus until he broke bread with them. Their companions, later confronted with Jesus’ appearance, did not know him either until he showed them his hands and feet and ate a meal before them.

All this is to say that even well-meaning, religious people who think they know Jesus don’t always recognize him when he appears. We may know “about” him, but it is incomplete knowledge at best.

The key to truly knowing Jesus, according to John’s epistle, is following his commandments — and that new commandment, which Jesus fulfilled in his own suffering and death, is the difficult commandment of sacrificial love for one another. Loving one another as Jesus loves us leads to a fuller, more genuine knowledge of Jesus himself. When we come to know Jesus in this way — and not simply in an idea or a likeness of him — we can’t help but come to love him.

QUESTIONS:

How has your knowledge of Jesus been incomplete? In meditating on Jesus’ sacrificial love for you, can you think of a person in your life whom Jesus is commanding you to love in the same way?

Nuestro Pastor Habla

La Cuaresma nos llama a profundizar nuestra relación con Cristo en la oración, el ayuno, y la limosna

Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo,

Le escribo hoy desde Roma, donde me estoy preparando para participar con los obispos de Texas, Arkansas y Oklahoma, en nuestra visita *ad limina* al Santo Padre, Papa Benedicto XVI. Cada cinco años, aproximadamente, los obispos son llamados a Roma para dar un informe a la Santa Sede del estado y la vida de su diócesis, y para recibir el estímulo del Papa y la orientación de su ministerio episcopal. Debido a la transición papal en 2005, han pasado ocho años desde que los obispos de los Estados Unidos han participado en una visita *ad limina*, y esta es mi primera visita como Obispo. Espero con interés la reunión con el Santo Padre, y compartir con él las muchas bendiciones de nuestra Diócesis, así como los desafíos, sobre todo como una de las diócesis de más rápido crecimiento en los Estados Unidos. Las visitas *ad limina* son un recordatorio que no somos sólo una parte de nuestra Iglesia diocesana local, sino también parte de la Iglesia Universal, bajo el liderazgo del Papa como el sucesor de Pedro, el príncipe de los apóstoles, y el vicario de Cristo en la Tierra. Esta vez estar en Roma es una bendición particular, no sólo para mí, sino para todos nosotros en la Diócesis, a medida que continuamos trabajando juntos para construir el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia, tanto a nivel local como universal.

Ahora también nos encontramos en la época de Cuaresma, una temporada especial de oración, ayuno y limosna que nos llama a una relación más profunda y más íntima con Cristo y la Iglesia. Es un momento que nos lleva a participar más profundamente del misterio pascual de Cristo por el cual morimos a nuestro viejo "yo" pecaminoso y resucitamos a una nueva vida en Cristo. En particular, la Cuaresma nos llama a salir de nosotros mismos, no centrarse tanto en el "yo" sino en el otro, en los necesitados tanto material como espiritualmente. Este es el enfoque, en particular, del mensaje del Santo Padre para la Cuaresma de este año, recordando el pasaje de la carta a los Hebreos: «Fijémonos los unos en los otros para estímulo de la caridad y las buenas obras» (Hebreos 10, 24).

Usando este enfoque del Santo Padre para la temporada de Cuaresma, me gustaría reflexionar sobre las prácticas cuaresmales de oración, ayuno y limosna, no sólo como medio para una mayor santidad y conversión a Cristo, sino sobre cómo cada una de ellas en particular nos llama a salir de nuestro egoísmo personal para centrarnos en el otro, ayudándonos a crecer en obras de caridad.

En primer lugar, sin duda la Cuaresma nos invita a una oración más profunda, ya que no podemos tener una relación amorosa con Dios sin la oración. La oración y la vida cristiana son inseparables: esta no sólo nos ayuda a amar verdaderamente a Dios, sino también a nuestro prójimo. De hecho, la oración tiene



Monseñor Kevin Vann

que estar en el origen mismo de nuestras obras de caridad, ya que no podemos amar a otros como Cristo nos exige sin estar constantemente en oración. Sin la oración, las buenas obras se pueden reducir a mero activismo, o se puede ser tentado rápidamente por el desánimo, debido a la inmensa carga de las necesidades de otros. Sin embargo, la caridad y las buenas obras, unidas a la oración, se convierten en obras de Dios y se transforman, no por simple amor humano, sino por el amor de Cristo que vence todo: "Nos apremia el amor de Cristo" (2 Corintios 5:14). El Papa Benedicto XVI, en su primera encíclica *Deus Caritas Est* (Dios es amor), nos habla de la importancia de la oración en la prédica de la enseñanza social de la Iglesia:

La experiencia de una inmensa necesidad puede, por un lado, inclinarnos hacia la ideología que pretende obtener ahora lo que, al parecer, no consigue el gobierno de Dios sobre el mundo: la solución universal de todos los problemas; por otro lado, puede convertirse en una tentación a la inercia, ante la impresión de que, en cualquier caso, no se puede hacer nada. En esta situación, el contacto vivo con Cristo es la ayuda decisiva para continuar en el camino recto: ni caer en una soberbia que desprecia al hombre y en realidad nada construye, sino más bien destruye, ni ceder a la resignación, la cual impediría dejarse guiar por el amor y así servir al hombre. La oración se convierte en estos momentos en una exigencia muy concreta, como medio para recibir constantemente fuerzas de Cristo. Quien reza no desperdicia su tiempo, aunque todo haga pensar en una situación de emergencia y parezca impulsar sólo a la acción. La piedad no escatima la lucha contra la pobreza o la miseria del prójimo. La beata Teresa de Calcuta es un ejemplo evidente que el tiempo dedicado a Dios en la oración

no sólo deja de ser un obstáculo para la eficacia y la dedicación al amor al prójimo, sino que es en realidad una fuente inagotable para ello. En su carta para la Cuaresma de 1996, la beata escribía a sus colaboradores laicos: «Nosotros necesitamos esta unión íntima con Dios en nuestra vida cotidiana. Y ¿cómo podemos conseguirla? A través de la oración». (36)

La santa época de Cuaresma también nos llama a ayunar. La práctica del ayuno se remonta a los tiempos del Antiguo Testamento como un acto de arrepentimiento y vuelta al Señor como se ve, por ejemplo, en el pueblo de Nínive, que respondió a los llamados del profeta Jonás al arrepentimiento con actos de penitencia y ayuno. En el Nuevo Testamento, Jesús mismo oró y ayunó en el desierto durante 40 días antes de ser tentado por Satanás y en preparación para su ministerio público. La práctica del ayuno ha estado siempre presente en la vida de la Iglesia, pero por desgracia en nuestra cultura, hoy en día, el ayuno de muchas maneras ha perdido su significado. Por lo tanto, la práctica del ayuno necesita ser re-descubierta por muchos en la Iglesia como poderoso medio de penitencia y conversión dentro y fuera de la temporada de Cuaresma.

Estamos llamados a ayunar completamente durante la Cuaresma porque, al privarnos de buena comida y alimento durante un tiempo, ordenamos mejor nuestras pasiones y resistimos las tentaciones corporales y espirituales. Como nos enseña el Papa Benedicto XVI:

La práctica fiel del ayuno contribuye, además, a dar unidad a la persona, cuerpo y alma, ayudándola a evitar el pecado y a acrecentar la intimidad con el Señor. San Agustín, que conocía bien sus propias inclinaciones negativas y las definía como "retorcidísima y enredadísima complicación de nudos" (CONFESIONES, II, 10.18), en su tratado LA UTILIDAD DEL AYUNO, escribía: "Yo sufro, es verdad, para que Él me perdone; yo me castigo para que Él me socorra, para que yo sea agradable a sus ojos, para gustar a su dulzura" (SERMÓN 400, 3, 3: PL 40, 708). Privarse del alimento material que nutre el cuerpo facilita una disposición interior a escuchar a Cristo y a nutrirse de su palabra de salvación. Con el ayuno y la oración le permitimos que venga a saciar el hambre más profunda que experimentamos en lo íntimo de nuestro corazón: el hambre y la sed de Dios.

—Mensaje para la Cuaresma 2009

El Santo Padre nos dice también que el ayuno, en una forma única a través de nuestro acto de abnegación, abre nuestros ojos y corazones a las necesidades de los demás y nos llama a

un deseo más profundo por las obras de caridad, ayudándonos a llegar a una comprensión más profunda de las necesidades de nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Al mismo tiempo, el ayuno nos ayuda a tomar conciencia de la situación en la que viven muchos de nuestros hermanos. En su primera carta, San Juan nos pone en guardia: "Si alguno que posee bienes del mundo, ve a su hermano que está necesitado y le cierra sus entrañas, ¿cómo puede permanecer en él el amor de Dios?" (3,17). Ayunar por voluntad propia nos ayuda a cultivar el estilo del Buen Samaritano, que se inclina y socorre al hermano que sufre (cfr. Enc. DEUS CARITAS EST, 15). Al escoger libremente privarnos de algo para ayudar a los demás, demostramos concretamente que el prójimo que pasa dificultades no nos es extraño. Precisamente para mantener viva esta actitud de acogida y atención hacia los hermanos, animo a las parroquias y demás comunidades a intensificar durante la Cuaresma la práctica del ayuno personal y comunitario, cuidando asimismo la escucha de la palabra de Dios, la oración y la limosna.

Finalmente, dirigimos nuestra atención a la llamada cuaresmal a la limosna, que es el enfoque particular del mensaje de Cuaresma del Santo Padre para el año 2012. Por la limosna o actos de caridad, estamos llamados a dirigir nuestra atención a aquellos que están en necesidad, no sólo los que están en necesidad material, sino también a aquellos que están en necesidad espiritual - los más pobres de los pobres. La limosna, sobre todo, es la llamada al corazón de la vida cristiana, la vida de caridad activa, que se manifiesta más profundamente a través de la tradición de la Iglesia en las obras corporales y espirituales de misericordia.

Sin embargo, en nuestra cultura actual, parece haber cada vez más una pérdida de sensibilidad a los que están en necesidad. En una sociedad que promueve el individualismo y el materialismo, la situación de los pobres, los débiles, y los más vulnerables se puede perder en la intensidad de una cultura cada vez más secular. La llamada cuaresmal a la limosna para nosotros como católicos es vivir y dar a conocer el gran regalo y tesoro de la enseñanza social católica, según nos anima el Santo Padre: «Fijémonos los unos en los otros para estímulo de la caridad y las buenas obras» (Hebreos 10:24). Hoy, más que nunca, la Iglesia está comprometida en una lucha por el significado de la vida y la dignidad de la persona humana. Como el Beato Papa Juan Pablo II tantas veces proclamaba, el hombre es

CONTINUADA A LA DERECHA

El Obispo Kevin Vann y otros obispos de la región X expresan su unidad con Roma

Visitas al Vaticano llamadas *Ad limina* dan ocasión de crecimiento en la unidad, dice arzobispo de San Antonio, Gustavo García-Siller

Por **Cindy Wooden**
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) – Las visitas al Vaticano llamadas *Ad limina* son ocasión para los obispos de confirmar y aumentar la unión mutua y recíproca entre ellos y con el Papa Benedicto XVI, a fin de dar testimonio más eficaz del Evangelio, dijo el arzobispo de San Antonio.

En la misión de evangelización, “nuestra unión es imperativa”, les dijo el arzobispo Gustavo García-Siller a los obispos de Texas (incluyendo el obispo de Fort Worth, Kevin Vann), Oklahoma y Arkansas durante su homilía del 15 de marzo, cuando los obispos empezaban su visita ad limina con la celebración de una Misa en la Basílica de San Pedro.

Este tipo de visita a Roma, requerida en lapsos regulares de tiempo, que hacen los jefes de cada diócesis del mundo, se conocen formalmente con el nombre de *ad limina*

apostolorum — expresión latina traducida como “peregrinación a los sepulcros de San Pedro y San Pablo en Roma” — quienes fueron martirizados allí. En la visita se incluye una reunión con el Papa y con dignatarios del Vaticano para compartir información y preocupaciones; no obstante, todas las actividades giran alrededor de la Misa y momentos de oración.

Durante la homilía de la Misa en San Pedro, el arzobispo García-Siller extrajo lecciones de la lectura del Evangelio en el pasaje en el que Jesús le dice a la multitud: “Todo reino dividido contra sí mismo será asolado”.

El arzobispo les dijo a sus compañeros obispos: “En el ambiente sobrecargado en el que ejercemos nuestro ministerio hoy en día, hermanos míos, no permitamos que otros nos dividan, ni que nos pongan a unos en contra de otros”.

“Aquí, en la Ciudad Eterna, renovemos nuestro voto de caridad unos con otros y con el colegio completo de obispos bajo la dirección del sucesor de Pedro, el Papa Benedicto”, dijo.



El Papa Benedicto XVI saluda al Obispo Kevin Vann de Fort Worth, durante una reunión en el Vaticano el 16 de marzo. Obispos de Texas, Oklahoma y Arkansas estaban haciendo sus visitas de ad limina al Vaticano, para reportar sobre el estatus de sus diócesis. (Foto CNS/L'Osservatore Romano)



En el Vaticano, el Papa Benedicto XVI saluda a los obispos de Texas el 16 de marzo durante sus visitas de *ad limina*. Sentados a la derecha están: el Obispo Patrick J. Zurek de Amarillo; Kevin W. Vann de Fort Worth; James A. Tamayo de Laredo; Plácido Rodríguez de Lubbock; y Michael D. Pfeifer de San Angelo. Sentados a la izquierda están: el obispo auxiliar J. Douglas Deshotel de Dallas; el obispo auxiliar Mark J. Seitz de Dallas; el obispo Kevin J. Farrell de Dallas; el obispo auxiliar Oscar Cantú de San Antonio; y el Arzobispo Gustavo García-Siller de San Antonio. (Foto CNS/L'Osservatore Romano)



El arzobispo Gustavo García-Siller de San Antonio da el sermón durante la Misa concelebrada el 15 de marzo por obispos de Texas, Oklahoma y Arkansas, en el altar de la tumba en la cripta de la Basílica de San Pedro, en el Vaticano, como parte de las visitas de *ad limina* de los obispos al Vaticano, para reportar el estatus de sus diócesis. (Foto CNS/Paul Haring)

el camino de la Iglesia, la Iglesia existe para defender y promover la dignidad de cada persona, y para anunciar a todo el mundo que la humanidad es amada por Dios! La Iglesia da testimonio de la verdad, y ésta es más explícita a través de sus obras de caridad, cuando cada miembro de la Iglesia verdaderamente se preocupa por el otro y está animado por el amor de Cristo. Como el Santo Padre nos exhorta:

Esta expresión de la CARTA A LOS HEBREOS (10, 24) nos lleva a considerar la llamada universal a la santidad, el camino constante en la vida espiritual, a aspirar

a los carismas superiores y a una caridad cada vez más alta y fecunda (CF. 1 Co 12,31-13,13). La atención recíproca tiene como finalidad animarse mutuamente a un amor efectivo cada vez mayor, «como la luz del alba, que va en aumento hasta llegar a pleno día» (Pr 4,18), en espera de vivir el día sin ocaso en Dios. El tiempo que se nos ha dado en nuestra vida es precioso para descubrir y realizar buenas obras en el amor de Dios. Así la Iglesia misma crece y se desarrolla para llegar a la madurez de la plenitud de Cristo (CF. Ef 4,13). En esta perspectiva

dinámica de crecimiento se sitúa nuestra exhortación a animarnos recíprocamente para alcanzar la plenitud del amor y de las buenas obras... Ante un mundo que exige de los cristianos un testimonio renovado de amor y fidelidad al Señor, todos han de sentir la urgencia de ponerse a competir en la caridad, en el servicio y en las buenas obras (CF. Hb 6,10). Esta llamada es especialmente intensa en el tiempo santo de preparación para la Pascua.
—Mensaje para la Cuaresma 2012

Por lo tanto, que esta época santa de la Cuaresma, a través de la oración, el ayuno y la limosna, abra nuestros ojos y corazones a nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Cristo que están en necesidad, y nos permita convertirnos en instrumentos del amor del Señor y de la misericordia a los que necesitan esperanza, a aquellos que necesitan saber que son amados, y aquellos que buscan el verdadero significado de la vida humana, que sólo puede ser cumplido en Cristo.

Usted y sus familias permanecen en mis oraciones durante esta época santa de Cuaresma y espero

poder celebrar con ustedes la alegría de la Pascua.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+ OBISPO KEVIN W. VANN, JCD, DD
DIOCESIS DE FORT WORTH



Obispos 'unificados, enfocados' se comprometen a continuar defensa de la libertad religiosa

Por Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON (CNS) — Declarándose “fuertemente unificados e intensamente enfocados”, los más altos obispos católicos de la nación prometieron continuar su defensa multipuntal de la libertad religiosa en los tribunales, en el Congreso y en la Casa Blanca.

La declaración de cinco páginas titulada *United for Religious Freedom* (Unidos por la libertad religiosa) fue aprobada el 14 de marzo por el *Comité administrativo de la conferencia estadounidense de obispos católicos (USCCB)*, compuesto por oficiales y directores de comités y un obispo electo por cada una de las regiones geográficas de las *USCCB*.

Los obispos abren su declaración agradeciendo a “todos los que

se han parado firmes con nosotros en nuestra vigorosa oposición a este injusto mandato legal”, refiriéndose al mandato del *Departamento de salud y servicios humanos (HHS)* a casi todos los patronos, obligándolos a proveer a sus empleados cobertura de anticonceptivos y esterilización a través de los planes de seguro médico.

“Esto no se trata de la iglesia queriendo obligar a nadie a hacer nada; se trata en vez del gobierno federal obligando a la iglesia, consistiendo de sus fieles y todas menos unas cuantas de sus instituciones a actuar en contra de las enseñanzas eclesísticas”, dijeron. “Esta no es una lucha que queremos ni pedimos, sino una impuesta sobre nosotros por el gobierno a su propio tiempo”.

El debate acerca del mandato de anticonceptivos “no es un asunto

demócrata, conservador ni liberal; es un asunto estadounidense”, añaden los obispos.

Tampoco se trata el asunto de acceso a anticoncepción ni de “los obispos ‘prohibiendo la anticoncepción’ de alguna manera, cuando el Tribunal Supremo removió ese asunto de la mesa hace dos generaciones”, dicen.

Lo que preocupa especialmente a los obispos del mandato de anticonceptivos y de la estrecha exención religiosa a éste es la “nueva definición de quiénes somos como pueblo de fe y qué constituye nuestro ministerio”, dice la declaración.

“El gobierno no tiene derecho a definir la religión ni el ministerio religioso”, dicen los obispos. De ese modo el *HHS* crea y aplica una nueva distinción, ajena a nuestra tradición católica y a la ley federal, entre nuestras

casas de culto y nuestros excelentes ministerios de servicio a nuestros vecinos, es decir, a los pobres, los desamparados, los enfermos, los estudiantes en nuestras escuelas y universidades y otros en necesidad, de cualquier comunidad de fe o de ninguna”.

Tal definición crea “una segunda clase de ciudadanía dentro de nuestra comunidad religiosa” que podría “propagarse por toda la ley federal debilitando su sana tradición de respeto generoso por la libertad y diversidad de religión”, añaden.

Los obispos dicen que su *Comité ad hoc para la libertad religiosa* planea publicar una declaración sobre la libertad religiosa, la cual “tratará la amplia gama de asuntos de la libertad religiosa”.

El documento venidero “reflexiona sobre la historia de la libertad religiosa en nuestra gran nación, haciendo un

resumen de la gama actual de amenazas contra este principio fundamental y declara claramente la determinación de los obispos para actuar fuertemente, en concierto con nuestros compañeros ciudadanos, en su defensa”.

Los obispos cierran su declaración haciendo un llamado a todos los católicos y a otra gente de fe a “unírseles en oración y penitencia por nuestros líderes y por la completa protección de nuestra primera libertad, la libertad religiosa, la cual no solamente está protegida en las leyes y costumbres de nuestra gran nación, sino que también está enraizada en las enseñanzas de nuestra gran tradición”.

“La oración es la más alta fuente de nuestra fortaleza, ya que sin Dios no podemos hacer nada; pero con Dios todas las cosas son posibles”, añadieron.

¡La Iglesia camina hacia el Año de la Fe! Acción de Gracias por dádivas del Espíritu Santo

El 1º de marzo, en el *Día de Comunión*, reunión de líderes de toda la Diócesis de Fort Worth, pudimos escuchar las presentaciones del teólogo Chris Carstens sobre una conmemoración anunciada por el Papa, que comenzará en octubre.

He aquí un segmento de la Carta Apostólica *Porta Fidei* (Puerta de la Fe), del Papa Benedicto XVI, donde nos habla de esta celebración tan especial...

«La puerta de la fe» (cf. *Hch 14, 27*), que nos introduce en la vida de comunión con Dios y permite la entrada en su Iglesia, está siempre abierta para nosotros. Se cruza ese umbral cuando la Palabra de Dios se anuncia y el corazón se deja plasmar por la gracia que transforma. Atravesar esa puerta supone emprender un camino que dura toda la vida. Éste empieza con el bautismo (cf. *Rm 6, 4*), con el que

podemos llamar a Dios con el nombre de Padre, y se concluye con el paso de la muerte a la vida eterna, fruto de la resurrección del Señor Jesús que, con el don del Espíritu Santo, ha querido unir en su misma gloria a cuantos creen en él (cf. *1 Jn 17, 22*). Profesar la fe en la Trinidad –Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo – equivale a creer en un solo Dios que es amor (cf. *1 Jn 4, 8*): el Padre, que en la plenitud de los tiempos envió a su Hijo para nuestra salvación; Jesucristo, que en el misterio de su muerte y resurrección redimió al mundo; el Espíritu Santo, que guía a la Iglesia a través de los siglos en la espera del retorno glorioso del Señor...

A la luz de todo esto, he decidido convocar un *Año de la fe*. Comenzará el 11 de octubre de 2012, en el cincuenta aniversario de la apertura del *Concilio Vaticano II*, y terminará

en la solemnidad de Jesucristo, Rey del Universo, el 24 de noviembre de 2013. En la fecha del 11 de octubre de 2012, se celebrarán también los veinte años de la publicación del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*, promulgado por mi Predecesor, el beato Papa Juan Pablo II, con la intención de ilustrar a todos los fieles la fuerza y belleza de la fe... Y precisamente he convocado la *Asamblea General del Sínodo de los Obispos*, en el mes de octubre de 2012, sobre el tema de la *Nueva evangelización* para la transmisión de la fe cristiana. Será una buena ocasión para introducir a todo el cuerpo eclesial en un tiempo de especial reflexión y redescubrimiento de la fe.

Resumiendo, tenemos tres eventos que el Santo Padre nos invita a celebrar. Comenzaremos, e vamos a enfatizar, el cincuenta aniversario de la apertura

del *Concilio Vaticano II*. Junto con este aniversario también celebraremos el vigésimo aniversario de la publicación del *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*. Como si esto fuera poco, durante la celebración de este *Año de la fe* se estará efectuando en el Vaticano un *Sínodo de Obispos*. Un sínodo es una reunión de obispos y especialistas para estudiar y discutir sobre algún tema específico. El tema seleccionado por el Papa es, la *Nueva evangelización* para la transmisión de la fe cristiana.

A partir del 11 de octubre de este año 2012, a menos de siete meses de la publicación de este artículo, el Santo Padre nos está pidiendo que lo acompañemos en reflexionar, estudiar y dar gracias por estos hechos históricos y reconocer como es que en cada uno de ellos el Espíritu Santo ha estado guiando a la Iglesia en su caminar por la puerta de la fe.

En lo referente al *Concilio Vaticano Segundo*, el Papa Juan XXIII, en su discurso de apertura del 11 de octubre de 1962, nos señaló algunas ideas claves sobre su visión del Concilio:

La mayor preocupación del CONCILIO ECUMÉNICO es la siguiente: Que el sagrado depósito de la doctrina cristiana sea custodiado y enseñado más eficazmente"... es necesario en primer lugar que la Iglesia no debe

apartarse del patrimonio sagrado de la verdad recibida de los Padres.... Es decir, el CONSEJO ECUMÉNICO XXI desea transmitir la doctrina pura e íntegra, sin atenuaciones ni deformaciones... Pero al mismo tiempo que jamás debe mirar al presente, a las nuevas condiciones y nuevas formas de vida introducidas en el mundo moderno.... La esencia de la antigua doctrina de depósito de la fe es una cosa, y la forma en que se presenta es otra. Yes el último que debe ser tenido en gran consideración”.

El énfasis de nuestro presentador fue el modo adecuado de interpretar las enseñanzas del concilio, siempre a la luz de los veinte siglos anteriores al concilio. Los errores más comunes de interpretar sus documentos son cuando algunos, de manera equivocada, quisieran interpretar sus documentos solo a la luz de lo que se vive actualmente en nuestra situación contemporánea.

Este es el verdadero proceso de discernimiento de Espíritu. El Espíritu Santo no se contradice y, por lo tanto, su adecuada interpretación exige saber lo que ha dicho en el pasado, y ver sus enseñanzas como un desarrollo y continuidad con el pasado. Preparémonos para un *Año de fe* donde le demos gracias a Dios por los hermosos dones del Concilio, el Catecismo y el Sínodo sobre la *Nueva evangelización*, todos ellos signos vivos de la acción amorosa del Espíritu Santo en la Iglesia Católica que nos está llevando por la puerta de la fe.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

- Llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de asistencia para víctimas, al número (817) 560-2452, Ext. 201, o, mandarle correo electrónico a jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Llamar al número de emergencia para el abuso

sexual: (817) 560-2452, Ext. 900

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

Jesus Sana Mi Matrimonio

Te invitamos a ti y a tu pareja para que Jesús Sane tu Matrimonio

Costo \$30 por pareja
(Incluye desayuno y lonche)

SABADO 5 DE MAYO (8AM-4PM)
DOMINGO 6 DE MAYO (8AM-5:30PM)

Miguel Aquino



Hnos. Carlos y Lupita



Padre Pedro Muñoz





"Porque yo se muy bien lo que haré por ustedes; les quiero dar paz y no desgracia y un porvenir lleno de esperanza. Cuando me invoquen y vengán a suplicarme, yo los escucharé. Jeremias 29:11-12"

Dirección: 481 Wildwood Ln. Grapevine, TX

NO HABRA CUIDADO DE NIÑOS

PARA MAYOR INFORMACION:
Ricardo y Marce 817-247-9645 • Ricardo y Itzy 682-554-9592 • Victor y Nubia 817-692-6972

Events Calendar

Around the Diocese and region

April Dates

6

GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS

10 a.m. - St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact the Office of Worship at (817) 560-2452, ext. 302.

27TH ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY ROSARY VIGIL FOR LIFE

1 to 2:30 p.m. - Planned Parenthood, 301 South Henderson, Fort Worth. For information, contact Chuck Pelletier at (817) 738-1086 or mubcare@gmail.com, or Chanacee Ruth-Killgore at (817) 560-2452 ext. 257 or cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org.

12

DIVORCE AND BEYOND

7 to 9 p.m. - St. Andrew Parish, 3312 Dryden Rd., Fort Worth. For information and to register for this eight-week program, contact Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or e-mail acurran@standrewcc.org.

13-15

YOUTH 2000 RETREAT

6 p.m. Friday to 12:30 p.m. Sunday - Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, visit the diocesan website at www.fwdioc.org and click on Youth Ministry, or contact Josie Castillo at (817) 560-2452 ext. 255 or by e-mail at jcastillo@fwdioc.org.

14

GROWING IN LOVE: A MARRIAGE RETREAT

9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. - St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, 2016 Willis Ln., Keller. For information, contact Carol Smith at dcsmith@txmountaineer.com.

15-18

DIVINE MERCY MISSION WITH FATHER JOHN HAMPSCH, CMF

Sunday through Wednesday, 7 p.m. each night - St. Paul the Apostle Church, 5508 Black Oak Ln., River Oaks. For information, call (817) 738-9925.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL'S WOMEN'S GUILD 2012 LADIES TEA

1 p.m. - St. Vincent de Paul Church, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Arlington. For information, contact Pearl Armstrong at (817) 991-7180 or pearlarm@sbcglobal.net or Jane Hurley at (817) 689-9812 or jhurley@netspend.com.

18

WORKSHOP - 'LUMEN GENTIUM' (PART 1 OF 4)

10 a.m. to noon - Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas. For information, call (214) 331-6224.

21

WORKSHOP - 'LUMEN GENTIUM' (PART 1 OF 4)

10 a.m. to noon - Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas. For information, call (214) 331-6224.

28

COME AND SEE VOCATION RETREAT WITH SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH

8 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Jesus the Good Shepherd Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, 1815 Egyptian Way, Grand Prairie. For information and to register, contact Sister Mary Paul Haase at (972) 642-5191.

May Dates

4-5

ST. MARK'S 'FUND' FESTIVAL

Friday, 6:30 to 10 p.m. adults only dinner; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. family festival - St. Mark Church, 2800 Pennsylvania, Denton. For information, e-mail smfundfestival@gmail.com or visit the parish website at www.stmarkdenton.org, or contact the parish office at (940) 387-6223.

5

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

10 a.m. - A monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and those struggling with addiction and seeking recovery. Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. For information, contact Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 431-5369.

6

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PRO-LIFE CHARITY DISC GOLF PICNIC

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. - Turner Park, 699 SE 8th St. (N. Beltline), Grand Prairie. For information, visit the diocesan website calendar page at www.fwdioc.org, or contact Dan Norman at (817) 419-8227.

8

AUXILIARY TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Rolling Hills Country Club, 401 E. Lamar, Arlington. For information and reservations, contact Sandy Fallon at (817) 893-0083.

11-13

RACHEL'S VINEYARD WEEKEND RETREAT

A weekend retreat for healing following an abortion. For information, contact Betsy Kopor at (817) 923-4757. All information is kept confidential.

12

RESPECT LIFE PARISH COORDINATORS' QUARTERLY MEETING

10 to 11:30 a.m. - The Catholic Center, 800 West Loop 820 South, Fort Worth. For information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore at (817) 560-2452 ext. 257.

17

DCCW QUARTERLY LUNCHEON MEETING

9:30 a.m. - St. Jude Parish, 500 E. Dallas, Mansfield. For information, contact Kathy Thome at (817) 236-8518.

19

MAGNIFICAT PRAYER BREAKFAST

9 a.m. to noon - Hilton Garden Inn, 785 State Highway 121, Lewisville. For information, contact Nanci Ferri at (817)498-7980.

23

WORKSHOP - 'LUMEN GENTIUM' (PART 2 OF 4)

10 a.m. to noon - Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas. For information, call (214) 331-6224.

26

WORKSHOP - 'LUMEN GENTIUM' (PART 2 OF 4)

10 a.m. to noon - Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas. For information, call (214) 331-6224.

**Would Jose Armando Romero
please contact Meg Hogan at
(817) 560-3300 ext. 200?**

Divine Mercy Sunday — April 15



St. Peter Church, 424 W. Main St., Lindsay

This service does not include Mass. Confessions will be heard from 2 to 2:45 p.m. A special Blessed Image of Jesus The Lord of Divine Mercy and First Class relic (piece St. Faustina's bone), will be present for veneration. Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament and Benediction will also occur. Novenas may be obtained at St. Peter with instructions on the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. For more information or ways to obtain novenas call Linda, at (940) 759-2870.

St. Mark Church, 2800 Pennsylvania Ave., Denton

A celebration of the Feast of Divine Mercy, will be held in the main worship space. A family teaching hour will precede a Eucharistic Holy Hour. The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus will serve as Honor Guard for the image of Divine Mercy. For more information, call (940) 387-6223.

St. Maria Goretti, 1200 S. Davis Dr., Arlington

There will be a Novena of Divine Mercy beginning on Good Friday, April 6, following the noon Stations of the Cross, followed by the second day at 8 a.m. Holy Saturday. There will be no public Novena on Easter Sunday. From April 9-14, the Novena will follow the 8 a.m. Mass. On Divine Mercy Sunday, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration after the 1 p.m. Mass until 3 p.m., followed by Divine Mercy prayers and Benediction. For more information, call (817) 274-0643.

Classifieds

Parish Secretary

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Wichita Falls, a parish of over 1,200 families, is looking for a full-time youth minister to develop, coordinate and implement a holistic youth ministry. Degree in religious education or certificate in youth ministry with some experience preferred. Candidate must exercise personal initiative, the ability to work in collaboration with other staff and youth ministry team, and possess excellent organizational skills. Candidate must be a prayerful, practicing Catholic, who works well with parents, has a genuine love for teens, and possesses excellent relational and communication skills. Application deadline is May 31. Send resumé to Fr. Sojan George, Our Lady Queen of Peace, 4040 York St., Wichita Falls, Texas 76309, or to sojangeorge520@hotmail.com.

General Construction Services

General construction work/repairs inside and out including topsoil, sand, gravel, washed materials, driveways, concrete, backhoe, and tractor services. Custom mowing lots and acres. Call (817) 732-4083.

Good Newsmaker

In new book, Sister St. John Begnaud, SSMN, describes

A Little Good

accomplished by the Sisters of St. Mary since their arrival in Texas

By Kathy Cribari Hamer / Correspondent

Those who have followed, admired, or been instructed by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur recognize and appreciate their ingenuity, strength, and determination. A new book, *A Little Good*, by Sister St. John Begnaud, SSMN, brings to life the story of the Sisters of St. Mary, giving the narrative tone, depth, and dimension.

The book is based on archival records as well as the sisters' journals, so it has all the history, but is highlighted by the sisters' thoughts and words at each stage of their development.

"I like to tell stories," says the author, who was an English major (Catholic University of America) with a master's degree in theology (University of Notre Dame), "and so I was telling some of the sisters the story of Sister Augusta who had come from France, and then Sister Agnes. I had been so impressed with them, and I thought: they are typical of the people we were born of." Both sisters are profiled in the book.

The SSMN community was founded by Father Nicholas Joseph Minsart in Namur, Belgium, in 1819 during a time when Belgium was a part of France (as a result of the Napoleonic wars), when religious communities were forbidden. Later, in what Sr. St. John describes as their "defiance of impossibility," four of the sisters traveled to New York in 1863 in

the middle of the Civil War.

Divine guidance was clear, Sr. St. John writes.

When the first four SSMN sisters set off for America, they were motivated by the power of their faith. Mother Claire, their first superior general, had spoken with Belgium-born Father Pierre DeSmet, a Jesuit missionary with a mission in St. Louis. He requested



sisters to come and work in that area; however, the Civil War made that impossible. Earlier Mother Claire had written: "Several of our sisters would be very happy to be sent to this far-off mission... It seems to them they could work more profitably for the Glory of God and the good of souls in an American city rather than in a Belgian one."

Leading the first three sisters was Mother Emilie Kemen, who, with the others sailed, through "indescribable terror."

"No one expected another storm, but it came..." a journal read, "tossing monstrous, billowing waves mountain high, seemingly ready to engulf the ship. A terrifying, grinding deafening

noise, like a sinister herald, seemed to announce that the ship was being dashed against the rocks."

During the storm, Father Cornelius Smarius, a Capuchin friar who accompanied the sisters on the voyage, bade them pray the Memorare and Rosary, later warning them, "Sisters, prepare for death."

They did not die, however. Instead a ferry and a train brought them to their Lockport, New York destination, where they found both home and school were to be located in four small rooms, shared with the pastor. He frequently ran up and down the stairs, chanting psalms "in a fine

SEE A LITTLE GOOD, P. 25



ABOVE: Sister St. John Begnaud, SSMN, poses for a picture during her 65th Jubilee at St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth in 2007. Sr. St. John recently wrote a book about the history of the sisters' work in Texas. (PHOTO BY KATHY CRIBARI HAMER / NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC)

LEFT: The cover of the book, *A LITTLE GOOD*, by Sr. St. John. On the cover is a photo of Sister Mary Angela, who brought the sisters to Texas at the request of the Bishop of Galveston, who was acquainted with her sister and brother-in-law, the mayor of Corpus Christi. (PHOTO COURTESY OF SSMN WESTERN PROVINCE ARCHIVES)

**Book Signing
2-4 p.m. March 31**

**Our Lady of Victory Convent
909 W. Shaw St., Fort Worth**

Sr. St. John Begnaud, SSMN, author of newly released *A LITTLE GOOD: THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY IN TEXAS* (WIPF and STOCK, 2011) will comment on her research into the early years of the Sisters of St. Mary in Texas. From humble beginnings in 1873, in less than 40 years, they grew schools in Waco, Corsicana, Ennis, Denison, Sherman, Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, and Dallas.

Also featured at the Book Signing will be SSMN Associate Dr. Sherrie Reynolds, whose book, *The ARMS OF GOD: THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR, WESTERN PROVINCE* (WIPF and STOCK, 2011) was released last spring.