

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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April 20, 2007



JUSTICE WALK — Reenacting Christ's Passion through the Stations of the Cross, youth from St. Matthew Parish in Arlington lead pilgrims on the Walk for Justice, passing the Tarrant County Courthouse in downtown Fort Worth April 6. The annual Good Friday event, sponsored by the diocesan offices of Peace and Justice and Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis, brings Catholic social teaching into public view, as the Stations of the Cross are blended with teachings on contemporary social justice issues. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Diocesan Walk for Justice puts public spotlight on social injustices

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

Every Good Friday, organizers of the Walk for Justice in downtown Fort Worth commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus by pairing the Way of the Cross with injustices occurring in today's society.

The fourth Station of the Cross, "Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother," was the perfect setting for Lois Robinson's impassioned plea against executing the men-

tally ill. In January 2000, her son, Larry, was put to death by the state of Texas after living with untreated paranoid schizophrenia for years.

"One-third of the people on death row are mentally impaired," said the grieving mother, as she addressed 200 Walk for Justice participants from the steps of the Tarrant County Courthouse.

After receiving an honorable discharge from the military, Larry

Robinson was denied long-term care by a veteran's hospital, mental health agency, and a private medical center because "he was not violent and they needed the bed," his mother remembers. A short time later, the Burleson resident killed five people and spent the next 17 years on death row before receiving the lethal injection that stopped his heart.

"And they're still executing the mentally ill," Robinson emphasized. **SEE JUSTICE WALK..., P. 7**

Bishops' pro-life official laments Senate move to fund human embryo research

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (CNS) — An official of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops criticized the U.S. Senate's "fixation on destructive research" after the Senate passed a bill that would provide federal funding for stem-cell research involving the destruction of human embryos.

"Many members of Congress remain dazzled by irresponsibly hyped promises of 'miracle cures' from the destruction of human embryos, although experts in the field increasingly admit that treatments from this avenue may be decades away," said Richard M. Doerflinger, deputy director

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— Richard Doerflinger

of the USCCB's Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

Doerflinger made his com-

ments late April 11 following an evening vote in which the Senate approved S. 5, a bill permitting destruction of human embryos in federally funded stem-cell research, by a 63-34 margin.

Should S. 5 become law, "millions of taxpayers would be forced to promote attacks on innocent human life in the name of scientific progress," he said.

Since President George W. Bush has promised to veto the legislation, however, and its backers do not have enough votes for an override in the House or the Senate, "we expect that this terrible burden will not be placed

SEE VOTES..., P. 8

On Easter, pope reminds faithful that Christ took on humanity's pains, trials out of love

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In his Easter message, Pope Benedict XVI lamented the countless wars, disasters, and horrors ravaging the world, including "the continual slaughter" in Iraq and the situation in the Darfur region of Sudan.

"Natural calamities and human tragedies that cause innumerable victims and enormous material destruction are not lacking" in the world, he said in his April 8 message, broadcast to millions of people in more than 65 countries.

The pope highlighted his concern for all those suffering from exploitation, hunger, disease, terrorism, kidnappings, and the "violence which some people attempt to justify in the name of religion."

While there were "some signs of hope in dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, nothing positive comes

from Iraq, torn apart by continual slaughter as the civil population flees," he said.

The political crisis in Lebanon, instability in Afghanistan, chaos in Somalia, economic collapse in Zimbabwe, and the "catastrophic, and sadly to say underestimated, humanitarian situation" in Darfur were some of the other places the pope listed as needing attention.

With all the suffering, evil, and injustice

plaguing the world, it is possible one's faith in God might be put to the test, just as the apostles' faith in Jesus had been shaken "by the scandal of the cross," Pope Benedict said.

But such doubts, fears, and disappointments help "purify all false concepts of God" and guide people "to discover his true face," the pope said.

Instead of being a sign of apparent failure, Jesus' passion and **SEE IN EASTER..., P. 13**



Pope Benedict XVI holds a candle as he celebrates the Easter Vigil in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 7. (CNS photo/Giampiero Sposito, Reuters)



VIRGINIA TECH MEMORIAL — Virginia Tech students kneel in front of a memorial during a candlelight vigil in the wake of the shootings at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17. Cho Seung-Hui, a South Korean student from northern Virginia, was identified as the gunman who killed at least 32 people April 16 at the university before taking his own life. **See story, p. 9** (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Bishop Vann encourages us to follow St. Thomas' example: to surrender to the 'I BELIEVE' of Faith

Dear Friends in the
Diocese of Fort Worth,

We are now in the Easter season of fifty days, a time in which the Church asks us to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, and to meet him in our daily lives.



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

Perhaps a key Gospel for these days is the Gospel of the second Sunday of Easter, which is the account of the disciples encountering the Risen Lord on the "evening of the first day of the week." This is also the time when St. Thomas was not present. He refused to believe until he had seen the Risen Lord. And so, the Risen Lord offered him just that opportunity a week later! In our liturgical calendar, this account is found in the Second Sunday of Easter.

The words of the Risen Christ to

We, like St. Thomas, can struggle with our Faith. We certainly can have our moments of doubt. But like St. Thomas, we are called ultimately to surrender, and not to be unbelieving, but to believe.

St. Thomas are important words, not only for St. Thomas, but for us, as well:

"...Do not be unbelieving, but believe.... Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

— John 20:27-29

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, spoke September 12, 2006, on the joys and blessings of believing when he reminded us through his homily at Regensburg:

"Those who believe are never alone.... Faith brings us together and gives us a reason to celebrate. It gives us joy in God, joy in his creation, joy in being together."

We, like St. Thomas, can struggle with our Faith. We certainly can have our moments of doubt. But like St. Thomas, we are called ultimately to surrender, and not to be unbelieving, but to believe.

We are called to believe in an age, which at times, is more attuned to questions, dialogue, and process than the response of "Yes, I BELIEVE." Yet at the Easter Vigil, or on Easter Sunday, we said "Yes" clearly in our parish communities — a "YES" to the Risen Lord, and a "YES" to the Nicene Creed, the Church's Profession of Faith. We give this response of "I BELIEVE" in an era in which our Faith is subject to constant scrutiny and doubt from certain sectors of our society and culture. The attention and hype given to the so-called "tombs of Jesus and Mary" during Lent are only the latest examples of this.

That is why "I BELIEVE" is so important, why what we believe is so important, why knowing our Sacred Scripture and doctrine is essential — because everything

else that we profess, that we hold dear, and that we live in our community of Faith follows from that belief.

St. John's Gospel concludes with these words that certainly are addressed to us:

"These are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name."

— John 20:31

I would like to say a word of thanks and appreciation to all involved in parish ministry who prepared our catechumens and candidates for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation. Thanks to our parish musicians and all involved in the Liturgy of Holy Week. A very special word of thanks to our priests who spent so many hours involved in these activities, and especially for the hours in celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, whether individual celebration of the sacrament or by taking part in the many communal penance services held around the Diocese. The reception and celebration of the Sacrament of Penance is a visible expression of the divine mercy of Christ, which is also a theme of the second Sunday of Easter.

God bless you always in these Easter days,
+Kevin W. Vann

Supreme Court upholds Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act

WASHINGTON (CNS)—The Supreme Court upheld the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act by a 5-4 vote April 18.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing the majority opinion in *Gonzalez v. Carhart*, said the law's opponents "have not demonstrated that the act would be unconstitutional in a large fraction of relevant cases."

Also voting in the majority were Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Samuel Alito, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas.

Voting in the minority were Justices Paul Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, David Souter, and John Paul Stevens.

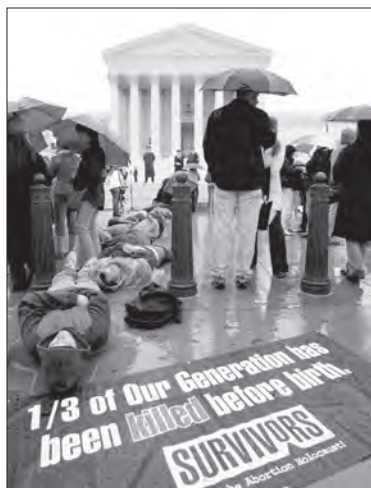
In her dissenting opinion, Ginsburg said the decision "tolerates, indeed applauds, federal intervention to ban nationwide a procedure found necessary and proper in certain cases by the American College of Ob-

stetricians and Gynecologists." She added the decision "refuses to take ... seriously" previous Supreme Court decisions on abortion.

Six federal courts had ruled the act had unconstitutionally restricted a woman's legal right to an abortion. In October the Supreme Court accepted cases from California and Nebraska, appeals of two lower court rulings that found the ban to be unconstitutional. The court conducted oral arguments in November.

In what the law calls partial-birth abortion, also referred to as an "intact dilation and extraction," a live fetus is partially delivered and an incision is made at the base of the skull, through which the brain is removed, and then the dead body is delivered the rest of the way.

In the 1990s, Congress had twice passed a ban on partial-birth abortions. Both times the



Abortion opponents demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court last November. In a 5-4 ruling April 18 the Supreme Court upheld the federal law banning the procedure known as partial-birth abortion. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

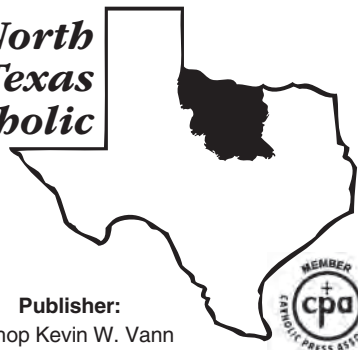
bills were vetoed by President Bill Clinton.

In 2000, the Supreme Court struck down a Nebraska ban on partial-birth abortions.

In 2003, Congress again passed a ban on partial-birth abortions, and the bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush.



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Diocesan



CARMELITE AUXILIARY FUNDRAISER — Bishop Kevin Vann accompanies Joe Rodriguez and Joan Grabowski on the piano as they sing "God Bless America." The ensemble was one of close to 20 acts featured at the Carmelite Auxiliary's March 31 fundraiser, "A Tribute to the USO." An assembly of about 200, which included families of grandparents, parents, and children, were entertained by featured singers and musicians from across the diocese performing popular and patriotic tunes from past decades. Live and silent auctions added to the afternoon's events. (Photo by Tessy Ross)

Progress in Catholic-Methodist dialogues to be focus of ecumenical gathering May 6

Parish Interfaith and Ecumenical Representatives (PIERs) of the Fort Worth Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission will meet Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m. in the Community Life Center at St. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1897 West Main Street in Lewisville. All interested Christians are invited to attend and to participate in discussion about the progress made within the past year in the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches' dialogues.

The featured speaker at the gathering will be Kenneth Loyer, a doctoral candidate at Southern Methodist University, who attended the signing of the Methodist Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), in Seoul, South Korea, in July 2006.

On that occasion, representatives of the Catholic Church and of the Lutheran World Federation joined Methodist officials in signing a common affirmation which welcomed the Methodist association with the JDDJ and pledged a continuing commitment to the work of deepening a common understanding of justification in theological study, teaching, and preaching.

Loyer will discuss the July

2006 event and will also offer information about the statement "The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church," which is currently, according to the Vatican Web site, "the work of a dialogue commission and not an official statement of the Catholic Church or the WMC."

The Vatican Web site notes that "in complementary ways ... both texts bring to fruition years of patient and persevering dialogue; and both mark a starting point for subsequent reflection, helping to set the agenda for further steps and initiatives in Methodist-Catholic relations."

PIERs, according to a recent press release from the Fort Worth Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission, are appointed by their pastors to interface with the commission to convey to parish members the progress of the church in church unity and understanding. Twenty-eight parishes have PIER appointees; the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission meets with the appointees twice each year to inform and update them on areas of special interest.

For more information, contact Kathleen Easler at (817) 430-2454.

*Responding
to God's Call*

Vocation awareness — Priestly vocations are rebounding in Texas

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

I recently had the privilege of gathering with the vocation directors of Region X, which includes the dioceses of Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

While I am new to the position of vocation director, I already know the majority of the vocation directors who represent the 15 dioceses of Texas. Five of us are recent alumni of Assumption Seminary in San Antonio. While in the seminary, I met three more current vocation directors who attended St. Mary's Seminary in Houston. As a group, we are upbeat at the current trend in vocations in Region X.

Most of the dioceses in Texas are beginning to see an increase in the number of men entering the seminary. Just 10 years ago only the Galveston-Houston Diocese had more than 20 seminarians. Today six dioceses have more than 20 seminarians, including Fort Worth. I believe this is only the beginning of a great trend. Why the increase in vocations?

There are numerous factors to be considered, but a few are key. Fifty years ago, the priesthood was an attractive vocation to high school teen-

age males. At the same time, Christ and the Church was at the center of Catholic family life. The priest was the spiritual leader of the local church and thus highly revered. The priest was often the most educated person in the parish. He taught in the classroom and was able to have a personal relationship with all his parishioners. As a result, many young men were drawn to step forward to enter the seminary.

Fast forward fifty years to today, and many of these factors do not fit into the mindset of the average Catholic family. The priest has 10 times the number of parishioners and often knows only a few by name; priests are seldom able to teach in the classroom; many parishioners hold advanced degrees, and last but not least, the church is often no longer the center of life for those who live in the city. But Christ and the Church remain, in spite of these factors.

The Catholic Church has struggled to adapt to these changes. Yes, we are lagging in some ways, but we are catching up. One of the greatest changes is to the position of vocation director. Each diocese today needs to have an active, full-time vocation director, supported by a team of priests, in order to successfully promote vocations to the religious life. The dioceses in Texas that have not shown an increase in seminarians have not dedicated one of their priests to the full-time ministry of promoting vocations. Too often a priest is assigned as pastor of a parish and then assigned as vocation director on top of an already overloaded schedule.

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

At the recent conference, one of the veteran vocation directors said that the biggest change in the past 10 years is that we have learned that the vocation director must have an ongoing personal relationship with the men who are discerning whether they have a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. It is my goal to make that connection, even though it has been challenging because of the geographical dispersion of the men considering the religious life. It has definitely been a challenge for me personally, but the rewards have been great every step of the way.

Yes, the Church is taking steps to adapt to a new world. As we grow, we must take advantage of the positive attitudes of the faithful. Yes, people are suffering spiritually, but through their baptism they are still drawn to Christ and the Church. They still see their priests, sisters, and brothers as faithful spiritual leaders. Many are highly educated but know little about their faith or religion. As priests, we are still teaching, but now it is more by example. Through our choice in committing ourselves in marriage to the Church, we have chosen to reject a world that denigrates everyone, scorns the sacred, and leaves everyone empty. We looked for more and have found it in Christ and his Church. We are on the rebound!

Vocations to the religious life in Texas are on the rise; don't miss out. If you think God is calling you or someone you know to the religious life or priesthood, drop me a line at kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

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GriefShare seminar to begin April 30 at St. Paul's

A GriefShare seminar will be presented at St. Paul the Apostle Church, 5508 Black Oak Lane in River Oaks, on consecutive Monday evenings, April 30 through July 23, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. GriefShare, a ministry to people grieving the loss of a

family member or friend, emphasizes a biblical approach to grief recovery.

Deacon Ron Aziere, GriefShare coordinator, announced that the seminar, which has been held before at St. Paul's, will offer new workbooks and video

presentations.

"No one should ever suffer losing a loved one alone, and we are here to listen and help you to recover," says Deacon Aziere.

There is no cost for participation. For more details, call (817) 738-9925 or (817) 626-9545.

Mass for new Catholics to be celebrated at the cathedral April 29

A Mass of welcome for all members of the Diocese of Fort Worth who have joined the Catholic Church or who have completed their Christian initiation within the past year will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann Sunday, April 29, at 2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth. Family and friends of the newly initiated are invited to attend; a reception will be held following the Mass.

"It is a great joy for me to welcome you as a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church," wrote Bishop Vann in his invitation to the event. "My prayer is that you will grow daily in love both for the Lord Jesus and for his church.... I am looking forward to being able to greet you personally."

All who plan to attend are asked to contact their parish RCIA coordinator. For directions or additional information, contact your parish RCIA coordinator or contact Mary McLarry at The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 268, or by e-mail to mmclarry@fwdioc.org.

Dan Luby to present keynote for singles conference in Plano June 9

"Finding God in the Gaps: Connecting Spirituality with Everyday Life," a one-day conference for all single adults — including those who are separated, divorced, widowed, or never married — will be held Saturday, June 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Prince of Peace Church Cana Center, located at 5100 W. Plano Parkway in Plano.

Dr. Dan Luby, a columnist and Catholic educator who currently serves as the director of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth, will serve as the keynote presenter for the event. A wide variety of workshops will also be offered throughout the day, addressing topics such as "Living Your Vocation as a Single Adult," "When Life Throws You a Curve Ball: Growing through Life's Unexpected Changes," "Living a Hope-Filled Life," and "God is Forgiveness: Letting Go of the Hurt." The day will conclude with Mass at 3:30 p.m.; a social hour will follow.

Registration is \$25 and includes lunch and refreshments. The deadline for registration is June 2. For more information or to register, visit online at www.setonparish.org; call (972) 380-2100 ext. 152; or e-mail to bmcwilliams@popplano.org.

Single young adults invited to consider religious vocation at VAP weekend

Single Catholic men and women, ages 18 to 40, are invited to attend the 2007 Vocation Awareness Program to be held at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive in Irving, July 13-15. The weekend is sponsored by the Serra Clubs of the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses, in partnership with the diocesan vocation offices.

The Vocation Awareness Program (VAP) offers single young adults the opportunity to participate in a weekend of vocational discernment and reflection. The weekend will include presentations on the process of discerning a religious vocation; panel discussions on the life styles of clergy and religious men and women; question and answer sessions; and the opportunity for private conversations with the priests, sisters, and brothers who serve as leaders during the weekend.

There is no charge for the program, which includes accommodations in private rooms and meals at the seminary.

For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 366-0439, or by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

Sisters of St. Mary invite women to 'Come and See' May 6

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will be hosting a "Come and See" program Sunday, May 6, at OLV Center, 909 West Shaw Street in South Fort Worth. Single women, ages 18 to 45, are invited to attend and to learn more about life as a religious sister. The day will begin with Mass at 10:30 a.m. in the convent chapel, followed by dinner with the sisters, a presentation, and time for sharing.

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in Fort Worth are part of a national trend of having young women seriously considering — and increasingly choosing — life as a religious sister, according to information from the congregation. The sisters have noted an increase in the number of inquiries over the past five years, the information states. Three women, as pre-candidates, are in the initial stage of membership, and four sisters are discerning transition into the congregation.

For those persons interested in a more extended visit with the sisters, inquiries are welcome about a "Come and Stay Weekend," May 4-6. For more information, contact Sister Margaret Miller, SSMN, at smargm@airmail.net or call her at (817) 429-4009.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



RENOVATIONS COMPLETE — Following months of restoration work when local Catholics had to attend Sunday services in the community gym, the sanctuary of St. Joseph Church in Rhineland is open once again. With sparkling white pillars and gothic arches, refinished pews, and religious statues returned to their niches, the worship space rings once again with the sounds of the celebration of the Eucharist. Father Leo Schloemer, a Glenmary Home Missioner, serves as pastor of this Catholic community, which was founded by German settlers in 1895. (Photo provided by Janet Dillard)

Medjugorje pilgrim Colleen Willard to speak at St. Mary's April 24

Colleen Willard, who states that she experienced a dramatic healing following a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, will offer her personal testimony during an evening of prayer, Tuesday, April 24, at 7 p.m. at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Avenue in Fort Worth.

The evening will begin with a rosary, followed by Willard's presentation. Organizers describe Willard's experience as testimony "that will cause a deeper awareness [of] the powerful healing of the holy Eucharist.... It will be an evening you will not want to miss."

A eucharistic healing service, conducted by Father David Bristow, pastor of St. Mary's, will conclude the evening.

The event is sponsored by the Fort Worth Queen of Peace Center. For more information, call (817) 244-7733 or (817) 558-9805.

Immaculate Conception Parish to host parish mission May 14-16

Sisters of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ will present a parish mission, "Deep Conversion, Deep Prayer," at Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 North Bonnie Brae Street in Denton, May 14-16.

Organizers call the mission "an inspiring opportunity to deepen, renew, or experience our walk with the Lord." The Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, based within the Diocese of Amarillo, is a contemplative community of Franciscan and Charismatic vowed women religious. The community follows the Rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Constitutions of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The parish mission sessions will be held on consecutive evenings; more information about times and mission activities will be announced. For more information about the sisters, visit the congregation's Web site at www.dlhc.org. For more information about the mission, contact the parish at (940) 565-1770.

Faith and Fiction group to meet May 17

"Faith and Fiction: Conversations on Spirituality and Imagination," a venue for discussing novels and films with themes that shed light on the journey of faith, will meet Thursday, May 17, at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in Fort Worth. The topic of discussion will be *Isbmael*, by Daniel Quinn.

Those planning to participate are asked to read the book, reflect on it in light of personal experiences, and come to the session with questions, insights, or observations to share. A potluck supper will be served at 6:15 p.m., and the discussion will take place from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Future dates and topics of discussion are as follows: June 21, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*, by Michael Dorris; July 19, the film "Il Postino," directed by Michael Radford; Aug. 16, the film "Rabbit-Proof Fence," directed by Phillip Noyce; and Sept. 20, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by Betty Smith.

To ensure good conversation, space will be limited. To reserve a spot or for more information, contact Dan Luby at (817) 560-2452 ext. 259, or by e-mail to dluby@fwdioc.org.

Beginning Experience offers help to those grieving loss of spouse

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. The next weekend session will be offered April 27-29 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

The program is designed to help those grieving the loss of a spouse to put closure on the past and to create a new beginning in the present. The ministry, although rooted in the Catholic tradition, is open to people of all faiths.

Another Beginning Experience weekend is scheduled for July 27-29.

For more information or to register, call the Catholic Renewal Center at metro (972) 601-4091 or e-mail the Fort Worth/Dallas Beginning Experience team at dfwbe@hotmail.com.

Presenter couples needed for marriage preparation programs

The diocesan Family Life Office is seeking married couples in good (not perfect) marriages to share their experience of married life with couples preparing for marriage. Each year the Family Life Office assists parishes by providing marriage preparation programs for over 600 engaged couples.

Presenter couples speaking English and/or Spanish are needed. Couples willing to volunteer for one or two sessions per year would be of great help.

To volunteer or for more information, call Deacon Dick Stojak, director of the Family Life Office, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 304.

Walk for Life benefiting Pregnancy Help Center set for May 12

The Pregnancy Help Center, which offers life-affirming pregnancy assistance to families in Wichita Falls and in Vernon, will host its sixth annual Walk for Life Saturday, May 12, at two locations: Lucy Park's Circle Trail in Wichita Falls and the Vernon High School Stadium in Vernon. Registration and a free breakfast will begin at 9 a.m.; the Walk for Life will start at 10 a.m.

The goal of the Walk for Life, according to the organization's Web site, is "to raise funds and friends for the ministry of the Pregnancy Help Center, educate community members about the Pregnancy Help Center and its outreaches, and make a positive life-affirming statement to our community." A strong Catholic presence is expected at the event.

Highlights of the day will include face painting, balloons, and a moon walk. Team incentive prizes and sponsored walker prizes will be awarded.

The walk will take place rain or shine. For more information, visit online at www.walkforlife.wfpregnancyhelpcenter.org.

Rachel's Vineyard retreat, June 1-3, to offer post-abortion healing

A Rachel's Vineyard retreat, designed to offer healing for women and men struggling with the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion, will be held June 1-3 in Fort Worth.

Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath. The retreat team provides the confidential support needed to help participants work through feelings of anger, shame, guilt, and grief, so that they may be open to experiencing the healing love and mercy of God.

Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and former participants in the abortion industry — anyone who has been hurt by abortion — are welcome to attend.

For more information or to register for a retreat, call the confidential help line at (817) 923-4757 or e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Avenue in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be held May 5, beginning at 10 a.m. in the chapel.

Calix meetings focus on enhancing spiritual growth through sharing Eucharist, discussion, and fellowship.

For more information, call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768 ext. 105 or Tim S. at (817) 735-1519.

NTC deadlines for submission

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Items for the May 11 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, May 2. Items for the May 25 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, May 16.

People and Events

John Michael Talbot to appear in concert April 28 in Wichita Falls

John Michael Talbot, an internationally recognized Catholic recording artist, will appear in concert Saturday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9th Street in Wichita Falls. Talbot's concert will also feature a choir assembled from area Catholic churches.

Talbot's music ministry has blessed millions over the past 25 years, according to promotional materials. He has produced more than 40 albums and videos and has authored 14 books. He has won numerous awards, including a Dove Award and the President's Merit Award for his work for the poor. He has taught extensively on simplicity, ministry to the poor, a secular Franciscan lifestyle, and monastic communal living.

Tickets are \$10 and are available at the church office. For more information or to volunteer to work at the concert, contact Bret Parker, the parish's director of music ministry, at (940) 723-5288. Seating is limited, so purchasing tickets early is encouraged.

Sacred Heart Parish to celebrate completion of pastoral center May 7

Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour invites all to share in the celebration of the blessing of the community's new pastoral center Monday, May 7. Bishop Kevin Vann will be celebrating the sacrament of confirmation at a 7 p.m. liturgy, which will be followed by the blessing of the new 8,700-square-foot building at 8 p.m. An open-house reception with refreshments will follow.

Seymour is located two-and-a-half hours from Fort Worth, going 199 west to Jacksboro and then 114 west to Seymour. For more information, contact the parish office at (940) 889-5252.

St. John's Singles Ministry announces spring events

The Singles Ministry of St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Drive in Fort Worth, recently announced a number of activities scheduled for the spring. The St. John's Singles Ministry aims to enhance the lives of singles through fellowship and spiritual growth.

Upcoming events will include: April 29, "The Song of Solomon" series begins on relationships and marriage, 6:30 p.m., call (817) 838-5998 to reserve space; May 11, volleyball game, St. John's Singles vs. Holy Family Singles, 7:30 p.m. in St. John's School gym; Friday Volleyball, April 27 and May 4, 18, and 25, 7:30 p.m. in St. John's School gym; Single adult Sunday classes, April 22 and 29 and May 13 and 20, 11 a.m. at St. John Church.

For more information about St. John's Singles Ministry activities, visit online at web2.airmail.net/sjta/singles/index.html, or e-mail to sjsingles@sbcglobal.net.

Junior high band camp to be offered at Nolan Catholic, June 4-8

A summer band camp for junior high students will be offered at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth, from Monday, June 4, through Friday, June 8. The camp is open to students entering the fifth grade through those completing the eighth grade.

Brian Standridge, director of the NCHS band program, and Chuck Compher, associate director, will serve as hosts for the camp. Concert band, jazz band, ensembles, and instrument master classes will be offered. An optional field trip to Burger's Lake is planned.

The fee is \$75 per student, plus an additional \$7 for the Burger's Lake outing. For more information, contact the NCHS band department at (817) 457-2920 ext. 1538 or e-mail to bstandridge@nolancatholic.org.

Pax Christi Austin announces state conference May 19

Pax Christi Austin, a chapter of the national Catholic peace organization Pax Christi USA, has announced that Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, founder of Pax Christi USA and the former auxiliary bishop of Detroit from 1968 to 1986, will serve as the keynote presenter for the 2007 Pax Christi Texas State Conference. The theme of the conference, to be held Saturday, May 19, is "Be Doers of the Word: Working Together for Peace with Justice." The event will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Church, 4800 Convict Hill Road in Austin.

Bishop Gumbleton, a proponent for peace and social justice, has been recognized for his peacemaking efforts with numerous awards. His weekly column, "The Peace Pulpit," can be found online at the Web site of the *National Catholic Reporter* at www.natcath.org.

For more information about the conference or to obtain a registration flyer, contact Cheryl Grossman at (512) 288-2477 or by e-mail to cgrossman@austin.rr.com.

Nolan Jazz Band's Big Band Dance set for May 5 at St. Vincent's

Members of the Nolan Catholic High School (NCHS) Jazz Band will offer what organizers call "a family-oriented event with an opportunity to listen and dance to some great music," at the NCHS Jazz Band's Big Band Dance to be held Saturday, May 5, at St. Vincent DePaul Church, 5819 West Pleasant Ridge Road in Arlington.

The dance will be held from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and will feature the music of the NCHS Jazz Band. Snacks and desserts will be provided; soft drinks and water will be offered for sale at the alcohol-free event. All who enjoy listening to or dancing to the Big Band sound are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Paul or Joy Krebs at (817) 691-5954.

St. Augustine Men's Purity Group meets weekly

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller, in Room 213, and on Sunday evenings at 7 p.m. at the Padre Pio House, 1301 Paxton in Arlington.

For more information, visit the group's Web site at www.sampg.org or e-mail to Mark at seasmenspurity@yahoo.com or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish office at (817) 431-3857.



THE LAST SUPPER — Seventh graders at Our Lady of Victory School reenact the The Last Supper during a prayer service for the student body April 5. Following the service, the student body gathered to take part in a seder meal, an annual event at the Fort Worth school, to commemorate the passover meal celebrated by Jesus and his disciples at which Christ instituted the Eucharist. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

St. Rita School will host Spring Fling April 28

St. Rita School will host its annual Spring Fling Auction and Dinner, Saturday, April 28, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Edythe Mareel Reiderer Parish Center, 5550 East Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth.

There will be numerous auction packages on which to bid, including a football signed by former TCU standout LaDainian Tomlinson of the San Diego Chargers; a baseball signed by former Texas Rangers pitcher Nolan Ryan; tickets to the Amon Carter Museum; a Parker Uniforms gift card; and many other items.

Proceeds from the event will provide support for academic enrichment and scholarship funds for St. Rita students.

Admission is \$6 at the door or \$5 pre-sale. Childcare will be available at the cost of \$5 per child or \$10 for two or more siblings; the children will be served pizza, and will play games and watch movies. Childcare space is limited, so reservations are needed.

To purchase tickets or for more information, contact the school office at (817) 459-9383.

Subiaco Academy to hold 'Discovery Sunday' April 29

Subiaco Academy, a Catholic college preparatory boarding and day school for young men in grades 9-12, will host a Discovery Sunday for parents and prospective students, April 29 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Those visiting will have the opportunity to meet members of the administration and faculty, and take a guided tour of the campus. Interested students may also take the preliminary placement exam.

Established in 1887 by the Benedictine priests and brothers of Subiaco Abbey, the academy, located in Northwest Arkansas near Fort Smith, offers a challenging program in academics, the arts, athletics, and various activities.

Anyone interested in learning more about Subiaco Academy is invited to participate in the Discovery Sunday activities at no cost. For additional information, contact the Subiaco admission office at (800) 364-7824; e-mail to admissions@subi.org; or visit online at www.subi.org.

San Mateo Catholic Men's Club to host golfing event May 14

The Catholic Men's Club of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth will sponsor its 10th annual golf tournament Monday, May 14, at Squaw Creek Golf Club, 1605 Ranch House Road in Aledo.

The tournament will begin with a shotgun start at noon. Prizes will be awarded for the top three teams and for player closest to the pin and the player with the longest drive. Drinks will be provided during the tournament, and a dinner following the tournament will be catered by R.J. Rivera Catering.

All are invited to "come out for a day filled with fun, food, drinks, golf, and [the] knowledge that you are helping our youth to further their education," states an event press release.

The cost is \$65 per person or \$260 for a team. Benefactors may sponsor a hole for \$100. To register, contact Emerico Perez at (817) 715-0289 or e-mail to tejanotm@swbell.net.

Diocesan Singles Council announces date for annual family picnic

A potluck picnic for single adults of all ages, their family members, and friends will be held May 19, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bowman Springs Park at Lake Arlington.

"All singles from the diocese are welcome.... Bring the kids!" notes Mike Wuller, coordinator for the Diocesan Singles Council. Volleyball and games and a recently updated children's playground will be available.

Those attending are asked to bring something to contribute to the meal. Coals for the grill and beverages will be provided.

The park is located at 7003 Poly Webb Road in Arlington. Reservations are not required. For more information, contact Mike Wuller at (817) 292-9169, or by e-mail to fwcdsmw@earthlink.net. For more information about the Singles Council activities and events, visit the diocesan Web site at www.fwdioc.org, and go to the Pastoral Services section of the site.

Young adults invited to participate in 'Adventure' retreat May 17-20

"The Adventure: An Ignatian Experience," a retreat program based on St. Ignatius' The Spiritual Exercises, will be offered May 17-20 for participants between the ages of 19 and 25. The retreat will take place at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, Lake Dallas.

The Spiritual Exercises, according to a retreat flyer, "can be successfully made at almost any stage, but they are specially designed for that proud, bold time in your life when virtually all life-determining options, and life-derailing mistakes, are made." "The Adventure" is a personal guided tour of the heart, in silence, and is described as an "identity-defining opportunity."

The cost is \$35. For more information or to register, call Montserrat at (940) 321-6020 or e-mail to Carol Ackels at montcarol@centurytel.net. Questions may be directed to Father Nathan Stone, SJ, by e-mail to nstonesj@yahoo.com.

Camp Subiaco expands to two weeks

Camp Subiaco, operated by the Benedictine Monks of Subiaco Abbey of Subiaco, Arkansas, in partnership with the Subiaco Alumni Association, has announced an opportunity for boys, ages 9 to 14, to participate in one-week or, beginning this year, a two-week summer camp experience.

Camp sessions will be offered June 17-23 and June 24-30. A camper may choose to camp for either one week or the full two-week session. Camp activities include fishing, camping, archery, go-carting, swimming, tubing, and riflery, with supervision from an all-adult volunteer staff.

Campers use the facilities of Subiaco Academy and Abbey, including a swimming pool, athletic fields, dormitories, and nearby streams and lakes. Subiaco is located in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains, on State Highway 22, 50 miles east of Fort Smith and 110 miles northwest of Little Rock.

Camp Subiaco is now taking applications. For more information or to register, visit the Web site at www.campsubiaco.com or www.subi.org, or call (479) 934-1001.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION — Close to 150 people gathered for a rousing St. Patrick's Day celebration at St. Mary Church in Henrietta March 16. On hand to provide music that was "authentic, lively, rock-solid Celtic," according to information from the parish, was the Shannon Folk Irish Band, directly from County Clare, Ireland. Band members John Grimes, Tony Lees, Mike Scanlan, and Jack Hogan entertained the community with "music for singin', laughin', cryin', and lovin' from ... the hauntingly beautiful land of Ireland," the information stated. Refreshments, complete with green punch, were served afterward. Funds raised from the event will go toward education scholarships to send parish youth to summer camp.

Diocesan

Prayers of the rosary sustain this 'army' in its Battle for Life

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
JOAN KURKOWSKI-GILLEN
CORRESPONDENT

Admirers compare them to Gideon's Army.

Five days a week, a handful of volunteers stands outside Fort Worth abortion clinics, prepared to defend life. Armed with rosaries and helpful pamphlets, they offer prayers and sidewalk counseling to women who arrive at the centers with plans to terminate a pregnancy.

Moved by the sincerity of the silent protest, some mothers reconsider their decision. Hundreds of other unborn children never draw their first breath, but that doesn't discourage the devoted band of pro-life advocates.

"We do have our little victories," said Patricia Ernst, a 22-year veteran of Mother and Unborn Baby Care, an organization that provides medical, emotional, and financial support to expectant mothers in crisis. "Moms bring the babies we've saved in to see us."

"And God seems to send them in when we're feeling the most battle-weary," said Margaret Rainey, another counselor who has spent 17 years working for the pro-life cause.

These dedicated volunteers received an added emotional lift April 6 when more than 425 men, women, and children turned out for the annual Good Friday Rosary Vigil sponsored by Catholics United for Life and Mother and Unborn Baby Care. The large crowd, led by Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann and a contingent of Catholic clergy, filled the sidewalks outside a busy abortion clinic

Above: Approximately 425 people gathered outside a local abortion clinic on Good Friday, April 6, to pray the rosary for life.

in Fort Worth's hospital district. In the past, organizers were allowed use of an adjoining field, but the land was recently sold, limiting the vigil participants to public property.

The restriction didn't seem to bother Vincent Smith, who came to the prayer service with his wife, Lydia, and teenage daughters, Taylor and Rachel. Saying the rosary with other families has become a Good Friday ritual for the pro-life supporters.

"This gives us a more dramatic appearance, so visually it might be a blessing," Smith said, referring to the long, narrow lines of people standing in prayer. "God works in mysterious ways."

Delia Perez Yzaguirre has attended the Rosary Vigil in the past to show her opposition to abortion. This year she brought her husband, Cris.

"Christ died for our sins, and we're still sinning," Yzaguirre said. "Abortion affects our entire society by promoting a culture of death.

This is some-



Above: Bishop Kevin Vann (front, left) and other diocesan clergy join Chuck Pelletier (right), director of Mother and Unborn Baby Care, and more than 425 pro-life advocates in praying for the sanctity of life.

thing I do to help end that."

Although the regular team of volunteers was heartened by the Good Friday turnout, countering the harm produced by abortion is a war they wage every day. No one knows that better than Chuck Pelletier, who helped found Mother and Unborn Baby Care in 1984 and spends most of his week counseling confused, frightened women and their partners.

"They begin to understand that we care about them and their future," says Pelletier, director of the crisis pregnancy center, who uses prayer, intuition, and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide his ministry.

A Sudanese man and woman, who came to the United States as political refugees five years ago, were one of the latest couples to receive help at the center. Already the parents of several children, they were feeling overwhelmed emotionally and financially when they arrived at an abortion facility for an appointment.

Both Catholic, the pair responded to the presence of sidewalk counselors outside

the clinic.

"They followed us back to the center, but the husband still wanted the abortion," Pelletier explained.

With no medical insurance and new mortgage payments, the struggling couple was "hanging on by their fingertips, and they didn't know how to use the resources available to them."

Counselors at the center offered to provide material assistance as long as they needed it, but those assurances weren't enough to change the husband's heart. So Pelletier handed the man a rosary and a wooden crucifix blessed by the bishop, led him and his wife into the center's chapel, and sat them down in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

That's when the experienced counselor asked several provocative questions. The family left the Sudan because the ongoing death and destruction didn't allow them to walk, breathe, and live as they should. Why then become part of the killing? Why become part of what you fled?

Pelletier closed the chapel door, and the pair spoke to each other for 10 minutes in their native language.

Below: The earnest prayers of Elizabeth Anne Crawford, age 5, are a hopeful sign for the future.



Above: A woman holds a baby, praying for other little ones who are threatened by the abortion industry.

"When I opened the door, they told me they were going to have the baby. They had talked it out in front of God," he said. "You could see the incredible sense of relief on the woman's face. This beautiful smile lit up the room, and she had this whole sense of life about her."

Mother and Unborn Baby Care helped the woman begin prenatal care and is working out a budget for the family. Pelletier credits God's grace for sparing at least one child from the infanticide suffered by so many unborn babies in this country and in war-torn Sudan.

"In the end, the Blessed Sacrament made the difference," he explained. "God is good to us."



Parishioners of San Mateo Mission in Fort Worth kneel in prayer at the Rosary Vigil for Life.

Diocesan

Justice Walk

Viewing social justice through the lens of Christ's passion

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen



Above: Joel Sifuentes, joined by peers from St. Matthew Parish in Arlington, portrays Jesus falling under the weight of the cross.



Above: The cross, which will be carried from station to station on the Justice Walk, lies on the ground as the assembly gathers for the beginning of the Good Friday pilgrimage.

FROM PAGE 1
phasized.

The death penalty was one of an array of topics broached by young people and adults during the public Good Friday observance co-sponsored by the diocesan Office of Peace and Justice and the Office of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis. Other presentations discussed the tragedy in Darfur, the plight of the "invisible children" of Uganda, the growing influence of media on today's culture, sexual abuse, and raising the minimum wage for the working poor.

As each youth group or adult spokesperson offered a reflection and prayer on a topic, teenagers from St. Matthew Church in Arlington, dressed in period costumes, acted out the Stations of the Cross at different down-

town locations. A few tourists and pedestrians joined the cross-led procession as participants moved through the streets. Other bystanders stopped to take pictures or ask questions.

The Walk for Justice is an opportunity for people to experience faith and share their beliefs publicly, according to Kevin Prevou, diocesan director of Youth Ministry and Adolescent Catechesis.

"It's also a chance to dig in a little and explore Catholic social teaching," he added. "We need to understand how we're called to take care of one another and be Jesus to one another."

Good Friday offers a powerful opportunity to learn more about the struggles of the poor, hungry, disenfranchised, and hurting. Along with information and wor-

ship, the Walk for Justice includes calls for action. Participants are encouraged to do something about the issues raised during the program.

"When we act justly and reach out to those in need, we experience Christ in our midst," Prevou said, explaining the event's fundamental message.

Years ago, Amy Arendt attended the Walk for Justice as a member of the youth group from St. Peter Church in Lindsay. This year she returned to participate in the program as part of a young adult ministry team from Holy Family and St. Andrew parishes in Fort Worth, which chose to discuss pro-life issues.

"I remember the impact this had on me when I was in high school," Arendt said. "It's a great way to spend Good Friday."



Above: Alondra Solis as Veronica and Jackie Olvera as Mary, enact the sixth station, "Veronica wipes Jesus' face with her veil."

Below: As the St. Matthew youth group dramatizes Jesus' third fall, social activist Johnny Lewis speaks about the working poor, pointing to where housing projects used to be located in downtown Fort Worth.



Left: Approximately 200 people braved wind and cold temperatures to participate in the Walk for Justice.

Right: Lois Robinson, whose mentally ill son was put to death by the state, advocates against executing the mentally ill.

National



CATHOLIC PRAYER BREAKFAST — President George W. Bush and Mother Mary Assumpta Long, prioress general of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor, Michigan, talk after Bush spoke at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington April 13. (CNS photo/Larry Downing, Reuters)

Catholic Divorce Ministry to hold international conference at Notre Dame July 5-7

Catholic Divorce Ministry (CDM), the ministry of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, invites all divorced and separated individuals, members of the clergy, and pastoral professionals to its 33rd annual international conference, to be held at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, July 5-7.

With the theme "Water in the Desert," the conference will offer participants the opportunity to hear keynote presenters and authors Kathy Brewer Gorham and Bill Dye, to attend workshops, and to experience fellowship with other conference attendees.

Workshops will address topics such as "Healing through rituals," "Recovering from difficult life events," "Forgiveness," "Remarriage," "Helping children cope with divorce," and "The annulment process."

Pre-conference ministry leadership seminars will also be held July 2-5. Participation in the seminars is available for a \$200 registration fee. Registration costs for the international conference range from \$170 for one-day participation to \$300 for the entire conference.

For more information, visit the CDM Web site at www.nacsd.org, or call (906) 482-0494.

Votes on legislation involving human embryo research not enough to override expected veto

FROM PAGE 1

on the American people now," Doerflinger said.

On Jan. 11 the House passed a similar measure, H.R. 3, by a vote of 253-174. The House vote was 32 votes short of a two-thirds majority needed to override a veto.

Doerflinger criticized those who continue advocating destructive research on human embryos, saying, "This debate continues to divert attention and resources away from the demonstrated therapeutic promise of morally sound research using adult and cord blood stem cells."

Before the House vote in January, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, urged legislators to "consider the fundamental moral line" they would cross if they approved the measure.

By a 70-28 vote the Senate also passed S. 30, a bill that would promote alternative ways to pursue stem-cell research without

destroying human embryos, but Doerflinger said in an interview that it was uncertain whether the Democratic leadership would let that bill come to a vote in the House or, if so, what form it would take.

The USCCB favors "a lot of things in S. 30" but has reservations about a provision that would allow use of "naturally dead embryos" for stem-cell research, he said. He said there are concerns in the pro-life community about how strict the standards would be to prevent abuse of that provision.

Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee, criticized the Democratic leadership in Congress for "political demagoguery, making claims for embryonic stem-cell research that go far beyond any evidence."

"Not a single human patient has yet been helped by stem cells obtained by killing human embryos," he said. "Meanwhile, many thousands of human pa-

tients have been helped with other types of stem cells, obtained in noncontroversial ways that do not require harming human embryos."

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, praised the 34 senators who voted against funding "research that requires the destruction of human life."

Noting that those votes are enough to prevent a veto override, he said, "Now that S. 5 is dead, we should immediately expand on adult stem-cell research that is treating people now."

The Bush administration said in an April 10 policy statement that the president "strongly opposes" S. 5 and would veto it if it reached his desk. "The administration believes that research on alternative sources of stem cells is extremely promising and provides robust opportunities to advance science without compelling American taxpayers to participate in ongoing destruction of human embryos," it said.

NCCW to hold convention in Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 20-23

The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), a women's service organization comprised of more than 5,000 affiliated Catholic women's organizations in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States, has announced that NCCW's 53rd national convention, "Bringing Light to our Global Society," will

be held Sept. 20-23 in Columbus, Ohio, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

The convention will feature internationally recognized Catholic speaker and author Matthew Kelly as the keynote presenter. Also featured will be writer Susan Conroy, author of *Mother Teresa's Lessons of Love and Secrets of Sanctity*, currently a NCCW book club selection. Delegates and

individual members with voting privileges will also have the opportunity to guide the future of the organization by proposing and voting upon new resolutions and bylaw changes.

For more information about housing costs, registration fees, and the conference schedule, visit the NCCW Web site at www.home.catholicweb.com or call the NCCW office at (703) 224-0990.

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Shooting of Virginia Tech students 'tremendously sad,' says Bishop DiLorenzo of Richmond, Virginia

BLACKSBURG, Virginia (CNS) — The April 16 shooting spree at Virginia Tech that left at least 33 people dead is "tremendously sad," said Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo of Richmond.

In a phone interview just hours after the shootings, Teresa Volante, Catholic campus minister at Virginia Tech, said she had sent out an electronic notice that the Newman Center chapel was open for anyone who wanted to stop in and pray.

But she said the center, located just off the campus, was rather quiet at that time since the dormitories on campus were still locked down and the off-campus students had been instructed to stay away.

"I'm here for students to talk to," she said.

Later in the afternoon Debbie McClintock, a volunteer who came in to help, told Catholic News Service that people at the center were calm and were focused on helping anyone who came in. A prayer service was held at 7 p.m. at the center.

At St. Mary's Parish, the only Catholic parish in Blacksburg, the receptionist said the pastor, Father James Arsenault, had spent more than three hours at the hospital with those who were wounded before heading over to the university to help there.

She said the church would be open all afternoon, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed for adoration, followed by a special Mass in the evening.

Father Rob Cole from Our Lady of Nazareth Parish in Roanoke came in to celebrate the



Undergrads lend each other comfort at the Newman Center at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17, the day after a student's deadly shooting rampage at the university. The Catholic center provided a spiritual haven for mourning students, friends, and family members. Pictured from left are Chris Smith, Elyse Ward, Suzane Browne, and David Ellord. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

e-mail around 9:30 a.m. In quick succession, messages from the administration said there had been a shooting in a residence hall, then warned everyone that a gunman was still on campus and that they should stay inside.

Greenwood said the people she was with were unsure whether they were hearing gunshots because of extreme high winds at the time.

"To be quite honest, it was scary as hell," she said.

Speaking with CNS a couple of hours after students were allowed to leave the campus, Greenwood said the impact of the gunman's toll was still hitting her.

"I'm having a hard time dealing with the fact that so many died," she said.

The April 16 shooting was the deadliest on-campus attack in U.S. history. Before that the worst was at the University of Texas in Austin in 1966, when a gunman climbed a clock tower and killed 16 people before police killed him.

Last year on the first day of classes for the 2006-07 school year at Virginia Tech, an escaped inmate was captured near the campus after he allegedly shot and killed a sheriff's deputy and a security guard. While the search for the inmate was on, classes were canceled, the Virginia Tech campus was closed, and students and staff were ordered to stay indoors.

Virginia Tech has about 26,000 students. Volante said about 800 to 1,000 of the students regularly attend Sunday Mass at the Newman Center or are involved in activities there.

Contributing to this story were Jerry Filteau and Patricia Zapor in Washington.

Mass, since Fr. Arsenault was still busy ministering to victims and their families.

The university president, Charles Steger, called the shootings "a tragedy that we consider of monumental proportions."

Bishop DiLorenzo, who celebrated a noon Mass for the victims April 17 at the cathedral in Richmond, said his heart goes out to the parents and family members of the dead students.

"At this time one cannot help but think of the endless years of commitment, of love and care these parents have invested in their children, and then to have it all cut down by a bullet is tremendously sad," he said.

"The tragedy really hit home with me," he said, because he learned of it at a chancery lun-

cheon that included two women who have children studying at Virginia Tech. He said that fortunately their children were not harmed.

Emily Flach, a freshman business major who lives on campus, said, "People are just really shocked. It's unbelievable that something like this happened."

She told CNS at 3 p.m. that many students had not eaten all day because of the lockdown and a remaining uncertainty about whether it was safe to go out.

She said her dormitory is about three minutes' walk from West Ambler Johnston, the dormitory where two students were killed in the first shooting at about 7:15 a.m.

Two hours later the gunman, identified as Cho Seung-Hui, a

23-year-old senior from South Korea, attacked students attending classes in Norris Hall, an engineering building, shooting more than 40 people before killing himself as police were closing in.

The initial death toll was placed at 22, including Cho, but as the day wore on the number of confirmed dead rose to 33.

When Flach learned there would be a prayer service at the Newman Center that evening, she said she thought that was a good idea. "I think the best thing we can do is come together ... and pray for everyone," she said.

Anne Greenwood, a second-year graduate student in history, said she was in a conference room in the Major Williams building, when Cho began shooting people at nearby Norris Hall.

She said that the first notice the group she was with had received about the shootings was when they began getting campus

Pope deeply saddened by massacre at Virginia Tech

By Alicia Ambrosio

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI was deeply saddened by the massacre at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, and prayed for the victims and their families, said the Vatican secretary of state.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone sent a telegram to Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo of Richmond, Virginia, expressing the pope's condolences to all those affected by the April 16 shoot-

ing that left at least 33 people, including the killer, dead.

Cardinal Bertone said in the wake of the "senseless tragedy" Pope Benedict asked him to assure the victims, their families, and the entire school community of his prayers.

Pope Benedict "asks God our Father to console all those who mourn and to grant them that spiritual strength which triumphs over violence," Cardinal Bertone said.



Left: Dave Hardy embraces his son, Scott, a freshman at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17. Scott Hardy reunited with his parents and sister Kristen (left) following a deadly shooting rampage at Virginia Tech the day before. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Below: Father James Arsenault receives a slice of pizza from campus minister Karen Melendez at the Catholic Newman Center at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, April 17. Fr. Arsenault, pastor of the local parish, had been ministering to families of victims of the Virginia Tech tragedy nearly around the clock since the shootings. Father Victor Quagraine (center) also had been helping students deal with their grief. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Viewpoints

No matter what darkness befalls us, we will never be abandoned

By Dan Luby

By all accounts, the marriage had been on life support for years. They had disbelieved it at first, each hoping that the troubles that roiled their life together were visible only to them, imagined, perhaps, or overemphasized.

When straight denial no longer worked, they pretended. Partly for the sake of their families and partly out of pride, but mostly from a deep-seated reluctance to face the truth, they told themselves that everything was OK. When friends or family, concerned at what they thought might be signs of a marriage in trouble, asked how things were going, both of them kept up a good front. Each insisted that it was just the normal ups and downs of a complicated life shared by two complicated and busy people.

Eventually though, the weight got to be too much for either one to carry. They awoke to the brittle fact that they weren't fooling anybody. The kids were walking on eggshells. Their families kept offering sympathetic questions and compassionate looks and endless pats

Easter season is when we most intentionally celebrate new beginnings. What happens in the story of Easter is not that Jesus returns as he was ... but transformed ... and living now in a wholly new way.

on the shoulder.

Most tellingly, perhaps, each of them noticed themselves finding reasons to be away — at work, with friends, out of town, anywhere but home with each other, anywhere but that place their distance created, where the silence struck them dumb and fear froze their hearts in their chests.

Finally, they named the truth: It wasn't working, and it wasn't going to get any better.

Still, when his wife finally spoke the "D" word out loud, he thought he might vanish from the face of the earth, might literally die, or just evaporate, like a wisp of steam. He thought his life was over.

And it was, in a way. In a way, he did die. He died to the expectation that, somehow, he was different, that they were immune from the struggles and difficulties he'd watched other people wrestle with over the years. He died to the illusion that he would get over it quickly.

Later, when he had passed through

the worst of it and into what he would always think of as his "new life," he told friends that he had never imagined pain so great. A smart, hard-working guy, used to success in almost everything he put his hand to, he was amazed to discover himself so helpless. He hated having to wait, he said, and he hated not knowing when it would be over.

And when it was over, when he had turned a corner and passed that indefinable point in his journey, on one side of which was his old life and the dark valley of suffering, and on the other a new life, with hope and the possibility of laughter and joy and trust, he hadn't known it right away.

It had dawned on him slowly, imperceptibly. He discovered himself going whole days at a time without once returning to the emotional boneyard of regrets and recriminations and imagined vindications that had been his hangout for a long, long time.

Friendships that endured had, he realized, grown stronger. He'd connected with his kids at a new level, really lis-

tening now, with an honesty and respect he'd never realized was missing before.

Not that there aren't moments when the old sorrows come roaring back, when he slips into old habits and negative patterns prompted by fear or envy or selfishness. But he knows now, in a new way, that the traps have releases, that the dead ends can be escaped. He knows he is not alone.

Easter season is when we most intentionally celebrate new beginnings. What happens in the story of Easter is not that Jesus returns as he was. He returns, alright, but transformed, having transformed death itself, and living now in a wholly new way.

No matter what befalls us, Easter says, God's mercy will win out. No matter how painful the loss, how impossible the task, how deep the grief, we will never be abandoned. We may wash our hands of each other; our weakness may get the better of us; we may not see a way out of the darkness — but the Risen Christ assures us, and the testimony of his disciples reminds us, that nothing can separate us from the love of God made visible in the Lord Jesus.



Dan Luby is the director of Christian Formation for the diocese. In May 2006, for the third time, his column received first place honors among regular columns on spiritual life in the Catholic press of the U.S.

and Canada. Dan's column earned the same recognition in 2001 and again in 2003. Dan and his wife, Theresa, have two children, Kate and Peter.

The real, ongoing message of Easter

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

When I sat down to write about Easter, it crossed my mind that maybe I shouldn't, because "Easter is over."

Wow, it is easy to get swallowed up in the marketplace mentality, isn't it? That mentality inspires pastel chickens and chocolate bunnies as we were moving into the austerity of Ash Wednesday.

And the day after Easter — practically by Holy Saturday afternoon — all that Easter merchandise was being marked down by 60 percent to make way for what? Mother's Day, I suppose.

Yes, in the commercial world, Easter was over by midnight on April 8. But for us, the season endures and continues to challenge us.

My Easter was spent, as always, with old friends from the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. We all live far from family, so we are "holiday family" for each other.

Yes, in the commercial world, Easter was over by midnight on April 8.

But for us, the season endures and continues to challenge us.

We have seen our children grow up together from the days of Easter egg hunts in the muddy Alaskan spring. We have seen some of the children join the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, as well as the Peace Corps.

It occurred to me that during all these Easters of change and growth, there was one constant — at some point in the day, the conversation always turned to talk about the church and our involvement in it.

This year, the discussion was also about

"What's next?" One couple in our group is nearing retirement, young grandparents who still regularly jog and cross-country ski.

They have been taking conversational Spanish with the hope of doing volunteer work in Central America when they retire. This June, they will volunteer for a month in Guatemala for an organization that works with "garbage dump" kids, children whose families make their living by scavenging at huge dump sites.

If the month goes well, our friends are one step closer to knowing what they will be doing in retirement in a couple of years. How's that for a switch from the golf course?

About a year ago, realizing my nest was rapidly emptying out and asking myself what I was going to be doing for the rest of my life, I entered a master's program in pastoral studies offered by Seattle University. When I discovered the average age of program participants is 40-something, I realized I wasn't a rarity after all.

As a matter of fact, my cousin went

through this master's program in her late 50s, and when I saw her recently, she was well on her way to completing her clinical pastoral education to become a hospital chaplain. At 65, having raised seven children, she told me she feels God has called her to minister to the dying.

Just today I spoke with a woman who at 46 is making her first, temporary profession of vows to a religious congregation. She gave up a successful career as a nurse practitioner, her own house, and her penchant for travel to pursue the "something more" to which she felt God called her.

Many people "of a certain age" find themselves with financial security, a lot of energy, and freedom they may not have had in years. They have the wisdom and maturity to really understand those words "life is short" and the spiritual insight to know the real, ongoing message of Easter.

This is a great source of tremendous energy for good and for the church. It is never too late to ask: What am I doing for the rest of my life?

Who belongs to 'Us'?

By Tom Grenchik

The Easter Season gives us many opportunities to reflect on the humbling reality that Jesus Christ died for all of us. Hanging in agony on that cross, our Lord passionately loved every human person that had ever been created and every human person that would be created from that moment on, until the end of the world. We are always in the mind of God, and He has loved us for all eternity. Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again — for each and every one of us.

But who belongs to "us?" Not very long after Adam was longing for "bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh," human beings began spending a great deal of their time excluding others from the concept of "us." In fact, in the very next generation we see Cain kill Abel, asking defiantly: "Am I my brother's keeper?" This reality has been played out not only among individuals, but also with entire groups of people. Throughout human history we have seen the manifest tragedies that result when some people are defined to be outside of the concept of "us."

It's very easy to look at the

past and point fingers. How could reasonable people, and especially people of faith, really have believed that some simply didn't belong in the human family? How could people have tolerated the mistreatment, enslavement, or extermination of neighbors because they were disabled, sick, mentally challenged, or the wrong color, faith, age, or nationality?

Yet don't we still do this today? Are there not members of the human family who have been defined as outsiders, not worthy of love and protection? Unfortunately, we have enough current examples of how we mistreat persons at the very beginning of life, at the very end of life, and generally whenever they are most vulnerable.

For example, in the public debate over embryonic stem-cell research, we have prominent politicians, celebrities, and wealthy business leaders all joining forces behind the idea that our youngest members of the human family can be manipulated, experimented upon, and even destroyed if there is some hoped-for medical benefit for the rest of "us." At state and national levels there is the constant and often successful push

to justify, fund, and promote the cloning of human beings in order to harvest their parts. Because they are tiny human beings, we are told that it's no big deal. Those pushing this agenda are not denying that these are human lives. They simply argue that these human beings don't quite look like us (yet), or they are "left-overs" who no one really wants, or they are simply the property of those who brought them into existence. But no matter how they came to be, and as short as their lives may be, aren't they still members of our human family?

As difficult as it may be for the rich and famous to fathom, our Lord Jesus Christ died not only for the people who look just like "us," but for every human being, no matter how big or small or how young or old. During this Easter Season of new life, let us be reminded of our Lord's perspective on who belongs to us. We must make this our perspective as well, and respond accordingly.

Tom Grenchik is the executive director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

As difficult as it may be for the rich and famous to fathom, our Lord Jesus Christ died not only for the people who look just like "us," but for every human being, no matter how big or small or young or old.

Sometimes we have to take on the unexpected . . .

Just call me 'Grammie Dora'

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Little Maddie called me "Grammie Dora," and I was pleased.

But it was never what I expected to be called.

The "Grammie" term was one that should belong to, well, a grandmother — someone with grey hair, small pearl earrings, and a chapel veil. More specifically, a Grammie was ... my mother. But no, she was gone. And like a fast and furious game of front-yard tag, I was "it."

Who realized, back when, as children, we lay on the front grass looking at the sky and finding pictures in the starry night, that it would be so few moons before we would be the ones inside, looking out the door and saying, "Come in now, it's bed time," or, later, "You have missed your curfew."

In a wink, after that, we would have gone full circle, standing on the porch, waving goodbye to our children, who carried their own children.

Little Maddie is the granddaughter of my friend Gwen, whom she calls, rightfully, "Grandma." She is a delicate three-year-old, who likes to play chase with her daddy, the two screaming to scare each other — a noisy and rambunctious bedtime game.

Madison also likes to watch kids' television. Her favorite is "Dora The Explorer," a learning show that takes pre-school-aged children into play-along stories. Dora always needs help with her adventures, and she asks her child audience for their input — in English and Spanish.

Dora is a genius, because even though she is really teaching the kids, the serious part of her Dora-ness is camouflaged by fun-Dora. Kids don't realize, while they are studying Dora's maps, and repeating directions in two languages, they are also learning to reason — bilingually. Dora is a brilliant instructor, a parent's salvation, a four-year-old's hero, and a toddler's rock star.

I never knew I was a Dora, until Maddie called me that, and then I wondered why. Turns out it is not because I am a genius, or because I know the Spanish word for grandmother (abuela) or hair (cabello).

Little Maddie thinks I am a Dora because our hairstyle is the same — we both have brown blunt-cut bobs. (Hurray. My hairdresser charges as much as my father paid for his first car. For that she cuts my hair exactly like a cartoon film sensation, whose style comes from a paintbrush.)

It might have been a bigger compliment if a child decided to call me Grammie Angelina or Grammie Catherine Zeta. If you are going to compare me to a superstar, Maddie, pick one who was not born on a drafting table.

But I guess I didn't choose what I turned out to be.

A few days ago the world watched television and witnessed the dreadful tale of death and destruction that unfolded at a university, where some people's children and grandchildren lost their lives to a destiny chosen by someone else, not

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Vocations to the priesthood take center focus at annual Chrism Mass

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer



Above: Bishop Kevin Vann is flanked by two of the four diocesan seminarians who are to be ordained to the priesthood in July — Deacon Tom Kennedy (left) and Deacon Raymond McDaniel (right). Deacons Jonathan Wallis and Isaac Orozco will also be ordained in July.

One week before Holy Thursday, the day Christ instituted the sacramental priesthood, priests from the Diocese of Fort Worth joined Bishop Kevin Vann to concelebrate the annual Chrism Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth.

At the Chrism Mass, the event at which holy oils and chrism are blessed for the year, priests and deacons also have the opportunity to stand together, renewing their commitment to ordained ministry.

In a year when a record number of seminarians are studying for ordination to the priesthood in this diocese, the Chrism Mass projected a clear emphasis on vocations — in the words of Bishop Vann’s homily, as well as in the offertory procession. Oil bearers and offertory gift bearers represented the home parishes of the four men who are to be ordained to the Order of the Presbyterate in July.

The oil of the sick was brought forth by hospital ministers representing St. Mary the Virgin Parish in Arlington, Deacon Raymond McDaniel’s home parish; oil of the catechumens was brought up by parishioners of Fort Worth’s St. Peter the Apostle, home parish of Deacon Jonathan Wallis.

The holy chrism was presented by the members of the home parish of Deacon Isaac Orozco, St. Matthew in Arlington, and the offertory gifts were carried forward by Deacon Thomas Kennedy’s parish, St. Maria Goretti, Arlington.

During the Chrism Mass, when the oils are presented to the bishop, representatives read

prayers that ask for blessings on the people for which they will be used: the oil of catechumens to anoint all who are called to baptism; the oil of the sick “for those who suffer in mind and body.”

For the holy chrism, readers proclaim, “We bring oil and fragrant perfume, and ask that it be consecrated as the holy chrism, to anoint all the baptized in the sacrament of confirmation, to anoint the presbyters’ hands and the bishop’s head, to anoint also the altar and walls of the house of the church.”

“We who prepare catechumens for baptism and candidates for confirmation, we who are preparing for these sacraments in our parishes, and we who support candidates for ordination, ask this blessing for our people.”

At the end of the liturgy, Bishop Vann stirred and blessed the oils, which were later bottled and packaged for immediate distribution among all the priests of the diocese.

In his homily, the bishop asked the assembled clergy to reflect on the priests who had been instrumental in their own vocations. He called this kind of example and influence part of the mission of the life of the priest.

Bishop Vann shared a story about a priest who had served in his home parish in 1963, while he was preparing to be

an altar server. “I was trying to learn the Latin form of the Mass and was having a tough time with the responses,” he said. “I almost didn’t pass; in fact, I nearly gave up.”

But Bishop Vann did succeed, and from that priest learned to love and to appreciate the liturgy, especially the Easter Vigil.

“I also learned the gift of patience,” he said, “because my serving career had many failures. Perhaps from all of it, I learned from that priest the importance of going on. Father knew I could do better,” Bishop Vann said. “He kept me going and helped me put up with the weakness in my life that still haunts me sometimes.”

“Priests are called to seek God always, to enter more deeply into union with the Lord, and to bear witness to God’s love,” he said. “That’s what that priest did for me and what we do for others today.”

Concluding, Bishop Vann said, “I can’t think of a better way to worship together than at the Chrism Mass, with Jesus Christ, the strength of the church, right here in our midst.”

“We gather here this evening so that all may enter more deeply into the life of the church, and thus be ever more faithful,” he said, quoting Pope Benedict, “wherever — however — the Lord calls us to be his witnesses.”

Right: Persons working in hospital ministry present the urn containing the oil of the sick.

Below: Bishop Vann pours fragrance into the oil that is to be consecrated as holy chrism.



Right: The bishop greets members of the congregation following the Chrism Mass, celebrated March 29 at St. Patrick Cathedral in Fort Worth.



Left: Garrett Ball of St. Patrick Cathedral Parish helps distribute the holy oils following the Chrism Mass.



Right: Kay Fialho of St. Patrick Cathedral Parish offers Father Steve Berg holy oils for his parishes, St. Jerome in Bowie, St. Joseph in Nocona, St. Mary in Henrietta, and St. William in Montague.



In Easter message, pope laments wars, horrors, unrest in Iraq

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death show "the face of a God who, in Christ, has taken upon himself the wounds of injured humanity," he said.

"Only a God who loves us to the extent of taking upon himself our wounds and our pain, especially innocent suffering, is worthy of faith," the pope said.

While his resurrection did not eliminate evil and suffering, Christ did take all of humanity's pains and trials upon himself out of love, and he "left us the love that does not fear death as the way to peace and joy," he said.

Pope Benedict read his message and gave his blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome and the world) after celebrating Easter morning Mass for about 85,000 people in front of St. Peter's Basilica.

The basilica's steps and central balcony were teeming with colorful tulips, daisies, hyacinths, blooming trees, and other greenery, all donated by companies in the Netherlands.

During the outdoor Easter Mass, a choir from the Pontifical Russian College in Rome sang an ancient hymn from the Byzantine liturgy to commemorate Easter falling on the same day this year for both the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

The pope offered Easter greetings in 62 different languages, which drew huge applause, cheers, and flag-waving from the jubilant visitors in the square.

During the April 7 Easter Vigil, Pope Benedict baptized and



POPE'S BLESSING — Pope Benedict XVI gives the faithful his blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome and the world) in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 8. In his Easter message to the world, the pope lamented the countless wars, disasters, and horrors ravaging the world, including "the continual slaughter" in Iraq and the "catastrophic" situation in the Darfur region of Sudan. (CNS photo/L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO)

confirmed six women: two from China, two from Japan, and one each from Cuba and Cameroon.

Using a small golden shell to pour the holy water over each catechumen's head, the pope also baptized the two Chinese women's children — a small infant and a toddler, both born in Italy.

Baptism represents "a new beginning in life" in which "we are grafted onto Christ," the pope said during the evening ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica.

At the end of the candlelit Way of the Cross at Rome's Col-

osseum April 6, Good Friday, Pope Benedict again reminded people of God's infinite capacity to love and urged them to become messengers of that love through compassion.

Speaking without a text, the pope said the early Christian theologians considered the greatest sin of the pagan world to be a hardened, insensitive heart. Becoming Christian is to receive a tender heart, "a heart of flesh" that is sensitive and moved by the pain and suffering of others, he said.

During the two-hour ser-

vice, the pope carried the black wooden cross for the first and last stations. Women and men from Angola, the Republic of Congo, Chile, South Korea, and China, as well as two Franciscan friars from the Holy Land, were among those who carried the cross during the service.

Earlier April 6, Pope Benedict presided over Good Friday of the Lord's Passion, beginning the rite by lying prostrate with his face on a pillow in front of the altar of St. Peter's Basilica.

The preacher of the papal household, Capuchin Father

Raniero Cantalamessa, said in his homily that humanity was in dire need of "a woman's era: an era of the heart, of compassion" so that the earth would finally stop being a breeding ground of ferocity.

Christian women "are the hope for a more humane world" that is too caught up in a quest for knowledge and power that is lacking in love and mercy, he said.

Those who condemned Jesus to die were men, the papal preacher said, while those pious and courageous enough to accompany Christ throughout his passion were the women. Even his closest disciples had already abandoned the suffering Christ or were preparing to pack up and head for home, he added.

These and many other women today, such as those who work with the poor, prisoners, victims of HIV/AIDS, and "every brand of society's rejects," are not just for honoring, but for imitating, he urged.

Pope Benedict left the Vatican Easter afternoon to spend a few days resting at the papal residence in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome.

At noon April 9, he recited the "Regina Coeli" prayer with visitors gathered in the courtyard.

Editor's Note: The English text of the pope's Easter message can be found online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/urbi/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20070408_urbi-easter_en.html.

Pope Benedict: John Paul's ministry, agony showed his love of Christ

By Cindy Wooden

VATICANCITY (CNS)—Pope John Paul II's intense pastoral ministry, "but even more, the Calvary of agony and the serene death of our beloved pope, let all people of our age know that Jesus Christ really was his everything," Pope Benedict XVI said.

Pope Benedict marked the second anniversary of Pope John Paul's death by celebrating a memorial Mass the evening of April 2 in St. Peter's Square.

The pope said his predecessor truly fit the biblical description of a "servant of God," which is the way the church officially refers to him while "his process of beatification quickly progresses."

Pope Benedict, who had set aside the five-year waiting period usually required before a sainthood cause begins, told tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square that the initial, diocesan phase of Pope John Paul's cause had concluded earlier in the day.

While the church has not solemnly proclaimed Pope John Paul a saint in heaven, Pope Benedict said he is certain that "our beloved John Paul II" continues to accompany the church with his prayers.

At the same time, he offered prayers that Pope John Paul, "our father, brother, and friend," would enjoy eternal rest and peace in the company of God.

The pope praised his predecessor's ability to share with the world his faith, hope, and charity, even as Parkinson's disease gradually made it impossible for him to walk and, ultimately, to talk.

"Especially with the slow, but relentless progression of his illness, which little by little stripped him of everything, he made himself an offering to Christ, a living proclamation of his passion, in a hope filled with faith in the resurrection," Pope Benedict said.

"Like his divine master, he lived his agony in prayer," the pope said. "He died praying. Truly, he fell asleep in the Lord."

Sitting near the front of the crowd was Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, the 46-year-old French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson's disease through Pope John Paul's intervention.

Earlier in the day, during a ceremony marked by prayers, song, and formal oaths in Latin, officials of the Diocese of Rome concluded the initial phase of Pope John Paul's sainthood cause.

The process had included interviews with more than 120 people who knew Pope John Paul and a study of his ministry, the way he handled suffering, and how he faced his death, said Cardinal Camillo Ruini, papal vicar of Rome.

"In the certainty of being loved by God and in the joy of responding to that love," the late pope "found the meaning, unity, and

aim of his life," Cardinal Ruini said during the prayer service in the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

The documents from the investigation were placed in five chests, latched, tied with a red ribbon, then sealed with red wax. They will be delivered to the Congregation for Saints' Causes for further study.

"The pope suffered in his flesh, and he suffered in his spirit, finding himself increasingly obliged to reduce his commitments," Cardinal Ruini said. His occasional "signs of impatience" were not the result of pain, but of his frustration at not being able to continue the ministry to which he felt called, the cardinal added.

Cardinal Ruini described Pope John Paul as a man of continuous, intense prayer, "concrete and radical poverty," and great freedom, which allowed him to stand up to Poland's communist government.

His love for God was lived as

love for human beings, leading the pope to be an insistent voice for peace and for the defense of human life from conception to natural death, the cardinal said.

Sr. Marie-Simon-Pierre, a member of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood, was at the prayer service, as were Polish Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz of Krakow, Pope John Paul's personal secretary for almost 40 years, and Polish President Lech Kaczynski.

Celebrating a televised Mass early in the morning at Pope John Paul's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Dziwisz called the late pope an "extraordinary witness" of Christ.

"John Paul II was a member of the friends of Jesus, that is, the group of saints. Membership in this group was what gave meaning and direction to his life, to all he did and said," Cardinal Dziwisz said.

"The people of God clearly recognize his sanctity," he said.

On political and practical fronts, attention turns to immigrants

By Patricia Zapor

WASHINGTON (CNS)—With Congress preparing to reopen the touchy subject of an immigration reform bill, the people and religious organizations that deal with the human repercussions of the current situation are planning new strategies and dusting off old ones.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, said he will bring the immigration legislation to the floor for debate the last two weeks of May, even though a Senate bill has yet to be introduced. A House version that so far is serving as a baseline for congressional discussion was introduced in March. President George W. Bush was expected to promote a White House-backed bill during events planned for the week after Easter.

Like the return of spring flowers, the season has brought increased attention back to border issues on many fronts:

—The self-proclaimed citizens' border-watch organizations such as the Minutemen were heralding their spring campaign along the Arizona-Mexican border.

—Workplace raids by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, or ICE, were the subject of vehement protests in California, New England, the mid-Atlantic, and the Midwest by religious leaders whose social service programs were trying to handle the repercussions for families who have had breadwinners arrested, detained, or deported.

—The vast coalition of faith groups, ethnic organizations, unions, business groups, and immigrants' rights organizations that supports a comprehensive approach to immigration reform worked all their channels in Congress to influence what final legislation includes.

The House bill, H.R. 1645, the Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy, or STRIVE Act, represents "a good starting point," according to Kevin Appleby, director of migration and refugee policy for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Among its failings, he said, are that the bill lacks provisions to restore due process rights for immigrants and includes unnecessary enforcement mechanisms that will harm refugees and asylum seekers.

The bill includes increased enforcement efforts at the border; legal orientation programs for detainees; new penalties for people convicted of certain crimes; an employment verifica-

tion program; provisions for up to 400,000 guest workers annually; a path to permanent residency for guest workers; reforms of the family-based immigration visa program; and a path to legalization for people who are already in this country illegally.

Meanwhile, workplace immigration raids since last fall that have torn apart families, especially those with some citizen and some undocumented members, are prompting some religious groups to resurrect a 1980s idea — offering sanctuary in their churches.

California-, New York-, and Chicago-based interfaith organizations are laying the groundwork for what they call a New Sanctuary Movement, which will offer refuge to families of mixed immigration status who are facing deportation. A formal announcement launching the movement is expected in late April.

The New Sanctuary Movement is being coordinated by Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice-California, an alliance of interfaith organizations; Interfaith Worker Justice, a Chicago-based national network of worker justice groups; and the New York Sanctuary Coalition as a way "to accompany and protect immigrant families who are facing the violation of their human rights in the form of hatred, workplace discrimination, and unjust deportation," as the movement's Web site says.

The group cites roots in the

sanctuary movement of the 1980s. Then, networks of mostly church-based shelters provided refuge for Central American immigrants who fled wars in their homelands, but were unable to obtain legal asylum in the United States.

On its main Web page, the new movement cites Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony as prompting their efforts.

In March 2006, Cardinal Mahony said he would instruct his priests and other archdiocesan employees to disregard provisions of a then-pending House bill that would have criminalized the act of providing humanitarian aid to people without first checking their legal status. The bill passed in the House, but negotiators were never able to resolve it with a vastly different Senate immigration bill and both proposals died with the 109th Congress.

"Cardinal Mahony's statements were significant in awakening the general public and legislators to the moral and human dimensions of the question — effectively changing the terms of the public debate," said the site.

Since then, religious leaders nationwide have considered how to best support immigrants, the background material said.

"The crisis of ongoing raids and deportations as well as the opportunity offered by the push for federal legislation increased the urgency of creating an effective and prophetic national strategy," it said.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Pope encourages priests to be inspired by Christ's sacrifice, love

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI encouraged today's priests to be inspired by Christ's sacrifice and love for others as they face their "tremendously heavy" burden of pastoral responsibilities. The pope made the comments April 5 at a chrisim Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, where he led more than 1,000 priests and bishops in a renewal of their ordination promises. The pope, presiding over the first of two Holy Thursday liturgies, blessed the chrisim and the oils used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, ordination, and the anointing of the sick. They were carried to the altar in silver urns by groups of catechumens, youths preparing for confirmation, the sick, and deacons about to be ordained in the Diocese of Rome.

Catholic Press Association board urges new stress on diocesan newspapers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Diocesan newspapers deserve new emphasis as a means of spreading the Gospel and connecting Catholics to one another and their church, said the board of directors of the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada. "Diocesan publications can light the fire of faith that warms hearts to action for the good of all," the CPA board said in a statement released April 10. "Recently the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies announced a bold initiative, the opening of 76 new diocesan newspapers. The goal ... was that each of Italy's 226 dioceses would have at least one publication to serve its members," the board said. "That same type of emphasis is needed in the United States and Canada," it said. CPA members include a wide range of national and international Catholic newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, but the 173 diocesan newspapers of the United States and Canada that belong to the association form nearly half of its member publications. Helen Osman, CPA president, told Catholic News Service April 10 that the board statement was sparked by the strong support Pope Benedict XVI expressed for the diocesan press at a meeting with the Italian federation last November.

Retired Episcopal bishop and wife return to Catholic Church

ALBANY, New York (CNS)—Bishop Daniel W. Herzog, recently retired Episcopal bishop of Albany, and his wife, Carol, have left the Episcopal Church and re-entered full communion with the Catholic Church. Both were raised as Catholics and joined the Episcopal Church as adults. In a letter to his successor, Bishop William H. Love, Bishop Herzog said his decision was a result of the decision of the 2003 General Convention of the U.S. Episcopal Church to affirm the election and ordination of an openly gay man, Bishop Gene Robinson, as bishop of New Hampshire. Referring to the turmoil that action caused in the church, he said, "That turmoil was not merely external. It also caused a lot of hidden tears." In his view, he said, the power the convention claimed in taking its action "negated any previous authority on which I had relied. It caused me to engage in a fresh examination of apostolic teaching and authority."

Bishop says World Youth Day will be 'an enormous grace' for Australia

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, Australia, said he feels hosting World Youth Day 2008 will be "an enormous grace" for his country and added that the event is the biggest "single thing you can do to encourage our youth." The bishop, who is chief organizer of the July 15-20 international event, made the comments April 10 to a group of about 50 people at the National Catholic Educational Association convention at the Baltimore Convention Center. At the final Mass at World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne, Germany, Pope Benedict XVI announced to the crowd that the 2008 gathering would take place in Sydney. Since then the country has been planning for the big event. Bishop Fisher said he has "really been praying about" the theme: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses." "Jesus calls us to go to the ends of the earth as witnesses of our faith and many young people think Australia is like the end of the earth," said Bishop Fisher jokingly. He said the goals of World Youth Day 2008 will be to enable youths to be witnesses of God, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and have a moving and sanctifying pilgrimage in faith.

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Nuncio tells NCEA convention that teachers are world's 'greatest artists'

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien

BALTIMORE(CNS)—Calling teachers "the greatest artists in the world," Pope Benedict XVI's representative to the United States opened the National Catholic Educational Association convention in Baltimore April 10 with praise for the "special qualities of mind and heart" that educators bring to their work.

Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the U.S., said many call Michelangelo the greatest artist ever because of his sculptures such as "The Pieta," which depicts Mary holding her son Jesus after his crucifixion.

The marble sculpture, on display near the entrance to St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, manages to convey both Christ's

acceptance of suffering and his "full confidence in his mother," the archbishop said.

"But I think the greatest artists of the world are teachers, because you sculpt the best of what you are, not in a piece of marble but in human beings who are the glory of God," he said.

"Each of us has forgotten a lot of what we were told in school," he added, "but a lot of what's inside us is from the example of teachers."

Archbishop Sambi said he was the son and brother of schoolteachers and that Pope Benedict, from whom he brought greetings, "understands perfectly the labors, the greatness," and the usefulness of the mission of education, since he was "a teacher

for a large part of his life."

Up to 10,000 people were expected at the Baltimore Convention Center for the April 10-14 NCEA convention on the theme "Anchor of Faith, Harbor of Light."

Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore; Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York; Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, chairman of the NCEA board of directors; Karen Ristau, NCEA president; and Ron Valenti, superintendent of schools in the Baltimore Archdiocese, also addressed the opening session of the convention.

Several speakers noted the historical importance of the choice of Baltimore as the site of the convention because it was the first Catholic diocese in the U.S. and once the home of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, considered the founder of the U.S. Catholic school system.

Archbishop Wuerl said the role of teachers in Catholic schools is "not just the communication of information, but to show a way of life, encourage a vision, and participate in the unfolding of God's mission."

"You have no way of knowing if the seeds you plant will



People applaud during the National Catholic Educational Association convention in Baltimore April 10. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

bear fruit in the future, but you continue to sow," said Cardinal Keeler.

Ristau presented two major NCEA awards to Catherine Hickey, secretary for education and superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of New York, and Sister Dominica Rocchio, a Sister of Charity who is former superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey.

Cardinal Egan noted that he had been "a student of these two teachers" who taught him to begin each morning with a salute.

"Sr. Dominica liked to hear my heels click as well," he said with a laugh. "Dr. Hickey is not so demanding."

Hickey, who received the Msgr. John F. Meyers Award for outstanding support of Catholic

education, heads a system made up of 279 schools, "and she knows every principal and every problem, and every pastor as well," the cardinal said.

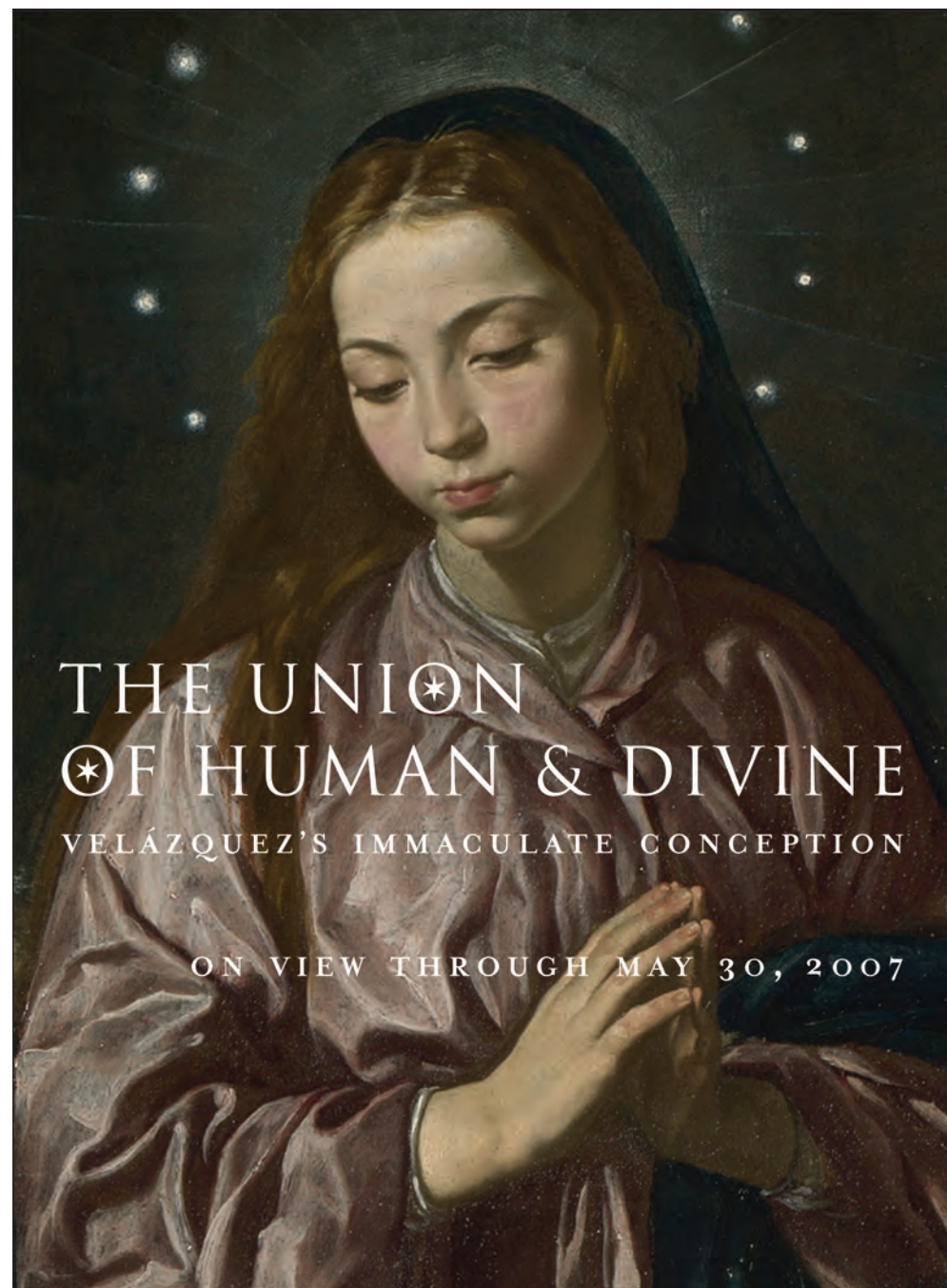
He praised Sr. Dominica, who received the C. Albert Koob Merit Award given annually to a distinguished Catholic educator, for her commitment to inner-city Catholic secondary schools.

In New York, where each inner-city Catholic high school has at least 65 percent of the student body living below the poverty line, 98 percent of the students graduate in four years, and 95 percent go on to college, Cardinal Egan said.

"If any other system were doing the same thing, they would be bringing in truckloads of money to make it work," he added.



Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, Archbishop Donald Wuerl of Washington, and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, sign a 6-foot copy of a cover of the Baltimore Catechism April 11 during the NCEA convention. (CNS photo/Owen Sweeney III, CATHOLIC REVIEW)



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LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday, May 1, 5:30 p.m.

*17th-century Seville:
Cradle and Forge of a Dogma*

Luis Martín, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of History, SMU

This lecture will explore the religious and spiritual climate of Seville in the early 17th century, when Velázquez was growing up there, and how it awakened his artistic genius.

Tuesday, May 8, 5:30 p.m.

The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art

Dr. Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt
Scholar of Spanish and Spanish-American art of the 17th and 18th centuries

Dr. Stratton-Pruitt will show how the definitive iconography representing the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception came about and explain why it was so closely associated with Spain and her dominions in the Americas, as well as how the image was adapted for particular cities, religious orders, confraternities, and other groups.

Tuesday, May 15, 5:30 p.m.

Marian Piety: The Role of the Immaculate Conception in the Devotional Life of Religious Orders and Confraternities

Jessica A. Boon, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Church History, SMU

This lecture will address the influence on Marian theology of scholastic speculation, Franciscan traditions, and local festivals in the High and Late Middle Ages, with special attention to the influence of early modern Spanish mystical authors and confraternal devotions on 17th-century views of the Immaculate Conception. Followed by a wine and cheese reception in the galleries at 6:30, and a voice recital with piano by the Meadows School of the Arts Division of Music at 7:30.

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

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

By Beverly Corzine

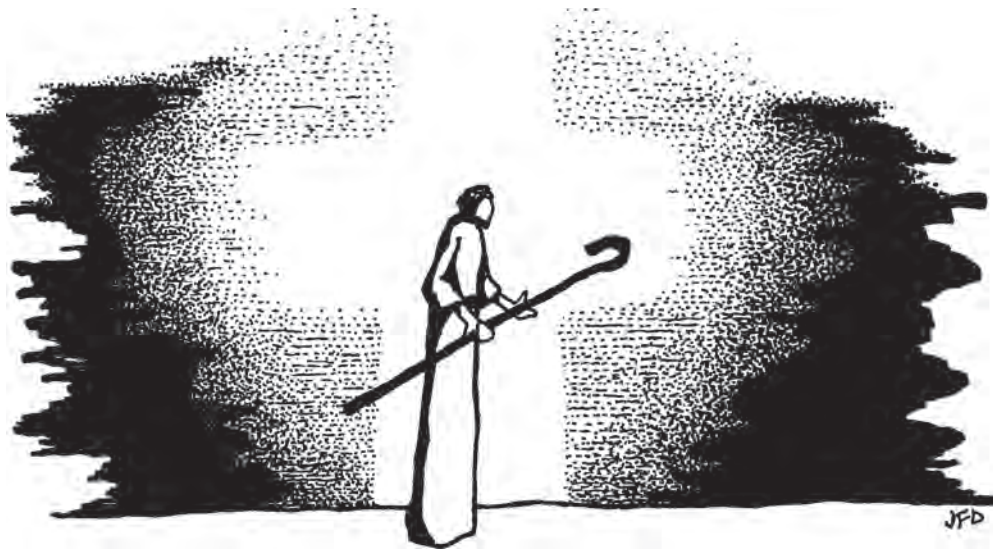
One brisk fall day I had to return home to retrieve a forgotten book. As I opened the door, the spicy smell of sautéing onions and green peppers greeted me.

Standing at the kitchen sink, my husband said, "What are you doing here? Forget your book?" I nodded.

"I thought you said you weren't making soup today."

"I changed my mind," he said, with a rather quizzical smile. I entered the living room which is shrouded in near darkness during the fall and winter. In the corner of my eye I saw a figure standing to my right, but recognition was slow in coming. Then he stepped closer. Finally, the smiling face of our dear friend Sal registered. An explosion of laughing, crying, hugging, and explaining ensued.

Sal, whom we had not seen in six years, had a layover at the airport. Sal and Winford had been



"Do
you love
me more
than
these?"
— John
21:15

planning to visit me at work, but my unexpected appearance set the stage for a double surprise on an ordinary day.

The element of surprise is at play again as John prepares us for the third post-resurrection appearance of Jesus. After all the events that have elapsed since the crucifixion, a small group of apostles and disciples return to the familiar seashore. It seems the men haven't decided how to fill their time after the action-filled years of following Jesus. Although some have witnessed the resurrected Christ, they are men without a plan. Finally, Peter decides to do something like we ourselves might do in this situation — something ordinary: "I am going fishing," he announces,

which must have seemed a good idea because the others pile into the boat with him.

After a long night without catching a single fish, the men recognize a familiar figure on the shore. Soon nets bulge with fish. Hungry men fill themselves with breakfast. In this almost surreal scene, Jesus probes the heart of Peter with the penetrating question: "Do you love me?" As Jesus digs deeper with each question, Peter answers an emotional "yes." Jesus has no words of condemnation for the man who denied him. Jesus prefers love, grace, and commitment.

If we listen, Jesus continues to ask, "Do you love me?" If our answer is "yes," we will discover "sheep" that need our care.

QUESTIONS:

When have you been surprised by an opportunity to tend God's loved ones?

How did you respond, and how did your response affect you?

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Pope: Announce Christ's death, resurrection at home, in the workplace

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI said modern Christians should imitate the early disciples by announcing Christ's death and resurrection wherever they live and work.

"We, too, like Mary Magdalene and St. Thomas and the other apostles, are called to be witnesses of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We can't keep this great news to ourselves. We need to announce it to the whole world," the pope said at his general audience April 11.

The disciples had the gift of encountering the risen Christ in their homes, offering them a tangible confirmation of the resurrection, he said.

But as St. Augustine said, Christians should know that "to have Christ in one's own heart is greater than having him in one's home," the pope said.

"We, too, if we seek the Lord with a simple and sincere spirit, will meet him. In fact, he himself will come to meet us. He will



Pope Benedict XVI greets the faithful as he leaves his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 4. In his audience talk, the pope explained the meaning of the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter. (CNS photo/Dario Pignatelli, Reuters)

make himself known; he will call us by name; he will lead us to the closeness of his love," the pope said.

More than 35,000 people filled the seats in St. Peter's Square to see and hear the pope at his first general audience following Holy

Week liturgies. They cheered in the sunshine as the pontiff took two turns through the crowd in an open jeep before delivering

his talk from the steps of the basilica.

The pope encouraged Christians to deepen their understanding of Easter by reading what church fathers had to say about those crucial events, especially Christ's appearances to his disciples in the days after his death.

He cited an insight of early church teachers about the discovery of the empty tomb and the excitement it generated among Christ's followers.

"When Peter and John go running to the tomb, each trying to arrive there first, they show us the one form of competition that is legitimate between believers: zeal in the search for Christ," the pope said.

After the audience, the pope returned by helicopter to his villa in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, where he was staying for several days after Easter. He was scheduled to return to the Vatican April 15 for a morning Mass, a liturgy that would mark his 80th birthday the following day.

Scripture Readings



April 29, Fourth Sunday of Easter.
Cycle C. Readings:

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

By Dan Luby

Hunger? Thirst? The oppressive power of these dogged and ruthless scourges of humankind is unknown to most of us living in the post-industrial world of the United States or other prosperous countries.

Sure, we might occasionally miss a meal or two; even, in extraordinary circumstances, go to bed hungry. We may once in a while get really thirsty, stuck in a hot place with no ready supply of safe water. But the gnawing, life-threatening hunger that is the daily bread of millions the world over? The tongue-thickening, mind-numbing thirst that haunts the days and nights of huge populations in underdeveloped regions? Most of us have no concept.

So, in Sunday's reading from Revelation, when we hear feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty as images of salvation, we cannot perhaps understand them as profoundly

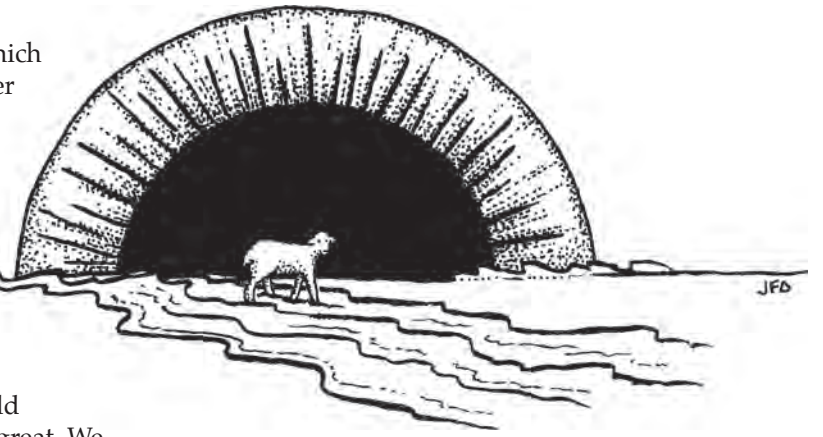
as those who live less sheltered lives.

But there is another image here which speaks to all of us, even if we've never ached with deep hunger or never been driven to despair by lasting thirst.

Because everyone understands tears. Everyone, even if only as a child, has cried — from frustration and abandonment, from anger and grief, from pain and loneliness and fear.

No one lives very long in this world without suffering defeats, small and great. We all know disappointment, betrayal, isolation, loss. Friendships can fail, marriages can fracture, families and nations and communities of faith can tear themselves apart. Dreams and relationships and loved ones die. And whether our tears flow easily and often, or stay pooled within our broken hearts, we all weep.

That's why, when the Scriptures tell us that in the great cosmic victory of Christ, of which his resurrection is the first taste and the absolute guarantee, "God will wipe away every tear from our eyes," it is good news in which we can all rejoice.



"For the Lamb, who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

— Revelation 7:17

QUESTIONS:

Who has helped wipe away the tears from your eyes? How can you express your gratitude? Who do you know that is suffering? What's one specific way you can offer consolation?

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We strive for perfection despite our frailties

By Jeff Hedglen

The words flew out of my mouth like a Nolan Ryan fastball. As soon as they got past my lips, I knew I was in trouble. The words were out there, never to return, no matter how badly I wanted to stuff them back down my throat and pull out the magic pen of the secret agents from "Men in Black" and erase the memories of all who were within earshot of my insensitive remark: I was caught with my foot stuck squarely in my mouth.

Sadly this description could be told about a couple of dozen moments throughout my life, some more innocent than others; some rather funny, and others very embarrassing — all of them regrettable.

Words have the power to heal and an equal force for destruction. In a country where speech is free, it far too often is used cheaply. Sometimes this freedom costs us more than we bargained for.

These slips of the tongue are not reserved just for hosts of radio shows. It seems that



One of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati's

sayings is "The higher

we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ."

all people can use words that are insensitive, angry, rude, disrespectful, prejudiced, and inexplicably ugly to each other — and this is just with family members.

While it is true that sticks and stones can break bones, it is not true that words never hurt. They have a staggering ability to cut people to the heart.

Though it is no excuse, I suppose I can kind of understand why a person who has not experienced the love of Jesus would resort to words motivated by emotions other than love. But what really bothers me is when people of

faith do it — especially when the person is me.

I wish I could say that my desire to be continually converted to Jesus and his Gospel has washed away all imperfections, but anyone who knows me even a little bit has been privy to some amount of the shadow that still remains.

You might be thinking, "Yeah, but sometimes that person really deserves to be yelled at," or, "Sometimes I just need to blow off some steam," or, "What I said was the truth." To all of these well-reasoned excuses I will say: That's all well and good for people who

desire to follow Jesus half way, but we are called to more than that. In fact, we are called to perfection: "So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Called to perfection? That seems so unreasonable. I suppose it depends on your definition of perfection. I cannot imagine that the all-knowing and all-loving God would call us to the unattainable. Sure, ultimate perfection will only be ours when we see the Father face to face, but until that time striving for it may be its own type of perfection.

The more we improve and refine ourselves, the more perfect we become. Recently I have become inspired by a young Italian man on his way to sainthood. He is Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. One of his sayings is "The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ." To me this means that we must flee mediocrity and seek with all our hearts to be the best living example of God's love that we can be.

This means taking the high

road, even if it is not fair to us, swallowing our pride from time to time, and letting others have their way. In a word this attitude is humility.

James says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you" (James 4:10). Thus it is our job to be humble and God's job to raise us up.

There is no better example of this than that which we saw during Holy Week. Jesus took everything his accusers threw at him with humility, even though they were wrong and he had done no wrong. He was secure in knowing that it is the Father's place to put others in theirs.

This Easter season, fueled by the power of the resurrected Jesus, let's strive for humility. Before we know it, we will be traveling with Blessed Pier Giorgio, "Verso l'alto!" ("Toward the Heights!") Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, is the principal organizer of Camp Fort Worth each summer. Readers with questions can contact Jeff at jeff@stbartsfw.org.

Monseñor Vann anima a seguir ejemplo de Santo Tomás: rendirnos a nuestro CREDO de la fe

Estimados amigos de la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Ahora estamos en la época pas-cual de cincuenta días, tiempo en que la Iglesia nos invita a celebrar la Resurrección de Cristo, y encontrarlo en nuestra vida diaria.



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

Quizás un Evangelio clave para estos días es el Evangelio del segundo domingo de Pascua, que es a que nos relata el encuentro de los discípulos con el Señor Resucitado en la "tarde del primer día de la semana." Éste es el momento en que Santo Tomás no estaba presente. Él rehusó creer hasta que él viera al Señor Resucitado. ¡Y por eso, el Señor Resucitado le ofreció esa oportunidad la semana siguiente! En nuestro calendario litúrgico, este relato se nos presenta en el Segundo Domingo de Pascua. Las palabras del Cristo Resucitado a Santo Tomás son palabras importantes, no solamente para Santo Tomás, sino para nosotros, también:

Nosotros, como Santo Tomás, podemos luchar con nuestra fe. Ciertamente podemos tener nuestros momentos de duda. Pero, como Santo Tomás, el Señor nos llama a rendirnos ante Él, y no ser incrédulos sino creer.

*"...No seas incrédulo; ¡cree!...
¿Crees porque me has visto?
¡Dichosos los que creen sin haber visto!"*

— Juan 20:27-29

Nuestro Santo Padre, el Papa Benedicto XVI, habló sobre este punto el 12 de septiembre del 2006, sobre las alegrías y bendiciones

de creer cuando nos recordó en su homilía en Ratisbona:

"El que cree nunca está solo... la fe nos reúne y nos regala una fiesta. Nos da la alegría en Dios, la alegría por la creación y por estar juntos."

Nosotros, como Santo Tomás, podemos luchar con nuestra fe. Ciertamente podemos tener nuestros momentos de duda. Pero, como Santo Tomás, el Señor nos llama a rendirnos ante Él, y no ser incrédulos sino creer.

El Señor nos llama a creer en una época, que ocasionalmente, se adapta más a preguntas, diálogos, y procesos que un "Sí, Yo CREO" como respuesta. Y durante la Vigilia Pascual, o el Domingo de Pascua, dijimos claramente en nuestras comunidades parroquiales "Sí Creo". Un "Sí" al Señor Resucitado, un "Sí" al Credo de Nicea, la profesión de fe de la Iglesia de la fe. Damos esta respuesta de un "Yo Creo" en una época en que nuestra fe esta sujeta a constantes escrutinios y dudas de ciertos sectores de nuestra sociedad y cultura. Las exageradas atenciones y publicidad dadas a las supuestas "tumbas de Jesús y María" durante esta pasada Cuaresma es solamente el más reciente ejemplo de esto.

Es por esto que nuestro "YO CREO" es tan importante, lo que creemos es muy importante, conocer nuestras Sagradas Escrituras y doctrina es esencial. Todo lo que profesamos, mantenemos, y que

vivimos en nuestra comunidad de fe sigue de este "YO CREO".

El Evangelio según San Juan concluye con estas palabras que ciertamente se refieren a nosotros:

"Pero estas se han escrito para que ustedes crean que Jesús es el Mesías, el Hijo de Dios, y para que creyendo tengan vida por medio de él."

— Juan 20:31

Quisiera decir unas palabras de agradecimiento y de aprecio a todos los que están participando de los diversos ministerios parroquiales que prepararon a nuestros catecúmenos y candidatos para la recepción de los Sacramentos de Iniciación. Gracias a nuestros músicos y a todos los que participaron en las liturgias de la Semana Santa. Una palabra muy especial de agradecimiento a nuestros sacerdotes que pasaron tantas horas en estas actividades, y especialmente por las horas dedicadas a la celebración del Sacramento de la Reconciliación, sean en celebraciones individuales del sacramento o participando en los muchos servicios comunales del sacramento alrededor de la Diócesis. La recepción y la celebración del Sacramento de la Reconciliación es una visible expresión de la Misericordia Divina de Cristo, que es también un tema del Segundo Domingo de Pascua.

Que Dios los bendiga siempre en estos días de Pascua.
+Kevin W. Vann

En Pascua, el Papa lamenta las tragedias humanas

Por Carol Glatz

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — En su mensaje de Pascua el Papa Benedicto XVI lamentó las incontables guerras, los desastres y los horrores que destazan el mundo, incluyendo "la matanza continua" en Irak y la situación en la región de Darfur de Sudán.

"Las calamidades naturales y las tragedias humanas que causan víctimas innumerables y enorme destrucción material no faltan" en el mundo, dijo él en su mensaje del 8 de abril, difundido a millones de personas en más de 65 países.

El Papa destacó su preocupación por todos aquellos que sufren por la explotación, el hambre, la enfermedad, el terrorismo, los secuestros y la "violencia que algunas personas intentan justificar en nombre de la religión".

Aunque hubo "algunas señales de esperanza en el diálogo entre Israel y la Autoridad Palestina, nada positivo proviene de Irak, destazado por la matanza continua mientras la población civil huye", dijo él.

La crisis política en El Líbano, la inestabilidad en Afganistán, el caos en Somalia, el colapso económico en Zimbabwe y la "catastrófica, y triste decir subestimada, situación humanitaria" en Darfur fueron algunos de los otros lugares que el Papa enumeró como necesitados de atención.

Con todo el sufrimiento, el mal y la injusticia que está plagando el mundo es posible que la fe de uno en Dios pueda ser puesta a prueba, igual que la fe de los apóstoles en Jesús había sido sacudida "por el escándalo de la cruz", dijo el Papa Benedicto.

Pero tales dudas, temores y decepciones ayudan a "purificar todos los conceptos falsos de Dios" y a guiar a la gente a "descubrir la verdadera cara de él", dijo el Papa.

En vez de ser una señal de aparente fracaso, la pasión y muerte de Jesús muestran "la cara de un Dios que, en Cristo, ha tomado sobre sí mismo las lesiones de la humanidad herida", dijo él.

"Sólo un Dios que nos ama al grado de tomar sobre sí mismo nuestras heridas y nuestro dolor, especialmente el sufrimiento de los inocentes, es digno de fe", dijo el papa.

Mientras su resurrección no eliminó el mal ni el sufrimiento, Cristo sí tomó sobre sí mismo por amor todos los dolores y las tribulaciones de la humanidad y él "nos dejó el amor que no le teme a la muerte como camino hacia la



El Papa Benedicto XVI lava los pies de un feligrés durante la Misa de la Cena del Señor en la Basílica de San Juan de Letrán, en Roma, el 5 de abril. El papa lavó y secó los pies de 12 hombres para conmemorar el gesto de humildad de Cristo a sus apóstoles la noche antes de morir. (Foto CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters)

paz y la alegría", dijo él.

El papa Benedicto leyó su mensaje y dio su bendición "urbi et orbi" (a la ciudad de Roma y

al mundo) después de celebrar la Misa matutina de Pascua para unas 85,000 personas frente a la Basílica de San Pedro.

¡CRISTO ES VIDA!

...y la muerte no prevalece

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OPL
Director, Instituto Luz de Cristo

Juan 8:51, En verdad les digo: el que guarda mi palabra no probará la muerte jamás.

Pascua es cuando los cristianos celebran el triunfo de Cristo sobre la muerte. Cristo es vida eterna y la ofrece a todos aquellos que la buscan. ¡Cristo nos da vida! Pero necesito aclarar que Él no impone la vida. Nuestro Señor Resucitado no obliga a nadie a que reciba esa vida que el sufrió tanto por conseguirnos. Él la ofrece y a nosotros nos corresponde expresar nuestro interés en recibirla o no. Es más, nuestro Señor no obliga ni impone ninguna de sus bendiciones o dones. Y tristemente son muchos, los que un día renacieron por el agua y el Espíritu, que no aprovechan los dones de nueva vida alcanzados en la Pascua.

Algunos creyentes, tristemente, no siguen realmente a Cristo. Algunos discípulos están supuestamente muy entusiasmados con el Señor pero no lo siguen de cerca a pesar de que Él es el camino. Muchos no creen en todas sus enseñanzas, buscan solo escoger sus doctrinas favoritas, a pesar de que él es la plena verdad. Otros saben de Jesucristo, y hasta te pueden citar capítulo y verso de varios pasajes bíblicos, pero realmente no lo conocen ni viven íntimamente su presencia a pesar de que Él es la vida.

Solo existe una manera de recibir y disfrutar la vida que Cristo nos ofrece. Solo existe una manera de no llegar a probar la muerte eterna jamás. Esa manera es guardando su palabra, guardando plenamente sus enseñanzas y nunca escogiendo unas doctrinas sobre otras. La unión de todas sus doctrinas y enseñanzas, este deposito de la fe recibida, forman la palabra de Cristo que todos tenemos que guardar y vivir.

Cristo nos lo dice en el Evangelio de Juan "En verdad les digo: el que guarda mi palabra no probará la muerte jamás." El Señor nos está dando el aviso. Cristo es amor, camino, verdad y vida pero no es algo impuesto, tenemos que aceptarla. La aceptamos no solo con nuestras palabras y oraciones sino con nuestra manera de vivir, con nuestro ejemplo de vida. Vidas que son un reflejo de todo el amor de Cristo.

Unámonos a la palabra que es y nos ofrece Cristo. Unámonos en un mismo testimonio del amor y verdad que es Cristo. Viviendo y guardando su palabra no solo nos asegura vivir la vida eterna que el Señor nos prometió sino que también nos convierte en sus evangelizadores. ¡Seremos comunicadores de que Cristo es el camino, verdad y VIDA! Seremos instrumentos del Señor para que otros alcancen la vida eterna.

Acompañemos a Cristo Resucitado, que está buscando a todos aquellos que están hambrientos de Él. Compartamos su palabra con amor y cariño. Seamos instrumentos de Cristo Resucitado amor, camino, verdad y vida. Hu yamos, con la ayuda de Cristo, de la eterna muerte pues ella sí que no prevalece.



Pedro Moreno es director diocesano del Instituto Luz de Cristo. Sus escritos espirituales han recibido múltiples premios de la Asociación de Periodismo Católico de los Estados Unidos y Canadá. Vive en el noroeste de Fort Worth con su esposa Maria Mirta y sus tres hijas Maria, Patricia y Mirangela. Pedro es Laico Dominicano.

Se debe conocer a Cristo como el Hijo de Dios, dice el Papa en un nuevo libro

Por John Thavis

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — En su nuevo libro, "Jesús de Nazaret," el papa Benedicto XVI dijo que se debe de entender a Cristo como el Hijo de Dios en una misión divina; y no solamente como moralista o reformador social.

El volver a enfatizar la naturaleza divina de Cristo es especialmente importante en un mundo que tiende a ridiculizar la fe religiosa y que experimenta "un emponzoñamiento global del clima espiritual", dijo el Papa.

A pesar de que Cristo no trajo un plan de progreso social, sí trajo una nueva visión fundamentada en el amor que reta los males del mundo de hoy, desde la brutalidad de los regímenes totalitarios hasta "la crueldad del capitalismo", dijo.

El libro, de 448 páginas, fue presentado en su edición en italiano, alemán y polaco, en el Vaticano, el 13 de abril. Saldría a la venta el 16 de abril, cumpleaños del Papa que cumple los 80 años, con subsecuentes ediciones en inglés y en otras 18 lenguas.

El libro, primer volumen de dos programados sobre la vida de Cristo, abarca la vida pública de Jesús desde su bautismo en el río Jordán hasta la Transfiguración delante de sus discípulos. En los 10 capítulos se analizan pasajes de la Escritura, pero también se exploran comentarios hechos por los padres de la iglesia primitiva hasta los estudiosos modernos.

En un prefacio, el Papa hace una aclaración poco usual, diciendo que el libro no debe ser leído como expresión oficial de las enseñanzas de la iglesia, sino como el fruto de sus investigaciones personales.

"Por lo tanto, cualquier persona es libre de contradecirme", decía.

A través del texto, el Papa cita pasajes del Antiguo y del Nuevo Testamento para demostrar que para entender a Cristo uno debe entender "su unión con Dios Padre".

Incluso en su bautismo, Jesús aparece como divino salvador; no como hombre ordinario que quizá pasaba por una crisis vocacional o psicológica que lo llevó al río Jordán, dijo.

De la misma manera, dijo el Papa, las enseñanzas de Cristo radicalmente diferentes no se originan en ninguna escuela humana sino en el contacto directo con Dios. Esto se ve claramente en el Sermón de la Montaña, en donde Cristo hace un resumen de las virtudes cristianas en las Ocho Bienaventuranzas, dijo.

La idea de que el humilde y el



PORTADA DEL LIBRO DEL PAPA, JESÚS DE NAZARETH

— Esta es la portada del nuevo libro del papa Benedicto XVI, JESÚS DE NAZARETH. En el libro, el Papa dice que se debe entender a Cristo como el Hijo de Dios en una misión divina y no solamente como mortal o reformador social. (Foto CNS)

pobre son bendecidos especialmente les ha chocado a varios, incluyendo el filósofo alemán Friedrich Nietzsche, como queja resentida en contra de las personas más afortunadas o exitosas del mundo, dijo el Papa.

Pero en recientes décadas se ha demostrado el valor duradero de esta visión cristiana, dijo.

Después de presenciar cómo los regímenes totalitarios de la era moderna han pisoteado la dignidad humana y golpeado al débil, "entendemos una vez más a los que tienen hambre y sed de justicia", dijo.

"De cara al abuso del poder económico, de cara a la crueldad del capitalismo que rebaja al ser humano a la condición de bien de consumo, hemos empezado a ver con mayor claridad los peligros de la riqueza y a entender de manera nueva lo que Jesús quiso decir cuando previno en contra de la riqueza", dijo.

El Papa dijo que la expectativa moderna ampliamente aceptada de que la religión debe servir como receta para paz y justicia en la tierra encuentra eco en la tentación de Satanás en contra de Cristo, la de cambiar las piedras del desierto en pan para aliviar el hambre.

A pesar de esto, muchas personas podrían preguntar "qué fue lo que Jesús trajo en verdad, si no fue la paz en el mundo, el bienestar para todos, un mundo mejor", escribió el Papa.

"La respuesta es muy simple. Jesús trajo a Dios", dijo. Revelándose a sí mismo como Hijo de Dios, Cristo les hace saber a las gentes que Dios está cerca de ellos

en su vida y activo en el trabajo de la historia humana, dijo.

Especialmente en la era moderna, hay una resistencia a aceptar que Dios sea algo más que una realidad subjetiva, dijo el Papa. La idea de "quitar a Dios" es el núcleo de toda tentación, dijo, y se ve en el acercamiento moderno hacia los problemas como la pobreza y hambre global.

Mediante la ayuda extranjera a países del Tercer Mundo, por ejemplo, se ha impuesto una solución materialista y técnica sobre los pueblos, ignorando sus creencias religiosas, dijo.

África, en particular, ha sido "robada y saqueada", dijo; y como el hombre que estaba a la orilla del camino en la parábola de Cristo, necesita buenos samaritanos.

En lugar de llevarles a estos pueblos a Dios, dijo, "les hemos llevado el cinismo de un mundo sin Dios, en el que lo único que cuenta es el poder y las ganancias".

El Papa advirtió que algunas de "las reconstrucciones" de Jesús ofrecidas por estudiosos de la Biblia han también disminuido su divinidad y terminan por presentar a Cristo simplemente como uno entre muchos fundadores de religiones. En este sentido, dijo, "la interpretación de la Biblia puede efectivamente ser un instrumento del Anticristo", al negar que Dios actúa sobre la historia humana.

El fiel cristiano necesita saber que el Nuevo Testamento es más que una mera colección de narraciones simbólicas o alegóricas; y de que no es solamente otro mito de muerte y renacimiento, dijo.

"Y sin embargo, en realidad sucedió. Jesús no es un mito, es hombre de carne y hueso, presencia real en la historia. ... Murió y resucitó", dijo.

En un capítulo, el Papa se enfoca en la importancia de la oración como Jesús nos la enseñó en el "Padre Nuestro". Y presentó la pregunta "¿No es Dios también madre?"

A pesar de que hay expresiones del amor maternal de Dios en la Biblia, y a pesar de que no se puede decir que Dios sea hombre o mujer, el Papa concluyó que la imagen de padre era apropiada en esa época para expresar la trascendente calidad del "otro" del creador.

Para los cristianos hoy, esa lengua permanece como norma, dijo.

"Madre no es un título de Dios ni un nombre con el cual se rece a Dios", dijo. "Oramos como Jesús lo hizo ... no como se nos ocurra a nosotros ni como nos plazca".

El Papa, cumpliendo 80, agradece a iglesia por rodearlo con afecto

Por John Thavis

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — En una Misa marcando su 80mo cumpleaños, el Papa Benedicto XVI le agradeció a la iglesia rodearlo con afecto “como una verdadera familia” y por apoyarlo con oraciones.

“Una y otra vez reconozco con alegría cuán grande es el número de personas que me sostienen con sus oraciones, quienes con su fe y amor me ayudan a realizar mi ministerio y quienes son indulgentes con mi debilidad”, dijo el 15 de abril.

La Misa abrió dos días de celebraciones conmemorando el cumpleaños del 16 de abril del Papa y el segundo aniversario de su elección el 19 de abril. Las festividades incluyeron un concierto en el Vaticano, docenas

de testimoniales escritos y una gigantesca torta de cumpleaños en forma del Vaticano.

Cincuenta mil personas, incluyendo peregrinos alemanes vistiendo indumentaria tradicional, atestaron la Plaza de San Pedro para la liturgia. El área del altar estaba rodeado por miles de flores — amarillas y blancas, los colores del Vaticano.

En su sermón el papa aparentó estar un poco reticente en cuanto a ser el foco de la Misa, diciendo que la liturgia no debe ser el lugar “de hablar sobre uno mismo”. Pero él añadió que su vida personal puede también ofrecer lecciones sobre la misericordia de Dios.

El papa dijo que él siempre creía que él había recibido un regalo especial por haber nacido

el Sábado Santo, “al principio de la Pascua”. En un sentido, dijo, él nació en su familia personal y en la familia más grande de la iglesia el mismo día.

Él dijo que su familia ayudó a llevarlo a Dios y expresó su gratitud a su padre, madre, hermana y hermano. El único miembro que sobrevive de su familia inmediata, monseñor Georg Ratzinger, estaba sentado cerca del altar papal.

El Vaticano instaló una dirección temporal de correo electrónico a donde la gente puede enviarle al Papa saludos de cumpleaños: <http://isidoro.vatican.va/auguri/auguri.php?lingua=en>.

Mientras tanto, los regalos se vertían en el Vaticano. El secretario privado del Papa, monseñor Georg Ganswein, dijo que estos incluyen cartas, libros, flores,



El Papa Benedict XVI sale en su papamóvil al final de la Misa celebrada en la Plaza de San Pedro el 15 de abril en honor de su 80mo cumpleaños. El Papa agradeció a la iglesia por rodearlo de afecto, como una verdadera familia, y por sostenerlo con sus oraciones. (CNS foto/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

discos compactos y hasta un gigantesco oso de peluche, el cual el papa donó al hospital de niños Bambino Gesù en Roma.

Monseñor Ganswein dijo que el Papa había dicho que él no deseaba aceptar regalos personales de los fieles. Aquellos

que quieran darle algo pueden hacer una ofrenda que el papa usará para causas eclesísticas o humanitarias especiales, dijo el secretario papal.

Un regalo que el papa sí aceptó fue una capa, o manto litúrgico, que le dio su hermano. El papa también recibió 80 botellas de cerveza de parte de una cervecería cercana a Freising, Alemania.

Encuentro para comprometidos (Spanish Engaged Encounter)

El Encuentro para Comprometidos es una preparación matrimonial de fin de semana para parejas de novios que desean contraer matrimonio. Está designado para dar a las parejas la oportunidad de dialogar intensa y honestamente sobre su futura vida como pareja. Es

presentado por un equipo de parejas casadas. El primer fin de semana se llevará a cabo el 7 y 8 de julio, 2007 en el Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth, Tx. 76103.

Favor de hablar con Suzanna Ordóñez para inscribirse al 817-560-3300 ext. 256.

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Conferencista: Dr. Carlos Barrillas y su equipo

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1 de mayo

Primer

Retiro:

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Jesus of Nazareth	Albany	176.06	120.00
Holy Redeemer	Aledo	892.30	1,028.00
Most Blessed Sacrament	Arlington	1,833.09	1,795.00
St. Joseph	Arlington	966.26	6,907.90
St. Maria Goretti	Arlington	4,315.20	0.00
St. Mary the Virgin	Arlington	0.00	174.00
St. Matthew	Arlington	1,731.25	0.00
St. Vincent de Paul	Arlington	443.00	702.00
Vietnamese Martyrs	Arlington	1,768.00	3,969.00
Holy Trinity	Azle	842.50	960.00
St. Michael	Bedford	5,075.00	50.00
St. Jerome	Bowie	120.00	100.00
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Breckenridge	351.86	252.00
St. John the Baptizer	Bridgeport	430.86	321.30
St. Jude Thaddeus	Burkburnett	514.00	445.16
St. Ann	Burleson	501.00	1,495.00
St. Catherine of Siena	Carrollton	3,228.50	3,242.53
Holy Rosary	Cisco	0.00	286.70
St. Joseph	Cleburne	625.38	1,413.76
Holy Angels	Clifton	182.25	372.08
Good Shepherd	Colleyville	2,259.92	1,174.00
Holy Cross	The Colony	470.00	1,524.42
Sacred Heart	Comanche	301.00	0.00
St. Joseph	Crowell	84.00	0.00
Assumption/Blessed Virgin Mary	Decatur	1,152.63	429.34
Our Lady of Guadalupe	De Leon	67.00	0.00
Immaculate Conception	Denton	3,887.06	4,610.83
St. Mark	Denton	3,518.32	1,962.00
St. Mary	Dublin	308.50	0.00
St. Francis Xavier	Eastland	0.00	51.00
St. Paul	Electra	0.00	21.00
All Saints	Fort Worth	506.71	325.00
Christ the King	Fort Worth	519.00	958.00
Holy Family	Fort Worth	2,143.00	2,728.00
Holy Name of Jesus	Fort Worth	0.00	0.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Fort Worth	2,245.00	518.00
Our Lady of Fatima	Fort Worth	1,005.00	1,026.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Fort Worth	2,256.00	2,101.00
Our Mother of Mercy	Fort Worth	67.00	225.00
San Mateo	Fort Worth	240.50	80.00
St. Andrew	Fort Worth	4,863.32	3,882.26
St. Bartholomew	Fort Worth	1,847.91	2,051.83
St. George	Fort Worth	964.00	159.00
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St. Thomas the Apostle	Fort Worth	1,415.35	1,395.00
St. Mary	Gainesville	275.00	232.00
St. Rose of Lima	Glen Rose	395.54	322.41
St. Francis of Assisi	Graford	0.00	0.00
St. Mary	Graham	0.00	0.00
St. Frances Cabrini	Granbury	353.00	952.00
St. Francis of Assisi	Grapevine	3,791.20	1,628.00
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Our Lady of Mercy	Hillsboro	294.75	1,007.51
Korean Martyrs	Hurst	0.00	0.00
Christ the King	Iowa Park	0.00	25.00
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St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Keller	2,350.10	2,120.00
Santa Rosa	Knox City	279.21	0.00
St. Philip the Apostle	Lewisville	4,987.32	3,420.71
St. Peter	Lindsay	578.27	567.46
St. Jude	Mansfield	2,498.42	1,383.43
St. Mary of the Assumption	Megargel	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Lourdes	Mineral Wells	777.97	0.00
St. William	Montague	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Morgan	112.00	265.16
Sacred Heart	Muenster	439.06	1,190.51
St. Joseph	Nocona	35.00	0.00
St. Theresa	Olney	0.00	0.00
Nativity/Blessed Virgin Mary	Penelope	112.76	148.77
St. Thomas Aquinas	Pilot Point	160.00	158.00
St. Mary	Quanah	247.00	0.00
St. Rita	Ranger	0.00	90.00
St. Joseph	Rhineland	326.60	175.00
St. Boniface	Scotland	41.75	122.00
Sacred Heart	Seymour	0.00	90.00
St. Brendan	Stephenville	127.51	0.00
St. John	Strawn	0.00	29.00
St. John	Valley View	0.00	115.00
Holy Family of Nazareth	Vernon	217.00	0.00
St. Stephen	Weatherford	301.00	1,084.00
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Wichita Falls	0.00	508.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Wichita Falls	0.00	1,978.07
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Wichita Falls	400.00	0.00
Sacred Heart	Wichita Falls	898.20	638.00
St. Mary	Windthorst	365.00	203.00

85,118.70 73,597.40

Prepared by the Accounting Dept for the Catholic Diocese of Fort Worth. Please forward all questions and comments to Debbie Lankford.

Limited child protection audits find most dioceses in compliance

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Twenty-seven of 29 Catholic dioceses and eparchies audited in 2006 complied with the church's national standards for child protection programs and the prevention of and response to sexual abuse, says a report released April 11.

However, four dioceses that were not found in compliance in 2005 refused to participate in the 2006 audit.

"The overall results of the 2006 audit are encouraging," said Patricia O'Donnell Ewers, chairwoman of the bishops' all-lay National Review Board. But she described the refusal of four dioceses to participate as "discouraging news."

Two — the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Melkite Eparchy of Newton, Massachusetts — had refused to participate in the 2005 audits as well and were supposed to undergo full audits. The Diocese of Baker, Oregon, and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Deliverance of Newark (New Jersey) for Syrians refused partial audits that would have focused on those areas where they did not meet compliance

standards in 2005.

"It is most unfortunate," Ewers said, "that the bishops and eparchs of these dioceses/eparchies are unwilling to participate in the one measure of public scrutiny that assures the Catholic lay faithful that the church is taking every means possible to reach out to those who have been harmed by individuals in the service of the church and to promote the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to its care."

William A. Gavin, president of the Massachusetts-based Gavin Group, which conducted the audits, reported that among the dioceses that were audited in 2006 only the Cincinnati Archdiocese and the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, were found to be not yet fully compliant with the abuse response and child protection standards set by the bishops' "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

The remaining problem in both dioceses was the need to complete the safe environment training of all volunteers who work with children, he said.

He told Catholic News Service that both dioceses have

been "very conscientious" about working toward full compliance, and he expects they will reach that goal this year.

The report on the 2006 audits, prepared by the bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection, was released by Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Washington, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, after the National Review Board reviewed it and recommended its publication.

Noting the high level of compliance on all articles of the charter, Bishop Skylstad said, "Vigilance to ensure the safety of children is now a way of life."

"In the last five years we have made enormous progress, yet we must continue to proceed steadfastly," he said.

The year 2006 was a period of transition for the audits. To adjust better to the rhythms of parish and diocesan life that are built around the school year and summer vacation time, future audits will go from July 1 to June 30 instead of Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. All dioceses are to receive a full 2007 audit, which will look at compliance from July 2006 to June 2007.

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Good Newsmaker / Diocesan

At age 80, pope is seen as patient teacher, sharing message of God's love

FROM PAGE 24
ments, ecumenism, sainthood causes, health care, justice and peace, interreligious dialogue, Eastern churches, and Vatican finances.

The fact that the pope has not already put his own team in place and has introduced few major changes at the Vatican has disappointed some of his strongest supporters in Rome.

"His problem is that he doesn't want to offend anyone," one Vatican official remarked recently.

Some journalists, too, have been frustrated that the "Ratzinger revolution" they predicted has failed to materialize, at least in the dramatic form they had foreseen.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the former Vatican spokesman

under Popes John Paul and Benedict, tackled the issue in a commentary written for the Rome newspaper *La Repubblica*.

The pope is certainly cautious, Navarro-Valls said, but that should not be confused with indecision or timidity. He said the pope is acutely aware that he's called to make serious judgments with lasting consequences for the church which often need "the right timing and the right maturation period."

Navarro-Valls said the pope's style seems to embody an intellectual seriousness: the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas' "diligent and subtle inquiry," which is never in a hurry.

The pope's patience also has been evident in his teaching style during his first two years.

His back-to-basics approach has aimed at gently prodding people to question the values of today's dominant culture and to make space in their lives for the divine.

In his one encyclical and in many talks, he has concentrated on the simple and positive core of the Christian message: love of God and love of neighbor.

When he has the world's stage, the pope tends to set aside intellectual sophistication and doctrinal complexity. At the recent Way of the Cross procession on Good Friday, he summarized in seven easy sentences the relationship between Christ's passion and the suffering of today's world.

"This is the profound intention of the prayer of the Way of

the Cross: to open our hearts and to help us see with the heart," he said.

"Our God is not a distant God, untouchable in his bless-

edness: Our God has a heart," he said.

At 80, the pope is not wielding a flame thrower. He's blowing on the coals.

Pope's new book to be released in English in May

FROM PAGE 24
go on sale April 16, the pope's 80th birthday, with subsequent editions in English and 18 other languages to come.

The book, the first of two planned volumes on Christ's life, covers the public acts of Jesus from his baptism in the Jordan River to the transfiguration before his disciples. Its 10 chapters analyze Scriptural passages, but also explore commentary from early church fathers and modern scholars.

In a preface, the pope makes an unusual disclaimer, saying the book should not be read as an expression of official church teaching, but as the fruits of his personal research.

"Therefore, anyone is free to contradict me," he said.

Throughout the text, the pope cites Old and New Testament passages to show that to understand Christ one must understand his "union with God the Father."

Even at his baptism, Jesus appears as the divine savior, not as an ordinary man who perhaps had a vocational or psychological crisis that led him to the Jordan River, he said.

The Christian faithful need to know that the New Testa-

ment is more than a collection of symbolic or allegorical stories, and that this is not just another myth of death and rebirth, he said.

"Yes, it really happened. Jesus is not a myth; he is a man of flesh and blood, a real presence in history.... He died and rose again," he said.

The pope explained in his preface that the book was the product of a "long inner journey," and that he had begun writing it in 2003. He said he was concerned that the figure of Jesus was becoming increasingly unclear, even for believers.

He decided that he could offer a portrait of the "historical Jesus" that was "more logical and understandable than reconstructions we have seen in recent decades."

Naturally, he said, to believe that Christ was God and that he revealed this in his public life goes beyond the possibilities of the historical method. In this sense, he said, the Scriptures should be read in the light of faith.

Doubleday, the U.S. publisher of the pope's book, plans to release the volume in English in May.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11
themselves.

Apart from personifying the biggest tragedy that can befall a family, the shootings at Virginia Tech University demonstrated our fragile and temporary state, and the unpredictability that defines our days on this earth.

Students walked innocently into classrooms, where all their choices went away, except in some cases, the choice between waiting to be shot or jumping out an upper-story window. There was no justice in those rooms; there was nothing that even resembled life as they saw it, when, as children, they also lay on front lawns, looking at the moon, wishing on stars.

"This was the kind of event that changes all your definitions," said one student, a junior, who woke up that morning knowing what good was, and would never again sleep without remembering the vision of evil and senseless death.

"From now on," another student said, "every campus tour forever will point out Norris Hall, where everyone's lives changed."

For days all over the world, and particularly in university

classrooms and halls, like Texas Christian University, where I hang out with some wonderful young people, questions hung thick in the air. How did this happen? How could it happen to someone young, to someone whose whole life was ahead, to someone who did not deserve it?

There was no reason at all for the 33 deaths that occurred at a university in Virginia this April.

And no matter how much the event is dissected and examined, it still will not compute, because it was unexpected and unspeakable.

But there was at least one thing, a tiny detail in the cacophony that made a little bit of sense. A 76-year-old Holocaust survivor, Liviu Librescu, an aeronautics engineer and a lecturer at the school for 20 years, blocked a classroom door, saving the lives of several students before losing his own, according to the Associated Press. Coincidentally, this happened on Israel's Holocaust remembrance day.

Who knew why this man survived the Holocaust, so many years ago that these Virginia Tech students' parents had not even been born? And the second his work was done — the saving of those children's lives, it would seem — his life ended.

We don't know the reason for

that, anymore than the reason a troubled young man trampled the sense, in a university built to make — and teach — sense.

I never knew I would be a mother, that I would intersect the lives of thousands of students, or that a very young child from Arkansas would one day call me Grammie, even though I am not her grandmother, or "Dora," even though I am not a hero or even a cartoon.

We don't know what is going to happen to us, any morning, any day. We don't know why we were born, where our lives will lead, or what God wants us to do with them. We can only pray for his guidance and our own eventual acceptance of his will.

Little Maddie calls me "Grammie Dora," and I am pleased.

It was never what I expected to be called, but right now, it seems okay.



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. Her column is syndicated in a number of the best Catholic diocesan newspapers across the U.S. In May of 2005, her column received the first place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada.

Umbert the Unborn



by Gary Cangemi

The FLOCK

By Jean Denton

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Calendar

MASS OF WELCOME

A Mass of welcome for all members of the Diocese of Fort Worth who have joined the Catholic Church or who have completed their Christian initiation within the past year will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann April 29 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth. Family and friends of the newly initiated are invited to attend. A reception will be held following the Mass. Reservations are requested by contacting an individual's parish RCIA director. For more information, contact Mary McLarry at The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 268 or by e-mail to mmclarry@fwdioc.org.

GRIEFSHARE SEMINAR

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 5508 Black Oak Lane in River Oaks, will again host the GriefShare Seminar April 30 through July 23. The program has been revised with new workbooks and video presentations. Trained facilitators will be present at all sessions to lead discussions following the prepared media presentation. Session times will be 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Light snacks will be provided. There is no charge for this seminar. For more information, contact Deacon Ron Aziere at (817) 738-9925 or (817) 626-9545.

'COME AND SEE'

Sunday, May 6, the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur at OLV Center, 909 West Shaw Street, Fort Worth, will host a "Come and See" day for single women, ages 18-45. The day will begin with Mass at 10:30 a.m. in the convent chapel, followed by dinner with the sisters, a presentation, and a time of sharing. Anyone wishing a more extended visit with the sisters may inquire about the "Come and Stay" weekend to be held May 4-6. For more information regarding the day event or the weekend, contact Sister Margaret Miller, SSMN, at smarmg@airmail.net or call her at (817) 429-4009.

ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY

The spring assembly of the Fort Worth diocesan Parish Interfaith and Ecumenical Representatives will meet May 6 at St. Philip the Apostle Parish, 1897 West Main Street, Lewisville. The topic of the meeting will be the progress made within the past year in the Catholic and Methodist churches' dialogues. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. in the Community Life Center with Kenneth Loyer, a doctoral candidate of Southern Methodist University, as the speaker. Loyer attended the signing of the statement of association by the World Methodist Council on the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in Seoul, Korea, in July 2006. For more information, contact Kathleen Easler at (817) 430-2454.

ENGLISH CURSILLOS

A Cursillo is a short course in Christianity consisting of a series of talks and meditations examining one's life in relation to Jesus Christ. An English Cursillo weekend for men will be held May 17-20. An English Cursillo for women has been scheduled for June 7-10. For more information, contact Mary Jean Nagy at (817) 226-1110 or by e-mail to mjnagy@fredhall-dfw.com.

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. The weekend retreat provides an environment and tools to help participants put closure on the past, and to create a new beginning in the present. The next BE weekend will be held April 27-29 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. For more information, call metro (972) 601-4091 or e-mail the Dallas/Fort Worth BE team at dfwbe@hotmail.com.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S GROUP

St. Augustine's Men's Purity Group, a ministry for men who struggle with sexual impurity issues on the Internet and other sources, meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller, and Sundays at 7 p.m., at 1301 Paxton (Padre Pio House) in Arlington. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.org, or e-mail to Mark at seasmenspurity@yahoo.com.

To Report Misconduct

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct by anyone who serves the church, you may

- Call **Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator**, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Or call the **Sexual Abuse Hotline** (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call **The Catholic Center** at (817) 560-2452 ext. 107 and ask for the vicar general, Father Michael Olson.

To Report Abuse

Call the **Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services)**
1 (800) 252-5400

VOCATION AWARENESS

Single Catholic men and women, ages 18 to 40, are invited to attend the 2007 Vocation Awareness Program to be held at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive in Irving, July 13-15. The weekend is sponsored by the Serra Clubs of the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses, in partnership with the diocesan vocation offices. There is no charge for the program, which includes accommodations in private rooms and meals at the seminary. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 366-0439, or by e-mail to kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

ST. JOHN'S SINGLES EVENTS

The St. John's Singles Ministry announces the following upcoming events: April 29, 6:30 p.m. – "The Song of Solomon," a study on relationships and marriage, call (817) 838-5998 for reservations; May 11, 7:30 p.m. – volleyball in St. John's gym, St. John's Singles vs. Holy Family; April 27, and May 4, 18, and 25, 7:30 p.m. – Friday night volleyball in St. John's gym; April 22 and 29 and May 13 and 20, 11 a.m. – Single adult Sunday classes. For more information, visit the Web site at web2.airmail.net/sjta/singles/index.html, or e-mail to sjsingles@sbcglobal.net. St. John the Apostle Church is located at 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills.

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WALK FOR LIFE

The Pregnancy Help Center, which offers life-affirming pregnancy assistance to families in Wichita Falls and in Vernon, will host its sixth annual Walk for Life May 12 at two locations: Lucy Park's Circle Trail in Wichita Falls and the Vernon High School Stadium in Vernon. Registration and a free breakfast will begin at 9 a.m.; the Walk for Life will start at 10 a.m. The goal of the Walk for Life, according to the organization's Web site, is "to raise funds and friends for the ministry of the Pregnancy Help Center, educate community members about the Pregnancy Help Center and its outreaches, and make a positive life-affirming statement to our community." Highlights of the day will include face painting, balloons, and a moon walk. Team incentive prizes and sponsored walker prizes will be awarded. The walk will take place rain or shine. For more information, visit online at www.walkforlife.wfpregnancyhelpcenter.org.

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

A Rachel's Vineyard retreat, designed to offer healing for women and men struggling with the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion, will be held June 1-3 in Fort Worth. Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath. For more information or to register for a retreat, call the confidential helpline at (817) 923-4757 or e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

EUCCHARISTIC HEALING

All are invited to gather for an evening of prayer and testimony as Colleen Willard shares the story of how she was unexpectedly and dramatically healed by the power of the holy Eucharist and the Blessed Mother's intercession. The presentation, sponsored by the Fort Worth Queen of Peace Center, will be held April 24 at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, located at the corner of West Magnolia and Jennings Streets in Fort Worth. The evening will begin with the rosary at 7 p.m. followed by the talk and a eucharistic healing service conducted by Father David Bristow. For more information, call (817) 244-7733 or (817) 558-9805.

PARISH MISSION AT ICC

Sisters from the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ will present a parish mission at Immaculate Conception Church, 2255 North Bonnie Brae Street, Denton, the evenings of May 14-16. With a theme of "Deep Conversion, Deep Prayer," the mission will be an opportunity to deepen, renew, or experience a walk with the Lord. The Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are a young Franciscan order based in Prayer Town (Channing), Texas. For more information, contact the parish office at (940) 565-1770.

PAX CHRISTI CONFERENCE

Pax Christi Austin will host the 2007 Pax Christi Texas State Conference, "Be Doers of the Word: Working Together for Peace With Justice." Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, founding bishop of Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace and justice movement, will be the keynote speaker. The conference, which will be held May 19 at St. Catherine of Siena Church, 4800 Convict Hill Rd., Austin, is open to everyone who is concerned about fully living the Word of God and working in community to bring about the reign of God. For more information about the conference or to obtain a registration flyer, contact Cheryl Grossman at (972) 288-2477 or e-mail to cgrossman@austin.rr.com.

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SACRED HEART, SEYMOUR

Sacred Heart Parish in Seymour invites all to share in the celebration of the blessing of its new Pastoral Center May 7. Bishop Kevin Vann will celebrate the sacrament of confirmation at 7 p.m. followed by the blessing of the new building at 8 p.m. Refreshments will be served at a reception after the blessing. Seymour is located two-and-a-half hours from Fort Worth, going 199 west to Jacksboro and then 114 west to Seymour. For more information, contact the parish office at (940) 889-5252.

SAN MATEO GOLF TOURNAMENT

San Mateo's Men's Club will host its 10th anniversary golf tournament May 14 at Squaw Creek Golf Course, 1605 Ranch House Road, Aledo. Tee-off time will be noon with a shotgun start. Following the tournament, dinner will be provided by R.J. Rivera Catering. The cost for the tournament is \$65 per player or \$260 for a team. The cost to sponsor a hole is \$100. All proceeds will benefit San Mateo youth scholarships. For more information, call Emerico Perez at (817) 715-0289.

ST. FRANCIS PRE-SCHOOL

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 861 Wildwood Lane in Grapevine is currently enrolling preschool children ages two through four for the 2007-08 school year. The program meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the school year, and follows the Grapevine-Colleyville ISD calendar. For more information or to arrange a tour, call Karen Deal at (817) 481-2685 ext. 30 or visit the Web site at www.stfrancisgrapevine.org and search under ministries.

ROSARY CONGRESS

Apostolatus Uniti's 18th annual Rosary Congress will be hosted by St. Paul the Apostle Parish, 5508 Black Oak Ln., Fort Worth, June 10-16. The congress will open with Mass and an outdoor eucharistic procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, June 10, and will close with a Mass and procession June 16, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. To sign up for hours of eucharistic adoration and for more information, call Kim Barton at (817) 926-0019 or (423) 386-3862, or Bonnie Sager at (817) 294-5579.

SUMMER BAND CAMP

A summer band camp for students entering fifth grade through those completing the eighth grade will be offered June 4-8. The camp, hosted by Brian Standridge, director of the NCHS band program and Chuck Compher, associate director, will be held at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. The fee is \$75 per student, plus an additional \$7 for the Burger's Lake outing. For more information, contact the NCHS band department at (817) 457-2920 ext. 1538 or e-mail to bstandridge@nolancatholic.org.

SINGLES FAMILY PICNIC

The Diocesan Ministry Family Picnic will be held May 19 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bowman Springs Park on Lake Arlington. Participants are asked to bring a dish to share. Coals for grilling and beverages will be provided. Reservations are not required. For more information, visit the Web site at visit the Web site at www.fwdioc.org under Pastoral Services, Singles Ministry.

BIG BAND DANCE

All are invited to a family-oriented event with an opportunity to listen to and dance to Big Band era music at the Nolan Catholic High School Jazz Band's Big Band Dance May 5 at St. Vincent DePaul Church, 5819 West Pleasant Ridge Road, Arlington. The dance will be held from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and will feature the Nolan Catholic High School Jazz Band. Snacks and desserts will be provided. Soft drinks and water will be available for purchase. This is an alcohol-free event. For more information, contact Paul or Joy Krebs at (817) 691-5954.

ST. RITA SCHOOL FUNDRAISER

St. Rita School will host its annual Spring Fling Auction and Dinner April 28 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Edythe Mareel Reiderer Parish Center, 712 Weiler Blvd., Fort Worth. Admission is \$6 at the door or \$5 pre-sale. Auction packages include a football signed by LaDainian Tomlinson (San Diego), a baseball signed by Nolan Ryan, tickets to the Amon Carter Museum, a Parker Uniforms gift card, and many other items. Childcare will be available for \$5 per child or \$10 for two or more siblings. A reservation for childcare is requested, as space is limited. The children will be served pizza, and will play games and watch movies. For more information, contact the school at (817) 459-9383.

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

Acclaimed musician John Michael Talbot will be in concert at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9th Street, Wichita Falls, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. This solo appearance will also feature a choir from area Catholic churches. Tickets are \$10 each and are available at the church. Contact Bret Parker at (940) 723-5288 for more information or to volunteer at the concert. Seating for the concert is limited.

HISPANIC MINISTRY WORKSHOP

A Hispanic Ministry Workshop will be held at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, Lake Dallas, May 7-10. The conference will be presented principally in English. The cost of the workshop is \$360 for a single room, or \$300 per person for a double room. All conference materials, lodging, and meals are included in the cost. Reservations are required with a \$100 registration deposit. Checks may be made payable to Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House. For more information, call (940) 321-6020.

Classified Section

TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

St. John the Apostle School, North Richland Hills, a PK-8 grade school of 330 students, is seeking a part-time technology specialist. The candidate should have a degree and/or professional experience in computer technology/education. The applicant should be able to help in the transition to a Web-based data management system, troubleshoot network problems, maintain software operation and licensing, conduct preventative maintenance and hardware repair, update the school Web site, and assist faculty and staff with computer software and hardware needs. Interested candidates should submit their résumés to Dr. Cindy Cummins, 7421 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills 76180.

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ACCOMPANIST

An accompanist experienced at three-manual pipe organ is needed for four weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with two choirs weekly, holy day Masses, availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send résumés to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Avenue, Fort Worth 76107 or call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104, to apply.

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Pope Benedict at 80: Blowing on the coals of faith

STORIES BY JOHN THAVIS
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE
VATICAN CITY

When Pope John Paul II turned 80 in 2000, it fueled yet another round of speculation about whether the ailing pontiff might break with tradition and resign.

In contrast, Pope Benedict XVI's 80th birthday April 16 finds him with the wind in his sails.

The pope's new book on Jesus was being released in several languages, an event that will no doubt launch the Christological themes of his pontificate into wider circulation.

In March the pope published a major document on the Eucharist, and sources said he was preparing to release a long-awaited decree liberalizing use of the Tridentine Mass.

Following a recent Vatican summit, the pope's announced letter to Chinese Catholics was anticipated eagerly in April, in hopes that it could offer a new path of dialogue with the government and help heal internal church divisions.

Meanwhile, the pope was preparing for his first papal trip to the Western Hemisphere, a mid-May journey to Brazil for a crucial planning session among Latin American bishops.

Pope Benedict, who marked the second anniversary of his election April 19, seems fit and energetic in public appearances. He glides through crowds and lingers with well-wishers and often delivers his most incisive remarks off the cuff.

Although the pope some-

Above: Pope Benedict XVI speaks at the end of a special concert performed by Germany's Stuttgart Radio Symphonic Orchestra in honor of his 80th birthday in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican April 16. (CNS photo/Dario Pignatelli, Reuters)

times suggests he may have little time in office, he shows no sign of ill health or failing stamina. During Holy Week, he seemed unfazed by the heavy schedule of 10 major liturgies and encounters.

The pope is one of very few top church officials not obligated to hand in his resignation on or before the age of 80. For cardinal and bishop members of Vatican congregations, 80 is the mandatory retirement age. Bishops must offer to resign as heads of dioceses when they turn 75, and so must the heads of offices of the Roman Curia.

That leaves Pope Benedict as the oldest among chief Vatican officials, but the others are not far behind. Today's Vatican is a senior-citizen crowd: Of the heads of the 25 main Vatican

agencies, only one is under the normal U.S. retirement age of 65.

The average age of top curial officials today is almost 73. That's more than 10 years older than the average age under Pope John Paul at the two-year mark of his pontificate.

In part, that's because 80 percent of curial leaders are holdovers from the era of Pope John Paul. That could change significantly over the next 12 months, when 10 of the 25 current department heads will be of mandatory retirement age.

To a great extent, then, Pope Benedict has a chance to put his own mark on the Curia in the coming year. The changes could affect Vatican agencies dealing with liturgy and sacra-

SEE AT AGE 80..., P. 22

Above: Pope Benedict XVI greets the crowds in St. Peter's Square at the end of a Mass marking his 80th birthday at the Vatican April 15. The pope thanked the church for surrounding him with affection "like a true family" and for supporting him with prayers. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

Right: Pope Benedict XVI looks at a copy of his new book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, presented to him at the Vatican April 13. (CNS photo/L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO, Reuters)

Christ must be known as Son of God, pope says in new book

In his new book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI said Christ must be understood as the Son of God on a divine mission, not as a mere moralist or social reformer.

Re-emphasizing Christ's divine nature is especially important in a world that tends to ridicule religious faith and that is experiencing a "global poisoning of the spiritual climate," the pope said.

While Christ did not bring a blueprint for social progress, he did bring a new vision based on love that challenges the evils of today's world — from the brutality of totalitarian regimes to the "cruelty of capitalism," he said.

The 448-page book was presented in its Italian, German, and Polish editions at the Vatican April 13. It was to

SEE POPE'S NEW BOOK, P. 22

Inside... This issue of the NTC

The annual Rosary Vigil for Life, led by Bishop Vann, brought over 425 Catholics together at a local abortion clinic, where every life saved is a "victory" to celebrate. **6**

Easter is a time of new beginnings, new life, columnist Dan Luby writes, reassuring us that "no matter what befalls us . . . God's mercy will win out." **10**

At the Chrism Mass, where the emphasis was on priestly vocations, Bishop Vann reminded the assembly that we are all called to enter more deeply into the life of the church. **12**

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