

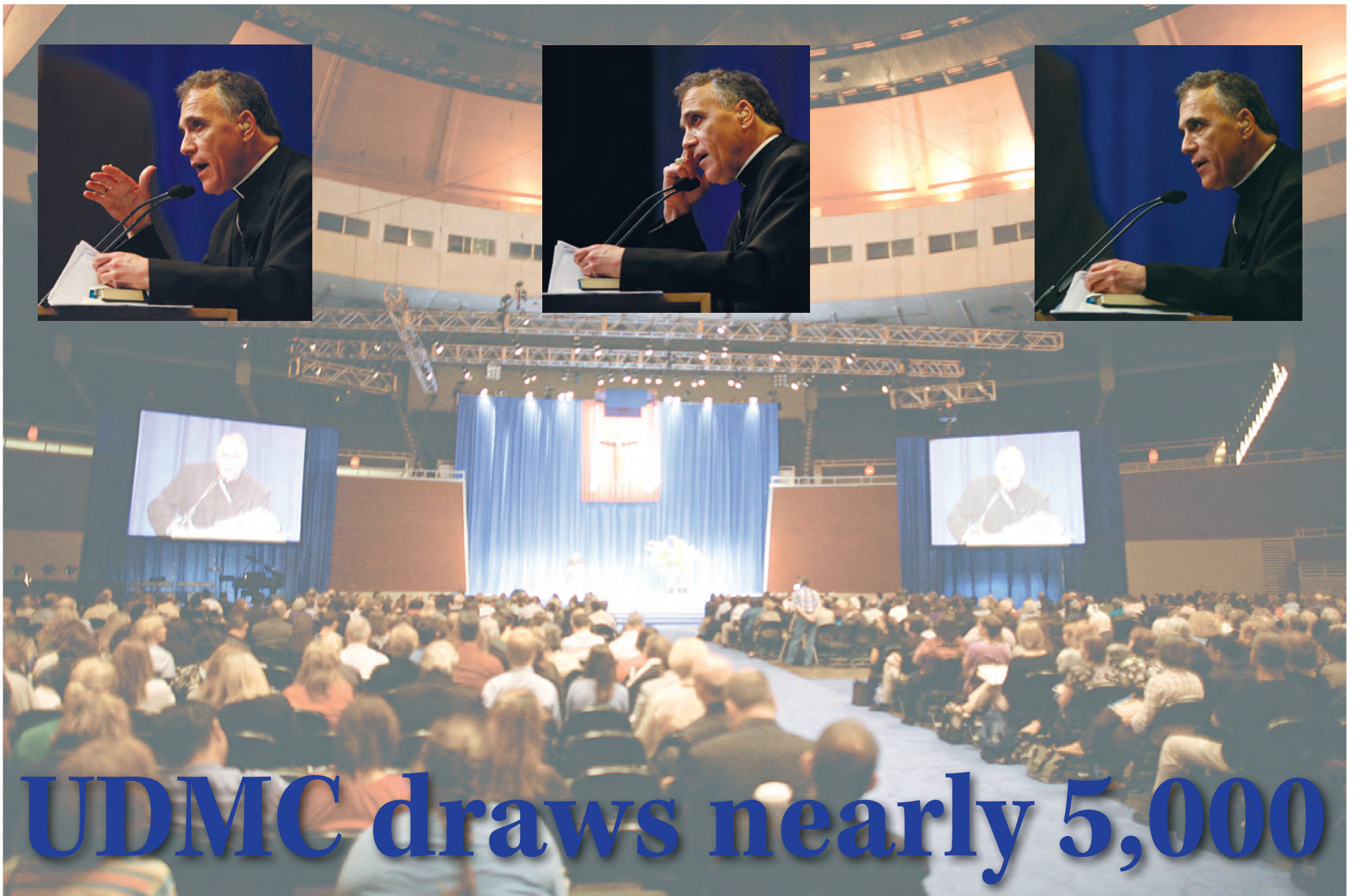


NEWSMAGAZINE North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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(NTC photos by Juan Guajardo)

UDMC draws nearly 5,000

Cardinal DiNardo points listeners to Jesus' example of fellowship, persuasion

Story and Photos By Juan Guajardo ■ Correspondent

Surrounded by a crowd of almost 5,000 catechists, ministers, priests, sisters, deacons, Catholic school teachers, and other lay people, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo stood front and center in a vast multi-level arena, between two huge projection screens, and encouraged the audience to continue their ministry work and to draw strength from prayer and Scripture.

Cardinal DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston, was just one of several nationally recognized speakers who presented at the fourth annual University of Dallas 2010 Ministry Conference on Oct. 22-23 at the Dallas Convention Center. Sponsored by the dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas, the overarching theme of the conference was "Walking Together in Faith."

It was a theme that Cardinal DiNardo took to heart in his keynote address that opened the conference on Friday morning, after an early morning prayer session.

He referred often to the Gospel of Luke to explain what it takes to walk with Jesus on his journey of faith. The cardinal pointed out that one of the prerequisites is prayer, telling how Jesus was absorbed in prayer when he was transfigured on the mountain, when he was baptized in the Jordan, and how Jesus told us to pray constantly

Photo above: Cardinal Daniel DiNardo addresses the gathered crowd of nearly 5,000 participants in the opening session of the second University of Dallas Ministry Conference to be hosted jointly by the Diocese of Fort Worth and the Diocese of Dallas.

with the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge.

"Prayer is a beautiful, humble form of pestering. Stick with it," Cardinal DiNardo said. "If you're going to walk in faith, personally, or as a diocese or as a parish, or as a group, you must be built on intimacy with Jesus and his Father. We call that prayer. St. Luke also recalls in the middle of the Jesus journey, that we should always look for opportune moments to pray.... What's an opportune moment to pray? Every moment. Every moment is opportune. There's only one bad prayer, the one that wasn't said."

Teaching is also part of journeying in faith with Jesus, Cardinal DiNardo said, noting that

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Our Shepherd Speaks

Working together to bring about the reign of Christ the King

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

These days bring about several important solemnities and feasts in the liturgical life of the Church and are very important for our reflection. They are a reminder that Christ is always present with us and journeying with the Pilgrim Church as we strive for holiness and eternal glory in Christ.

At the end of this month, we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King which brings to a dramatic close the Liturgical Year. The Solemnity of Christ the King was first established by Pope Pius XI in 1925 because of the growing threats of Communism, Nazism, and Fascism (right across the city from him!) and the threats all these posed upon the human spirit. Christ the King reminds us that the ultimate power that cannot be threatened or coerced by these powers was Christ the King. Therefore, the human person would always be free, no matter what, and Christ the King has the “last word” over evil. The image of Christ as our Lord and King has a very special meaning to all of us, even those of us in Western democracies. Christ comes as King to rule over evil, sin, and death, and to restore the order of the Kingdom of God that was thrown into chaos after the first sin. In fact, in John’s Gospel, the trial of Christ and his ultimate crucifixion is portrayed as the enthronement of Christ, who now reigns over sin and death forever from the throne of the Cross. The Solemnity of Christ the King also reminds us that like Christ, we are called to share in his kingly mission through humility and service, and to conquer hearts through works of charity and mercy. As Pope Benedict XVI teaches,

But in what does this ‘power’ of Jesus Christ the King consist? It is not the power of the kings or the great people of this world; it is the divine power to give eternal life, to liberate from evil, to defeat the dominion of death. It is the power of Love that can draw good from evil, that can melt a hardened heart, bring peace amid the harshest conflict and kindle hope in the thickest darkness.

— Angelus Address, November 22, 2009

In addition, the Solemnity of Christ the King was originally celebrated on the last Sunday of October, but with the reform of the Liturgical Calendar in 1969 it was put at the last Sunday of the Liturgical Year to remind us that at the end of salvation history, Christ will come again to judge the living



Bishop Kevin Vann

and the dead as recorded in the passage from *Matthew 25* where Christ comes and separates the sheep from the goats. In fact, the readings from the last several Sundays of the liturgical year focus on the last judgment, on being ready and prepared for the coming of the Lord. It calls us to make an examination of conscience on how we have lived our lives in Christ over the past year. It is a sobering reminder that some day we will come before Christ the King and render an account of our lives and how we used the gifts and graces that God has given us to build up the Kingdom of God.

This same theme of preparation for the coming of Christ also carries over into the new liturgical year that begins on Dec. 5 as we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent. The word “advent” comes from the Latin *adventus* which means “coming” or “arrival”. The season of Advent is a season of preparation for Christ’s coming in two ways. First, we are called to look into our lives and into our hearts, to examine our consciences, and to assess our readiness for when Christ comes again. We do not know the day or the hour that Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, nor do we know the hour that Christ may call each of us individually to account for our lives and how we loved God and neighbor. Secondly, the Season of Advent prepares us to celebrate and recall Christ’s first coming in the Incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, so that we may present to Christ a heart full of purity, love, and peace. *The Catechism* clearly describes this dual meaning of Advent:

When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this

ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor’s birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (524).

The liturgical color for Advent is purple, as the season of Advent is somewhat penitential (although less so than Lent) but with the added theme of expectant hope in the revelation and coming glory of Christ. This expectant hope is especially expressed during the Third Sunday of Advent called *Gaudate Sunday* or Joyful Sunday as we “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ” and the liturgical colors are rose (pink) instead of purple. There are many rich traditions that we can partake of during the season of Advent, especially in the family setting, such as the lighting of the Advent Wreath, or the daily opening of an Advent Calendar, accompanied by meditation and prayer that helps us live, in our own daily lives, our penitential and expectant hope in the coming of Christ.

There are also two very important Marian feasts that also fall within the season of Advent. The first is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception when we celebrate that Mary was conceived without the stain of Original Sin so that Mary could become the pure and stainless tabernacle through which Christ would become Incarnate and receive a pure human nature. This truth is revealed to us in Sacred Scripture by the greeting of the Angel Gabriel who comes to Mary and marvelously reveals “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you” (*Luke 1:28*). Mary is completely full of grace precisely because she is the one who was conceived without sin and continued to fully cooperate in complete “obedience of faith” with the grace and presence of the Holy Spirit. It is under this title of the Immaculate Conception that we most fully see Mary as Model of the Church for she truly models in her person and in her life and witness the Church as the spotless Bride of Christ. As Vatican II teaches us in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*,

But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the faithful still strive to conquer sin and increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues. (65)

In addition, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception has a special meaning to the Church in the United States, for Mary under the title of the Immaculate Conception is the patroness of the United States, and it is to her we entrust the protection and guidance of our great country. Therefore, the bishops of the United States have declared the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to be a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics in the United States.

The second important Marian feast is the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. This is a very important day not only for Hispanic Catholics but for all of us who live under her title as Patroness of the Americas. This feast recalls the fateful days of Dec 9-12, 1531 when Mary appeared to an indigenous Aztec native who came to be known by his baptismal name Juan Diego. Upon revealing herself to Juan Diego in his native language Nahuatl, Our Lady of Guadalupe immediately told him she is the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. She asked Juan Diego that a chapel be built on Tepeyac hill for the conversion and nourishment of the faithful, especially the Aztec people, due to their practice of idolatry and human sacrifice which included children. Our Blessed Mother sought to evangelize the people and Juan Diego would serve as the key person to accomplish this task.

Our Lady of Guadalupe desired to show her mercy and compassion upon the people as only a mother could. Her appearance as an indigenous young Indian girl brought to light the love of the people in her heart. Juan Diego immediately rushed to speak with Bishop Zumarraga about the vision of the Blessed Mother. Initially Juan Diego’s message was not heard. Eventually, Juan Diego presented the bishop with a tilma that, once opened, revealed the image of our Lady along with roses not in season at that time.

There is much significance to the meaning and symbols surrounding the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe. First, Guadalupe in Indian terms means “to smash the snake’s head” (*Genesis 3:15*). Keep in mind the Aztecs had settled in this particular area known as Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) from a vision of an eagle perched on a cactus and devouring a snake. Mary’s role in crushing the serpent is her triumph over evil. The backdrop of the stars, the sun, and moon at her feet represent her role as Mother of God. Her sash at her waist represents a sign of pregnancy to show the love God has for his children through the birth of Christ and also her care and concern for the unborn. This is why Our Lady of Guadalupe has become such a symbol and advocate for the

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Bishop's blog making its 'advent'

Bishop Kevin Vann has announced that he will launch his new blog on the first Sunday of Advent, November 28. The blog will be accessible from either the front page of the diocesan website — www.fwdioc.org — or from the North Texas Catholic page of the diocesan website — www.fwdioc.org/ntc. Bishop Vann says this new "venture" as he describes it, has come as the result of people in the Diocese of Fort Worth and other parts of the country suggesting that he take it on. "I hope this will be a forum where I can communicate some of my personal reflections and thoughts on our faith as I travel around our diocese and to other meetings in this country and elsewhere. Advent always is a beautiful season of faith as we reflect first of all on the second coming of Christ, and then

prepare for the celebration of his first coming. It is also a new Church year," he added, "so it is a graced moment to begin in faith something new! This is will be a 'work in progress,'" he said, of the blog, "as is life, with the help of God!"

If you want updated news before our next issue, check out the online version of the North Texas Catholic — www.fwdioc.org/ntc — or just click on our spot on the diocesan home page to come over and see what has been posted. Many stories appear there in their entirety, but briefer in print. Plus some of our content appears only on the Web.

Jeff Hensley
Editor

pro-life movement and the culture of life.

Finally Our Lady of Guadalupe's motherhood truly extends to us all, especially to the poor and to the immigrant, for she herself appeared to Juan Diego as a poor common woman who identifies with the plight of the poor and those who are seeking a better life and future. Our Lady of Guadalupe was also declared the "Star of the New Evangelization" by Pope John Paul II because she appeared to Juan Diego to evangelize the people of the Americas and to bring them into a true relationship with her Son. Her humble witness to the truth of Christ and the truth of the Gospel serves for us all as a model to follow as we strive to bring out the New Evangelization through our holy and humble witness and

our love for Christ.

All of these liturgical feasts and celebrations that are celebrated in the Universal Church ultimately remind us that we are all part of the one Body of Christ the Church, and that we are all called to work together in a true spirituality of communion to bring about the reign of Christ the King not only in our own lives, but in the lives of all around us. This was the witness of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and we ask for her intercession as we work together in the communion of the Church to bring about the New Evangelization.

I conclude with the words of Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his visit to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City in 1999:

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of Peace! Save the nations and peoples of this continent. Teach everyone, political leaders and citizens, to live in true freedom and to act according to the requirements of justice and respect for human rights, so that peace may thus be established once and for all. To you, O Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, belong all the love, honor, glory and endless praise of your American sons and daughters!

+ Kevin W. Vann

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

Pope issues apostolic exhortation 'Verbum Dei', 'The Word of the Lord'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — God constantly tries to enter into dialogue with the people he created — speaking through creation and even through silence, but mainly in the church through the Bible and through his son Jesus Christ, Pope Benedict XVI said.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Verbum Domini* (*The Word of the Lord*), the pope encouraged Catholics to embrace and value each of the ways God tries to speak to humanity.

The document, a papal reflection on the conclusions of the 2008 Synod of Bishops on the Word of God, was released at the Vatican Nov. 11 and emphasized the need to improve Catholics' familiarity with the Bible and with the need to read and understand it in harmony with the church.

The Bible is not a dusty collection of ancient writings addressed only to ancient peoples, he said. But it's also not some sort of private letter addressed to individuals who are free to interpret it any way they please, the pope said in the document, which is close to 200 pages long.

The pope said he wrote "Verbum Domini" because "I would like the work of the synod to have a real effect on the life of the church: on our personal relationship with the sacred Scriptures, on their interpretation in the liturgy and catechesis, and in scientific research so that the Bible may not be simply a word from the past, but a living and timely word."

Pope Benedict asked for greater church efforts to teach Catholics about the Bible, to help them learn to read it and pray with it, to treat it with great dignity during the liturgy and emphasize its importance by making sure homilies are based on the day's readings.

For centuries, Catholic laity actually were discouraged from reading the Bible themselves. Even though that began changing 100 years ago, Bible reading often is seen as a Protestant activity.

In fact, some evangelical Christians use passages from the Bible to preach against the Catholic Church, which the pope said is truly ironic since "the Bible is the church's book."

"Every saint is like a ray of light streaming forth from the word of God," he said, listing personalities ranging from St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta and from St. Dominic to St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer, the founder of Opus Dei.

Some of the Bible's lessons are old but need to be given new attention, Pope Benedict wrote.

The Scriptures make it clear that the family founded on marriage is part of God's plan for humanity and for human happiness.

"In the face of widespread confusion in the sphere of affectivity,

and the rise of ways of thinking which trivialize the human body and sexual differentiation, the word of God reaffirms the original goodness of the human being, created as man and woman and called to a love which is faithful, reciprocal and fruitful," he wrote.

The Bible, the pope said, is filled with words of consolation and joy, but as God's word it also is "a word which disrupts, which calls to conversion."

New York archbishop Dolan likes being on the front lines 'with the folks'

NEW YORK (CNS) — Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York is a man familiar with the inner workings of the Catholic Church but once described himself as "a sort of fish-fry and bingo guy" who preferred being "in the field ... on the front lines ... with the folks."

The gregarious prelate was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 16, the second day of the bishops' fall general meeting in Baltimore. He will begin serving his three-year term at the close of the meeting Nov. 18, succeeding Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George.

Since being installed as head of the New York Archdiocese in April 2009, Archbishop Dolan has announced a strategic plan to close underperforming archdiocesan elementary schools and change the traditional parish governance model, addressed the growing controversy over plans to build an Islamic community center and mosque a few blocks from ground zero, and urged Catholics to make Mass the center of each Sunday.

At a February 2009 news conference in New York after the announcement of his appointment to the city, the archbishop said, "The vitality of this great archdiocese is in its parishes. The priests are on the front lines. I am their servant. You can count on me to help them."

Contraception, sterilization not preventive health services, panel told

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Contraception and sterilization should not be included among mandated "preventive services" for women under the new health reform law, a spokeswoman for the U.S. bishops told an Institute of Medicine committee Nov. 16.

"As you study the vital question of preventive services for women under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, I urge you to focus on services that will offer authentic care and save lives," said Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

The Institute of Medicine's Committee on Preventive Services for

Briefly

State, National, Church



(CNS photo/Carlos Garcia, Reuters)

A farmer casts fertilizer on a rice farm in San Carlos, Venezuela, Oct. 14. Rich economies must pay more attention to farming, Pope Benedict XVI said during his Nov. 14 Angelus address.

Pope says rich nations must pay more attention to farming as valuable, dignified work

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Modern economies must pay more attention to farmers and the entire agricultural sector, not out of some nostalgic yearning for a simpler time, but out of recognition that farms feed the world and offer dignified work to millions of people, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"I believe now is the time to re-evaluate agriculture, not in a nostalgic way, but as an indispensable resource for the future," the pope said Nov. 14 during his midday Angelus address.

Thanksgiving holidays in many countries at the end of the harvest season are an appropriate time for everyone to reflect on the importance of agriculture and on the ways that many modern economies ignore the sector or actually inflict harm on it through trade policies or through the promotion of industries that destroy farmland, he said.

With the current global economic crisis, the pope said, the temptation of the richest countries is to band together to improve their own situations, often in a way that harms the world's poorest countries and uses up "the natural resources of the earth, entrusted by God the creator to human beings to cultivate and safeguard."

The world urgently needs to forge "a new balance among agriculture, industry and services so that development is sustainable, no one lacks bread and work, and so that the air, water and other primary resources are preserved as universal goods" belonging to all people, he said.

The response of all people of good will, the pope said, must be "to educate everyone to a wiser and more responsible style of consumption and to promote personal responsibility, together with the social dimension of rural activities based on perennial values such as welcome, solidarity, and sharing toil and labor."

Women is charged with recommending to the Department of Health and Human Services a list of preventive services for women that will be mandated for all health plans under the new health reform law. HHS is to announce that list next August.

Addressing the committee at its first meeting, McQuade echoed a letter sent by the Office of the General Counsel of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to HHS Sept. 17.

"The conference has a particular concern that contraceptives and sterilization not be mandated as

'preventive' services," she said. "To prevent pregnancy is not to prevent a disease — indeed, contraception and sterilization pose their own unique and serious health risks to women and adolescents.

"In addition, contraceptives and sterilization are morally problematic for many stakeholders, including religiously affiliated health care providers and insurers," McQuade said.

HHS' interim final rules for women's preventive services include such medical services as blood pressure and cholesterol screening;

diabetes screening for hypertensive patients; various cancer and sexually transmitted disease screenings; routine immunizations; and counseling related to aspirin use, tobacco cessation and obesity.

Those services "pose little or no medical risk themselves, and they help prevent or ameliorate identifiable conditions that would pose known risks to life and health in the future," McQuade said.

But the use of prescription contraceptives "actually increases a woman's risk of developing some of the very conditions that the 'preventive services' listed in the interim final rules are designed to prevent, such as stroke, heart attacks and blood clots ..., so a policy mandating contraceptive services as 'preventive services' would be in contradiction with itself," she added.

McQuade also said the mandated inclusion of contraception and sterilization would violate the freedom of conscience of those employers and insurers who object to them and of the insured who prefer that their policies not include them.

"Thus the administration's promise that Americans who like their current coverage will be able to keep it under health care reform would become a hollow pledge," she said.

The Institute of Medicine is "an independent, nonprofit organization that works outside of government to provide unbiased and authoritative advice to decision-makers and the public," according to its website. It is an arm of the National Academy of Sciences.

In their September letter to HHS, Anthony R. Picarello Jr., USCCB general counsel, and Michael F. Moses, associate general counsel, raised several other arguments against the inclusion of contraception or sterilization as mandated health services.

"Some may claim that contraception and sterilization are 'preventive services' in the sense that they 'prevent' abortion," they said. "But this is implausible for several reasons. ... Studies have shown that the percentage of unintended pregnancies that are ended by abortion are higher if the pregnancy occurred during use of a contraceptive. Finally, numerous studies have shown that contraceptive programs do not reliably or consistently reduce abortion rates."

Picarello and Moses also said the drug ulipristal, an "emergency contraceptive" marketed as ella, is specifically targeted to women who might already have conceived and is administered up to five days after unprotected sex.

"The policy advanced by Planned Parenthood -- mandating coverage for 'all forms of FDA-approved prescription contraception' as a preventive service -- would therefore be in direct tension with the statutory prohibition on mandating any abortion service, as at least one of the drugs covered by

that policy is an abortifacient drug," they said.

Archbishop reports on efforts to reinforce church teaching on marriage

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Saying "today is like 1970 for marriage," Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Ky., urged his fellow bishops Nov. 15 to look at the challenges to traditional marriage as if they could see *Roe v. Wade* on the horizon.

Speaking on the first day of the bishops' annual fall meeting in Baltimore, Archbishop Kurtz made the comments as chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, which was just upgraded to a subcommittee of the bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth.

He updated the bishops on various projects to reinforce the church's teaching about the sanctity of marriage, including the release of new multimedia materials and active work in battling legislative efforts to change legal definitions of marriage in order to legalize same-sex marriage.

He likened the situation for laws about marriage to the period just before *Roe* legalized abortion in 1973. "If you had seen *Roe v. Wade* coming three years out, what would you have done differently?"

Archbishop Kurtz said 4,500 copies of a DVD "Made for Each Other," and its accompanying education materials had been distributed around the country, and other materials are in development aimed at teaching children. He also announced that there are plans to hire a full-time staff adviser at the USCCB on marriage and family.

At the end of the report, Cardinal Francis E. George, the outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, announced that the ad hoc committee would now be a permanent subcommittee of the Committee on Marriage and Family Life.

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe, N.M., said the U.S. Catholic Church should build more bridges to "churches that agree with us on marriage and family life," particularly evangelical churches. "The mainline churches have abandoned the traditional teaching on marriage and family life," he said, "But the evangelical communities, along with the Roman Catholics are strong."

Archbishop Sheehan pointed to the Manhattan Declaration -- a joint statement signed in November 2009 by more than 140 Christian leaders, many evangelical and Catholic, pledging renewed zeal in defending the unborn, defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and protecting religious freedom. The document also mentioned the possibility of civil disobedience, if necessary, to defend beliefs.



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Bishop Vann stands with kindergartners dressed as their favorite saints, which included St. Juan Diego, St. John the Baptist, St. Theresa of Avila, and St. Patrick, among others.

Our Lady of Victory School kindergartners celebrate All Saints Day by dressing as their favorite saints at Nov. 1 Mass with bishop

Appropriately dressed for the occasion, 15 kindergartners from Our Lady of Victory celebrated a special All Saints Day Mass with Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann. As the rest of the student body sang a rousing rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In," the excited youngsters paraded into the OLV school gym wearing the distinctive garb of their favorite martyr, prophet, or apostle from Church history. One six-year-old donned the green miter and cloak of St. Patrick. Another classmate strapped on sandals and a fur-like vest to resemble a desert-weary John the Baptist. A young girl, representing St. Elizabeth of Hungary, wore a stylish cape and lace veil as she carried a basket of food to feed the poor. Some of the other popular saints featured during the Nov. 1 holy day liturgy included St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Peter, St. Juan Diego, and St. Nicholas.

Addressing the costumed kindergarten

class during his homily, Bishop Vann explained that the word "saints" comes from the Latin word for holy. "The saints teach us how to be holy," he added. "They teach us how to love Jesus and how to follow Him in this life on to eternity." Most saints did not lead easy lives but remained cheerful despite personal difficulties and challenges, the bishop pointed out. "They show us that following Jesus Christ should bring us great joy," he continued. "So, on this All Saints Day, let's remember that the saints set an example of how to live in this world." Kindergarten teacher Linda Petrey said her young students enjoyed learning about the saints and looked forward to participating in the special Mass with the bishop. "In class, we talked about the lives of the saints and how they suffered," she added. "I think the entire experience is something they'll remember the rest of their lives."

Briefly

Locally Significant Events

Our Lady of Victory students honor veterans

A powerful message on faith and freedom, delivered by a former Vietnam prisoner of war, gave students at Our Lady of Victory School a stronger appreciation for the importance of Veteran's Day.

Lt. Col. John H. Yuill, who was shot down over Hanoi in December 1972 while piloting a B-52, told the youngsters that parachuting into enemy territory and being captured by gun-toting villagers was a harrowing experience. "One of the things that helped me greatly during my time in prison was my faith in God and prayer life," he said during the outdoor Nov. 11 ceremony in front of the school.

Along with murmuring "Hail Marys" and "Our Fathers" in his cell, the Indiana native and father of seven offered personal prayers of petition. Only half of the crewmen shot down during the bombing mission that day survived. "So I thanked God for my life," he continued. "Then I asked Him to let me return home so I could spend more time with my wife, Rose, and my children." Yuill's wife and one of his offspring, Kathy Shaw, a pre-kindergarten teacher at OLV, were in the audience for the ceremony that included the raising of the colors by Navy officers Lt. Commander Kip Wright and Lt. Commander Fernando Navarro. Youngsters, parents, and visiting military also recited the Pledge of Allegiance and offered a moment of silence for fallen soldiers as Brian Standridge, Nolan Catholic High School band director, performed *Taps* on the trumpet.



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Our Lady of Victory School students show their respect for the American flag during the Veteran's Day ceremony Nov. 11.

Faith cannot be removed from everyday life, especially in the medical profession, says Bishop Vann at annual White Mass

From the time she was a young girl, Jenna Fletcher felt called to be a physician. The White Mass, a liturgy that honors St. Luke, the patron saint of physicians and recognizes the ministry of health care workers, gave Fletcher the opportunity to offer a few prayers of thanksgiving. A second year student at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, she's in the process of realizing her childhood dream. "I know I'm called to be a physician and nothing else," the medical student said adamantly. "I'm hoping God will lead me on this journey that isn't even close to being over. The work is challenging, but I'm getting it done day by day."

As president of the Medical Association of Catholic Students, Fletcher helped organize the White Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann on Oct. 30 in St. Patrick Cathedral. The liturgy is held each year St. Luke's Oct. 18 feast day. The term "White Mass" refers to the traditional white coats and uniforms worn by hospital personnel. White symbolizes purity and light in the Church and has a similar meaning in the medical community. The bishop, who worked as a medical technologist at an 800-bed hospital in Springfield, Illinois, before entering the seminary, said he had an appreciation for the challenges that confront people in the health care industry. "When I would run tests, I sometimes forgot there were people behind those blood samples until I went on a floor and came face-to-face with suffering," he admitted. "Never forget that behind those piles of paperwork

is the image of God. You represent his presence." Ministering to those in need of spiritual, as well as physical healing is not just a profession. It's a divine call, Bishop Vann continued. "You represent Christ, the Divine Physician," he explained. "You bring the power, love, and healing of Christ to those who are sick. And you witness to them that God is here." In today's society, there is a drive to keep faith and the practice of religion out of the marketplace. For Catholic health care professionals, that is impossible. Faith is not just something that stays in church with you on Sunday but goes with you each day into your profession," he said. "Your presence opens the door of conversion to people and is a reminder that humans are made in the image and likeness of God." Doctors, nurses, and other health care workers also play an important role in helping patients deal with the mystery of suffering and death. "There is an important dimension to suffering," Bishop Vann explained. "As Catholic professionals we should remind folks that somewhere, in their suffering, is the presence of Christ." In closing, Bishop Vann praised members of the medical community as being "a valuable part of the body of Christ in the Diocese of Fort Worth." The medical profession is one of the resources God uses to comfort the sick, he pointed out. "Thank you for all you do," the bishop added. "You carry on — in a special way that many others cannot — the healing power of Christ."

Galveston-Houston Archdiocese deacon candidate Greg Hall trusted God while leading rescue effort for trapped Chilean miners

HOUSTON — Greg Hall was preparing to serve as an acolyte for Mass at Christ the Redeemer Church when an associate contacted him about a "banging on the pipe." It was Day 17 after the Chilean mine collapsed on 33 miners. A representative from Drillers Supply International — a company owned by Hall and his wife, Angelica — was updating the deacon-in-training on the task assigned to the company's crew: drilling through more than 2,000 feet of rock down into the gold and copper mine. "At that time, we thought we were just drilling to try to get a video feed to let (the miners') families know they had perished," Greg Hall said. "Then we found out that all 33 of them were alive." Moments after serving at Mass in Houston, Hall headed for the airport and left for the San Jose mine in the Atacama Desert. Days after the drilling was completed, all of the miners were methodically extracted from the mine Oct. 13.

"I talked to a lot of people, and this was the most challenging drill I have done in 25 years," Hall, now back home, told the *Texas Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese. "Talking to my peers, it was the most technologically challenging hole they ever heard of." "I firmly believe God drilled that hole," he said. Once Hall arrived in Chile, the Chilean government had requested he devise an alternate plan to get the miners out. Initial rescue efforts proved unsuccessful, including the miners trying and failing to escape through a ventilation shaft. "I just took what resources were available in the country to draw from very quickly, went through a series of scenarios, and came up what was known as 'Plan B,'" Hall said. "They had asked me not to publish the information at that time because no one wanted to get any hopes up because people didn't believe we could do it. In fact, maybe I didn't believe we could do it."

Once Plan B was put into motion, the Drillers Supply International crew had gotten down almost 1,969 feet when the drilling rig came to a halt with just 131 more feet to go. "The tool was hopelessly stuck, and I was totally out of answers," Hall recalled. "And if we didn't come up with an answer, we were finished, we were going to start over again or (the Chilean government) would just consider Plan B a failure." It was at that critical moment when Hall realized he wasn't powerless after all. "I could pray, and I started praying very hard," he said. "Soon after that, we started getting a little leeway and (the drill) started moving again." In Chile, the tall Texan (6-foot-7-inches) proved to be a man of action not complacent to stand on the sidelines. "What we have known for years at Christ the Redeemer, the world is now coming to know — and that is, if you need help, Greg Hall is the man to call," Father Sean Horrigan said.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk tackles *in vitro* fertilization at Oct. 10-11 seminar

Father Tad Pacholczyk began his talk on *in vitro* fertilization with a thought provoking question. Addressing the audience at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, the noted bioethicist asked how many knew a baby conceived using the medical procedure. Most of the people in the room raised their hands. Then he posed a second question: "And how many of those couples were Catholic?" When only a few hands went down, the speaker seemed unfazed. The rate of Catholics using *in vitro* fertilization to assist infertility is almost as high as non-Catholics. He attributes Catholic demand for the technology to a lack of formation and catechesis. "People just don't think there's an issue here," Fr. Tad suggested. "They don't know the moral concerns that are raised by these technologies." Sponsored by the Catholics Respect Life office and Good Shepherd Church, Fr. Pacholczyk's Oct. 10-11 seminars discussed beginning of life issues as well as stem cell research, cloning, and

end of life treatment decisions. The first presentation on reproduction technologies was attended by more than 100 people. Using videos, some lighthearted cartoons and statistics, the director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center explained the ethical issues that surround "creating fellow human beings in laboratory glassware." Between three and four million IVF fertilizations are performed each year and the attempts produce approximately 250,000 babies annually. The practice has become so commonplace, people don't consider its broader ramifications, Fr. Tad pointed out. Advances in science and technical expertise are outstripping moral discernment on the matter. "That's why informative discussions are important," Fr. Tad said. "This is important stuff because it touches the genesis of the next generation." The moral and ethical "slippery slope" of IVF technology is already leading to other concerns. When the first IVF baby was born 30 years ago, no

one imagined that society would consider taking human embryos for the intentional, premeditated purpose of "strip mining" them for their stem cells, the bioethicist said, raising the controversial topic of embryonic stem cell research. Using statistics from 2001, Fr. Tad noted that for every 6.72 embryos implanted using *in vitro* technology, only one live birth occurs. Most embryos perish. "Five deaths for every live birth, and that doesn't count the embryos that are poured down the sink, frozen, or lost to steps along the way," he explained. "I think it's important for people to at least be aware of this." The multi-billion dollar industry of *in vitro* fertilization relegates couples to the status of consumers, undermines the meaning of sex, and treats embryos — especially frozen human embryos — like objects. "Any embryo who comes into the world is sacred and deserving of unconditional respect," Fr. Tad said. "And procreation, the way we hand on the gift of life, is sacred in itself."

New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan elected to head USCCB

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan was as surprised as anyone that he was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 16. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, was elected the conference's vice president.

"I'm surprised, I'm honored, I'm flattered and a tad intimidated," Archbishop Dolan told Catholic News Service shortly after being elected in an unprecedented departure from the USCCB's normal tradition of electing the conference vice president to the presidency.

He beat current vice president Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, 128-111 on a third-ballot vote and took office at the end of the bishops' meeting Nov. 18.

Saying he didn't know what was behind his win, and in keeping with the sense of humor for which he is known, he joked that the only thing he might have done to "campaign" for the presidency was to make one offer: "I did promise we'd have Dunkin' Donuts at the morning coffee break (of the bishops' meetings) and Haagen-Dazs sundaes at the break in the afternoon, but apart from that I didn't make any promises."

Archbishop Dolan is a Missouri native who was ordained for the Archdiocese of St. Louis in 1976. He studied for the priesthood at Cardinal Glennon College, St. Louis, and at the Pontifical North American College in Rome and the Pontifical University of St. Thomas, which are both in Rome.

After ordination, he completed his doctorate in American church history at The Catholic University of America, writing his dissertation on the late Archbishop Edwin O'Hara, a founder of the Catholic Biblical Association.

At a news conference following the election, he cited Archbishop O'Hara and his predecessor as archbishop of New York, the late Cardinal John O'Connor — whose gold pectoral cross he wears — as among his models as bishops.

Archbishop Dolan's election marked the first time since the bishops' conference was reorganized in 1966 following the Second Vatican Council reforms that a sitting vice president who sought the presidency did not

win election. In two elections, in 1974 and in 1977, circumstances dictated that the vice president did not rise to lead the conference.

Amid some public criticism in recent weeks about the election process, he suspects bishops might have begun to "bristle" a bit at the notion the results were a foregone conclusion.

"I love Bishop Kicanas and I presumed he was going to be president," the archbishop said. "I do think the bishops take these elections so seriously there's a sort of bristling that anybody would be thought of as a shoo-in."

"I think a lot of bishops said maybe it's time that the vice president doesn't automatically become the president," he continued. "That is a surprise. You can see Bishop Kicanas got a great vote. He enjoys high esteem."

He added that the vote "was hardly a landslide," and that he doesn't think it was a personal reflection on Bishop Kicanas.

At a news conference following the bishops' morning session, he pointed out that he and Bishop Kicanas had been the final candidates for vice president three years earlier. The Tucson bishop won that vote of 128-106.

Archbishop Dolan, 60, said he's a bit daunted to be succeeding Cardinal Francis E. George as president. In the CNS interview, he called Cardinal George "an amazing cocktail of wit, perceptive intelligence, and pastoral savviness."

Archbishop Dolan also admitted, "I'm not all that good at meetings," so the prospect of being in charge of the flow of a meeting is a little intimidating.

"Even my brother bishops tease me, because they watch me at these meetings and they know my patience level isn't all that high, that I'm one of the ones that often go for coffee in the middle of a session. I'm not going to be able to do that anymore," he joked. "I'm stuck up at the bench."

Archbishop Dolan said he regrets having to give up his chairmanship of Catholic Relief Services, which he said he's found exhilarating for the sense it has given him of the universal Church.

Archbishop Dolan has been head of the New York Archdiocese since his installation in April 2009. He said he's "loved every day of it," and acknowledged there's been a steep learning curve in becoming



Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, and New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan let out a chuckle during a press conference at the annual fall meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 16. Archbishop Dolan was elected conference president and Archbishop Kurtz was elected vice president during the meeting.

head of one of the largest U.S. archdioceses but sees it as good preparation for becoming the national representative of his fellow bishops.

He likened his surprise over his election to his appointment to New York in February 2009. He had been archbishop of Milwaukee since 2002.

"I didn't ask to be archbishop of New York, and when I got the word the Holy Father wanted me to be, I asked if I could indicate why I shouldn't be that person," he said. "And the nuncio said, 'That wasn't what I asked you. I didn't ask if you should, I asked if you would, because the Holy Father wants you.' So there's an immense trust in God's grace and mercy and that's unfailing."

He remembered telling his mother at the time that he didn't know if he had the right attributes for the New York post. Her response was, "Relax, obviously the people in charge think you do."

"I guess my brother bishops feel the same way," he added about his election.

He said he gets "a kick out of the fact that people out there usually try to read more into the elections than we do."

He said bishops are "so laudably absorbed in the governance of their own dioceses that a lot of the speculation and stuff, I don't think we have much time for it. I'm not naive enough to not know that is on people's minds, I don't know the answer."

He several times quoted Cardinal George in saying he doesn't see the role of president as "bishop of the bishops," but as someone there to serve the interests

of the bishops.

Archbishop Dolan said he didn't think being on the presidential slate would lead anywhere except possibly to election as vice president. "No bishop runs for office," he said. "In fact we run from it."

The archbishop said he didn't expect to bring about any significant change in the way the USCCB operates. He said changes made over the past 15 years, scaling back on the bishops' involvement in a wide range of public policy issues, have put the conference into a healthy balance between public policy and pastoral concerns.

He said Cardinal George and his predecessors, retired Spokane Bishop William S. Skylstad and Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta, in particular, set a model for the USCCB president in finding that balance.

"I think there has been a welcome rethinking, a welcome tempering of the position and the role of the conference," he said. "There's been a reclaiming of our Catholic polity, that when it comes to the governing of the Church you have the bishop of Rome, you have the bishops in our dioceses, and you have our pastors. And the conference is at the service of the bishops."

"Its doctrinal or moral authority would only come from the fact that the bishops would come and proclaim what we do in our own dioceses," he continued.

That said, however, he said there's a clear role for the Church to guide people beyond the strictly pastoral concerns. "Our forte is the realm of the spirit, but the kingdom of God, the call to conversion, the teaching of Jesus and his Church does have implications in every part of life, including the political and economic sphere."

He cited the list of issues: the sanctity of human life, the protection of marriage and family, protection of immigrants and the poor, and the promotion of a civilization of love and a culture of life, and "being on the side of justice and peace."

"I think the high point of this meeting was certainly not my election but Cardinal George's eloquent consideration of the suffering in Iraq," for example. "Nothing is alien to the heart of Christ. There is nothing in the political and economic sphere that would not be part of the light of Christ."

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National

US must 'redouble its efforts' to protect Iraqis, cardinal tells Obama

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops urged the U.S. government to “redouble its efforts to assist Iraqis” in providing safety for its citizens, especially religious minorities.

“To meet its moral obligations to the Iraqi people, it is critically important that the United States take additional steps now to help Iraq protect its citizens, especially Christians and others who are victims of organized attacks,” said Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago in a Nov. 9 letter to U.S. President Barack Obama.

The cardinal sent the letter after the Oct. 31 attack on the Syrian Catholic church in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad that killed 58 people and wounded 75.

In a brief discussion of the



CNS photo/Thaier al-Sudani, Reuters

letter during the Nov. 15 opening session of the bishops' annual general meeting in Baltimore, Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, said the attack on the church also

raises the issue of how Christians who have left Iraq are faring in the countries where they are living as refugees.

He noted that before the current war, there were more than 900,000 Christians in Iraq, and that there are now fewer than 350,000. “Many who fled are wandering around, looking for work” in countries that are not

◀ *Residents place Iraqi national flags on coffins during a funeral at the Syrian Catholic cathedral in Baghdad, Iraq. Dozens of hostages and police were killed when security forces raided the cathedral Oct. 31 to free worshippers being held by gunmen wearing explosives.*

equipped to handle the demand.

“Our country has not stepped up to help,” said Cardinal McCarrick, noting that “these people have nothing and cannot go back.”

Cardinal George responded to Cardinal McCarrick by noting that he and Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, outgoing vice president of the conference, had been discussing the issue with Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

While the stance of the Church had been to encourage people to return to Iraq so the Christian community does not disappear in the country, Cardinal George said the recent developments make clear this is not a viable option.

The USCCB and the Vatican have been in contact with the State Department to encourage a shift in policy on admitting Iraqi refugees, Cardinal George said in his remarks to the bishops, who affirmed his letter to Obama by acclamation.

In the letter, the cardinal reminded the president that the U.S. bishops had expressed “grave moral questions” before the U.S.-led combat began in Iraq and had warned of the “unpredictable consequences” of that action, Cardinal George said, “The decimation of the Christian community in Iraq and the continuing violence that threatens all Iraqis are among those tragic consequences.”

The attack, along with recent bombings in Baghdad, “are grim evidence of the savage violence and lack of security that has plagued the Iraqi people, especially Christians and other minorities, for over seven years,” he said.

Although the U.S. bishops welcome the end of U.S. combat in Iraq, Cardinal George said, the United States “has so far failed in helping Iraqis to develop the political will needed to deploy effective strategies to protect the lives of all citizens.”

“Having invaded Iraq, our nation has a moral obligation not to abandon those Iraqis who cannot defend themselves,” he added.

The cardinal outlined a series of steps that, “at a minimum,” the United States and the international community must help Iraq to achieve:

- “Enable the Iraqi government to function for the common good of all Iraqis.
- “Build the capacity of Iraq’s military and police to provide security for all citizens, including minorities.
- “Improve the judicial system and rule of law.
- “Promote reconciliation and the protection of human rights, especially religious freedom.
- “Rebuild Iraq’s shattered economy so that Iraqis can support their families.
- “Assist refugees and internally displaced Iraqis.”

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Diocese

The Gift of Priesthood

Priests of the West Central Deanery share their experiences



Father M. Gerald Gordon, TOR

Parish: St. Andrew Church, Fort Worth

Ordained: May 17, 1969

Q. How do you find Christ in others?

A. I see it in their selfless commitment to their families and parish ministries. You see a father and mother who have four or five children, and they make time to visit the homebound when they also spend special time with their children during the week. These things, to me, make Christ very present.



Father Mel Bessellicu

Parish: St. Ann Church, Burleson

Ordained: May 31, 1997

Q. What part does the celebration of the Eucharist play in your fulfillment as a priest?

A. It's at the very center of my fulfillment. The Eucharist is why I became Catholic. The Eucharist is why I stay Catholic. The Eucharist is why I accepted God's call to become a priest. It was the Eucharist that brought me into the Church. I'm a convert. When I converted in August 1988, I couldn't tell you exactly why I did except I knew the Catholics had something I wanted. In September 1988, when I took a tour of the church, during the last part we went into the eucharistic chapel. And the lady giving the tour opened the tabernacle, and said very matter-of-factly, "Jesus is in here." I thought, "Wow. That's why I wanted to be Catholic — because of the Eucharist." I left that day with tears in my eyes, and I remember saying, "Lord, why do you humble yourself to be on altars around the world — to be bread for us to eat? Why would you do that?" The only answer I could come up with is that He loves us so much! I don't think it was an accident that the very first Mass that I celebrated as a priest was on the feast of Corpus Christi — the Body and Blood of Christ.



Father Gerald Cooney

Parish: Retired

Ordained: June 3, 1950

Q. What part of your priestly duties do you find the most rewarding?

A. Always at the heart of the priesthood is service of people — mainly the Sacraments — Eucharist, baptisms, marriages, reconciliations, anointing of the sick, and burying the dead. Caring for people from life to death.



Father Balaji Boyalla, SAC

Parish: Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Mineral Wells

Ordained: April 18, 1999

Q. What part of your priestly duties do you find the most rewarding?

A. As for me, the most rewarding priestly duty would be visiting the sick and the homebound. I could clearly see and experience the joy and the spiritual strength that I could give them with my visit, and it is so with every ordained priest. The sick and home-bound go through terrible physical, psychological, and spiritual pain. At this crucial moment of their life, a priest's visit can soothe them in their situation. That is why the priesthood is a precious gift of God [and] for me that gives me great satisfaction as a priest. Through this ordination to the priesthood, I am filled with the grace of God, I am inspired to inspire others, and I am gifted to become a gift to others.



Father Antony Mathew, TOR

Parishes: St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Fort Worth; Holy Trinity Mission, Azle

Ordained: May 2, 1996

Q. How can God's people better support their priests?

A. God's people can better support their priests by being actively and enthusiastically involved in various ministries and thereby supporting and assisting the priest to further the kingdom of God within the parish and beyond the boundaries of the parish. Secondly, by taking time to get to know the priest through friendship and regular conversation so that the priests can have a better knowledge of the parishioners and can minister to the people adequately.



Father Tom Wigginton

Parish: St. Paul the Apostle Church, Fort Worth

Ordained: June 12, 1976

Q. What do you most desire to convey to your parishioners or others you serve?

A. The priesthood of the faithful — what I hope to convey is that by their baptism that they share in the priesthood. After I was ordained on June 12, there was a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Thomas the Apostle Church and the theme of that liturgy was the priesthood of the faithful. My job as a priest is to activate and equip the priesthood of the faithful to make them living members of the Church — so their lives have a purpose other than self-centeredness. For example, we recently eliminated the word "usher" here (at St. Paul the Apostle.) Everyone in the church is to be a minister of greeting. Jesus says that anyone can invite a family member or friend to dinner because you can expect them to return the favor. But instead, you should invite the stranger. That's what Christian hospitality means — being kind to a stranger.



Father Warren Murphy, TOR

Parish: St. Andrew Church, Fort Worth

Ordained: May 28, 1960

Q. What do you most want to see happen in the lives of those you serve?

A. All of us are called to conversion, and that's an ongoing relationship with the Lord. God calls us to be living examples of his presence in the world. We are to have a conversion away from sin to become a reflection of God's presence in the world.



Father Publius Xeureb

Parish: Holy Redeemer Church, Aledo

Ordained: May 11, 1968

Q. How do you find Christ in others?

A. To find Christ in others you have to first earn their trust. Then you find Christ in the stage and condition of life they are in. In every stage of life, we find Jesus coming to us in the Sacraments offering us his grace, love, and blessings. To me, administering the sacraments is a special occasion of finding Jesus in others.



Editor's Note:

This is the seventh in an ongoing series featuring priests from the different deaneries in the diocese sharing about aspects of their ministry. Interviews were compiled by Jenara Kocks Burgess

We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance...

1 Thessalonians 1:2

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Advent's star is rising, memories of a meeting of faiths

By Denise Bossert

I was nearing my ninth birthday, and it was the time in childhood when seemingly insignificant experiences begin coalescing into memories that will stay with us for the rest of our lives — like the sweltering summer day when my best friend and I sat on the sidewalk in front of the parsonage where my family lived. After trial and error, we found a limestone rock, and we practiced drawing stars on the concrete. We had learned a new method, two inverted triangles rather than the star formed by an unbroken sequence of five lines.

A lady came up the sidewalk and smiled at our work. She was older than my mother, a member of that indefinable period of womanhood that exists somewhere between the age of mothers and grandmothers. “Are you Jewish?” She asked the two of us. We stared at her blankly. “That’s the Star of David,” she explained. “The star of my faith.”

I looked at my friend. I could see that she didn’t know any more about Jewish faith than I did. So we sat in silence. The lady shrugged her shoulders and kept walking.

There was a missing link in the chain. We *were* connected to the lady who paused to talk to us, but we didn’t quite know *how* we were related.

The woman stopped because she wanted to know if we shared a common bond. When we didn’t reply in the way she expected, she just kept walking. She didn’t recognize anything familiar or familial about us either.

We were strangers.

She went off to live her life. We kept playing on the sidewalk in front of Faith Wesleyan Church and the pastor’s house on the corner of Second and Walnut Streets.

Today, I know what the missing link is in the chain that connects me to that woman. In the fullness of time, God’s Son entered the world, born of a virgin. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the link. From the House of David, God raised up a poor and humble girl. And she became the Mother of God *Himself!* And then she became the Mother of the Redeemed as well.

Every Advent, I haul the boxes up from the basement, and we begin trimming the Christmas tree. Many years ago, I bought a handmade Star of David from a Jewish glass artisan in Atlanta, Georgia. The star is cobalt blue. It’s stunningly beautiful, yet simple and unadorned.

I carefully open the tissue and find a place on my tree for the star, with its two triangles — bearing the same image of the star my friend and I scratched into the sidewalk so long ago. And I think of the woman who paused and asked, “Do you know what you are drawing?”

Each Advent, I glance at the figures on my mantel shelf, and I see a young woman peering over an empty manger. She’s waiting for something. She’s waiting for God’s promised Son. And then my eyes go to the Christmas tree, where my blue Star of David hangs on a branch. The string of Christmas lights plays off the smooth handcrafted glasswork. And I realize that I have an answer for that woman who paused to talk to me on the sidewalk in front of my dad’s church in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

“Yes, I know what I’m drawing. I am connected to you, dear-lady-with-no-name. And you are connected to me. Your daughter has become my mother.”

Like two triangles intersecting.

The Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Denise Bossert has been writing about her experience of conversion to Catholicism for several years. She writes from New Melle, Missouri.

The Believer's compass

Influenced but not compelled

By David Mills

“Believers subconsciously endow God with their own beliefs on controversial issues,” recently declared the magazine *New Scientist*, not unhappily, I’m sure. Figuring out what God thinks about controversial issues, said one scientist quoted in the story, may “serve as an echo chamber to validate and justify one’s own beliefs.”

Beliefs are like a compass, the scientists wrote. A compass “points north no matter what direction a person is facing. This research suggests that, unlike an actual compass, inferences about God’s beliefs may instead point people further in whatever direction they are already facing.”

Well, yes, that could be true. On the other hand, it might not be. Or it might be true to some extent without changing the fact that we know something about what God thinks because he told us.

For centuries, religious believers have argued that almost everyone through history and across cultures has believed in God because God is there to be believed in. For nearly as long, those who didn’t believe in God have been trying to explain away all this religion by arguing that most of us can’t help it. We believe in God because we have to.

There’s the “life is too scary” explanation, claiming that most people can’t live in a world without the security of an absolute truth and therefore invent one. There is the “I want power” explanation, claiming that some people realized they could control everyone else more easily if they claimed to be speaking for God.

There is the “believing in God helped us survive” explanation, claiming that belief gave man some evolutionary advantage. And there are a lot of other explanations, like the “God gene” that supposedly means religious belief is built into our DNA.

People who don’t believe in God have offered simple and sophisticated versions of all these explanations. Freud offered a sophisticated version of the first, Marx a sophisticated version of the second, Darwin and his descendents a sophisticated version of the third.

Those of us who know, as Job once said, that our Redeemer lives, know these explanations are wrong, but we can’t just blow them off. These aren’t stupid people.

The claims in the *New Scientist* story came from a study led by a professor from the University of Chicago (a prestigious scientist and school) and published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* (a very prestigious journal). It’s a bit like getting a theological opinion from a professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome that appeared in an official Vatican journal. You have to take it seriously.

The scientists first asked the subjects of their study what they believed God thought on certain

We can still see the truth, because God himself reminds us who he is.

That’s one of the reasons for the Mass.

subjects and then asked them to argue for the other side, and found that after arguing for the other position the subjects changed their idea of what God thought. They also found that these people used the same part of their brains when they talked about their own and God’s beliefs, and a different part when talking about other people’s beliefs.

Therefore, they said, we seem to think God thinks what we think. To put it another way, when we say “God says,” we’re really saying “I say.”

Perhaps not. For one thing, the story doesn’t say whether the study measured how much their religion prevented them from changing their views. Maybe their religious beliefs kept them from changing their views as much as they would have if they didn’t believe what they believed. That’s perfectly possible, and if true would show that they don’t use religion simply as an “echo chamber,” but that it binds them in some way.

But the *New Scientist* writer believes that this study proves we create God in our own image, as he put it in the first sentence of the article. Science has spoken. The scientists themselves don’t say this, however. They carefully use the word “may.”

With which the Catholic can agree. What we believe may well influence what we think God is saying. The very beginning of the Bible tells us that man fell into sin because he confused himself with God. It’s what we sinners do.

All these “scientific” explanations of belief show that we can be influenced — which should surprise no one — but not that we are compelled. We can still see the truth, because God himself reminds us who he is. That’s one of the reasons for the Mass.

One other thing: Another researcher quoted in the article found that when we pray we use the same regions of the brain as when we’re talking to a friend. Well, yeah.

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VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Finding Home

Julie bakes a pie crust and roasts a cookbook's language

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

While holiday baking last year, Julie became irate with the recipe book. Really. And we laughed at her.

"This cookbook has an attitude," my daughter said. "It's snooty."

"It reads, '*scant*' one-and-one-fourth cups all-purpose flour. '*Gently*' sift flour and baking powder into a large bowl. '*Rub*' in butter and stir in sugar. Then add egg and '*a little*' water to *bring the dough together*."

"*A little water?*" she asked the cookbook, "How much is *a little*?' 'What exactly does *rub* mean?'" And please, Miss Perfect Grasp of the English Language," she held up the book and directly addressed it, "'Tell me exactly how much *scant* is! If I don't get the amounts right, are you going to be all *finicky* and decide not to be a pie crust?'"

As Julie raved, mocked, and berated the cookbook's language, her siblings and I listened to her, laughing. I recorded her. It was one of those moments that becomes a legendary family performance: Sweet Julie cracks like a pastry crust.

Who knew that humorous interlude would become a golden memory? It was part of a scant, gently-sifted family pie, rubbed, formed, and rolled out at the best sweet shop of all: home.

Recently I talked about home to three men, one a long-time Boy Scout, one working on my car, one on my computer.

The computer guy said, "When I think of home it isn't of one place or even one person. I lived in lots of houses, sometimes with my parents, sometimes with grandparents. I remember my grandparents' modest home, and the yard where I liked to camp outside with my cousin. We'd spend all night battling the mosquitoes, but it was better to be outside slapping them off than inside feeling the summer heat.

"You don't remember just good times or just bad times," the computer guy said. "But you do remember the sense of things as they felt then. I guess that old shotgun house, and that yard, meant 'home' to me."

When the car repair guy talked about home, he spoke of the outdoors, connecting it with his father. "We used to go hunting, and last year we went again, and had a good time," he said. "This year my son's going with us and we'll show him the ropes.

"I want my son to learn fishing and camping, like I did. From my dad."

The car guy also recalled the mountains. "When I was in Scouts we went to Philmont, New Mexico. And recently, at the Boy Scout Museum, I watched a film about that camp.

"The boy in the film said, 'It feels you're so

"A little water?" she asked the cookbook, "How much is *a little*?' 'What exactly

does *rub* mean? And please, Miss Perfect Grasp of the English Language,' she held up the book and di-

rectly addressed it, 'Tell me exactly how much *scant*

is! If I don't get the amounts right, are you going to

be all *finicky* and decide not to be a pie crust?'"

close to God there,' and I got tears in my eyes.

"My wife asked, 'Why are you crying?'"

"'Because I remember what it was like,' I told her, 'when you're up there, and the wind's blowing, and there's no sound. It's just you and God.'"

God goes to camp too, at least that's the belief of Bob Connelly, who has been a symbol of Catholic Scouting in the Diocese of Fort Worth for five decades. Bob recently attended his 50th Catholic scouting retreat, and he left his current home at a rehab center to do it.

Bob was determined to be there, because he had been the first retreat master for the diocese, organizing the program after moving to Fort Worth in the early 1960s. Attending the retreat with him were six of his seven children, including his son Mike, who also had attended the first diocesan retreat, with his dad, in 1961.

"I am always connected with the Church," Bob said, "and Scouting is the way I am with the Church, year in and year out."

The computer guy had told me home was his grandparents' back yard. The car guy had felt home in the mountains, in what he perceived, rightfully, was the presence of God. And my friend Bob Connelly considers Catholic Scouting a touch of home.

Last month I attended a journalism convention in Louisville, a Kentucky city whose name I could not even pronounce. (I should have taken Julie. She might have chastised the city for its creative use of phonetic sounds.)

One day while walking through "LOO-ih-vuhl," I realized one thing I really pronounce well, and I really understand is the Church, God's home.

Walking through the city one

afternoon, I searched my iPhone for the nearest Catholic parish, and found the Cathedral of the Assumption, where they were beginning a wedding rehearsal. "We are not open," the wedding minister said, "But you can come in and visit, if you'd like."

So I did. I watched the two young people begin to rehearse. I wondered if they knew their lives were about to become a succession of times, places, and people that would slowly and completely create a simple thing: home.

Their wedding would be a beginning of home for them. And I was watching them rehearse for it, in a place that was home to me.

Kneeling, I prayed for my children, who, together with me had created year after year of moments that would always define home. Throughout the rest of their lives, their home would be sensed in bits and pieces, like my computer guy had said. It would be savored, outdoors and indoors, in forests or on mountains, like my car guy had said.

And it would all be connected, as my friend Bob knows, to God, who surrounds and perfects all else.

My silly daughter Julie made us laugh last year, as she ranted about the stuck-up recipe book that gave the directions, that made the pie crust, that carried the fruit, that was browned with care, and served with cream to the people we loved, who would fill our days, and adorn our years.

That night, all of us together, including Julie's snooty cookbook, made "home."

Kathy Cribari Hamer is an award winning family life columnist for the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC and a number of other Catholic diocesan newspapers.

MIA: the common good and social investments

By Jeff Hensley
Editor, North Texas Catholic

Difficult economic times make for hard choices, as those among us who fear the growth and power of government cross swords with those who want to throw money at all our problems to solve them.

It's not possible to fund all the good things that most of us might agree on.

But in the flurry of back and forth shouting that substitutes for dialogue, we seem to have lost not only our respect for each other, but to have lost sight of three of our most important values: the concept of spending for social programs as investments; the concept of putting aside personal interests in favor of the common good; and the idea that in a democracy, powers are delicately balanced to protect the rights of the individual, or as some have put it, the measure of a society's health is how it treats the weakest and most defenseless of its members.

Speaking up for social programs as not merely costs or money thrown away, but as money invested in the future of our children and our country, seems to be shouted down by rhetoric that would turn a blind eye to human need.

Failure to provide health care for the indigent and the working poor circles around quickly to bite us.

Failure to provide adequate schools where each child can find some area in which to excel or serve, creates educationally (and sometimes emotionally) stunted individuals.

But accountability has to be part of the picture too. Programs that don't produce results in kids or in medicine should not continue to be funded.

Programs that define pregnancy as a disease to be treated at public expense should remain unfunded.

These least ones, the unborn, as well as the other least ones among us, those who were born into poverty, those who cannot afford both medicines and food, those who need affordable housing. They shop beside us and drive beside us.

As we move toward Thanksgiving and Christmas, we should try to find a way that we can prepare a place for the Christ Child as He appears in "the least of these" in the flesh, as well as in the creche.

Features

Life brings us hard times, but God remains with us

By Jeff Hedglen

My mom died when I was 26. She never got to meet my wife, and she never got to see me “grow up.” In a lot of ways she got the worst of me: the selfish clueless kid, money-asking-for-teen, and the lost young adult. That might be too simplistic, but the man I am now is light years from who I was when she died.

Early in our marriage my wife and I had six miscarriages in two and a half years. This is another thing that did not turn out as I had planned. The idea is to get married, have 2.3 kids and live happily ever after — right? The pain, doubt, questioning, searching, and loss that came with that time were more than I thought we would make it through.

These are just two examples from my life where things did not turn out as planned, and as life went on, I found out that a different plan was taking shape.

I am convinced that my mother’s death catapulted me into the person I am today. From the time of her diagnosis with cancer, her two-and-a-half year battle, her death, and funeral, I never shed a tear. I figured this was not normal, so I began to see a therapist. That year and a half in counseling was the best thing that ever happened to me. I often wonder if I would have ever gone to counseling if it had not been for Mom’s death. The thought of who I might be today without that self-examining time of healing kind of scares the bejeebers out of me.

Along with this, the loss of six pregnancies has put me in a unique position to share loss and grief with people. When I was a young youth minister, I had no idea how to handle death and hospital waiting rooms, so I typically avoided these situations, even though I was needed. After traveling the journey of loss so many times, I now find it easy to sit with a frightened, nervous, exhausted family in a waiting room, or

wake, or funeral.

Although life does not turn out the way we want, that doesn’t mean God is unaware. In fact the Psalmist reminds us that “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul” (*Psalm 23:1-3*). Yes, there are things that we want that do not come to pass, but the Lord has an even better idea of what we need, and He is all about making that happen.

Throughout both stories of loss in my life, there were people who walked beside me, my wife, and my family. Looking back I realize that those people were instruments of

Looking back I realize that those people were instruments of the Good Shepherd, leading me to green pastures...

the Good Shepherd leading me to green pastures, still waters, and restoring my soul. They helped me to let go of my want and cling to the reality that was before me.

The time of year that is around the corner is one of the worst times of year for so many people. Especially for those who are having their first Thanksgiving and Christmas without a loved one. Not to mention those having their fifth, tenth, or twentieth year with these significant people gone.

I believe that God is calling those of us not grieving this year to be the hands and feet of the Good Shepherd. To be the steady presence, the listening ear, or the writer of a card (a real card, not an e-mail) that says I remember what happened, and I’m thinking of you. To be the person who invites the person out for coffee or lunch and maybe even over for Thanksgiving dinner.

Grief, loss, and tears are not the first thing we think of when this season approaches, but for many people these are the dominant emotions. I invite you to say a prayer asking God if there is someone He has in mind for you to reach out to this year. God does promise to wipe the tears from our eyes (*Revelation 7:17*), but more often than not, He uses our hands.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring) Msgr. Georg Ganswein, the personal secretary of Pope Benedict XVI, greets a family after the pope blessed their child during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 10.



(CNS photo/Kacper Pempel, Reuters) A worker walks past the head of a giant statue of Jesus in Swiebodzin, Poland, Nov. 6. Msgr. Sylwester Zawadzki, former pastor of Divine Mercy Church, who commissioned the statue, said the figure, with its adjoining altar and stations of the cross and its proximity to the main highway, would “provide a catechesis for millions of people” passing the town.

Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

- 1. Part of big fish story
- 2. Fruit of the mount?
- 3. Creed's namesake
- 4. Turn away
- 5. Wasteland

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi

Panel 1: THERE'S NOTHING LIKE READING MY UNBORN TIMES AFTER BREAKFAST.

Panel 2: WOW! FOCUS ON THE FAMILY HAS DONATED 500 ULTRASOUND MACHINES TO PREGNANCY CENTERS.

Panel 3: THEY SAY WOMEN WHO SEE THEIR BABIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS ABOUT HAVING AN ABORTION.

Panel 4: NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A WEAPON OF MASS CONVERSION!

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The FLOCK by Jean Denton

Panel 1: IT'S ADVENT. ONLY 20 SHOPPING DAYS 'TIL CHRISTMAS!

Panel 2: WE'RE CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR—WE MUST KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS!

Panel 3: YOU'RE SO RIGHT.

Panel 4: ONLY 20 SHOPPING DAYS 'TIL THE COMING OF CHRIST!

DENTON

In Memory

For more detailed obituaries, visit the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC's website at www.fwdioc.org/ntc.

Deacon Jim Bell ministered to sick and homebound

Deacon Jim Bell, passed away Sunday, Oct. 24 in Fort Worth at the age of 84. Dcn. Bell was a member of the first deacon class formed for the diocese and was ordained in 1978. He had served most recently at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Granbury.

Dcn. Bell was born March 4, 1926, in Plainview, Texas, to James Clarence Bell, Sr., and Delma Mauldin Bell. He married Jean Stork on April 8, 1953, in Nazareth, Texas. He served in the military in World War II, rising to the rank of first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

"He had tremendous faith and his prayer life was amazing," said Deacon Jim Fuller, Dcn. Bell's colleague at St. Frances, and next-door neighbor in recent years.

"He had a tremendous love for the Eucharist. When I was sick, he brought me daily Holy Communion. He



was very concerned I would be going without it," Dcn. Fuller said. "He'd come next door to visit, and to pray, or just to check on how we were doing."

Dcn. Fuller said that Dcn. Bell seemed to focus his ministry on the sick and homebound. While in Granbury, Dcn. Bell also coordinated a team of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to help him in ministering to the sick and homebound.

"Whenever someone in the parish asked to be seen by a minister, Jim is the one the

office would call. ... He had a real gift with people who were suffering," he said.

After being ordained, Dcn. Bell served at St. Rita and Our Mother of Mercy Parishes in Fort Worth. He also served at St. Jude Parish in Mansfield before moving to St. Francis Cabrini in Granbury. In the early 1990s, he also served as an assistant chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital in Fort Worth.

Prior to his ordination to the diaconate, Bell and his family were active in the Catholic charismatic renewal. For several years, Jim lead the St. Rita Parish prayer meeting, the first Catholic charismatic prayer meeting in the city of Fort Worth.

"Family was everything to him. He was especially proud of his son, Dirk," Dcn. Fuller said. Dirk died in 1994. "He would say that he was excited to get to heaven and be reunited with Dirk."

Sr. Margaret Miller passionately served her congregation

Sister Margaret Miller, SSMN, 76, died Thursday, Oct. 21, in Fort Worth. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Bartholomew Church in Southwest Fort Worth. Interment was at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Sr. Margaret Miller, daughter of Frank S. Miller and Philomena Pavlicek Miller, was born in Waco, Dec. 27, 1933, and spent her childhood there. She attended Sacred Heart Academy and graduated from Waco High School in May 1951. She entered the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur at Our Lady of Victory in Fort Worth, Sept. 8, 1951, and took Sister Mary Vianney as her religious name. Later she returned to her baptismal name, Sr. Margaret Miller.

Sr. Margaret taught elementary and secondary school for 19 years. Her students at Nolan Catholic High School applauded her



as an excellent math teacher. She engaged in pastoral and social work in schools and parishes in Texas. She earned a B.A. in history at Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, an M.S. in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. in sociology (criminology) from Sam Houston State University.

When Sr. Margaret was 39, she was diagnosed with an illness which prevented her working actively in the apostolate. Although the diagnosis stated she had only a short time to live,

Sr. Margaret organized and operated the OLV Gift Shop for 20 years, selling handmade articles that she and other sisters and friends had crafted. The profits went to the sisters' retirement fund.

For 10 years, Sr. Margaret served as contact person of her province for women interested in becoming Sisters of St. Mary. In 1999 Sr. Margaret began a website for the Western Province of the Sisters of St. Mary. Five years later she was asked by the general council to set up and be the webmaster of an international website, which she did with the help of a computer technician and one of her former piano students, Mary Martin.

She overcame the limitations of her poor health to reach out to a wide variety of friends and to keep abreast of all the activities of the sisters in the provinces of the congregation.

Journalist Phil Record shared his faith throughout his life

Phillip J. Record, 81, an active lay Catholic who was a leader in the St. Bartholomew Parish community, retired newspaperman with nearly 50 years working for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and a professor of journalism at Texas Christian University, died Sunday, Oct. 31, in Fort Worth.

Bishop Kevin Vann presided at the Mass of Christian Burial celebrated Friday, Nov. 5 at St. Bartholomew in Southwest Fort Worth. Bishop Vann said that for Record, his Catholic religion was not just a personal thing, "but something he shared in the press room, the classroom, and all the rooms of his life."

Phil's faith was also expressed in his involvement in leadership in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Bishop Vann spoke of joining Phil in his home for one of his faith sharing groups and in one of the Life in the Spirit seminars presented at St. Bartholomew.

In a eulogy following the funeral Mass, Bob Schieffer, host of the CBS news program *Meet the Press* and former *Star-*



Telegram reporter spoke of his 50-plus year friendship with Record.

He owed as much to Phil Record, he said, as to any individual on earth. Speaking of Record's high news ethics, Schieffer said he was constantly reminding those in the newsroom that as important as it was to be first with a story, it was even more important to "get it right," because, as Schieffer put it, he knew the consequences of getting it wrong.

A native of Fort Worth, Phil Record was a newspaperman more than half a century, spending most of those years at the *Star-Telegram*. Record first went to work for the newspaper in 1944 as a copy boy. He retired as ombudsman for the

newspaper in 1997. He joined the Journalism Department (now the Schieffer School of Journalism) at TCU in January 1999 as a professional in-residence teaching ethics.

After graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1950, he served in the U.S. Army for two years and worked as a reporter in Lubbock, where he met his wife, Pat, for two years before returning to the *Star-Telegram* in 1954 where he eventually became associate executive editor.

Record served as national president of the Society of Professional Journalists, the nation's largest journalism organization in the '80s, and the received the Wells Key, the highest honor bestowed by the society on a member.

Record was a commissioned lay minister in the Catholic Church and served as chair of the diocesan Board of Conciliation and Arbitration and was a vice chair of the first Synod of the Diocese of Fort Worth. He was a member of the board of directors of Cassata High School.

Gail Schatzman served thousands through the CRC

Gail Andrea Schatzman, founding director of the Catholic Renewal Center (CRC), known for her pioneering and visionary work in lay ministry within the Diocese of Fort Worth, died Saturday, Oct. 23. The Mass of Christian Burial was offered Friday, Oct. 29 at Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington.

A native of New Haven, Connecticut, Gail was a counselor and educator with a deep love for the Catholic Church. After establishing the retreat center in 1972, on the grounds of Nolan Catholic High School, Gail developed a network of visionary ministries that operated with the CRC as their home base.

"Her goal was always to fill in the gaps, to address unmet needs," said her daughter, Andrea Vignale. "She started creating and coordinating retreats, programs, and conventions for youth in the early 1970s, because nothing was available for teenagers besides parish CCD programs at that time." Many of the teens who experienced "The Happening"



retreats of the 1970s and early 1980s became ministry leaders within the diocese of Fort Worth and beyond, said Jeff Hedglen, youth minister at St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth and director and founder of Camp Fort Worth.

"Before any of the experts' documents on youth ministry were ever written, or even thought of, Gail had a strong understanding of and commitment to comprehensive youth ministry, which includes catechesis, service, fellowship, prayer and worship, community life, evangelization, and leadership development," said Hedglen.

Recognizing the need for compassionate care for those who suffered from the pain of separation and divorce,

Gail worked with Sister Josephine Stewart, SSMN, to help establish the now internationally-recognized "Beginning Experience" at the CRC. "Special Days for Special People," a ministry to those with physical and mental disabilities, became a treasured source of support and renewal to participants and their caregivers alike. Gail also established the program "Bridges," designed to provide common ground and shared experiences between people at all levels of physical ability.

Longtime colleague and friend Dan Luby, assistant professor and director of enrollment and student affairs at the University of Dallas School of Ministry, recalled that Gail's outreach continued to expand through the years. "Gail, with the help of friends and colleagues, created a place of hospitality and peace that fostered creative ministry and helped bring the Gospel alive for tens of thousands of people... a comfortable, safe place where visitors could confidently expect a welcoming smile, a listening ear, and a place of prayer."

Local parishes invite fallen-away and lapsed Catholics to return to the Church

By Jenara Kocks Burgess
Correspondent

Bill Nichols decided to join St. Michael Church's Re-Membering Church program after he had his marriage of 35 years, blessed by the Catholic Church after an annulment. Even though the validation of his marriage to his wife Jeanine allowed him to return to the sacraments, he needed something more. He hoped his experience with the Re-Membering group would help him return to being active in the Church.

Saying he hadn't been part of the Catholic Church since before Vatican II, Nichols said, his participation in Re-Membering "made me understand more of the changes" that had transformed the Church. "I'm of the old Church," he said. "I needed to actively find out what it was like post Vatican II," he said.

According to information from the CARA Catholic Poll posted on the CatholicsComeHome.org website, only 33 percent of U.S. Catholics attend Mass on a weekly basis, which means 42.7 million U.S. Catholics are not practicing Catholics. Catholics Come Home is an organization that reaches out to inactive Catholics as well as the un-churched and the "under-churched."

Personal stories, experiences with family members and friends as well as these statistics have prompted many parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth to start or continue programs that invite inactive Catholics to return to full participation in the Church.

"It's extremely important to invite people back because there are so many non-practicing Catholics out there," said Lucas Pollice, director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

"In a loving way, we should teach them what the Church teaches," said Pollice, "and witness to them by living our Catholic life. I think that will help them overcome many of the obstacles to coming back to the faith," he said.

According to one survey Pollice cited, non-practicing Catholics are the second largest "denomination" in the United States.

"Bishop [Kevin] Vann and I have talked about possibly doing a diocese-wide program reaching out to non-practicing Catholics after *Why Catholic?* is over," said Pollice "It is one of the things we would definitely like to do," he said. "There are so many non-practicing" or less than fully active Catholics, we really do need to reach out to and encourage "and help them come back to fully practicing the faith," he said. "It's definitely a priority."

Pollice said there are several programs being used across the country that are very good, including the most well-known, Catholics Come Home, whose website www.catholicscomehome.com and materials he recommended.

Pastors, religious education directors, and program team members at parishes with similar programs expressed a hope for a diocese-wide program citing the success of similar campaigns facilitated by Catholics Come Home in other dioceses.

Ryan Hanning, director of Adult Evangelization of the Diocese of Phoenix, was quoted on the Catholics Come Home website as saying that the average increase of attendance of each parish in the diocese in returning Catholics and new



ABOVE: Jack Gieryic (left), a parishioner at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Fort Worth, and pastor Father John Stasiowski, lead the parish's Catholics Come Home program in prayer. Gieryic, who had been away from the Church since before the Second Vatican Council went through the program three years ago and now serves on the team.

LEFT: Jack Gieryic facilitates the discussion during one of the program's weekly meetings.



converts was 12 percent or 92,000 people in the six months after the Catholics Come Home media campaign ended in that diocese.

In the Diocese of Corpus Christi in Lent 2009, the increase in Mass attendance was 17.7 percent after their bilingual Catholics Come Home/Catolicos Regresen campaign, according to the Catholics Come Home website.

Nichols said that what he liked most about the Re-Membering Church program at St. Michael Church in Bedford is how group members treat each other.

"The love of each other underlies everything," he said. "That group is so love-filled." Though his wife is not Catholic, he said, "those people have been wonderful to her."

In addition, he said, "All the different topics [discussed in the sessions] are interesting and done well."

The St. Michael program meets weekly in the fall and spring with a break over Christmas. "It's kind of the same schedule as a school year," Nichols said, "but people can come in at any time."

Ann Bass, a team member with St. Michael's Re-Membering Church Program, said "We feel like the Holy Spirit gets them there at the time they need to be there."

Bass said many people who become involved stay a part of the group for years because they have ongoing issues. For these, she said, it can take them quite a while to become active in the sacraments and ministries again.

Eileen Ewell, another Re-Membering Church team member said that "With some, when we see them in the choir or working at a fish fry, then hopefully they've gone

through the processes of re-integrating with the Catholic faith community.

Immaculate Conception Church and St. Mark Church in Denton, St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville, and Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville all have similar programs in which they invite non-practicing or "partially practicing" Catholics to a series of classes in a small group setting tailored to answering questions about the Church after Vatican II, issues of marriage, reconciliation, and the Mass in an effort to help these Catholics become active in the Church again.

"I saw it as an opportunity to learn more about my faith. Now I'm serving on that committee," said Immaculate Conception parishioner Rita Soto, who went through the program run by team members from both Denton parishes.

Soto, who is also currently serving as a team member, said that the program was inviting because her pastor, Monsignor Charles King made "everyone feel so comfortable. It's a welcome home program, and they truly do welcome you." Soto, who attended Mass weekly at Immaculate Conception, added that participants share their stories of how they were brought up in the Catholic faith. "It's just like a bio of your Catholic religion. If you left the Church and came back, that's discussed."

Jack Gieryic, a member of St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville who is now on the team for its Catholics Returning Home program, said he first became involved in the program as a result of encouragement from his wife of four

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Catholics Coming Home

years, Deanna.

Gieryic, like Nichols at St. Michael, had been away from the Church since before the Second Vatican Council. He said he attended the Catholics Returning Home program at St. Philip for a second year to get more information.

"I hadn't been to church in 40 years. When I got there, it was not my typical Catholic Mass," he said.

Gieryic, in his third year with the program, said as a team member, he works alongside other Catholics Returning Home team members who are cradle Catholics.

"I feel like I know why I'm there. They can't relate to someone who is coming back like I can," he said. "This is helping me understand what the Catholic Church is about. My Catholicism was so black and white. We didn't touch a Bible. Now I sometimes go to a Bible study with my wife, Deanna," he said.

Susan Sandles, director of Religious Education at St. Philip, said they had 10 in their Catholics Returning Home program this year. They met for six Tuesdays starting in September. This year's group decided they wanted to continue to meet, and now meet from 6:30-8 p.m. on Tuesdays in St. Philip's parish office conference room.

"We're going to go over some of the topics we covered before, but we're going to go much deeper this time," she said.

Sandles said in addition to putting ads in the bulletin, they also put ads about the Catholics Returning Home program in the *Dallas Morning News* and *Lewisville Leader*.

"We get many people who have seen it in the newspaper because they are not attending Mass," she said.

Steve Landon, director of parish operations at Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville, said he could put an ad in the Colleyville newspaper and a few people would see it, but the diocese could do it on a much larger scale like Phoenix. Presently, the church advertises the program in the church bulletin, on a big sign on the church, and another big sign beyond the parking lot at an intersection of two streets.

"I think it's a wonderful thing," said Steve Landon, referring to diocese-wide programs. "It's hard to get people to come to the program."

Participants and team members at various parishes have said that whatever form of advertising used, the fruits of their labor are well worth the investment.

"You have to spend some money on it, but the result is a lot of people come home. A lot of people are waiting for the invitation to come home," said Msgr. King, Immaculate Conception pastor who has worked with programs inviting Catholics to return for 15 years at two different parishes, St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills and Immaculate Conception. "We don't get a large number of people, and some folks ask, is it worth the effort? My answer is, yes, it is. If we have one person coming home, it is worth all the effort we can put out."

"That's the key. Getting the word out that you are welcome and invited to come home," he added.

For several weeks before the program starts inviting people to write down the names of friends or loved ones they would like to invite to be in the Coming Home program, which starts during Advent, Msgr. King makes an announcement before each Mass.

"Christmas is very often the time when people come to church or come back to the Church. So I've always thought, 'Let's invite people to come home for Christmas.' So we use Advent, the season of getting ready. And every year we use the four weeks of Advent in which people are invited to talk about themselves and their experience of the Church," Msgr. King said.

Msgr. King also makes a similar announcement before Lent to get people ready for Holy Week and the Easter season.

Marjorie Looney, Immaculate Conception Coming

A lot of people are waiting for the invitation to come home. ...

We don't get a large number of people, and some folks ask, is it worth the effort? My answer is yes it is. If we have one person coming home, it is worth all the effort we can put out.

**— Msgr. Charles King, pastor
Immaculate Conception Church**

Home team member, said when parishioners write down someone's name on the card to be sent to the church office, they are also supposed to put their names on it as well. She said team members can call the parishioner for more information on the person they suggested for the Coming Home program, and that parishioner is invited to participate in a session along with the person they recommended.

"This way the person whose name is given can feel support from that parishioner — not just from the stranger who called them," Looney said.

"Our hope and our goal always is to really have the parishioners involved. They will be coming to one of the sessions themselves. This is a ministry for the entire church — for every parishioner to be involved in," she said.

Another key of the success of such programs within the parishes is that reconciliation is strongly encouraged. Both Landon in Colleyville and Msgr. King in Denton said the pastors have one session where they invite participants to talk about any bad experiences they have had with the Catholic Church, and the pastors apologize to the group for those experiences. The priests also invite the participants to the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Landon said some of the major reasons he's found that people give for leaving the Church are marital problems, and they feel like they've been excommunicated. Others have had something bad happen to them at the church, he said.

Looney said the ICC and St. Mark's Coming Home team uses the website catholicscomehome.org as a tool for people who are not ready to attend sessions. She said they can look at the website to answer questions from the privacy of their homes.

"It shows people that it's not just about Immaculate Conception or St. Mark or the Diocese of Fort Worth — it's the Catholic Church as a whole that is inviting people back," she said.

Since participating the Re-Membering Church program at St. Michael Church in Bedford, Bill Nichols, like Soto at ICC in Denton and Gieryic at St. Philip the Apostle in Lewisville, is much more involved at his parish. He attends Mass every week, and he serves as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and a greeter. He and his wife Jeanine often help with church festivals together, and they sometimes even still attend the Re-Membering Church sessions together, when he is not out of town for work. He is also a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

"I would like to see even more participation," Nichols said. "You have a reluctance to get involved with something like this. You're on the outside, but you're reluctant to walk through that door. But the people in this group are so welcoming. They're like, 'Come on in.' Many of them have been through this before — marriage issues or different things that have kept them away from the Church. With them, you never feel like you're on the outside," Nichols said.

Resources for inactive Catholics or Catholics with family members or friends who are inactive

The following websites can be used to offer more information about the Catholic faith: Catholicscomehome.org or Oncecatholic.org.

The following parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth have programs who invite non-practicing or partially practicing Catholics to learn more about their faith and return to the sacraments, meet at the following times and can be contacted in the following ways by phone or e-mail:

- St. Michael Church in Bedford; Re-Membering Church Program meets 7 p.m. Tuesdays during the school year in the formation center of the church; call or e-mail Mike Bush, director of religious education, at (817) 510-2726 or mbush@smocchurch.org.
- Immaculate Conception and St. Mark Churches in Denton; Coming Home Program meets from 7 to 9 p.m. during four weeks on Tuesdays, Nov. 30-Dec. 21 at the ICC School Library; call Marjorie Looney with ICC at (469) 471-2668 or Father Tim Thompson at St. Mark at (940) 387-6223.
- St. Philip the Apostle Church in Lewisville; Catholics Returning Home program meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays in the St. Philip parish office conference room; call Susan Sandles, director of religious education, at (972) 219-5838.
- Good Shepherd Church in Colleyville; Come Home Program will be meeting starting at 7 p.m. during five weeks on Thursday evenings, Jan. 20-Feb. 17 at the church.; call Steve Landon, director of parish operations and adult formation, at (817) 421-1387.

For more information about resources for returning Catholics or other questions regarding adult faith formation, visit the Diocese of Fort Worth's Adult Faith Formation page at <http://www.fwdioc.org/CATECHESIS/ADULTFAITHFORMATION/Pages/default.aspx> or e-mail Lucas Pollice, diocesan director of Catechesis, at lpollice@fwdioc.org.

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TCU Catholic Community teaches students that growing in their faith is a

LIFELONG JOURNEY

By Barbara Griffith Moffett / Correspondent
Photos by Steve Moffett



LEFT: Father Charlie Calabrese, "on loan" from the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio, has pastored the community since 1984.



LEFT: The TCU Catholic Community is made up of the university's students, alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as local residents. They celebrate their weekly Sunday Mass in the Brown-Lupton University Union.

It's a winning season at Texas Christian University, the result of years of recruiting, the development of experienced leaders, and an unwavering focus on a goal. Oh yeah, the TCU football team is doing well, too.

While Gary Patterson's Horned Frogs may be shaking up the BCS, it's the TCU Catholic Community that's providing an unbeatable combination for a large, diverse, and devoted group of believers. Students are at the center of the community, supporting each other and taking on faith-based projects. Their work is sustained by a dedicated group of adult lay ministers. They've been recruited and are led by Father Charlie Calabrese, an energetic and soft-spoken priest from the Diocese of Steubenville, Ohio, who's been "on loan" to Fort Worth for 26 years.

"Father Charlie," as he's universally known, is the iconic pastor of the TCU Catholic Community. He's a veritable 'man in motion' as he strides briskly across campus.

"He's awesome; he's involved," says Jonathan, a TCU freshman from LaQuinta, California. "And, he helps us grow."

Fr. Charlie first came to Texas in the early 1980s to visit old friends who'd relocated to Fort Worth. He'd been with Lee and Peggy Bohme through the illness and death of their 14-year-old son, Michael, and in 1984 returned to check on them and their 9-year-old daughter, Megan.

He was then the campus minister at Ohio University and had no inkling of moving. During a dinner hosted by the Boehmes, fellow guest Father Peter Lyons, then pastor of St. Andrew Parish, and a TOR, suggested Fr. Charlie take the TCU post.

"Peter, my bishop would never let me come," he remembers saying. When Fr. Lyons persisted, Fr. Charlie responded: "Okay. If my bishop will let me, I'll come."

A month later, he was driving to Fort Worth.

But, he didn't come without a game plan. He formed a TCU Catholic Community Advisory Board of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and Fort Worth residents who direct and guide the mission. All of them participate in retreats, Bible study, and volunteer at the Presbyterian Night Shelter.

However, the TCU Catholic Community is perhaps best known for its Sunday evening Masses. On a typical Sunday evening recently, the Mass, offered in the Brown-Lupton University Union, the Mass draws 200 students, faculty, and friends who begin filling the third-floor ballroom a half-hour before the first song.

Veronica Sandoval, who along with Claudia Gonzales is student co-president of the Catholic Community, is checking with classmates about the upcoming "Awakening" retreat. She reports a recent Halloween fall festival the group held for some children at Catholic Charities was a success, as rewarding for the TCU students as it was for the little ones.

"Catholic Community is a group that has the same faith base, but is open to everyone," she says. "And, we have a lot of fun. There are a lot of freshmen who come to TCU and we've worked to get to know them. A lot of the juniors and seniors have taken them under their wings."

The Boehmes are there. So is their friend, Dolly Worden, who says of Father Charlie, "his homilies are so meaningful." Micki Halaburt, a TCU neighborhood resident, agrees, adding: "And, I love the music."

The music is an energetic mixture of contemporary and upbeat versions of traditional hymns. That is by design. Music director Steve Kinch came to the TCU Catholic Community 18 years ago as an undergraduate — and never left. He directs a powerful blend of student voices and instruments — piano, percussion, flute, trumpets, guitars, bass — and sometimes a mandolin.

Words and music are projected on two walls of the ballroom, which keeps heads up and eyes forward.

"Our focus is on being engaging," Kinch says. He credits his wife's Baptist background and his exposure to the "praise and worship style" of music with inspiring some of his decisions. Ultimately, though, he says the young people make it work.

Dr. Ann Smith, an administrator at Cook Children's

Medical Center with vast experience in college ministry, concurs.

"Everything is done by the students," Dr. Smith says. "It's part of the joy of this. If you have any question about the future, all you have to do is look at these students and their commitment [to the TCU Catholic Community]."

Each Wednesday a smaller group of about thirty students come together for Mass, followed by dinner at the Annie Richardson Bass Building.

On this particular Sunday evening, the readings are about St. Paul's exhortation to "do everything without grumbling or complaining," while in the Gospel Jesus tells his listeners to renounce what's important to them in order to follow Him. Instead of a homily, Fr. Charlie leads reflections on the Scripture.

After a companionable silence, students begin to talk about moments of personal and spiritual revelation. One young woman reveals her sister has redecorated what used to be their shared bedroom "back home," and another volunteers her parents have turned *her* old room into an office.

"I wanted my own place here in Fort Worth now, but..." the first young woman says with chagrin.

"It's a mixed bag, isn't it?" Fr. Charlie observes gently.

All of the young people realize that as they move forward to claim adulthood, there is also loss of childhood security and comfort. In this moment, they know this is something they have in common: They are not alone.

"I think we all look better than we really are," Fr. Charlie says later. "To others, we may seem to 'have it together' or be 'better' than we really are.

"From my experience, this is true of college students. Generally, they keep their questions, struggles, and doubts to themselves, partly because they think that other Catholic students — especially the upperclassmen and those in leadership — 'have it together.'"

Fr. Charlie says these young people worry the older students will think less of anyone who experiences moments of doubt and questioning. This is why he believes "Awakening," a twice-a-year retreat for about 70 students and adult leaders is at the cornerstone of the work at the TCU Catholic Community.

Awakening participants openly talk about their lives and faith journeys, their questions and their struggles to believe.

"They come to realize that figuring out what it means to follow Jesus as Catholic Christians is a lifelong journey — and that as they change, their faith changes. They re-appropriate it religiously, intellectually, and morally."

In the end, this may be where the TCU Catholic Community is most successful: everyone can join this team.

Bishop challenges TCU students to learn from the saints

By Barbara Griffith Moffett
Correspondent

Bishop Kevin Vann celebrates Mass with the TCU Catholic Community twice a year, once each semester. On Oct. 31, the bishop engaged his TCU listeners with a homily full of humor, history, and some personal insight. And, appropriately enough for a campus setting, he had some recommended reading.

First, there was a pop quiz. Bishop Vann smiled as someone correctly made the connection to Halloween — All Hallows' Eve — and All Saints Day. He then explained how All Saints Day had been originally observed in May to coincide with the Roman celebration of the Pantheon. When the Church expanded to include the Celtic peoples, that observance was moved to late fall.

"It was transferred to this day because it was believed — by the Celts — that this was the time of year the spirits



Photo by Steve Moffett

of the dead could roam the earth."

The bishop added both humor and perspective by sharing a book called *Saints Behaving Badly*, by Thomas J.

LEFT: Bishop Kevin Vann explains the Catholic roots behind Halloween, and challenges the students to look to the saints for examples of Christian lives during one of his semi-annual visits to the TCU Catholic Community.

Craughwell. A respected diocesan newspaper columnist, Craughwell writes most saints weren't born with halos. Although parts of his book are written with a tongue-in-cheek tone, the author gets his point across.

"This book shows the real struggles that men and women of God have had in their lives," Bishop Vann said, adding that all of us face some kind of similar challenge.

"In my genes," he revealed, "I have the 'Black Irish' tendency to worry too much about things. We can be awfully serious about too many things. No matter where we are in life, the Lord walks ahead of us and after us and protects us," he said. "On All Saints Day we celebrate our heroes and heroines, all of whom have had a conversion experience."

The Eucharist is an invitation to accept or reject God's will in our lives, says theologian Doug Bushman at *Why Catholic?* lecture

Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

"If we understand what Eucharist is, then we really know our Catholic faith," Douglas Bushman told the 50 people who gathered inside the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Ministry and Formation Building for a Nov. 16 "Going Deeper with *Why Catholic?*" presentation offered by the Pope John Paul II Institute Catechetical School.

Bushman, director of the Institute for Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University near Naples, Florida, was invited by the diocese to give two talks on the Paschal Mystery and celebration of the Eucharist at local parishes. His Nov. 15 presentation, "If I Could Only Touch Him: The Role of Faith in Celebrating the Sacraments" drew 135 people to St. Maria Goretti Church in Arlington.

"We wanted to help people dig a little deeper theologically and spiritually into what they are studying in *Why Catholic?*," said Lucas Pollice, diocesan director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation. "It reinforces and will hopefully go a little deeper than what they're getting in their small groups. Encouraging more study and adult formation is a priority."

Addressing his audience at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the nationally recognized theologian went beyond the commonly understood doctrinal beliefs about the Eucharist to discuss its pastoral dimension.

"The loving invitation of Jesus to receive Him in the Eucharist is a response to the question, 'Will you go away also?'" Bushman



Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen

Professor Douglas Bushman, director of the Institute of Pastoral Theology at Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida, discusses the pastoral dimension of the Eucharist Nov. 16 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller as part of a two-part "Going Deeper with *Why Catholic?*" lecture series.

said, outlining the theme of his presentation. "Jesus is always asking us if we find his teachings difficult. He wants to know if we are going to use our free will to abandon him and reject his love."

Every time Catholics approach the Eucharist they should explore the answer to his questions.

"Jesus wants us to receive Him in the Eucharist knowing what it means and having weighed the options," he pointed out.

The speaker said our response should be like the apostle Peter's in *John 6:68* when he said, "Where else should we go? Where shall we turn?"

"When I read that, I think Peter is saying, 'I have considered the options. What you're saying is demanding, but when I look at the others, no one compares to you,'" Bushman said interpreting the Gospel passage. "Only your words correspond to the deepest aspirations of my heart. Only you have the words of eternal life."

Every time we use our free will and make a decision we must engage our human dignity and choose whether we are going to reject God's love, he added.

"Am I going to have a third drink or stop at two? Am I going to gossip or stop now," Bushman said, citing some common occasions of sin. "Will I cause Him (Jesus) to weep or be an occasion of joy for Him by doing what He wants, receiving his love, and following Him to the cross."

Those are the two fundamental options available to every human being, every day, every moment in every single decision made.

"We are either for Him or against Him," Bushman preached. "We either nail Him to the cross or we are nailed to the cross with Him. To be human means to make that decision."

The Church offers its people Mass and the Eucharist every day to help them make a decision based on love.

We are either for Him or against Him. We either nail Him to the cross or we are nailed to the cross with Him. To be human means to make that decision.

— Professor Doug Bushman, director of Pastoral Theology, Ave Maria University

"This is the meaning of our existence and every breath we take," he said.

Patty Bransford, director of children's formation at St. Patrick Cathedral and a former theology student of the professor, said the presentation gave her a better

understanding of materials used in her *Why Catholic?* group.

"The topics he talked about followed in line with what we're discussing," she added. "Every time you listen to Mr. Bushman, you learn something you've never heard before."

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Vocations

Responding to God's call

Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, is the director of Vocations for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Western Province, based in Fort Worth, and also serves as the director of Children's Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth. She can be reached by e-mail at ycruz@fwdioc.org.



Dare to ask, 'Can I find a home in religious life?'

By Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN

How is God making known his call to men and women today to discern a vocation to the religious life? Why are decisions for religious life so difficult for young adults to make today? Could it be because of an over-abundance of possible choices? Perhaps it may have something to do with the diminishing numbers of religious men and women? Or is it the ability of those same religious to provide a meaningful and profound witness to a radical way of living? These are some questions that often are in the forefront for many congregations and vocation directors of our time.

At a recent Conference for National Religious Vocation Directors (NRVC) in Cleveland, one of the keynotes opened with this topic and stated that the complexity of discerning a vocation need not focus on the "complexity" but rather on the discerning. Young women and men continue to be called to enter into this process and discover whether they are able to respond to Christ's invitation to give it all up to follow Him. In the familiar parable of the rich young man who asks "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (*Matthew 19:16*), Jesus outlines a series of helpful guidelines and then invites the young man to follow Him. Following these guidelines could take us through unexpected

turns in life, which through perseverance could lead us to risk our own hearts and lives — because Jesus has chosen us and we are able to accept his invitation. Is there any witnessing to this in our Diocese of Fort Worth?

This brings me to share an event that is living proof not only of God's continued call, but of the courage and fidelity it takes to continue on this journey. Three religious women witnessed to this fact in Fort Worth on Nov. 11 in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Western Province. These three sisters, already perpetually vowed religious in different congregations, went through a period of five years discerning their vocational call. They faced the burning question, "Could I say 'YES' to God once more?" which entailed renewing a commitment in a new religious community, a new culture, a new language, and a new country. After an intense journey with their spiritual directors and the Sisters of St. Mary, each one of these young women gave a resounding YES response to God. They recommitted themselves to living a radical life of fidelity to God, service to the Church, and living out their vows walking on this journey with a pioneering group of religious women in Texas — the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. Sister Gloria Cabrera, Sister Inés Díaz, and Sister Clara Vo became perpetually

vowed members of this community, once again committing to live out their call to leave all to follow Christ!

What are some common denominators for each of these sisters?

Their profound love for Christ.

A willingness to invest themselves in renewing this relationship.

Self-transcendence with a willingness to work with God's grace in overcoming the challenges which are a part of discernment.

Their courage to nurture a sense of community with a new charism and a new group of religious women.

The generosity to share their gifts and personal charisms brought from their families and from three different communities of women religious: Franciscan, Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts, and La Salle.

Openness with a gentle heart to welcome with simplicity, joy, hope, and service, the challenge to serve Christ today in works of justice and mercy.

A genuine spirit of search, allowing the Holy Spirit to act in each one unfolding God's faithful love.

God's Spirit is always acting and uncovering new ways to make Christ present in this world and to spread the Gospel message, keeping it alive and meaningful in order to bring about a daily transformation

and conversion of our hearts. A search for direction in the lives of our young adults today could either be found or the opportunity missed! Undoubtedly each person seeks to discover the true gift of their vocation in order to reach a fulfilling, peace-filled, and joyful life. In this world of "over-abundance," God continues to provide the grace for people to listen and accept his call to enter religious life with passionate love and commitment.

Where is the port of entry for young men and women? How could we contribute to their discernment and help them be attentive to God speaking in a culture of distraction? How are we preparing the soil for this seed to grow in their hearts? "... but when **seed** fell on good earth, it grew, yielding thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold..." (*Matthew 19:16-30*). The Church continues to mandate us to move forward in our times, make Christ's Gospel message known, and encourage discipleship without losing the sense of depth and sacredness. Pope Benedict calls us to embrace this great challenge in his encyclical letter *Caritas Veritatis* (Charity in Truth).

Certainly we don't control the future; however, we are collaborators with God in its making. Dare to risk, to ask the question while standing at the door of discernment, "Can I find a home in religious life?"

Bishops asked for release of more priests for service as military chaplains

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services appealed to his fellow bishops Nov. 15 to release more of their priests for service as military chaplains.

In a brief talk on the opening day of the U.S. bishops' Nov. 15-18 fall general assembly, Archbishop Broglio said his flock — which includes Catholics serving in all branches of the military, their families and those at Veterans Affairs hospitals nationwide — is served by only 275 priests, a number that will decline in coming years.

He said most people serving in the military are between the ages of 18 and 28, and studies have shown that most of those

who abandon the faith they were raised in do so before the age of 24.

After their service, members of the military and their families will return to the U.S. dioceses and archdioceses from which they came, "and I would like to be able to return them to you as Catholics," Archbishop Broglio said.

He recalled meeting a group of 10 Protestant chaplains, all of whom had been baptized as Catholics but became attracted to Protestant denominations during their military service because no Catholic chaplains were available to them early in their enlistments.

Archbishop Broglio also talked about a bishop who had denied the request of a priest in his diocese who was willing to continue

working as a military chaplain. The bishop expressed concern about not having a priest to assign to a certain parish in his diocese.

If a Catholic family in the United States does not have a priest in their parish, they can drive to another parish nearby, the archbishop said, "but military personnel cannot drive to another parish."

He also appealed to the pragmatic side of his fellow bishops, noting that about 10 percent of all priests ordained in the United States in an average year have prior service in the military and another 10 percent belong to families in which someone was in the military.

"More priest chaplains (to nurture vocations in the military) will mean more candidates for the priesthood," he said.

Archbishop Broglio said he was not there to discuss whether U.S. involvement in Iraq or Afghanistan was right, but however one feels about that question, "we are obligated to care for the men and women who are there."

"If we are not there, someone else will be and we will have no control over the message given," he said.

And although no one knows the reason behind the rise in suicides among military personnel, "chaplains are essential to dealing with the problem," the archbishop said.

He also asked each bishop to designate a day of fasting and prayer in his diocese for "a just and lasting peace," for an end to military suicides, and for the families and soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in military service.

Catechesis

Mass, source and summit of Christian Life

By Lucas Pollice

As we continue with our journey through the Sacraments, we now turn our attention to the Mass, or the celebration of the Eucharist. Christ instituted the Eucharist during the Jewish Passover, when He becomes the new and eternal Passover Lamb.

Through his sacrifice on the cross, we are freed from slavery to sin. In the same way that the Passover was at the very heart of the faith of Israel, the Eucharist is at the very heart of the New Covenant established by Christ. It is the “source and summit” of the Christian life. The celebration of the Mass is where we come to once again mysteriously participate in his death and Resurrection and are transformed by his grace.

The Mass is a sacrifice. It re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is a memorial, a literal re-presentation of the sacrifice of Calvary and application of its fruit. The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one and the same. It is the same victim and the same offering; only the manner is different. It is truly Christ we offer to the Father in sacrifice. Caveat: The Mass is not a re-sacrificing of Christ, but it re-presents the one sacrifice of Calvary. We are not crucifying Christ again, but mystically participating in the very same sacrifice. Jesus Christ, body, blood, soul, and divinity, is being offered to the Father for the forgiveness of sins as a continuation of the one and same sacrifice of the cross.

The members of the Church also offer themselves with Christ as a sacrifice to the Father. God does not desire the sacrifice of bulls and rams, but a sacrifice of our hearts and lives. We are to be active participants at Mass as we offer all that we have and all that we are so that we may be transformed into Christ and participate in the priesthood of all the faithful.

The word “Mass” comes from the Latin *missio*, which means “to be sent.” We go to Mass to be healed and transformed so that we can go out into the world and consecrate it to God through our words and actions. We are sent forth to “love and serve the Lord and one another.” The Mass is the *source* and *summit* of the Christian life. It is both an end in that it is the greatest act of worship that we can participate in and brings us into union with Christ (summit); as well as a means by which we are transformed and nourished by Christ to go into the world and faithfully live as his followers (source).

The Mass is also the wedding feast of the Lamb of God in which his union with his Bride, the Church, is made

complete. During this celebration, Christ offers himself completely to his Bride, first through his Word, and then through the gift of the Eucharist where He gives Himself completely, body, blood, soul, and divinity. In turn the Church gives herself completely to her Bridegroom, by each person offering himself/herself to the Father with Christ. Through the reception of the Eucharist, Christ literally becomes “one flesh” with his Church. By becoming “one flesh” with Him we are transformed to be like Him and are sent out to be Christ to the world and to accomplish his work.

We will now take a closer look at the Order of the Mass, which is the heart of our worship as Catholics. It is within the Mass that we come into union with the divine, where the angels and all of heaven itself unite with us as we offer ourselves to the Father, through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE ORDER OF THE MASS

The Liturgy of the Word

We first celebrate together Christ’s unique presence in his Word, the Scriptures. Within the first part of the Mass, we are nourished by the Word (Jesus) through the inspired Word of God. The Liturgy of the Word reveals to us the good news of salvation in Christ, helps us put it into action in our daily lives, and prepares us to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

PREPARATORY RITES/We Pray With Our Words and Our Hearts

The Mass begins by the community preparing themselves to encounter Christ in the Scriptures and the Eucharist and draws us into the mysteries of God.

The Processional: The priest and ministers process into the church while a song is sung. The priest then kisses the altar as an act of reverence for the altar of sacrifice which represents Christ as the cornerstone of the Church. (Stand)

The Greeting: The priest begins with the Sign of the Cross and then greets the community in the name of the Holy Trinity. The Mass is an action of the Holy Trinity and our participation within it. During the Mass, we enter into the intimate life of the Trinity! (Stand)

The Penitential Rite: This is a time in which we examine our lives and seek forgiveness from Christ for our sins. We do this in order to prepare to immerse ourselves into the mysteries of faith. Sin blocks our spiritual sight. By being cleansed of our sins we will

be able to open ourselves completely to Christ in both the Scriptures and especially in the Eucharist. Note: The Penitential Rite only obtains forgiveness for venial (lesser) sins. If we are conscious of committing a mortal (grave) sin we must first receive the sacrament of Penance before we can receive the Eucharist. (Stand. Kneel during Lent)

The Gloria: A prayer of praise and adoration in which we lift up our hearts in love to God in thanksgiving for his works of salvation. After being cleansed of our sinfulness, the *Gloria* draws us into the mysteries of God and opens our hearts and prepares us to listen to his Word in the Scriptures. (Stand)

The Opening Prayer: The priest reads a short prayer with the intentions of the Church for that day. Notice the prayer is addressed to the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. We are truly participating in the life of the Trinity. (Stand)

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD/We Listen to God’s Word Proclaimed

The reading of the Scriptures, a service of instruction.

The First Reading: The first reading is usually from the Old Testament, except during the Easter season when it is from the Acts of the Apostles. The Old Testament reading is always thematically tied to the Gospel reading. (Sit)

The Responsorial Psalm: The Church then prays one of the Psalms in the Old Testament. These are the ancient prayers of Israel. The responsorial psalm is usually sung and always requires the participation of the community. (Sit)

The Second Reading: The second reading is from one of the New Testament letters. (Sit)

The Gospel: The priest or deacon reads from one of the four Gospels that tell about the life and ministry of Christ. The Gospels are the most sacred of all the Scriptures because they contain the actual recorded words of Christ. Before the Gospel, we make the Sign of the Cross with our thumb over our foreheads, mouth, and hearts asking God that the Gospel will forever be in our minds, upon our lips, and in our hearts. We are bearers of the Gospel! (Stand as a sign of the special importance of the Gospel. Standing is also a sign of attention.)

The Homily: The priest speaks to the community about the Scriptures and how we can live them out in our daily lives. (Sit)



Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, celebrates Mass at the start of the bishops’ annual fall meeting in Baltimore Nov. 15. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

THE CREED/We Respond to God’s Word

The Church stands together as one in faith and responds to hearing the Word of God by proclaiming our belief in the Triune God and all He has revealed. The Creed is a visible sign of our unity in one faith that will be actualized in the Eucharist. Our belief in the Creed is what also allows us to participate in what will happen next! It is like passing through a door into the mysteries of God. (Stand)

The Prayers of the Faithful: We end the Liturgy of the Word by bringing our intentions before the Lord that will be offered to the Father with the Eucharist. We especially pray for the Church, the world, the sick, and the dying. Other appropriate intentions can also be added. (Stand)

Next month, we will go through the Liturgy of the Eucharist and also discuss how to properly prepare oneself for receiving the Eucharist.



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Word = Life

Readings Reflections

“He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”
— Matthew 3:12



December 5, Second Sunday of Advent. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
- 2) Romans 15:4-9
Gospel) Matthew 3:1-12

By Jeff Hedglen

As I have gotten older, I have begun to love the season of Advent -- almost more than Christmas. The spiritual focus of the weeks leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth is a great escape from the overly commercialized "Xmas" we find in the stores 10-12 weeks before the actual day. The gods of materialism, over-busyness, glamour, indulgence, pride and greed come forth and do all they can to upstage the real star of the season.

Years ago, I read a book called *In the Hall of the Dragon King*, by Stephen R. Lawhead. In one scene, one character is trying to convince another that the God Most High is better than the other gods. The conversation goes like this:

"The Most High God is One. The gods of earth and sky are but the chaff blown before the mighty wind of his coming. They cannot stand in his presence, and even now their power grows weak."

"But what makes this nameless God different from all the others?"

"He cares."

In my estimation, not one of the Xmas gods cares for us or even thinks about us beyond our wallets and lines of credit. The Gospel from week two of Advent gives us a picture of God similar to the one in Lawhead's book as John the Baptist describes Jesus this way:

"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

It is clear that the Messiah that John is talking about is serious and all-powerful. He is one who separates the chaff from the wheat, the shell from the seed, the fluff from the substance.

As Christmas approaches I think this Gospel is calling us to lay aside the "chaff" of the worldly celebration and lift high the seed of the Father, the one he planted in the world 2,000 years ago and planted in our hearts at baptism. Advent reminds us that we now await the eternal harvest, and until then we wait and pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

QUESTIONS:

What are the worldly aspects of this time of year that distract you the most? What are some things we can do to stay focused on Jesus as Christmas approaches?

“They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God.”
— Isaiah 35:2



December 12, Third Sunday of Advent. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
Psalm 146:6-10
- 2) James 5:7-10
Gospel) Matthew 11:2-11

By Sharon K. Perkins

The 50 or 60 women in the room looked like most women you would meet anywhere on a given day in the grocery store, the elementary school parking lot or the coffee shop. Representing ages 17 to 70 and attractively dressed, they helped themselves to coffee and donuts and chatted about their day-to-day activities the way most women would at a genteel Saturday morning gathering.

But as soon as the retreat began and each woman came to the microphone, the veneer of gentility quickly dissolved and the ordinariness became extraordinary. Story after emotional story poured forth — personal accounts of their life experiences revealing a depth and magnificence of God's power and presence that few observers would have guessed merely moments before.

In the first reading for this week, the prophet Isaiah describes an unbelievable sight: the desert blooming with "abundant flowers," its desolate silence breaking forth into "joyful song." James' Epistle offers the image of a tilled but barren field waiting for fruitfulness that is all but invisible. And somewhere in the wilderness, a fiery, eccentric-looking preacher prepares the way for the Lord, who, at the time, was walking among the people, still unrecognized.

During the season of Advent, because most of us know what's coming — the birth of Jesus at Christmas — we "over-anticipate" and look for the Lord's appearance in all the expected ways and places. Despite the obvious liturgical shift from green to purple, we still can feel like we're in "ordinary time."

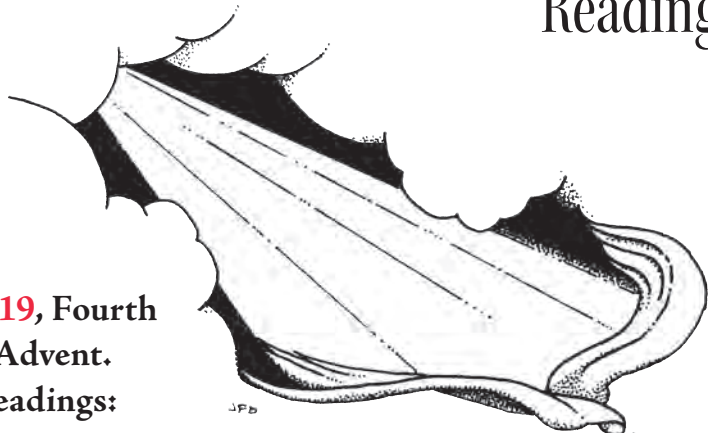
But Advent is really about surprises, about seeing the magnificence of God breaking forth in the unexpected, the overlooked, and the hidden. Advent calls us to fine-tune our eyes and ears to the "splendor of our God" already in our midst — and then to tell others what we have seen.

QUESTIONS:

When and how has God surprised you by appearing in a way you would have least expected? This Advent season, how can you become more alert to God's splendor revealed in the ordinariness of your experience?

Word = Life

Readings Reflections



December 19, Fourth Sunday of Advent. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-6
- 2) Romans 1:1-7
Gospel) Matthew 1:18-24

By Jeff Hensley

The theme of obedience to the revealed will of God runs through the Scriptures for this weekend, as we await with eagerness the birth of the Lord Jesus. In the first reading, God convincingly tells Ahaz to seek a sign from him. Instead, Ahaz replies, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!”

In response, the prophet Isaiah challenges his lack of sincerity saying that God will bypass this king and give God’s people a sign: “The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.”

In the second reading, Paul speaks of Jesus, through whose “resurrection from the dead,” he has “received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith.”

Then in the Matthew reading, an angel appears to tell Joseph that Mary is pregnant with Jesus, “through the Holy Spirit,” fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy of the birth of “Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us’”

God commands our obedience in many ways, most notably through Scripture and the teachings of the church. Much turmoil in life can be avoided if we form our consciences by following God’s Word revealed in these two sources.

But God also speaks directly to our hearts. My wife reported to me that several times in recent weeks, a Scripture popped up on her smart phone, just as she was experiencing great anger, even though she had done nothing to cause the phone to tap into the daily Scripture application she uses.

I had a similar experience during a time of temptation some years ago when a Scripture from *1 Corinthians 10* popped up in the search engine on my computer, un-entered and un-copied from any other source.

My wife and I have both believed we have heard from God through our thoughts or Scriptures as we have read the Bible, but I cite these two little technological instances just to show God’s versatility.

Such personal revelations, however, cannot be in conflict with the teachings of the church or Scripture. Then they would simply be end runs around what God desires as the perfect Christmas gift: our hearts of love and obedience to his Son, our Savior, the child whose birth we seek.

QUESTIONS:

When have you had to rely on your knowledge of Scripture to “make the right choice”? What spiritual reading can you do to help properly form your conscience and provide a source of strength in times of stress and temptation?

“When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.”
— Matthew 1:24

“Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body.”
— Colossians 3:15

December 26, Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalm 128:1-5
- 2) Colossians 3:12-21
Gospel) Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

By Jean Denton

The farther I get in life, the more I understand the meaning of family in God’s plan.

In celebrating the Holy Family, this weekend’s readings show us the breadth and depth of the family communion: Bear with one another, love your wife, obey your parents, do not discourage your children, forgive each other, take care of your father when he’s old, put on love. The readings describe “your wife like a fruitful vine,” and “children like olive plants around your table,” and tell the story of Joseph’s courage and sacrifice to protect his vulnerable wife and child.

My Uncle Bob placed his family at the center of his life. Their home was a model of mutual love and encouragement.

Eight years ago, his son Charles gave up a comfortable academic position in England to move back to Texas, because he and his wife wanted to live closer to their families.

“A lot of my colleagues couldn’t understand it, but I never regretted it for a minute,” Charles told me last week as he prepared for his father’s funeral. “At the time, my mother was still with us and our daughters got to know their grandmother and grandfather very well.”

Although Bob’s own parents died when he was quite young, he became a rock of care and connection for his in-laws and his siblings — and for all their children as well.

He put on love and treated all of us, along with his own sons and grandchildren, as olive plants around his table. He led our prayers when we gathered, and he showed us how to bear with one another.

A niece recalled a visit he made to her with “his express purpose to give me support and counsel during a rather grueling and challenging (emotional) recovery process.”

In Bob’s last years, his other son Tom and his family visited and helped care for him daily even as he struggled with Alzheimer’s disease. Their devotion was no surprise.

Embracing each others’ lives as our own — in the highs and lows, caring, giving, forgiving, encouraging, and bearing with one another in love and in the name of the Lord Jesus — is how the holy family gives meaning to life.

QUESTIONS:

What family experiences do you recall that have strengthened you and taught you how to live in relationship with others? What dysfunctional families, or dysfunctions within your own family, presently need your attention?



Nuestro Pastor Habla

Trabajando juntos para acercarnos al reino de Cristo el rey

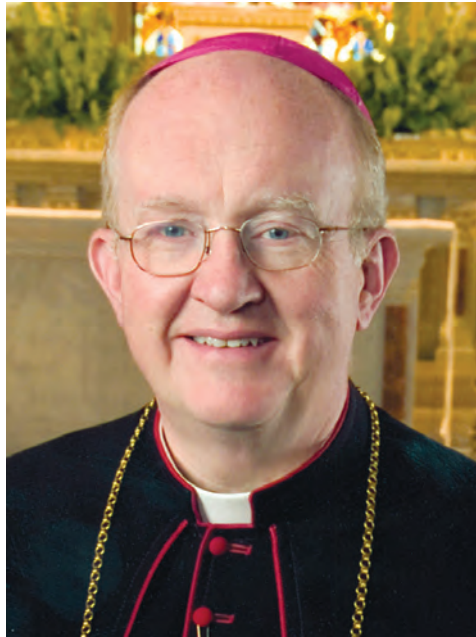
Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo de la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Estos días nos traen varias solemnidades y fiestas importantes en la vida litúrgica de la Iglesia, y son muy importantes para nuestra reflexión. Son un recordatorio de que Cristo está siempre presente con nosotros y viaja con la Iglesia peregrina, mientras nos esforzamos en crecer en la santidad y alcanzar la gloria eterna en Cristo.

Al final de este mes, celebramos la solemnidad del Cristo Rey, que cierra en forma dramática el año litúrgico. La solemnidad del Cristo Rey fue establecida por el Papa Pío XI en 1925, debido a las crecientes amenazas del comunismo, nazismo y fascismo (¡al otro lado de su propia ciudad!), y las amenazas que todo esto plantea al espíritu humano. El Cristo Rey nos recuerda que el poder supremo que no puede ser amenazado u obligado por estos poderes era el mismo del Cristo Rey. Por lo tanto, la persona humana siempre será libre, pase lo que pase, y el Cristo Rey tendrá la “última palabra” sobre el mal. La imagen de Cristo como Nuestro Señor y Rey tiene un significado muy especial para todos nosotros, incluso aquellos de nosotros en las democracias occidentales. Cristo viene como rey a regir sobre el mal, el pecado y la muerte, y para restaurar el orden del reino de Dios, que fue arrojado al caos tras el primer pecado. De hecho, en el evangelio de Juan, el juicio de Cristo y su crucifixión final, es interpretada como la consagración de Cristo, que ahora rige sobre el pecado y la muerte para siempre desde el trono de la Cruz. La solemnidad del Cristo Rey nos recuerda también que, como Cristo, estamos llamados a compartir su misión real a través de la humildad y el servicio, y a conquistar corazones a través de obras de caridad y misericordia. Como enseña el Papa Benedicto XVI,

Pero, ¿en qué consiste el “poder” de Jesucristo Rey? No es el poder de los reyes y de los grandes de este mundo; es el poder divino de dar la vida eterna, de librar del mal, de vencer el dominio de la muerte. Es el poder del Amor, que sabe sacar el bien del mal, ablandar un corazón endurecido, llevar la paz al conflicto más violento, encender la esperanza en la oscuridad más densa.
— ÁNGELUS, 22 de noviembre de 2009

En adición, la solemnidad de Cristo Rey originalmente se celebró el último domingo de octubre, pero con la reforma



Monseñor Kevin Vann

del calendario litúrgico en 1969, fue puesto en el último domingo del año litúrgico, para recordarnos que al final de la historia de la salvación, Cristo vendrá otra vez para juzgar a los vivos y a los muertos, según lo registrado en el pasaje de Mateo, capítulo 25, donde Él viene y separa las ovejas de las cabras. De hecho, las lecturas de los últimos domingos del año litúrgico se centran en el juicio final, de estar listos y preparados para la llegada del Señor. Nos llama a realizar un examen de conciencia para examinar cómo hemos vivido nuestra vida en Cristo durante el año pasado. Es un recordatorio que da de pensar que algún día, llegaremos antes del Cristo Rey, y a Él le tendremos que rendir cuentas de nuestras vidas, y cómo hemos utilizado los dones y gracias que Dios nos ha dado para construir su reino.

Este mismo tema de preparación para la llegada de Cristo también se transfiere al nuevo año litúrgico, que comienza el 5 de diciembre mientras celebramos el primer domingo de Adviento. La palabra adviento proviene de la palabra en latín *adventus*, que significa *venir* o *llegada*. La temporada de Adviento es una temporada de preparación para la llegada de Cristo, que procede de dos maneras. En primer lugar, estamos llamados a buscar en nuestras vidas y corazones, para examinar nuestras conciencias y evaluar nuestra disposición en cuanto vuelva Cristo otra vez. No sabemos ni el día ni la hora cuando vendrá Cristo, otra vez en su gloria, para juzgar a los vivos y a los muertos; tampoco sabemos la hora en que Cristo pueda llamarnos individualmente, cada uno de nosotros, para rendirle cuentas de nuestras vidas, para entender cómo hemos amado a Dios y al prójimo. En segundo lugar, la temporada de Adviento nos prepara para celebrar y recordar la primera llegada de Cristo en la Encarnación, que celebramos durante la Navidad, y para poder presentarle a Cristo un corazón lleno de pureza, amor

y paz. *El Catecismo* describe claramente este doble significado de Adviento:

Al celebrar anualmente la liturgia de Adviento, la Iglesia actualiza esta espera del Mesías: participando en la larga preparación de la primera llegada del Salvador, los fieles renuevan el ardiente deseo de su segunda llegada (cf. Ap 22, 17). Celebrando la natividad y el martirio del Precursor, la Iglesia se une al deseo de éste: “Es preciso que él crezca y que yo disminuya” (Jn 3, 30). (CIC 524)

El color litúrgico de Adviento es el morado—como la temporada de Adviento muestra algo penitencial (aunque menos que la Cuaresma)—pero agrega el tema de la expectante espera en la revelación y próxima gloria de Cristo. Esta expectante espera se expresa de manera especial durante el tercer domingo de Adviento, llamado *Domingo Gaudate* o *Domingo Alegre*, pues estamos en “espera alegre de la llegada de nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo, nuestra esperanza”, y los colores litúrgicos se convierten en rosa, en lugar de morado. Hay muchas ricas tradiciones en que podemos participar durante la temporada de Adviento, especialmente en el entorno familiar—tales como la iluminación de la corona de Adviento, o la apertura diaria de un calendario de Adviento—acompañadas de la meditación y la oración que nos ayuda a vivir, en nuestra vida diaria, nuestra esperanza penitencial y expectante en la llegada de Cristo.

También hay dos fiestas Marianas muy importantes que entran en la temporada de Adviento. La primera es la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción, cuando celebramos que María fue concebida sin la mancha del pecado original para poder convertirse en tabernáculo puro, a través de la cual Cristo se encarnaría para recibir una naturaleza humana pura. Esta verdad se revela en la Sagrada escritura cuando el Ángel Gabriel saluda a María y maravillosamente declara, “Salve María, llena eres de gracia, el Señor es contigo” (Lucas 1: 28). María es completamente llena de gracia, precisamente porque ella es la que fue concebida sin pecado y continuó cooperando plenamente en completa “obediencia de fe” con la gracia y la presencia del Espíritu Santo. Es bajo este título de la Inmaculada Concepción que vemos a María como modelo de la Iglesia, pues ella verdaderamente modeló en su persona, y en su vida llena de testimonio de fidelidad a la Iglesia, la esposa impecable de Cristo. Como nos enseña el Concilio Vaticano II en la *Constitución Dogmática sobre la Iglesia, Lumen Gentium*,

Mientras la Iglesia ha alcanzado en la Santísima Virgen la perfección, en virtud de la cual no tiene mancha ni arruga (cf. Ef 5, 27), los fieles luchan todavía por crecer en santidad, venciendo enteramente al pecado, y por eso levantan sus ojos a María, que resplandece como modelo de virtudes para toda la comunidad de los elegidos. (65)

Además, la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción tiene un significado especial para la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos, porque María—bajo el título de la Inmaculada Concepción—es la patrona de los Estados Unidos, y es a ella que nos encomendamos para la protección y la orientación de nuestro gran país. Por lo tanto, los obispos de los Estados Unidos han declarado la fiesta de la Inmaculada Concepción como día de obligación para los católicos en los Estados Unidos.

La segunda fiesta Mariana importante es el día de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre. Este es un día muy importante, no sólo para los católicos hispanos, sino también para todos nosotros que vivimos bajo su título como patrona de las Américas. Esta fiesta recuerda los días del 9-12 de diciembre de 1531, cuando María se apareció a un indígena Azteca que llegó a ser conocido por su nombre bautismal, Juan Diego. Tras revelarse a Juan Diego en su idioma náhuatl, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe inmediatamente le dijo que ella era la virgen María, madre de Dios. Le pidió a Juan Diego que se construyera una capilla en la colina de Tepeyac, para la conversión y cuidado espiritual de los fieles—especialmente el pueblo azteca—debido a su práctica de idolatría y sacrificio humano, que incluía a los niños. Nuestra Madre Santísima trató de evangelizar a la multitud, y Juan Diego serviría como la persona clave para realizar esta tarea.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe deseaba mostrar su misericordia y compasión al pueblo, como sólo una madre podría. Su aparición como una joven indígena hizo resaltar el amor que sentía por el pueblo. Juan Diego inmediatamente se apresuró a hablar con el obispo Zumarraga acerca de la visión de la Madre Santísima. Inicialmente, no se escuchó el mensaje de Juan Diego. Sin embargo, finalmente presentó al obispo una tilma que, una vez abierta, reveló la imagen de la Virgen, junto con rosas que no estaban en temporada en ese momento.

Es muy importante los significados y símbolos que rodean la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. En primer lugar, *Guadalupe* — en términos indígenas —

CONTINUADA A LA DERECHA

Individuos, arte necesitan valores trascendentales para ser completos, dice el Papa

Por Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

BARCELONA, España — El Papa Benedicto XVI advirtió a los países del peligro de ya no estar al servicio amoroso de sus ciudadanos mientras pedía a los fieles llevar mensaje de la esperanza de Cristo a toda la gente.

Durante un viaje de dos días a lo que solía ser una España acérrimamente católica, el Papa buscó alentar y renovar la fe en Dios de la gente y convencer a una sociedad crecientemente más secular que la iglesia quiere el diálogo, no la confrontación.

La visita del Papa los días 6 y 7 de noviembre, su 18vo viaje al exterior, lo trajo primero a uno de los lugares más populares y más antiguos de peregrinación del catolicismo, *Santiago de Compostela*, y luego a Barcelona, donde consagró la *Basílica de la Sagrada Familia*.

Durante la Misa del 7 de noviembre, en la cual bendijo y ungió el altar de la iglesia dedicada a la *Sagrada Familia de Nazaret*, dijo que los cristianos deben oponerse a todo ataque contra la vida humana y promover la institución natural de la familia.

Bajo el gobierno del primer ministro José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, quien ascendió al poder en el 2004, España ha relajado sus leyes de divorcio, reducido las restricciones del aborto, legalizado el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo y permitido que las parejas homosexuales adopten.

En su homilía, el Papa elogió el progreso técnico, social y cultural logrado a través de los años. Sin embargo, dijo, un país debe también avanzar moralmente.

Pidió que los tribunales, los cuerpos legislativos y la sociedad respeten y defiendan la vida sagrada e inviolable de los niños, desde el momento de la concepción.

“Por esta razón la Iglesia se opone a toda forma de denegación de la vida humana, y da su apoyo a todo lo que promueva el orden natural en la esfera de la institución de la familia”, basado en



Pope Benedict XVI leads the Angelus prayer outside the Basilica of the Sagrada Familia after consecrating the church in Barcelona, Spain, Nov. 7. The pope, on a two-day trip to Spain, urged Catholics to resist every attack on human life and promote the natural institution of the family. (CNS photo/Albert Gea, Reuters)

La Iglesia de la Sagrada Familia está rodeada de grúas de construcción en Barcelona, España, el 4 de noviembre. El Papa Benedicto XVI hizo una peregrinación a España el 6 y 7 de noviembre y consagró la iglesia, que está parcialmente completa. (Foto CNS/Gustau Nacarino, Reuters)

el matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer, dijo.

Más de 6,000 personas llenaron la iglesia que el Papa elevó a basílica menor durante la Misa. Otras 50,000 personas siguieron el evento afuera, en 33 pantallas enormes instaladas en calles y plazas circundantes.

Aunque el viaje papal no fue una visita oficial, el Papa fue recibido, después de aterrizar bajo densa neblina en *Santiago de Compostela*, por el príncipe Felipe y la princesa Letizia de Asturias, cardenales y obispos españoles y autoridades gubernamentales de los niveles local, regional y nacional.

Durante una Misa al aire libre celebrada el 6 de noviembre frente a la catedral de *Santiago de Compostela*, del siglo 12, el Papa dijo que cuando las sociedades y los gobiernos ya no están al

servicio amoroso de todas las personas, entonces la arrogancia y la explotación arriesgan apagar los verdaderos desarrollo y realización humanos.

Solamente amando y sirviendo a los demás como lo hizo Jesús, hasta con el más simple de los gestos, recobrará la humanidad un sentido de felicidad y esperanza, dijo.

Unas 6,000 personas llenaron a capacidad la diminuta plaza y otras 200,000 estaban presentes en la pequeña ciudad, alineadas en calles y plazas, según autoridades locales. Las campanas de la catedral sonaban y los peregrinos vitoreaban y gritaban, “¡Viva el Papa!”.

El Papa vino como peregrino para conmemorar el año santo de Santiago Apóstol, que ocurre cada vez que la fiesta de Santiago, el 25 de julio, cae domingo.

Ir en peregrinación es una oportunidad de “salirnos de nosotros mismos para poder encontrar a Dios” y experimentar una conversión, dijo en comentarios anteriormente ese día dentro de la catedral de la ciudad.

Participó en algunos de los rituales tradicionales de los peregrinos, tales como arrodillarse en oración en la pequeña cripta que contiene la tumba del apóstol, cruzar caminando la puerta santa y admirar la inmensa estatua de piedra y laminado de plata de Santiago que la mayoría de los peregrinos abraza.

El Papa se reunió en Barcelona con el rey Juan Carlos de España y la reina Sofía y tuvo una breve reunión privada con el primer ministro Zapatero en el aeropuerto de Barcelona antes de salir hacia Roma.

significa “romper la cabeza de la serpiente” (Génesis 3: 15). Tenga en cuenta que los aztecas se habían quedado en este lugar particular—conocido como Tenochtitlan (ciudad de México)—por una visión de un águila posado sobre un cactus y devorando una serpiente. El papel de María, al aplastarle la cabeza a la serpiente, es su triunfo sobre el mal. Las estrellas, el sol y la luna a sus pies representan su papel como Madre de Dios. El lazo en su cintura es una señal del embarazo para mostrar el amor que Dios tiene hacia sus hijos a través del nacimiento de Cristo, y también su cuidado y preocupación para la criatura aun sin nacer. Por eso, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se ha convertido en un símbolo como defensora del movimiento pro-vida, la cultura que promueve y está a favor de la vida.

Finalmente, la maternidad de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe verdaderamente se extiende a todos nosotros, especialmente a los pobres y a los inmigrantes, pues ella se apareció a Juan Diego como una pobre mujer común que se identifica con la difícil situación de los pobres y los que buscan una mejor vida y futuro. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe también fue declarada la “Estrella de la nueva evangelización”, por el Papa Juan Pablo II, porque se le apareció a Juan Diego para evangelizar a los pueblos de las Américas y ponerlos en una verdadera relación con su Hijo. Su humilde testimonio de la verdad de Cristo y la verdad del evangelio sirve para todos nosotros como un modelo a seguir, esforzándonos por sacar la nueva evangelización a través de nuestro testimonio santo y humilde, y a través de nuestro amor

por Cristo.

Todas estas fiestas litúrgicas y fiestas que se celebran en la Iglesia universal, en definitiva, nos recuerdan que todos somos parte del cuerpo de Cristo—la Iglesia—y que todos estamos llamados a trabajar juntos en una verdadera espiritualidad de comunión para lograr el reinado del Cristo Rey, no sólo en nuestras propias vidas, sino también en las vidas de todos los que nos rodean. Esto fue el testimonio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, y pedimos su intercesión mientras trabajamos juntos en la comunión de la Iglesia para lograr la nueva evangelización.

Concluyo con las palabras del Papa Juan Pablo II, pronunciadas en su visita a la *Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, en la ciudad de México en 1999:

¡Virgen Santa de Guadalupe, reina de la paz! Salva a las naciones y a los pueblos del continente. Haz que todos, gobernantes y ciudadanos, aprendan a vivir en la auténtica libertad, actuando según las exigencias de la justicia y el respeto de los derechos humanos, para que así se consolide definitivamente la paz. ¡Para ti, Señora de Guadalupe, madre de Jesús y madre nuestra, todo el cariño, honor, gloria y alabanza continua de tus hijos e hijas americanos!

† Kevin W. Vann

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

Noticias

de la Iglesia



Musulmanes y cristianos asisten a un servicio memorial en la iglesia católica siria en Bagdad, el 7 de noviembre, ofrecido en memoria de las víctimas del ataque del 31 de octubre en la iglesia, que dejó saldo de 58 personas muertas y docenas de heridos. (Foto CNS / Mohammed Ameen, Reuters)

La colecta de la CCHD se dirigirá a defender la dignidad humana por medio de la lucha contra la pobreza

WASHINGTON (CNS) — La dignidad humana se puede defender mediante la lucha contra la pobreza, dijeron los dirigentes de la *Campaña católica de desarrollo humano* (CCHD) en su preparación para la colecta anual del 2010, que se recaudará en la mayoría de las parroquias el 20 y el 21 de noviembre.

“En estos tiempos de gran sufrimiento económico, es más importante que nunca para la iglesia de los Estados Unidos, por medio de la *Campaña católica de desarrollo humano*, continuar con la misión de Jesucristo a fin de ‘llevarles la buena nueva a los pobres, libertad a los cautivos, vista nueva a los ciegos y liberación a los oprimidos’”, dijo el obispo Roger P. Morin de Biloxi, Mississippi, presidente del subcomité de los *Obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos*, en una declaración.

“La CCHD es una parte única y esencial de un compromiso católico más amplio para vencer la pobreza. Por medio de la CCHD se busca ‘el camino institucional... de la caridad, no menos excelente y efectivo que la clase de caridad por la que se encuentra al prójimo directamente’”, añadió el obispo Morin, citando palabras de la encíclica del Papa Benedicto XVI, del año 2009, *Caritas in Veritate* (Caridad en la verdad).

El obispo hizo los comentarios en una carta dirigida a las parroquias, en la que se les pedía a los católicos que fuesen tan generosos como les fuera posible durante la colecta anual, que es la fuente principal de apoyo para el programa nacional de los obispos de los Estados Unidos en contra de la pobreza.

En el censo de los Estados Unidos del año 2009, se informaba que había habido un aumento de un 9.6 por ciento de pobreza. En general, había 43.6 millones de personas que vivían a nivel de pobreza, que representaba un 14.3 por ciento del total de la población.

Durante 40 años, por medio de la CCHD, se han dado fondos a grupos de la comunidad para que se hagan viviendas asequibles, se obtengan salarios justos y se dé entrenamiento de trabajo, como también la organización de proyectos dirigidos por individuos de bajos ingresos para ayudar a las personas y resolver problemas en su comunidad respectiva.

El año pasado, por medio de la CCHD, se otorgaron más de \$7.8 millones a 223 peticionarios en todos los Estados Unidos; 648 parroquias católicas, 39 instituciones católicas y 31 comunidades religiosas involucradas en los grupos beneficiados por la CCHD.

Dolan: ‘Estoy sorprendido; me siento honrado, halagado ... un tanto intimidado’

BALTIMORE (CNS) — El arzobispo Timothy M. Dolan de Nueva York estaba tan sorprendido como cualquier otro al ser electo presidente de la *Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos* (USCCB) el 16 de noviembre.

“Estoy sorprendido; me siento honrado, halagado y un tanto intimidado”, dijo el arzobispo Dolan a *Catholic News Service*, poco después de haber sido elegido en un desvío sin precedente de la tradición normal de la USCCB, donde elijen al vicepresidente de la conferencia a la presidencia.

Ganó 128 a 111 al actual vicepresidente, el obispo Gerald F. Kicanas de Tucson, Arizona, en una tercera ronda de votación, y asumirá el puesto al final de la reunión de los obispos el 18 de noviembre.

Diciendo que no sabía qué había detrás de su triunfo, y manteniendo el sentido de humor por el cual es conocido, bromeó que lo único que pudo haber hecho como “campaña” para la presidencia era hacer una oferta: “Prometí que comeríamos *Dunkin’ Donuts* durante el receso para el café matutino (de las reuniones de los obispos) y helados de *Haagen-Dazs* para el receso de la tarde, pero aparte de eso, no hice ningunas promesas”.

El arzobispo Dolan es nativo de Missouri y fue ordenado para la *Arquidiócesis de St. Louis* en 1976. Estudió para el sacerdocio en el *Cardinal Glennon College*, en St. Louis, y en el *Pontificio Colegio Norteamericano* y la *Pontificia Universidad Santo Tomás*, ambos en Roma.

Después de la ordenación terminó su doctorado en Historia eclesiástica estadounidense en la *Universidad Católica de América*, escribiendo su disertación acerca del fallecido arzobispo Edwin O’Hara, uno de los fundadores de la *Asociación bíblica católica*.

Dijo a CNS que actualmente está leyendo *Decision Points*, la autobiografía del ex presidente George W. Bush.

En conferencia de prensa después de la elección, citó entre sus modelos como obispos al arzobispo O’Hara y a su predecesor como arzobispo de Nueva York, el fallecido cardenal John O’Connor, cuya cruz pectoral de oro lleva puesta.



El 16 de noviembre en Baltimore, durante la reunión anual de otoño de la Conferencia de obispos católicos, el arzobispo Timothy M. Dolan, de Nueva York, visto a la derecha, se dirige a miembros de los medios de difusión. Los obispos lo eligieron presidente de la conferencia. A la izquierda se ve el vicepresidente nuevamente elegido, el arzobispo Joseph E. Kurtz, de Louisville, Kentucky. (Foto CNS/Nancy Wiehch)

La elección del arzobispo Dolan marcó la primera vez desde que la conferencia episcopal fue reorganizada en 1966—después de las reformas del Segundo Concilio Vaticano—que un vicepresidente activo, buscando la presidencia, no gana la elección. En dos elecciones, en 1974 y en 1977, las circunstancias dictaron que el vicepresidente no ascendería a liderar la conferencia.

En medio de cierta crítica pública en semanas recientes acerca del proceso de elección, sospecha que los obispos podrían haber comenzado a “erizarse” un poco ante la noción de que los resultados podrían ser una conclusión preestablecida.

“Amo al obispo Kicanas, y asumía que él sería el presidente”, dijo el arzobispo. “Sin embargo, sí pienso que los obispos toman estas elecciones tan seriamente que hay un tipo de irritación al considerar cualquiera ganador seguro”.

“Pienso que muchos obispos quizás dijeron que era tiempo que el vicepresidente no se convirtiera automáticamente en presidente”, continuó. “Eso sí fue una sorpresa.”

Uno puede ver que el obispo Kicanas obtuvo una gran votación. Él disfruta de alto aprecio”.

El arzobispo Dolan, de 60 años de edad, dijo estar un poco intimidado al ser sucesor del cardenal Francis E. George como presidente. Durante la entrevista con CNS, llamó al cardenal George “un asombroso cóctel de ingenio, inteligencia perceptiva y astucia pastoral”.

También admitió: “No soy muy bueno en reuniones”, por lo que la posibilidad de estar a cargo del flujo de una reunión es un poco intimidante.

“Hasta mis hermanos obispos bromean, porque me observan en estas reuniones y saben que mi nivel de paciencia no es muy alto, que soy uno de los que va a menudo a buscar café en medio de una sesión. No voy a poder hacer eso más”, bromeó. “Estoy atrapado en la banca”.

El arzobispo Dolan dijo que lamenta tener que entregar su presidencia de *Catholic Relief Services* (*Servicios Católico de Socorro*), del cual dijo ha encontrado estimulante, por el sentido que le ha dado de la iglesia universal.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

UDMC speakers bring fresh ideas to those in ministry

FROM PAGE 1

Jesus, on his journey to Jerusalem, told several parables, and some of the most memorable ones in the New Testament. He added that Jesus, in responding to a malicious, loaded question from a lawyer, tells the story of the Good Samaritan and teaches that there is no boundary to who we should love as neighbor.

“Jesus knows how to teach on the journey to Jerusalem,” the cardinal said. “Sisters and brothers, if we walk together in Christ when we pray, we know we have to learn how to teach. That’s part and parcel of the message of our Catholic faith. We have to teach like Jesus. We have to teach with imagination, we have to teach with ‘suavity’ is the word I like to use. The sweetness of putting a sucker punch in the stomach and not even knowing that you’ve been hit by it, that’s the way we have to learn to teach.”

Cardinal DiNardo concluded by adding that it’s also important to have fellowship, to form solidarity with others, and to share the news that Christ is risen. He mentioned that Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, often took part in table fellowship, going to several dinners and teaching or performing miracles.

He retold the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who encountered the Risen Jesus, who also had dinner with them.

“But there’s a further dimension that many people never mention about the Emmaus episode,” Cardinal DiNardo continued. “It is at the centerpiece of the eucharistic feast that we get the basis for mission. They can’t stay there anymore, they have to run back and announce to the twelve, the Lord is risen. Table fellowship with Jesus makes the Church want to be in fellowship and solidarity with all.... The Catholic faith wants us to invite all in but also to invite all to repent. Little is forgiven the one whose love is small.”

The conference also featured talks by dozens of prominent speakers from around the nation. Participants had the opportunity to listen to talks ranging from martyrs and feminine models of ministry in the Bible, to the future of faith formation and end-of-life issues in Catholic teaching.

Rocco Palmo, the developer of the “Whispers in the Loggia” website which has received more than 20 million hits, and also a commentator on Catholic topics for a number of well-known



Clockwise from upper left: Chanacee Ruth-Kilgore, director of Catholics Respect Life for the diocese chats with a visitor to the diocese's Respect Life table in the exhibit hall ■ Bishop Vann shares some thoughts with Cardinal DiNardo between sessions ■ Dr. Robert McCarty offers communications tips for parents and youth ministers ■ Rocco Palmo, creator of the Whispers in the Loggia website offers his view of the need to use social networking for reaching youth and young adults ■ Anna Marie Chamblee, Marriage Tribunal judge/assessor, Fr. Dan Kelley, and Meg Hogan, director of the Marriage Tribunal, listen intently to a speaker ■ Barbara Chapman, administrative assistant in the Office of Vocations and Seminarians, and Sue Laux, coordinator of Youth for Life for the diocese, seek to pick up communications pointers from Dr. McCarty ■ Director of Adult Catechesis and Formation for the diocese, Lucas Pollice, speaks to what the camera reveals from another angle, is a packed meeting room



newspapers and TV networks, spoke about the challenges and the critical importance of connecting the Church to the recent technology revolution. He told how he developed his website in 2004 in the basement of his parents’ home and how one month later the site viewer numbers ballooned to 10,000 visits, and then to several million a few years later — evidence, he noted, that people are looking for peace and a sense of belonging.

Palmo spoke of the enormous numbers of people online, searching the Web, using social networking tools and so on. “When we use these, we spend long stretches online, aimlessly wandering around simply because we seek,” Palmo said. “If we’re not there as a Church, my friends, someone or something else will be, and anytime we lose one of us to something else, we all lose. We all lose; the stakes are too high....”

Dr. Robert McCarty in his talk, “Catholic Youth Evangelization: A Call to the Good News” also touched on the concept of spreading the message of the Gospel, but focused specifically on ministering to youth.

In front of a packed meeting room he outlined some important tools to use to bring the Good

News to young people — a challenge because they’re living in a fast-living world with material values, Dr. McCarty said.

“When we think about young people, I think there is a hunger for meaning and purpose,” he told an audience which included many youth ministers. “I think kids are hungry for a sense of ‘there’s a reason for this.’ For young people sometimes you hear the language of ‘is there a plan?’ ‘Is there some work God wants me to do?’”

He added that youth are hungry not only for the holy and the transcendent, but also for human connections, which McCarty said can be the language for sharing the Gospel message.

“The language of young people, I’m going to say first, it’s the language of relationships,” McCarty said. “I don’t think this has ever changed: with young people it is the language of relationships.”

McCarty also gave the audience several tips on how to develop relationships with their youth in a way that calls them to community, a relationship with Jesus, and eventually discipleship.

“What does Jesus do in his ministry? The first thing He does, He makes contact with people,” McCarty said. “For three years He

wanders around, He goes where they live; He goes where they pray; He goes where they have dinner.... The point is He makes contact. He goes where they are. The second thing He does then, He invites them into relationship with Himself, with the community of believers. And it’s always an invitation; it’s always an invitation to be in relationship ... that relationship leads to the possibility of commitment, and it’s always a possibility, you can never demand it. You can never require it.”

To get there McCarty said it takes spending time with youth, being where they are, and listening to them. He offered using the scale of one-to-ten to help youth express or describe something. He also encouraged participants and ministers to use small talk and create conversation with youth.

“Be where they are, spend the time with them to build relationships. It’s about being the Good News in the flesh,” he said.

Sue Laux, Youth for Life coordinator for the Diocese of Fort Worth said she enjoyed the conference and Dr. McCarty’s talk.

“There were several things I took from it,” she said. “One of them was ways of using small talk to help reach our kids,” she said, referring to his suggestion

that they ask kids to rate their feelings on a scale of one to ten on various things, because, “they won’t always tell you right off what they think. So I really liked that idea, using that scale to improve communications with kids.”

Mark Knox, high school youth minister at Good Shepherd Parish in Colleyville, said he has been coming to the conference since it was held at Dallas’s St. Monica Parish and that he enjoyed the event and especially the address by Cardinal DiNardo.

“Having the cardinal in our presence is a blessing, because I’ve never met a cardinal before. It’s hard enough to see the bishop, then to see the cardinal there, that’s pretty neat.”

He also enjoyed being able to visit with fellow ministers.

Knox said Good Shepherd’s staff is active in the diocese, “and every time we have a diocesan function, I see all the youth ministers in our diocese,” he said. “But I know a whole lot of youth ministers and other parish staff in Dallas and I never see them. So having one event where all of us [from both the dioceses] can come together is a blessing because we get to see those colleagues we don’t normally get to see at our own diocesan functions.”

Respect for Life

At all stages

Bishop to celebrate Vigil for All Nascent Human Life

Bishop Kevin Vann will celebrate the Vigil for All Nascent Human Life Saturday, Nov. 27 at 5:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral. The vigil will consist of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, evening prayer, a Rosary, and Benediction.

In September, Pope Benedict announced that he would celebrate a "Vigil for All Nascent Human Life," "Nascent" meaning life at its beginnings or origins, on Nov. 27 at St. Peter's Basilica, coinciding with first vespers of the First Sunday of Advent. The Holy Father also requested that "all diocesan bishops (and their equivalent) of every particular Church preside in analogous celebrations involving the faithful in their respective parishes, religious communities, associations, and movements."

For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, director of the diocese's Catholics Respect Life Office at (817) 560-2452, ext. 257, or by e-mail at cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org.

George Weigel announced as keynote speaker for diocese's 2011 pro-life banquet

The Catholics Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth has announced that George Weigel, renowned theologian and biographer of Pope John Paul II, will be the keynote speaker at next year's Bishop's Annual Catholic Pro-Life Banquet.

The banquet will be held Saturday, Sept. 24, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency DFW, 2334 N. International Pkwy., DFW Airport.

A native of Baltimore, George Weigel was educated at St. Mary's Seminary College in his native city, and at the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto. In 1975, Weigel moved to Seattle where he was assistant professor of theology and assistant (later acting) Dean of Studies at the St. Thomas Seminary School of Theology in Kenmore.

In 1984-85 Weigel was a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. There, he wrote *Tranquillitas Ordinis: The Present Failure and Future Promise of American Catholic Thought on War and Peace* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

Weigel is the author or editor of 19

other books. He has written essays, op-ed columns, and reviews for the major opinion journals and newspapers in the United States, and is a contributor to *Newsweek*. A frequent guest on television and radio, he is also Vatican analyst for NBC News. His weekly column, "The Catholic Difference," is syndicated to sixty newspapers around the United States. His scholarly work and his journalism are regularly translated into the major European languages.

From 1989 through June 1996, Weigel was president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he led a wide-ranging, ecumenical, and inter-religious program of research and publication on foreign and domestic policy issues.

From June 1996, as a Senior Fellow of the Center, Weigel, in his most famous work, prepared a major study of the life, thought, and action of Pope John Paul II. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* was published to international acclaim in the Fall of 1999, in English, French, Italian, and Spanish editions. Polish, Portuguese,



Noted Catholic theologian and author George Weigel speaks at the Atlanta Archdiocese's 2007 eucharistic congress, held at the Georgia International Convention Center in Atlanta.

Slovak, Czech, and Slovenian editions were published in 2000.

Weigel has been awarded 12 honorary doctorates, the papal cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, and the *Gloria Artis* Gold Medal by the Republic of Poland. He serves on the boards of directors of several organizations dedicated to human rights and the cause of religious freedom and is a member of the editorial board of *First Things*.

George Weigel and his wife, Joan, have three children and one grandchild, and live in North Bethesda, Maryland.



Sister Rejeanne Roussel, SSMN, general superior for the international congregation, offers a few words during the ceremony.



Sister Patricia Ste. Marie, provincial for the sisters' Western Province, speaks during the ceremony.



Sister Miriam NeSmith helps newly-professed Sister Gloria Cabrera with her cross.



Sister Inés Díaz sings from a hymnal during the Mass.

Profession...

FROM PAGE 28

love.

"That's why the readings are so rich with this notion of being so much in love with God, that we can love everybody else with his love," Fr. Vessels added. "And far from there being a conflict between human love and divine love, they are made for each other. That's what our faith is, that's what our salvation is, to live the love of God in our everyday life."

Fr. Vessels reflected on Sr. Gloria and Sr. Inés's Mexican heritage, calling the evening's event a historic moment in the

organization of the Catholic Church in this country. "The Spanish influence of the Mexican Church, the Central American Church, is being felt," he said. And certainly the faith of the Mexican Church, I would say, you can reduce it to a Marian church, a family church, and a suffering church."

He spoke of Sr. Clara's Vietnamese heritage, surmising that she brought similar qualities from her native land.

"They don't leave anything behind," Fr. Vessels said. "They bring and contribute to this congregation the charisms of their own institutions. Yes they are leaving their institutions to join this one, but with joy. Not because they didn't like the other institution,

but because God has called them precisely to share these blessings, these graces, with the congregation of Our Lady of Namur."

Present for the liturgy was Bishop Kevin Vann, who prayed the "blessing for those who are sent as missionaries." "I believe this is an appropriate blessing for the three of you," he said, in Spanish and English, "you are missionaries for us and for all the Church."

"...Make their words the echo of Christ's voice," he prayed, "so that those who hear them may be drawn to obey the Gospel. Fill the hearts of your missionaries with the Holy Spirit so that becoming all things to all people, that they may lead many to you, the Father of all, and to sing your praises in your holy

Church."

The bishop ended his prayer with a blessing spoken in Vietnamese, to the delight of the audience. The crowd answered with pleased laughter, cheers, and applause.

"I have been a member of this adventure for the five years that it's been going on," Fr. Vessels had recalled, concluding his homily. "Inés, Gloria and Clara... I love all three of them, and I won't make one jealous of the other..."

"See, that's the point: When your love is rooted in divine love, then there's no fear, there's no mistaking the love that you feel for another person, and that's what we share, what we've shared these five years."



Sister Clara Vo takes her vows to be a part of the congregation.

Events Calendar

Around the Diocese and region

December Dates

1

AUXILIARY TO THE DISCALCED CARMELITE NUNS' ADVENT QUIET DAY

10 a.m.
Discalced Carmelite Monastery, 5801 Mount Carmel Dr., Arlington. For information, contact Jean Mallick at (817) 738-7123.

3

AN EVENING OF PRAYER AND SHARING WITH THE SISTERS OF ST. MARY OF NAMUR

First Friday of each month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Single women ages 18-45; Our Lady of Victory Center, 909 W. Shaw, Fort Worth. For information, call Sister Yolanda Cruz at (817) 923-3091.

4

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION

First Saturday of each month at 10 a.m.; Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth. For information, call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768, ext. 105

4-5

CATHOLIC RENEWAL CENTER CHRISTMAS BOOK AND GIFT SALE

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.
Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, call the CRC at (817) 429-2920.

5

WINDTHORST KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SAUSAGE MEAL

11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
St. Mary's Parish, corners of Highways 281, 25, and 174 in Windthorst. For information, call Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6444.

8

HOLY FAMILY MENS CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER/DANCE

7 p.m.
Ridglea Country Club, 3700 Bernie Anderson Ave., Fort Worth. For information, call Don Sutton at (817) 735-1424.

9

FORT WORTH DIOCESAN MINISTRY WITH LESBIAN AND GAY CATHOLICS, OTHER SEXUAL MINORITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Vespers will begin at 7 p.m. in the chapel at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth, followed by a pot-luck dinner. For information, contact Father Warren Murphy at (817) 919-1122 or Dorene Rose at (817) 329-7370.

10-12

RACHEL'S VINEYARD INTERDENOMINATIONAL WEEKEND RETREAT

This is a confidential retreat. For information, call (817) 923-4757.

11

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH CELEBRATE 125 YEARS OF MINISTRY IN THE UNITED STATES

2 p.m.
Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop Kevin Farrell at Holy Family of Nazareth Church, 2323 Cheyenne St., Irving. For information, contact Sr. Edyta Krawczyk at (972) 641-4496 or sedytak@yahoo.com.

11

'EUCHARIST, RECONCILIATION, AND OUR LADY' WITH DR. SCOTT HAHN

10:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
All Saints Church, 5231 Meadow Creek Dr., Dallas. For information, call Chris Vaughan.

13

MEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

Second Monday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Single men ages 16-50; St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

13-15

ADVENT MISSION: WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? SEARCHING FOR THE CHILD JESUS!

7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 861 Wildwood Ln., Grapevine. For information, call the parish office at (817) 481-2685.

14

WOMEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

Second Tuesday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Single women ages 16-50; St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

15

20TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SING-ALONG

6:30 p.m.
Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, 1814 Egyptian Way, Grand Prairie. To RSVP or for more information, contact Sr. Edyta Krawczyk at (972) 641-4496.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT "MAGNIFICAT"

7:30 p.m.
Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, 2800 Valwood Parkway, Farmers Branch. For information, contact Thomas Woods at (817) 875-3416.

19

ADVENT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

3 p.m.
St. Mary the Assumption Church, 509 West Magnolia, Fort Worth. For information, call Rebecca Slugg at (817) 923-1911.

22

22ND ANNUAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BANQUET

Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom, 1201 Houston St. For information, contact the Catholic Schools office at (817) 560-2452, ext. 280.

26

PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP: THE LAY CARMELITES

2 - 4:30 p.m.
Chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lubbock St. in Fort Worth. For information, call Phyllis Poth | (817) 457-1746.

January Dates

10

MEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

Second Monday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Single men ages 16-50; St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

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WOMEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

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21-23

RACHEL'S VINEYARD WEEKEND RETREAT

This is a confidential retreat. For information, call (817) 923-4757.

22

HIKE FOR LIFE

Registration: 1:30 - 2 p.m.; Beginning Ceremony: 2 - 2:30 p.m.; Kickoff: 2:30 p.m. St. Stephen Church, 1802 Bethel Rd., Weatherford. For information or to register, go to www.hikeforlifetexas.com.

27

FORT WORTH DIOCESAN MINISTRY WITH LESBIAN AND GAY CATHOLICS, OTHER SEXUAL MINORITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

7 p.m.
Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Warren Murphy at (817) 919-1122 or Dorene Rose at (817) 329-7370.

28-30

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, call (972) 601-4091 or e-mail the DFW Beginning Experience Team at dfwbe@hotmail.com. Additional information on the program may be found on www.beginningexperiencedfw.org or www.beginningexperience.org.

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NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

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CALL

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Classifieds

Liturgy Coordinator

Holy Family Church, Fort Worth, is accepting résumés for the position of Coordinator of Liturgy. Responsibilities include: coordinating liturgical ministry volunteers; planning funeral, wedding, and parish liturgical celebrations; collaborating with the choir directors and musical ministries. Applicant must be a practicing Catholic and familiar with post Vatican II liturgy. A college degree or equivalent work experience, good communication and organizational skills are required. Send a résumé to the attention of Father Jeff Poirot, Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107 or by e-mail to jpoirot@holyfamilyfw.org



World Youth Day Cross makes its own pilgrimage in advance of the 2011 event in Madrid

Bishop Gregorio Martinez Sacristan of Zamora, Spain, follows the World Youth Day cross as its carried by young people during a service in the town square of Zamora, Spain, Nov. 13. The cross is traveling throughout Spain in advance of the Aug.16-21 international Catholic youth gathering in Madrid. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Good Newsmakers

Three sisters transfer into the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Western Province, professing to give themselves

Entirely to God

Story and Photos by Kathy Cribari Hamer / Correspondent

Three women of distinctively different heritage spoke identical words Nov. 11 as they professed final vows at Our Lady of Victory Center.

The young women, two from Mexico and one from Vietnam, came from three other religious congregations, and were canonical transfers to the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. That creative and inclusive SSMN community, together with a supportive array of oblates, associates, and outside friends, welcomed them, literally, with open arms.

“I give myself entirely to you,” each candidate said in the liturgy, promising chastity, poverty, and obedience, asking to seek God’s glory, “in whatever way you lead me.

“I promise to live, pray, and work in the congregation,” they each stated, “and to do whatever is asked of me, wherever I am sent.”

Newly accepted into the SSMN congregation were Sister Inés Díaz, from Mexico, a former member of the Congregation of the Missionary Catechists of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; Sister Gloria Cabrera, from Mexico, formerly with the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception; and Sister Clara Vo, from Vietnam, who had been a member of the LaSalle Sisters.

The sisters’ final vows were not

the only occasion celebrated Nov. 11. It was also the celebration of the SSMN Founding Day. After the profession liturgy, the community shared a traditional meal of baked potatoes and apples, which had been the supper shared in Belgium by the founding sisters their first day as a community.

The canonical transfer was a process that took five years, during which the three had studied, lived, and prayed with their newly-



Three sisters from different congregations canonically transferred into the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur at the congregation's Western Province headquarters, Our Lady of Victory Center in Fort Worth, Nov. 11. From left to right are Sister Gloria Cabrera, formerly a Franciscan Sister, Sister Clara Vo, formerly a LaSalle Sister, and Sister Inés Díaz, formerly a Missionary Catechist of the Sacred Hearts do the "Sign of the Cross" as they are prayed over by the bishop.

chosen congregation. Sr. Inés and Sr. Gloria had been in Fort Worth working in catechetical ministries as members of their previous orders, and “They made a connection with our sisters,” said Sister Patricia Ste. Marie, SSMN, Western Province Provincial. She said they felt they would be happy carrying on their lives in this community.

Coming from Vietnam, Sr. Clara had made a more complex journey to Fort Worth and the Sisters of St. Mary, having spent 24 years as superior general of her order in her native country.

Celebrating the profession liturgy was Father Jack Vessels, SJ, formerly of Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas, who had been instrumental in the discernment and formation of the three nuns, and was spiritual director for Srs. Gloria and Inés.

In his homily, Fr. Vessels found a common denominator in the day’s readings, the Song of Songs: “My lover speaks... Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!”; the



Fr. Jack Vessels, SJ, preaches at the Mass commemorating the sisters’ profession and the congregation’s anniversary. Fr. Vessels served as spiritual director for Srs. Gloria and Inés.

book of Peter, in which, Fr. Vessels said, “Peter has grasped the truth of Jesus his friend and the son of God”; and the Gospel of John, “I love you just as my father loves you – remain in my love.”

“The common denominator is human love,” he explained. “The

human love of Christ can only reach out to others through our human love for each other. That’s the indispensable element. Sure he can show his love lots of other ways, but the way he has chosen to show it, by becoming human, is with human

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