

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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November 21, 2008

Bishops cite abortion deregulation fears in post-election statement



Bishop Michael Cote of Norwich, Connecticut, front left, and Coadjutor Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of Cincinnati, attend a Nov. 11 session of the annual fall meeting of the USCCB in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

By Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE — Fears about laws and changes in regulations on abortion that might advance under a new Democratic-run Congress and White House are the central focus of a statement approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 12 during its annual fall meeting.

The majority of the 830-word, untitled statement focuses on concerns about the possible passage of the Freedom of Choice Act, calling it “an evil law that would further divide our country” and adding that the church “should be intent on opposing evil.”

It warns against interpreting the outcome of the Nov. 4 elections as “a referendum on abortion” and says “aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans.”

The statement was crafted during the bishops’ meeting in Baltimore and involved a total of nearly three hours of discussion during executive and public sessions Nov. 11. Under USCCB policies, statements drafted outside the usual committee approval process may be issued by the

SEE BISHOPS, P. 14

Rising unemployment prompts more people to turn to Catholic Charities

By Eileen Casey Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Catholic Charities agencies across the country are finding that the nation’s growing unemployment rate is one more factor in their efforts to provide food, clothing, and shelter to those in need.

In Michigan — where automobile giants General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler are based — unemployment is a reality for thousands of people once employed in the car industry and for business owners hit hard by the collapsing economy.

“People are being laid off continually,” said Chris Root, who heads the Lansing, Michigan, Diocese’s Catholic Charities department. The agency’s offices around the diocese help people pay for rent and utilities, provide food, and help the unemployed with a job training program.

The demand for all these services is increasing significantly, Root said.

Counseling for domestic abuse, substance abuse, and for family and marriage problems all have been on the rise since the financial downturn, Root noted in a Nov. 12 interview with Catholic News Service. “The strong correlation between economics and marriage and the well-being of family life is evident here. There is an increased need to assist people in the family dynamics,

and relationships.”

According to the U.S. Labor Department statistics released Nov. 7, the jobless rate rose to 6.5 percent in October when employers fired 240,000 workers. That figure put the total number of unemployed Americans past 10.08 million, the highest level in 25 years.

One year ago, the jobless rate was 4.8 percent. Many economists are saying the rate could climb to 8 percent or 8.5 percent by the end of 2009.

“The impact on the states has been tremendous,” said Paul Martodam, CEO of Catholic Charities in the Phoenix Diocese.

Currently, the Phoenix agency is only able to help up to 40 percent of those who seek assistance. It is providing more utility and emergency assistance than in previous years and finding it more difficult to help people find jobs with livable wages.

Cutbacks in service-related industries such as retail, restaurants, and construction — along with a 5 percent decrease in federal funds and a 20 percent decrease in donations — has made it tough to assist those in need. The Phoenix Catholic Charities agency also has had a decline in staff from 610 to 537 employees.

Dominick Calgi, CEO of Catholic Charities, P. 15



Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, prays as he celebrates Mass Nov. 10 at the bishops’ annual fall meeting in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

Bishop’s Annual Pro-Life Banquet draws record crowd to hear Fr. Mitch Pacwa

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen Correspondent

More than a few people wiped tears from their eyes as a smiling 8-month-old Jeslliam was carried on stage by a relative. Moments earlier, her parents Jessica and William Lopez, told an audience attending the Bishop’s Annual Catholic Pro-Life Banquet, how the presence of a sidewalk counselor outside a Fort Worth abortion clinic, saved their baby’s life.

Reading from a letter written by his wife, the young father described how his spouse attempted a self-induced abortion with aspirin and other pills before making an appointment for a medical procedure. Arriving late for the scheduled abortion, the distraught mother of two thought the figure approaching her car in the parking



lot was a clinic employee.

“Instead I found the perfect angel,” Jessica Lopez wrote in her honest, first person account. “She told me an abortion would not make my situation better and reassured me that everything was going to be okay. I was going to be helped.”

Assistance came from The Gabriel Project, a pro-life ministry in the Diocese of Fort Worth that offers expectant mothers spiritual guidance, emotional support, and material resources if needed. A trained volunteer called Lopez at home later that

SEE FATHER PACWA, P. 21

Jessica Lopez holds her 8-month-old daughter Jeslliam on stage at the Nov. 1 banquet, as CRL President Angela Walters looks on at left. Her husband, William Lopez (right) had just read Jessica’s story of how sidewalk counseling made her daughter’s young life possible.

Cardinal George voices hope for Obama administration, points to possible obstacles to our desired unity

Given the importance of this issue in the recent Fall Meeting of Bishops of the United States, Cardinal George's statement appears in lieu of Bishop Vann's column. It should be noted that Bishop Vann contributed to the discussion that helped form the statement in the area of protecting freedom of conscience for medical professionals. Bishop Vann has been appointed by Cardinal George as the Episcopal Conference Liaison to the Catholic Health Association.

Cardinal George's statement will run in Spanish in the Dec. 5 issue of the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC.

BALTIMORE — Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), voiced hope for the Obama administration but pointed to possible obstacles to our desired unity, in a Nov. 12 statement at the end of the annual fall assembly of the USCCB.

"The bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic

transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all," he said.

He said that "the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve," if the administration's policies increase abortions.

"Aggressive pro-abortion policies, legislation, and execu-

tive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.

"We express again our great desire to work with all those who cherish the common good of our nation," he added. "The common good is not the sum total of individual interests: it is achieved in the working out of a common life based upon good reason and good will for all."

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

"If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil." (Psalm 127:1)

The Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historic transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all. Because of the Church's history and the scope of her ministries in this country, we want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all; our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented; our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good and will continue to cooperate gladly with the government and all others working for these goods.

The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all. Legal protection for those members of the human family waiting to be born in this country was removed when the Supreme Court decided *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973. This was bad law. The danger the Bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself.

In the last Congress, a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced that would, if brought forward in the same form today, outlaw any "interference" in providing abortion at will. It would deprive the American people in all fifty states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints

and regulations on the abortion industry. FOCA would coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars. It would counteract any and all sincere efforts by government and others of good will to reduce the number of abortions in our country.

Parental notification and informed consent precautions would be outlawed, as would be laws banning procedures such as partial-birth abortion and protecting infants born alive after a failed abortion. Abortion clinics would be deregulated. The Hyde Amendment restricting the federal funding of abortions would be abrogated. FOCA would have lethal consequences for prenatal human life.

FOCA would have an equally destructive effect on the freedom of conscience of doctors,

nurses, and health care workers whose personal convictions do not permit them to cooperate in the private killing of unborn children. It would threaten Catholic health care institutions and Catholic Charities. It would be an evil law that would further divide our country, and the Church should be intent on opposing evil.

On this issue, the legal protection of the unborn, the bishops are of one mind with Catholics and others of good will. They are also pastors who have listened to women whose lives have been diminished because they believed they had no choice but to abort a baby. Abortion is a medical procedure that kills, and the psychological and spiritual consequences are written in the sorrow and depression of many women and men. The bishops

are single-minded because they are, first of all, single-hearted.


The recent election was principally decided out of concern for the economy, for the loss of jobs and homes and financial security for families, here and around the world. If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve. Abortion kills not only unborn children; it destroys constitutional order and the common good, which is assured only when the life of every human being is legally protected. Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation, and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.

This statement is written at

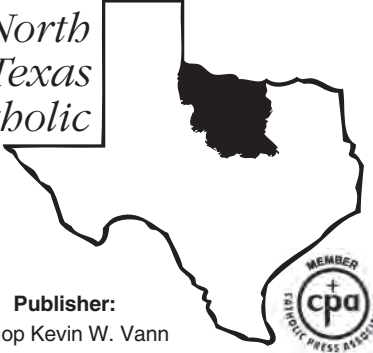
the request and direction of all the Bishops, who also want to thank all those in politics who work with good will to protect the lives of the most vulnerable among us. Those in public life do so, sometimes, at the cost of great sacrifice to themselves and their families; and we are grateful. We express again our great desire to work with all those who cherish the common good of our nation. The common good is not the sum total of individual desires and interests; it is achieved in the working out of a common life based upon good reason and good will for all.

Our prayers accompany President-elect Obama and his family and those who are cooperating with him to assure a smooth transition in government. Many issues demand immediate attention on the part of our elected "watchman" (Psalm 127). May God bless him and our country.

*North
Texas
Catholic*



17 Years in a Row



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Little Rock's Bishop Taylor defends rights of immigrants in pastoral letter

By Malea Hargett
Catholic News Service

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Five months after being ordained the bishop of Little Rock, Bishop Anthony B. Taylor has issued his first pastoral letter in hopes of teaching his flock about the human rights of undocumented immigrants.

I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: A Pastoral Letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants was introduced to the priests of the state Nov. 5 during a study day. Diocesan employees gathered at St. John Center for a similar event Nov. 7.

Bishop Taylor said he believes Catholics are not properly informed about the human rights of immigrants.

"I hope that people will open their hearts to the call of Jesus in our time," he said in an interview with the *Arkansas Catholic*, Little Rock diocesan newspaper. "More than that, I hope it goes down from their head to their heart and (they) see what the Lord is asking of us. ... It is the biggest area where the teaching of the church is not well-known."

Bishop Taylor, who is fluent in Spanish and has worked in Hispanic ministry for 28 years, said he believes being able to migrate to another country is an "intrinsic human right."

He said it is nearly impossible for immigrants, predominantly from Mexico, to come to the United States legally.

"They are here because there is no way to get documents, not because they don't want documents," he said. "You can't be obliged to do what you can't do. Immigration laws should correspond to the reality."

The 30-page document includes five appendices with additional resources, information on what the U.S. bishops' conference has said and supporting Scripture references. The bishop consulted with several priests and laypeople over the past three months when writing the letter.

Booklets of the letter will be made available in all parishes and missions in English and Spanish.

To get parishioners to read and discuss the letter, Bishop Taylor asked Cackie Upchurch, director of Little Rock Scripture Study, to write a three-week Advent study guide for small-group sharing.

"The purpose of the pastoral letter is not to just go on record

but rather to teach," he said. "People learn not just by reading a document but also by dialoguing and sharing with others, especially if the concepts are new and are hard to get your mind around."

The pastoral letter will be distributed to parishioners on the feast of Christ the King Nov. 23, when a recorded homily by Bishop Taylor is to be played at all Masses. The study sessions are expected to be held in churches through Dec. 20.

The season before Christmas was chosen because "Advent is a time of longing and expectation, a time of hope," Bishop Taylor wrote in his letter introducing the pastoral letter. "What changes do we need to make here in Arkansas in order to ensure that today's Marys and Josephs — today's Mariás and Josés — receive a warm welcome truly worthy of the Savior whose birth we celebrate on Christmas?"

In the pastoral letter Bishop Taylor did not suggest specific changes in the law he would like to see.

"My role is that of teaching faith and morals," he said. "It is for the laypeople to come up with ways to implement that."

Copies of the pastoral letter will be sent to the state's representatives and senators.

"Hopefully they'll learn from the mistakes made in Oklahoma," including the effect on the economy there, said the bishop, ordained as a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, where he was a pastor when he was named Little Rock's bishop in April.

"If you think the (U.S.) economy is in trouble now, do we need more disruption in our economy now?" he asked.

Oklahoma legislators passed House Bill 1804, and it went into effect Nov. 1, 2007. The law makes it a felony to transport or shelter undocumented workers and requires employers to verify that all of their employees are here legally. Many employees moved to Texas and Arkansas after officials started enforcing the law, thus hurting the agriculture and service industries.

"It is so sad to see the way people's spirits get crushed by oppressive things that happen to them, by mistreatment in the workplace, where people are powerless and they were doing everything right," the bishop said.

*Responding
to God's Call*

Thanksgiving is a pilgrimage to reconnect with family and parish life

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Can our travels this holiday season to friends and family be seen as a religious pilgrimage?

Some will of course say, "Sure, padre, if you knew my family, it's a pure act of faith!" and others may say, "The holidays are the worst time of the year for me."

However, I would like to offer you a true story that may help you enjoy the holidays as never before. But first you must journey with me on a pilgrimage. Put the car keys away for a moment. This journey will require a lot of walking instead.

Pilgrimages have been a staple of the Christian life since the time of Christ. Judaism had established annual pilgrimages a thousand years before our Lord's birth which included pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Passover feast, the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, along with many other feasts. In fact, Jesus grew up having traveled annually with his parents Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover feast (*Luke 2:41*).

There are three things that stand out here. First, the travel was by foot. Can you imagine that they had to travel over 200 miles round trip by foot through mountainous regions and dangerous passages, all on unpaved roadways? So, secondly, it would have taken at least two weeks to travel to and from Jerusalem. Thirdly, they made this pilgrimage annually.

Imagine all the preparation needed for their travels. This small pilgrimage wasn't so small an event after all! Preparation for this pilgrim-

We, too, should consider the holiday season as a pilgrimage in which we choose to enter more deeply into family and parish events.

age would have consumed much of their lives each year. Since Passover is in early spring, they would have begun to prepare during the prior harvest season to obtain dried fruits, various nuts, flour, and oil, along with more immediate preparations such as unleavened bread, dried meats, and fish.

Whatever food they brought with them for the journey would be carried by hand, not in the trunk of a car. Also, they would have needed to save money to stay at an inn, if one was available, and more money to purchase a lamb and supply their other needs during their stay.

Yes, now I can see better the trouble they went through to participate in this annual pilgrimage, but what was the significance of the pilgrimage, and was it really worth all the trouble? To respond, let us look at the benefits of all their labor and sacrifices.

Because they traveled in caravan for up to two weeks, Mary and Joseph were able to meet and get to truly know their neighbors and friends, and make new acquaintances. They would have sung many songs together, mostly religious.

Around the campfires at night, Jesus would have heard the elders tell many stories of old about Judaism; Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, King David, and the prophets, but most especially about God the Father. They would have prayed together, lamented together about the times they

had forsaken God, and they would have spoken about their hope for a prosperous future.

Once they arrived in Jerusalem they would have entered more deeply into the solemnity of the occasion. Feet and bodies sore, they would have been overjoyed to have made the journey and to have returned once again to the holy city of Jerusalem and to the temple.

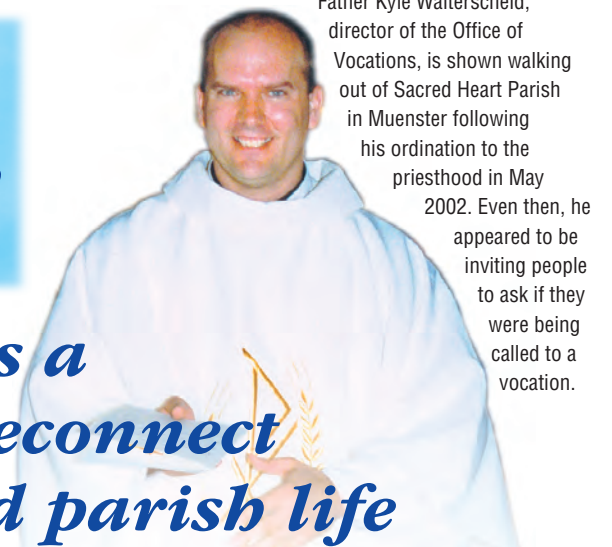
Yet, their spirits would have been moved all the more by the preparation for the Passover and the Passover itself, that reminded them that God alone is faithful and that God alone delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, led them out of the desert, and brought them into the Promised Land.

Lastly, they would have returned home, recounting for many weeks all the events, people, and experiences which had strengthened their fidelity to God. And in the end, they would have offered God true thanksgiving for their lives and their loved ones.

We, too, should consider making an annual religious pilgrimage that can help draw us back to our faith and cause us to be more appreciative of our life and salvation in Christ. We, too, should consider the holiday season as a pilgrimage in which we choose to enter more deeply into family and parish events.

Thus, at the end of this holiday season, may you recount for many weeks all the events, people, and experiences which will have strengthened your fidelity to God, and may you offer to God a true thanksgiving for your life and your loved ones.

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



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

Rachel Ministries announces plans to expand services in Spanish

Rachel Ministries is excited to announce plans to expand its outreach to include programs and services in Spanish. Rachel Ministries, a compassionate, faith-based abortion recovery ministry offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath. The expanded outreach program is in the beginning stages, and is currently seeking volunteers who can read and speak Spanish to help build the Spanish program.

The ministry is also seeking Spanish-speaking licensed counselors to volunteer during the Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats. The retreat team, which includes a priest, a licensed counselor, and several helpers, provides the confidential support required to work through the spiritual, psychological, and emotional pain of abortion, and experience the healing love and mercy of our Lord.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to be included on the referral list. Training will be provided to all volunteers.

Anyone who is bilingual and has a compassionate heart to help those hurting after an abortion is asked to contact Betsy Kopor at (817) 923-4757 or by e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

Knights of Columbus to hold Annual Thanksgiving Day Memorial Mass

The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus General Worth Assembly will celebrate its Annual Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27 at the Carmelite Convent at 5801 Mt. Carmel Dr. in Arlington. The Mass will honor the Sir Knights who passed away during the past year.

The ciborium on display at the Mass will be engraved with the names of the following Sir Knights: James W. Wright, Milton Ray Townsend, John William Petrelli, Sr., and John J. Nykaza. This ciborium will be presented to Holy Trinity School for their use at Mass services.

Father Anh Tran, Faithful Friar, will celebrate the Mass, and the Carmelite Nuns will provide the choir music.

All Knights, Sir Knights, and the public are welcome to this Memorial Mass.

Guadalupe Society to hold breakfast, dinner fundraiser

The Guadalupe Society of San Mateo Church in Fort Worth will have a breakfast on Sunday Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to noon in the church hall at 2930 Pulido St. Menudo and breakfast burritos will be served.

The society will also hold a Virgen de Guadalupe enchilada dinner fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5, in the church hall. The funds will be for the Dec. 12 celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses.

For more information, contact Rachel Rodriguez of the Guadalupe Society at (817) 994-6228.

Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

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

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

For more information, call Deacon Joe Milligan at (817) 737-6768 ext. 105.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Dec. 2

The regular fourth Thursday of the month meeting of the Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Their Families will not be held in November and December, due to the holidays.

All, including parents and friends, are invited to attend a 6 p.m. Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 2 in the chapel of the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth next to Nolan Catholic High School, followed by a pot-luck dinner.

The next regular meeting of the ministry will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



St. Catherine of Siena Church celebrates Our Lady of Guadalupe

St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Community cordially invites everyone to participate in the parish's celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Friday, Dec. 12.

A Rosary novena to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held beginning Wednesday, Dec. 3 through Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the narthex of the church, except Monday, Dec. 8, when the Rosary will be prayed at 6 p.m.

According to information provided by the parish, a bilingual Mass will be concelebrated Friday,

Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A Spanish choir, children, and youth of the parish, the Knights of Columbus, and the Matachines de María Inmaculada will participate in the celebration of this special Mass in honor of Our Lady.

Following the Mass there will be a reception in Assisi Hall with hot chocolate, tamales, and pan dulce. The Matachines de María Inmaculada will also dance during the reception.

St. Catherine of Siena is located at 1705 E. Peters Colony Road, Carrollton.

Courage group affirms Church teaching, meets twice monthly

Courage, an international apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church, ministers to those with same-sex attractions. Cardinal Lopez Trujillo affirms that the Pontifical Council for the Family "supports the organization called COURAGE which was founded by Father John Harvey, OSFS, for helping homosexual persons to live in accordance with the laws of God and the teaching of His Church." Pope John Paul II told Fr. Harvey, "Courage is doing the work of God."

Courage was created in 1980 in New York City at the request of the late Terence Cardinal Cooke. Fr. Harvey was chosen as its founder because of his years of experience directing Catholics struggling with same-sex attractions. It now has chapters throughout the United States and in eight other countries.

Courage is not a "change" ministry, that is, it does not focus on any attempt to change one's "orientation." The focus is helping members, whether single or married,

to live lives of interior and exterior chastity, which means living according to the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding sexual love as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Courage D/FW was started in 1999 with the approval of Bishop Joseph Delaney of Fort Worth and Bishop Charles Graham of Dallas. Its spiritual advisor is Msgr. Mark Seitz of St. Rita Church in Dallas. The group meets in the Metroplex every Friday evening. Meetings include prayer, discussion of relevant topics, learning how to deepen spiritual lives, sharing struggles and successes, and occasional guest speakers and fellowship.

Courage also has had an annual retreat for the last two years and is currently trying to organize a local chapter of EnCourage, the sister organization which provides support for friends and family of people with same-sex attractions.

For more information, contact (972) 938-LIFE (5433) or e-mail couragedfw@catholic.org.

NTC deadlines for submission

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

Items for the Dec. 5 issue must be received by noon on Tuesday, Nov. 25. Items for the Dec. 19 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 10.

Lay Carmelites invite others to join prayer gatherings

"Would you like to deepen your relationship with Jesus and Mary?" ask the Third Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (Lay Carmelites). The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of this deeper relationship to join them on the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship.

Those interested in participating are asked to gather at 2 p.m. in the chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lubbock in Fort Worth. Formation will take place in the college library from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.

Monthly vocational discernment program to be held Dec. 8

All men and women ages 18 to 50 are invited to attend a monthly discernment program at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth.

The next discernment program will be held Monday, Dec. 8, with a Mass in honor of the Immaculate Conception at 7 p.m. followed by eating out at a local establishment. No registration is required.

The Men and Women's Monthly Discernment Program includes a holy hour of eucharistic adoration, an hour discussion on vocational

discernment, and an evening meal provided by the Serra Club.

The women's group is led by the religious sisters serving in Fort Worth, and the men's group is led by the priests of the Vocation Office and various religious men who serve the Fort Worth Diocese. This program also welcomes anyone who is at least a sophomore in high school and at least 15 years of age.

For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org or at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

St. Michael to hold business expo

St. Michael Church in Bedford will host a Home Business Expo on Sunday, Nov. 30 from after the 7:30 a.m. Mass to 3 p.m. Organizers say people should expect showcasing and selling services for religious craft items, jewelry, merchandise,

realtors, herbal products, green companies, and much more. Organizers added that the event offers a "great opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts and at the same time support local parishioners as they work to sustain their families."



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, GAINESVILLE – St. Mary's School recently identified four seventh grade students who are eligible to participate in the Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP). They are, from left to right, Newton Vu, Hannah Gerken, Caroline Thomas, Gage Clark. Currently, there are 19 students enrolled in seventh grade. These students earned eligibility by scoring at the 95th percentile or higher on a standardized test. The Duke TIP identifies academically talented students and provides model programs and services to support the development of their optimal educational potential. The students who elect to participate will take the same ACT or SAT that high school juniors and seniors preparing for college admission will take. This above-level testing experience will provide them with more information about their academic abilities so that they can effectively plan for their high school years.

Official Assignments

The following assignments have been made by Bishop Kevin Vann:

Monsignor Charles B. King, PA, has been assigned as the parochial administrator of St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.

Father Victor Cruz, HGN, has been assigned as a sacramental minister for St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.

Father Gary Swircynski, OFM, has been assigned as a sacramental minister for St. Peter Parish, Lindsay, effective Nov. 1.

People and Events

Our Lady of Grace High School to host Development Dinner

Our Lady of Grace High School will hold its annual Development Dinner at 6 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Trophy Country Club at 500 Trophy Club Dr. in Roanoke.

The evening will feature guest speaker Patrick Reilly, founder of the Cardinal Newman Society, on the necessity of Catholic education from kindergarten to college. The presentation is geared toward parents considering sending their children to a Catholic university or college. Dave Palmer from Catholic Radio KATH-AM, 910 will serve as emcee.

The Scanlan Foundation has offered a matching grant of \$75,000, and the school's goal is to raise enough funds to match the gift and to build a school "worthy of our students' abilities and bright futures." The event will also honor the school's benefactors and supporters.

Our Lady of Grace High School, located in Roanoke, is newly accredited by the Texas Catholic



Conference. The school offers a "strong Catholic identity with faith formation integrated into a college preparatory curriculum," along with sports, after-school clubs, and leadership opportunities.

Tickets for the event will be \$50 per person, which includes dinner, entertainment, information, and fellowship. A cash bar will also be available. For more information, or reservations, call (817) 933-6516 or visit us the school's Web site, www.olghs.com.

Cathedral to hold Our Lady of Guadalupe Lecture Dec. 11

St. Patrick Cathedral will offer a lecture and slide presentation on Our Lady of Guadalupe at 7 p.m. Dec. 11. There will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m.

Dr. Miguel Leatham, a renowned Catholic expert on Our Lady of Guadalupe, will speak on "The Image of Guadalupe in the Light of Science and History." The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, believed to have been miraculously imprinted upon the cloak of Saint Juan Diego, has been the subject of various critical examinations over its 475-year history. The talk will take the audience on an historical tour of the major studies and students of the image from the Spanish colonial era to the infrared study of 1979. Dr. Leatham will compare the findings of these investigations and will comment on

their significance for understanding the image of Guadalupe and its history.

Dr. Leatham is a sociocultural anthropologist on the faculty of Texas Christian University, specializing in the study of Latin American and Mexican-American cultures, with a teaching and research focus on religion, religious movements, and ethnic folklore.

He has continuously researched and taught on the devotion of Our Lady of Guadalupe since 1982 and was a member of the Centro de Estudios Guadalupanos in Mexico City from 1982-1986. He has delivered numerous illustrated public lectures on Mexican and Mexican-American religious traditions and cultural histories in cities throughout South Texas and in Fort Worth.

St. Augustine Men's Purity Group meets at three locations

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly at three locations within the Diocese of Fort Worth. The group offers meetings at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller, in Room 213; at the Padre Pio House, 1301 Paxton Ave. in Arlington; and at Immaculate Conception Parish, 2255 North Bonnie Brae St. in Denton. Those men interested in attending one of the upcoming sessions are asked to consult the group's Web site, www.sampg.com, for specific meeting dates and times.

For more information, e-mail to Markatseamspurity@yahoo.com or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish office at (817) 431-3857.

Deaf Ministry program seeking court reporter for CART services

The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter who can help with CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation) services.

The Deaf Community celebrates a special Deaf Community Mass on the first Sunday of each month at 1:45 p.m. at San Mateo Church on the near South Side of Fort Worth.

The ministry would like to provide CART services for deaf persons who do not sign, so they can read the simultaneous transcriptions and be a part of the special liturgy.

To help with this service, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 284-3019 (Voice or TDD) or e-mail to mcinatl@fwdioc.org.



SERRA CLUB, WICHITA FALLS – The Wichita Falls Area Serra Club prepared and hosted a Clergy and Religious Appreciation Dinner September 18, 2008 at Sacred Heart Church and Parish Hall. Honored guests included thirteen clergy and religious, two diaconate candidates, and one seminary candidate. The evening began with a social hour, followed by dinner and recognition of guests. Certificates of appreciation were presented to 100-Club members and organizations. These are individuals and groups who annually provide financial support for the Club's numerous religious vocations programs. Bill Archer, former Club treasurer, was also recognized for his seven years of service. Seated in the front row from left to right are Sr. Clara Vo, Sr. Ginny Vissing, SSMN, and Sr. Patricia Ste. Marie, SSMN. Standing in the second row from left to right are Fr. Ivor Koch, Wichita Falls Serra Club Chaplain, Deacon Larry Bills, Fr. Raymond McDaniel, Fr. Severius Blank, Fr. Charles Gorantla, Fr. John Swistovich, Deacon Jim Novak, Fr. Hoa Nguyen, and Fr. Joseph Meledom.

Annual German Sausage Meal scheduled for Dec. 7 in Windthorst

The Windthorst Knights of Columbus Council #1824 wish to invite everybody to their Annual German Sausage Meal from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, in the St. Mary's Parish Hall at 101 Church St.

Food to be served includes all you can eat homemade German sausage, spare ribs and sauerkraut, trimmings, ice cream, and tea. Take-out orders will be available.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children 12 and younger. Raw sausage will be sold for \$3 per pound, and home-baked goods will be available from the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Handicap seating and parking is available.

For more information, contact Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6444.

Grammy winner to perform for benefit

This year the proceeds from the HALOS Fort Worth fifth annual dance will go towards Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth children emergency shelter.

Grammy award winner Tejano star Little Joe and his band La Familia will perform. The event is from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 29 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall at 4100 Blue Mound Rd.

The presale ticket price is \$30 per person or \$35 at the door. Tables may be reserved with the purchase of eight tickets. Ice, sodas, and food are not covered by the cost of the ticket. All donations are tax deductible.

To purchase tickets or make a donation for the raffle, please call of the numbers shown below Mary Hernandez at (817) 923-5261, Flores Insurance at (817) 724-7673, or Lopez Plumbing (817) 923-9869.

Fr. Cedric to lead Advent Mission at St. Joseph in Arlington Dec. 1-3

Father Cedric Pisegna, CP, will lead a three-night mission and Mass at St. Joseph Church at 1927 SW Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington.

Since ordination as a Passionist Priest in 1991, Fr. Cedric has dedicated his life to God and a desire to make a difference in peoples' lives by bringing them closer to Christ and the Holy Spirit. His messages are about the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ and are practical, inspirational, and orthodox Catholicism. Fr. Cedric preaches, writes, and produces to help people come to know Jesus in a personal way.

He was touched by the grace of God when he was a 19-year-old student and called to make known the imperishable riches of the Holy Spirit. His personal surrender to Christ's calling and experiences in Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the core of the real life stories he shares in his mission talks.

Fr. Cedric has produced numerous CD and DVDs on Christian living. He has also authored 12 books including *Living Passionately*, *Glorious Holy Spirit*, *Thy Kingdom Come* and his newest book, *You Can Be Happy: a lifestyle in Well Being!* Many of his books and CD/DVDs will be available for purchase and signing at the narthex each evening.



Fr. Cedric Pisegna, CP

Presently, Fr. Cedric appears on television in a number of major market areas including New York, Boston, Atlanta, San Antonio, Houston, Detroit, New Orleans, and Cincinnati and nationally on the Angel, EWTN, and National Catholic radio networks.

For more information about Fr. Cedric and to view some of his TV/radio interviews, visit his Web site at www.FrCedric.org. For more information about his three-day visit to St. Joseph, call Anita Favila at (817) 472-5181 or Metro (817) 467-3049. All talks will begin at 7 p.m. in the church. Parking available on the west sides of the church.

St. Ann to hold Advent Night of Reflection

Father Mel Bessellieu will present an Advent night of reflection at 7 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 11 at St. Ann Church in Burleson about "Angels: God's Heavenly Messengers."

The Adult Bible Study Groups will sponsor the event as a time to "slow down and direct our thoughts to Advent as a time of preparation for our Lord's Birth," according to

promotional materials.

Cookies and Punch will be served in the hall after Fr. Bessellieu's talk. For more information call the church office at (817) 295-5621.



CATHOLIC FAMILY FRATERNAL OF TEXAS – KJZT JUNIOR DIVISION OF SOCIETY #104 IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH, ABBOT – Juniors decorated and placed small white crosses on the graves of infants, children, and young adults at Fatima Cemetery for All Souls Day. The Juniors also attended the Blessing of the Graves on Nov. 2 at the cemetery. Immediately following the blessing, the Juniors placed United States flags on the veterans' graves. Pictured above left from left to right in the front row are Lauren Gerik, Lydia Pustejovsky, Payton Pustejovsky, Mallory Ballew, and Alyssa Ballew, and from left to right in the back row, Ashley Ballew, Sherry Pustejovsky, Carly Pustejovsky, Morgan Ballew, and James Bezdek. Pictured above right, Carly Pustejovsky places a white cross on an infant boy's grave. (Photos and story by club reporter James Bezdek)



ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC SCHOOL, FORT WORTH – Henry Fenoglio, World War II veteran, and his wife Juanita, visited their son, St. Andrew School teacher Mike Fenoglio, and his fifth-grade students on Veterans' Day. They are pictured here with several of the students (left to right): Patrick McCormick, Tatum Norris, Colin Burns, Marti King, Christian Zamora, Matt Luchetski and Allie Linstrom.

Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and St. Patrick parishioner Arthur Dickerson receives Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor

Special papal recognition, in the form of the Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor, was bestowed upon Fort Worth native Arthur Dickerson Sept. 11. Bishops Kevin Vann of Fort Worth and Kevin Farrell of Dallas were special guests at the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land Benefit Dinner, held at the Park City Club in Dallas. Father Peter Vasko, OFM, presented the Gold Cross of Honor to Dickerson and to Dallas resident Tony Piscitelli. Fr. Vasko is president of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.

Pope Leo XIII established this form of special recognition in 1900 in order to promote spiritual interest in the Holy Land and to recognize benefactors for their outstanding commitment to the Holy Land. Dickerson, who also holds the rank of knight Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, has been an active member of St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth for more than 40 years. He and his wife, Patricia, are the parents of 11 children.

Dickerson is the chairman and owner of Southwestern Petroleum Corporation, which has ties to businesses in countries around the world. A well-known philanthropist and supporter of Catholic causes, Dickerson chaired the cathedral's capital campaign and earned an award from the Fort Worth chapter of the National Society of Fundrais-



Arthur Dickerson and his wife, Patricia, stand with Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM, after Fr. Vasko presented Dickerson with the Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor at the Sept. 11 Benefit Dinner of the Franciscan Foundation of the Holy Land. The Dickersons are longtime parishioners at St. Patrick Cathedral in downtown Fort Worth. Dallas resident Tony Piscitelli also received the Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor at the dinner. (Photo by Holmberg)

ing Executives.

A trustee for Texas Wesleyan University, Dickerson has also served three terms as a trustee for the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and has also served on the board of the Fort Worth Opera. He was founding chairman of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation. He also served multiple terms as vice-chairman of St. Joseph's Hospital Board.

The papal honor is in the form of a cross. Represented on the cross are the mysteries of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Nativity of Christ, his baptism, and the Feast of the Eucharist. Also represented on the reverse side of the cross is the risen Christ and his agony at Gethsemane; the scourging and crowning with thorns; and Christ's crucifixion. The cross is inscribed with the words, "A Holy Journey to Jerusalem."

San Antonio's Bishop Cantú joins in torch run honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio joined in a torch relay run making its way from Mexico to New York, and San Antonio Archbishop José H. Gómez celebrated a Mass of devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe to welcome the runners to San Fernando Cathedral Nov. 5.

The runners of the Guadalupe Torch Race ("Carrera Antorcha Guadalupana") were in the midst of the South Texas leg of a run that began in Mexico City and will ultimately be completed at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas.

The runners, members of the Tepeyac Association and more than 300 residents of the Alamo

City, prayed for her intercession in the effort to "promote friendship and solidarity among Mexican-American community groups all along its path, provide a symbolic link for those families divided by the international border," and raise awareness on immigration issues.

The run, reminiscent of the journey of the Olympic torch, began at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

According to the Tepeyac Association, the sponsor of the run, its purpose is to represent "the fervor and faith Hispanics have for Our Lady of Guadalupe, arguably the premier national symbol of Mexico and its culture."

Bishop Cantú, who at age 41 is currently the youngest bishop

in the United States, led the relay by carrying the torch for the final two miles of the run to San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio.

Archbishop Gómez received the torch at the cathedral prior to celebrating the Mass. The runners also were greeted by a mariachi choir and "matachines," or religious dancers, from Corpus Christi. The archbishop and his auxiliary are two of the 26 active Hispanic Catholic bishops in the U.S.

Bishop Cantú told reporters the U.S. bishops have been advocating comprehensive immigration reform for some time, and that the runners would be meeting with groups that support immigration reform during their journey to New York.

Office of Catechesis continuing education grant applications for 2009 are now available

The Diocese of Fort Worth has announced that persons actively involved in ministry within the diocese for two years or longer who are planning programs of study in service of those ministries are invited to apply to the diocese for educational grant assistance.

In a press release from the Department of Catechesis, it was announced that these grants "made available through the generosity of the people of the diocese," have resulted in "a sum of \$20,000 allotted for distribution again next year."

Applications are now available and must be submitted to Lucas Pollice, M.T.S. Director of Catechesis at the Catholic Center, and be received by or be postmarked no later than Jan. 19, 2009.

According to information supplied by the Department of Catechesis, applicants will be asked to specify their intended course of study, its place and cost, and any other financial aid they expect to obtain. The pastor's (or supervisor's) signature is re-

quired, as is information that will help establish financial need.

The applications will be processed through the Department of Catechesis by the Committee on Continuing Education Grant Disbursement. Determinations of aid will be made by late February. At that time, successful applicants will receive a "Letter of Intent" indicating subsequent steps of the process. That letter must be returned by April 1, and checks will be sent out between May 1-15, 2009.

To receive an application, individuals are asked to contact Josie Castillo at (817) 560-3300 Ext. 255 or at jcastillo@fwdioc.org. Forms can also be downloaded from the diocesan Web site www.fwdioc.org: click on "Ministry Preparation" and choose "Continuing Education Grants."

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Diocesan

Our Lady of Victory students thank veterans, create wall of honor

"Honoring and thanking those who have served our great country in the armed forces has become a special annual event at Our Lady of Victory Catholic School," said Rachael Garnett, development director for OLV School in a press release describing the school's second annual Veteran's Day service. Garnett reported that many servicemen and women joined them for the observance, representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and TCU.

Sponsored by the OLV Student Council guided by teacher Amy Wright, this celebration, Garnett said, demonstrates to the OLV students and local community the importance of patriotism and pride in our country.

"Under an overcast sky, Student Council members created a wall of names devoted to family and friends who have served in the military," Garnett reported. "Additionally they of-



OLV student council members pose before the wall of honor they created, honoring family and friends who have served in the military.

ferred prayer, poetry, and respect to our servicemen and women. The Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth U.S. Navy Honor Guard and Nolan Catholic High School Concert Band Director Brian Standridge also participated in the proceedings.

Garnett reported that those present commented on the pro-

found feeling of patriotism and faith in the leadership of God they experienced at the ceremony. One veteran who had served for 37 years wept, she said, as he received the card created for him that hung on OLV's wall of honor.

Rachael Garnett of OLV School provided the information for this story.



St. Mary's School students pose with signs to be placed in the yards of the veterans named on them during November.

St. Mary's Gainesville hosts Mass and reception, students honor veterans

St. Mary's Church and School in Gainesville honored local veterans Friday, Nov. 7. The day began at 8:15 a.m. with a special Mass at the church attended by the school children and many veterans representing several branches of the military.

After Mass, there was a reception in the parish hall for the veterans, their families, and the staff members of St. Mary's Church and School. The hall was decorated with posters thanking the veterans for their service to the country. Each class in the school made a poster and hung it in the parish hall. A centerpiece for the

reception table displayed a green plant surrounded by military memorabilia.

Pat Benton, a teacher at St. Mary's School and a veteran himself, organized the event. He welcomed the group and introduced Reagan Martin, president of the student council. Martin told the veterans that the students celebrate, appreciate, and honor them for what they have done for this country. She ended her comments by saying, "We remember those who continue their fight each day, as they have to live with their injuries, memories, and those who have not returned."

She asked the audience to join her in a round of applause for the veterans in attendance. St. Mary's eighth graders served those seated at the tables.

In addition to this special celebration, Benton and his students led a campaign to honor veterans by putting signs in their yards. Ronnie Brooks of Future Sign Service made all of the signs and donated his labor. St. Mary's staff members supervised as the students placed the signs in yards throughout the area. These signs were designed to be displayed every year during the month of November.

Veterans attending activities at St. Mary's pose before posters students made to honor their service to the nation.



Deacon candidates and parish representatives meet to iron out details of internships

When 32 deacon candidates begin their parish internships next year, a "cadre" of priests, brothers, deacons, and laypersons will join the Permanent Deacon Formation team in guiding the candidates through the final phase of their formation. Pastors, deacons, pastoral administrators, and laypeople met with the deacon candidates Nov. 13 at The Catholic Center for an orientation and discussion of the requirements of the internship. Deacon candidates will be serving internships in 24 parishes across the diocese, from Jan. 1 through June 21, 2009. (Photos by Jeff Hensley, NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC)



(L. to R.) Judy Locke, associate director of Deacon Formation, with Wendell Geiger and Lynn Sowers, deacon candidates from St. Peter the Apostle Church, Fort Worth.



(L. to R.) Fr. Sojan George, HGN, with deacon candidate Eldon Gray, St. John the Baptist Church, Bridgeport. Fr. Sojan is pastor of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Decatur, St. Mary Parish in Jacksboro, and St. John the Baptist Parish in Bridgeport.



(L. to R.) Juan Jasso, deacon candidate, with Fr. Jack McKone, associate pastor, and Fr. Hector Medina, pastor, of St. Matthew Church, Arlington.



(L. to R.) Fr. Polycarp Nguyen, CMC, pastor, and John Ban Nguyen, deacon candidate, Vietnamese Martyrs Church, Arlington.

Ministerium 2008 focuses on church and family in 21st century

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant
Photos by Donna Ryckaert

For more than 300 priests, deacons, vowed religious, and ministry professionals within the Diocese of Fort Worth, the focus of the Oct. 23 Ministerium was an opportunity to focus on a topic that affects every parish community.

"Today, we are focusing upon and learning about family life and how we can most effectively support and care for families," said Bishop Kevin Vann, in his welcoming remarks at the gathering at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington. "As a pastor, I have worked with many, many families in marriage preparation and then sacramental preparation for their children, and I have taught religious education classes to children who couldn't attend Mass each Sunday because they alternate between their parents' homes on weekends. We all face realities like these in our parishes today."

The Ministerium, an annual

learning opportunity for ministry leaders in parishes across the diocese, features experts and topics that impact Catholic ministries. "The Church and the Family in the 21st Century: Partners in Disciple-Making," was led by Charles Balsam, a marriage and family consultant with extensive experience in family ministry in the Dioceses of Beaumont and Austin.

Balsam currently serves as the manager of program development at the Leadership Institute of Jason's Deli Inc., a company now franchised in 23 states. Jason's Deli was founded 32 years ago in Beaumont by current company president Joe Tortorice, an active Catholic.

The company's leadership institute offers courses to its employees in ethics, wellness, personal financial management, and emotional intelligence. The institute also offers "Marriage Matters: Strengthening the Bonds through Reconnection," an all-expense paid weekend course for couples.

"I teach several of these weekend retreats for Jason's Deli each year, for the employees and their spouses, with a focus upon communication, intimacy, and conflict resolution," said Balsam, in explaining his commitment to strengthening families. His company's focus on personal growth is a valuable, and, unfortunately, rare witness to Catholic teaching about the primacy of the marriage relationship, noted Balsam.

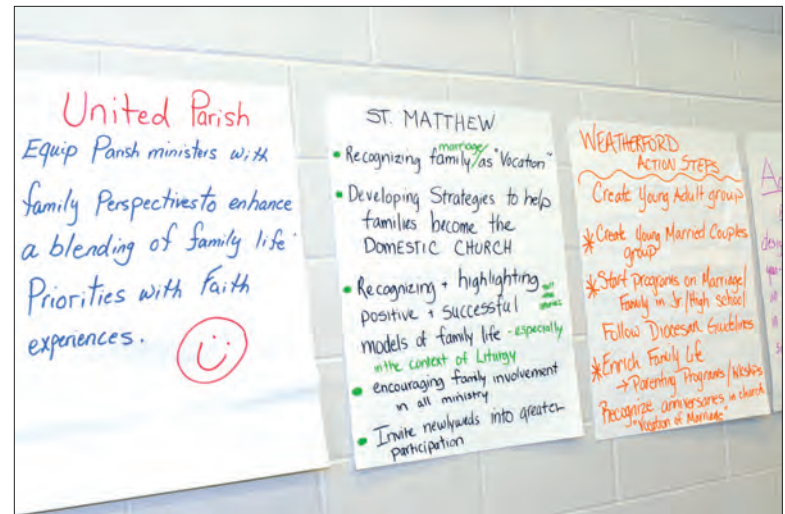
"We're in the middle of a culture war, here in this country, and, to be honest, I don't have a lot of good news to report," Balsam told Ministerium participants. He noted that contemporary trends — such as increased television viewing, mobility, and a consumer culture — have dramatically changed expectations of marriage and family life in the United States, and have led to higher divorce rates.

Shifts in U.S. demographics over the past 100 years — from 60 percent rural population in 1900 to 79 percent urban in 2000 — have also impacted families, Balsam said. Cohabitation outside marriage has increased by 1,200 percent since 1965, signifying a weakened commitment as couples approach marriage.

Quoting pivotal church documents, such as Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Balsam explained the church's definition of sacramental marriage. "The concept of intimacy, the concept that a couple's covenant of mutual self-giving is a representation of the very relationship of Christ with the church, is a rich understanding of marriage," said Balsam. "And the church's teaching and understanding of sacramental marriage continues to grow in depth."

Having discussed the many threats to marriage in contemporary culture, and the benefits of marriage for adults and children, Balsam pointed out that children in single-parent families, children born to unmarried mothers, and children in stepfamilies or cohabiting relationships face higher risks of poor outcomes, such as clinical depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, and incarceration.

"Stable families who attend



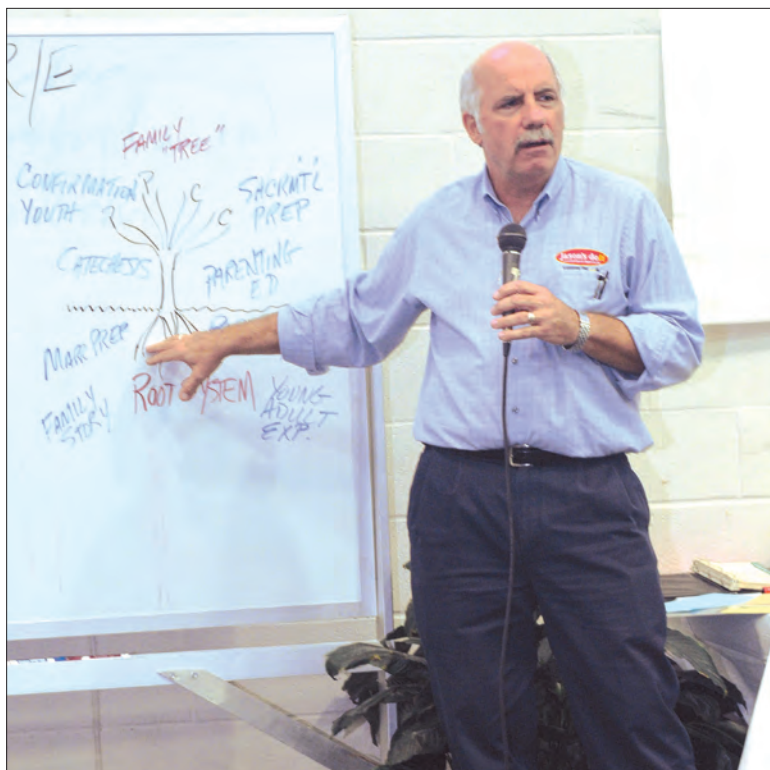
Parish groups met in the afternoon at table discussions to brainstorm ways of more effectively ministering to families. Their efforts were posted on the walls of the Ministerium gathering space.

church together are healthier, happier, and suffer from fewer addictions and social problems," Balsam told Ministerium participants. "Our church has written and continues to speak eloquently about the tasks of the Christian family in passing on values, promoting full human development, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the life and mission of the church."

The question for all who minister within the Catholic Church, said Balsam, is obvious. "Are we helping parents to teach their children to carry out these tasks?" he asked. "Are we doing our best in marriage and baptism preparation, in children's and youth ministry, to reach out to families?"



Bishop Vann welcomed participants to this year's Ministerium, urging them to focus upon a family perspective in their various ministries.



Charles Balsam, a marriage and family consultant for employees of Jason's Deli, offered information and resources to Ministerium participants at the Oct. 23 event, held at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington.



Ministry leaders from parishes across the diocese mingle each year at the annual Ministerium. Representing several different parishes at this year's gathering were (left to right) Samira and Bill Wenzel from Holy Trinity Mission in Azle, Josefina Villarreal, Becky Lucas from Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington, and Sr. Mary Louise Swift, CSFN, from St. Rita Church in Fort Worth.

Major life transitions such as marriage, birth of children, the adolescence of children, and the death of elders in families coincide with the church sacraments, said Balsam. "We need to be taking every opportunity to be relevant to families in every stage of their family's life cycle. We need to be offering more to families, and we need to be incorporating a family perspective into all that we do in ministry in the church."

Ministry leaders gathered in the afternoon to discuss the ideas, resources, and suggestions offered by Balsam, to brainstorm new ways of incorporating a family perspective into their existing ministries, and to share their own forms of outreach to couples and families. Father Hector Medina, pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington, noted that an example of effective

Diocesan

tive family ministry in his own parish is the quinceañera preparation that is offered for young Hispanic girls as they approach their 15th birthdays.

"Ed Lozano, the youth minister in our parish, offers an excellent, family-based approach to planning for the quinceañera," said Fr. Medina. "He involves the parents, the grandparents, and other family members, in a very comprehensive and spiritual process. It draws them more into the life of the church."

Other participants brought up ideas for incorporating Catholic teaching on dating, sacramental marriage, and sexuality in

religious education classes; strengthening baptism and marriage preparation programs within parishes; offering child care to improve adult attendance at parish education opportunities; providing support to families in crisis; offering more family events; and increasing awareness among Catholics that faith education begins in the "domestic church" that is family life.

Bishop Vann, in his closing remarks, thanked participants for their commitment to improving partnerships between parishes and families and to strengthening households of faith.

"I hope that we can take the

fruit of these reflections today and really use them, so that they can become part of our life and ministry, especially as we approach our 40th anniversary as a diocese," said the bishop, who serves as a member of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. "Our families are depending upon us."

For more information about incorporating a family perspective into church ministry, see the U.S. Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) publication, *A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY*, available at (1-800) 235-8722, or online at the USCCB Web site at www.usccb.org.

'Marriage Matters' offered at Ministerium

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

"Marriage Matters," an afternoon breakout session led by ethics expert Sister Renee Mirkes, OSF, was included in this year's Ministerium as a way of focusing attention on a vitally important aspect of ministry to families.

Sr. Mirkes addressed the implications of the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* and also discussed the "domino theory" that a growing acceptance and use of artificial contraception and sterilization over the past 40 years has led to widespread social problems in contemporary American culture. Sr. Mirkes identified other falling "dominos" as abortion, homosexual activity, incest, and euthanasia.

"Once we decided that it is okay to contracept, we, in effect, said that we no longer recognize

the inherent moral goodness of procreation in marriage," Sr. Mirkes told approximately 70 Ministerium participants in her two-hour session. "In reducing sex to a purely biological function, we must know that we haven't got a leg to stand on when it comes to 'lifeless sex,'" she said, as shorthand for referring to other sexual behaviors in which sex is separated from procreation.

Sr. Mirkes, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity, is director of the Center for NaProEthics, the ethics division of the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. She holds a graduate degree in theology from the University of St. Thomas in Houston as well as a doctorate in theological ethics from Marquette University in Milwaukee.

Weaving together the threads of science and theology, Sr.

Mirkes offered an impassioned defense of Catholic teaching on human sexuality and the dignity of the human person. With that as her context, she explained the Pope Paul VI Institute's role in training physicians, serving as a resource for ethical guidelines in healthcare issues, and promoting strong marriages and healthy families.

"At the Pope Paul VI Institute, we offer guidance in moral family planning through the 'fertility care system,'" Sr. Mirkes explained. "The system is true, good, and beautiful, and 35 years of clinical research have gone into creating an ovulation method that is marriage-friendly, family-friendly, and woman-friendly. We have also developed an effective way of treating infertility within marriage.

"Become partners with us at the Pope Paul VI Institute, so that all of us, together, can be committed to evangelization of these truths," urged Sr. Mirkes. "This is the way we can begin to address the moral earthquake we are dealing with in our society today."

Father Ray McDaniel, associate pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, and sacramental minister at Sacred Heart Church in Seymour and St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Megargel, appreciated the information offered in Sr. Mirkes' presentation, he said.

"I think she made a compelling case for how artificial birth control undermines the message we are trying to offer in preparing couples for sacramental marriage in the church," said Fr. McDaniel. "We need to be teaching and working with our young people, in the earliest stages of their lives, in preparing them to have the correct view of Catholic marriage. She gave excellent suggestions for all of us to follow."



Marie King (left) of St. Jude Thaddeus Parish in Burkburnett talks about results of parish brainstorming sessions with Florence Anderle of St. Mary Parish in Windthorst.



Youth ministry and formation leaders (left to right) Lauren Ellis and Debbie Buckley of St. Catherine of Siena Church in Carrollton, Gabe Gutiérrez of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, and Jeff Hedglen of St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, share ideas about incorporating a family perspective in parish religious education programs for children and youth.



Catholic school workers gather to discuss information presented at this year's Ministerium. Pictured (left to right) are Sylvia Mendez, a bookkeeper St. Peter Church in White Settlement with Principals Carolyn Yusuf of Our Mother of Mercy School in Fort Worth, Erin Vader of St. Peter School in White Settlement, and Stephen Hiner of Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth.



Sr. Renée Mirkes, director of NaProEthics at the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, led a two-hour afternoon session, entitled "Marriage Matters," at this year's Ministerium.

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

ForYourMarriage, an engaging Web site created by the United States Conference of Bishops in 2007, offers a Web-savvy interactive look at various aspects of married life from preparation for the wedding to leaning into each other in the later years of life.

Currently nine people offer insights into how they keep their marriages alive, by answering the banner-displayed question, "What have you done for your marriage today?" By clicking one of the nine lively pictures, the visitor to the site gets to hear what other everyday folks in varying situations say about how they're making their marriages work.

Another feature allows viewers to follow along with "Sarah's

Blog" as she prepares for her wedding and lifetime commitment. Currently Sarah is discussing how different their families of origin are and speculating on how that will play out in their relationship.

"MarriageRx" offers insight on issues that challenge marriages: in-laws, finances, sex. Currently there is a feature on "Sharing Household Duties," always a good topic for negotiation.

A set of topics at the left of the screen offers topics: "For Every Couple"; "Preparing for Your Marriage"; "Caring for Your Marriage"; and "About Catholic Marriage."

For Your Marriage is worth spending some time with. The Web address is www.foryourmarriage.org.

Viewpoints

Advent calls us to invite Christ into our lives and return to simple faith

By Lucas Pollice

The many liturgical seasons and feasts that we celebrate each year are among the more beautiful treasures of the Catholic faith. These allow us as the People of God to remember, contemplate, and bring into our own hearts and lives the mystery of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Through the liturgical seasons, we witness, live, and receive the graces of the Paschal Mystery and the Father's plan of salvation accomplished in Christ so that in the celebration of the Eucharist, we are put into intimate communion with Christ and his saving power. These seasons allow us to live the life of Christ and to walk with Him so that we may be filled with his life and grace.

Advent is one of the most beautiful seasons in the liturgical calendar. Unfortunately, it can become easy to overlook this season with all of the business and distractions of our lives as we prepare for Christmas.

However, Advent is a true blessing that we need to be aware of and take advantage of, as the Church calls us back to a simple childlike faith as we prepare for the coming of Christ.

ADVENT IS A TIME TO LOOK INTO OUR HEARTS

The season of Advent has a dual focus. During the first two weeks of Advent, the readings at Mass focus on the reality and eventuality of the Second Coming of Christ. It is a time when we pause and look into our hearts and ask: "Am I ready for the Lord, when He comes again?"

This is a very important question we should constantly be asking ourselves, for we do not know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come to us, whether that be at the actual Second Coming or when the Lord calls us to Himself at the end of our own lives. Either way, we will have to give to Him an account of our lives and how we lived our lives loving God and others around us.

Thus, this first half of Advent calls us

Advent reminds us that just as Christ became incarnate in the womb of Mary, we must make Christ incarnate in our culture and in our world, so that it may become impregnated with the grace and mercy of Christ. That is our calling as Catholics. Evangelization and witness is not optional.

to an examination of conscience and to joyful conversion. We know that the Lord is victorious and will come again, but do we share in his victory? Do we live our lives in a way that builds up the Kingdom of God, or hinders it? Are we truly living as salt of the earth, bringing Christ to the ordinary places of everyday life?

Advent reminds us that just as Christ became incarnate in the womb of Mary, we must make Christ incarnate in our culture and in our world, so that it may become impregnated with the grace and mercy of Christ. That is our calling as Catholics. Evangelization and witness is not optional.

What is needed today, more than ever, is Catholics who are living lives of holiness that are radiant with the light of Christ, Catholics who are willing to bring about the civilization of love and the culture of life. What is needed today is a simple, yet powerful faith centered on the Person of Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH CALLS US BACK TO SIMPLE FAITH

This is exactly what the last two weeks of Advent call us to do. On the Third Sunday of Advent, we are reminded of the words spoken prophetically in Isaiah: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" (Isaiah 40:3).

As we prepare to celebrate the first coming of Christ at Christmas, the Church calls us back to the simple faith of children and to make straight the paths in our own lives to Christ. How can we be an effective witness of Christ, if we do not know Him and embrace Him fully? What are the things in our lives that keep us from fully embracing Christ?

The season of Advent provides us a perfect example of this kind of faith in Mary. It was her simple, yet pro-



The first Sunday of Advent falls on Nov. 30 this year. The illustration displays the first of the four candles of the Advent wreath lit. (CNS illustrations/Emily Thompson)

found faith that brought about the Incarnation of Christ. Had it not been for her humble surrendering to the will of the Father, our salvation in Christ would not have been possible.

Advent calls us to reflect upon the profound words of Mary, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary

surrendered everything to God, holding nothing back, and through this gift of herself to God she was able to receive the very gift of God Himself.

Ultimately, Christ desires nothing of us but our friendship and the gift of ourselves, that he may transform us, so that we might receive fullness of life. In a day and age when we can make things so complicated, the season of Advent calls us to this childlike faith and abandonment to Christ.

'DO NOT BE AFRAID!'

This kind of faith and surrendering to Christ reminds me of one of the great themes of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II:

Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ!

We live in a world often overcome by fear, worry, and distress. But we are not to be afraid, for if we surrender ourselves to friendship with Christ, then nothing can take our life away, and nothing can separate us from his love.

Pope Benedict XVI recalls this powerful teaching of John Paul II at the beginning of his own pontificate and calls all of us to this faith of a child and to friendship with Christ:

"At this point, my thoughts return

to 22 October 1978, when Pope John Paul II began his ministry here in Saint Peter's Square. His words on that occasion constantly echo in my ears: 'Do not be afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ!'

The Pope was addressing the mighty, the powerful of this world, who feared that Christ might take away something of their power if they were to let him in, if they were to allow the faith to be free...The Pope was also speaking to everyone, especially the young. Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that he might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom?

And once again the Pope said: No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation.

And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ — and you will find true life. Amen." (Homily at the Inaugural Mass of the Pontificate of Benedict XVI)

This is the message of Advent! Do not be afraid to open wide the doors of our hearts and minds to Christ, so that on Christmas Day we may once again gaze into the eyes of the Christ Child and receive in its fullness the wonder of God's everlasting and unconditional love. May all of us embrace this season of joyful conversion so that we may ever more grow in friendship with Christ.



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

Moving Forward

holding ground

By Susan E. Wills

Are you a pro-life Catholic struggling with how the future may look for pro-life efforts?

Many of us are anxious over the fate of unborn children should President-elect Obama act on his statement to Planned Parenthood that he will sign the "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA), a ruinous bill that would eliminate virtually every pro-life law and policy in the country. Funding limitations, informed consent, parental notification, clinic health/safety regulations, conscience protections for health care providers and hospitals — all would end under FOCA.

Many are depressed that we may soon, through our taxes, be forced to pay for the destruction of boys and girls by abortion and human embryo research.

Have Catholics and the rest of the country abandoned their pro-life convictions? Is it over? Short answers: No, and it's not over until the right to life is guaranteed to all Americans!

A recent Marist poll commissioned by the Knights of Columbus again showed that — when presented with clear choices in a polling question — only 8 percent of Americans favor abortion on demand throughout pregnancy. The poll also found that 60 percent of Americans favor banning all abortions, or limiting them to the rare cases of danger to the mother's life, rape, or incest.

The 54 percent of all Catholics (45 percent of weekly Mass-goers) who voted for our new

Abolitionists did not work simply to reduce the number of slaves, but to end completely that odious violation of human rights.

President generally did not do so because of his support for abortion. They largely voted on the basis of other issues they saw as pressing, and didn't really see their core values on life being threatened. As pro-Obama law professor Doug Kmiec put it: He was "sounding more Catholic than most Catholics I know." The President-elect spoke often of "reducing abortions" and finding "common ground" on the issue. The question is whether that was sound, not substance.

A BeliefNet survey of Evangelical voters found that 86 percent of those supporting the new President agreed with his view that the best way to reduce abortion is "by preventing unintended pregnancy (through education and birth control) or by providing financial assistance

to pregnant mothers." It sounds good, but it's simply untrue that birth control programs reduce abortions, and most women seek abortions for reasons other than, or in addition to, financial need.

In any case, simply reducing abortions is not the point of the pro-life message. Our goal is a society that respects and defends every human life from conception onward. Abolitionists did not work simply to reduce the number of slaves, but to end completely that odious violation of human rights. And we must work tirelessly to overturn the evil and unjust law that effectively denies the humanity of unborn children and allows them to be torn limb from limb.

So how do we move forward? The Catholic Bishops of the United States pointed the way at their recent general meeting. They pledged the resources of the Church to mobilize the Catholic community to oppose FOCA and all other attempts to eliminate existing pro-life laws and policies. This will include a massive education and postcard campaign beginning in January, urging members of Congress to reject the abortion extremism of FOCA.

If we respond, as the bishops have called us to, we can defeat FOCA and retain our freedom to help build a culture of life.



Susan Wills is assistant director of education and outreach for the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Go to www.usccb.org/prolife to learn more about the bishops' pro-life

Bishops approve blessing service for children in the womb

BALTIMORE (CNS) — To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops Nov. 11 overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, praised the new blessing as "a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child" and said it could also serve as an opportunity for

parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support. Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer of San Angelo, said the document could present "a great catechetical moment for all of us." He said he hoped it might lead the bishops to declare an annual day of prayer for the unborn in the future. The document required the approval of two-thirds of the Latin-rite members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and must be

sent to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for *recognitio*, or confirmation. The English-language version was approved 223-1 and the Spanish-language version 224-0. Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, New Jersey, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, introduced the document Nov. 10, the first day of the USCCB fall general assembly in Baltimore.

Thanksgiving memories



There are some recipes you can capture on index cards and some that can only be re-captured if you can still crank up the old VCR

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

It was a familiar scene, replicated in millions of homes yearly: families preparing for Thanksgiving. In our case the event was preserved on videotape.

The children sat around the kitchen table or stood at countertops. Some stirred simmering pots; some peeled apples. There were two young teens, one sassy 6-year-old, a pre-schooler, and a toddler, all working on the meal we would share the next day.

It had gotten noisy and slightly out-of-control, when on the tape, 6-year-old Julie, clearly a first-grader on the outside and elementary school teacher on the inside, said loudly, "Anyone who does not behave will sit in the corner."

There was an instant of all-around quiet then, and because of the magic of videotape, I heard myself answer her, correctly: "Julie, I don't think we have enough corners."

Preparing a holiday feast is difficult even for a team of six, even though Butterball turkeys, they said, were "perfect for cooks who know all about turkeys... but especially for those who don't." No one in my kitchen that year knew anything about turkeys, but a few might safely have been called turkeys. Some were affectionately known as "punkin," and in a previous life, I had been called "Cranberry." So even without food, we were a meal all by ourselves.

That night, 4-year-old Andrew stood on a chair mixing stuffing. He had a deep roasting pan, where I had placed bread and home-baked cornbread. His job was to break up the pieces and mix them. When asked what he was making, Andrew replied, "popcorn."

Abby was on a chair in front of the sink, rinsing apples, and when I asked her, "What are they for?"

She wrinkled her brow, puckered her chubby lips, and said, "Halloween?"

"No," I said, "what is tomorrow?"

Abby rolled her eyes and brought her tongue over her upper lip, thinking. Then she exploded in a triumphant smile and declared, "Thanksgiving!"

At the table behind me, Julie and John rolled dough, while Meredith put together chocolate pie filling.

I was filming.

Now, 22 years later, I am using those tapes to prepare a rehearsal dinner video for my cornbread-mixing son, who is grown, and about to be a groom.

The video I will edit is designed to fit neatly into the perfection couples dream of when they envision their wedding days. But ironically, the images on the tapes come

SEE HAMER, P. 22

Area bishops invite youth to Six Flags to celebrate a Texas

World Youth Day

Photos by Wendy Pandolfo

More than 8,000 teens and their adult leaders — representing the Catholic dioceses of Fort Worth, Dallas, Austin, and Tyler — gath-

ered on Sunday, Oct. 26, for the annual regional celebration of World Youth Day. The exuberant participants filled the festive outdoor worship space with a youthful

spirit of energy, joy, and reverence.

Bishop Kevin Vann served as main celebrant and was joined on the altar by Bishop Kevin Farrell of the Diocese of Dallas at the afternoon World Youth Day Mass, celebrated in the Music Mill Amphitheatre at the Six Flags Over

Texas theme park in Arlington. The two bishops beamed as teens processed before them, carrying braziers of incense and colorful bell poles adorned with ribbons and banners representing parishes from across North Texas.

"This is my fourth World Youth Day celebration here in Texas," Bishop Vann told the outdoor congregation. "What a beautiful view I have from here as I look out at all of you. Bishop Farrell and I are proud of all of you and wish to welcome you here today."

In his remarks during his homily, Bishop Vann talked to his youthful listeners about the similarities between communication tools such as Facebook, texting, and e-mail, and the Scripture readings of the day.

"These readings are powerful, because they tell us to love God with our whole being, not to keep that love to ourselves," he reminded the congregation. "We must love our brothers and sisters, those who God sends our way — not always an easy task. We take that message of faith, and that message is meant to be shared all around us,

each and every day.

"Can we make a difference in the lives around us?" Bishop Vann asked the crowd. "Can we carry that message of love out into the world?"

"The 'yes' that he heard back from the youth was loud enough to drown out the roller coasters in the background!" Kevin Prevou, diocesan director of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry, laughed as he described the enthusiastic response to the bishop's question. "The youth ministers and young people of our diocese always come away from our World Youth Day Mass energized and renewed in their faith. It's a great opportunity for the young church of North Texas to gather, to sing, and to pray together."

With the theme of the day, "Our God, the Great I Am," displayed in a dark blue backdrop laced with gold ribbon, North Texas teen musicians, cantors, readers, and altar servers joined the bishops, priests, and deacons on the altar. The Life Teen choir of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, led by Ben Briones, "was particularly outstanding this year, and did a great job of leading the congregation in songs of praise and worship during the liturgy," said Prevou.

A special highlight of this year's celebration was the participation of internationally recognized Catholic musician Jesse Manibusan, who led the crowd in an hour of community-building witness

talks, music, and prayer in order to heighten the sense of unity and energy within the congregation prior to the Mass. (Manibusan and his family are members of St. Francis Parish in Grapevine.)

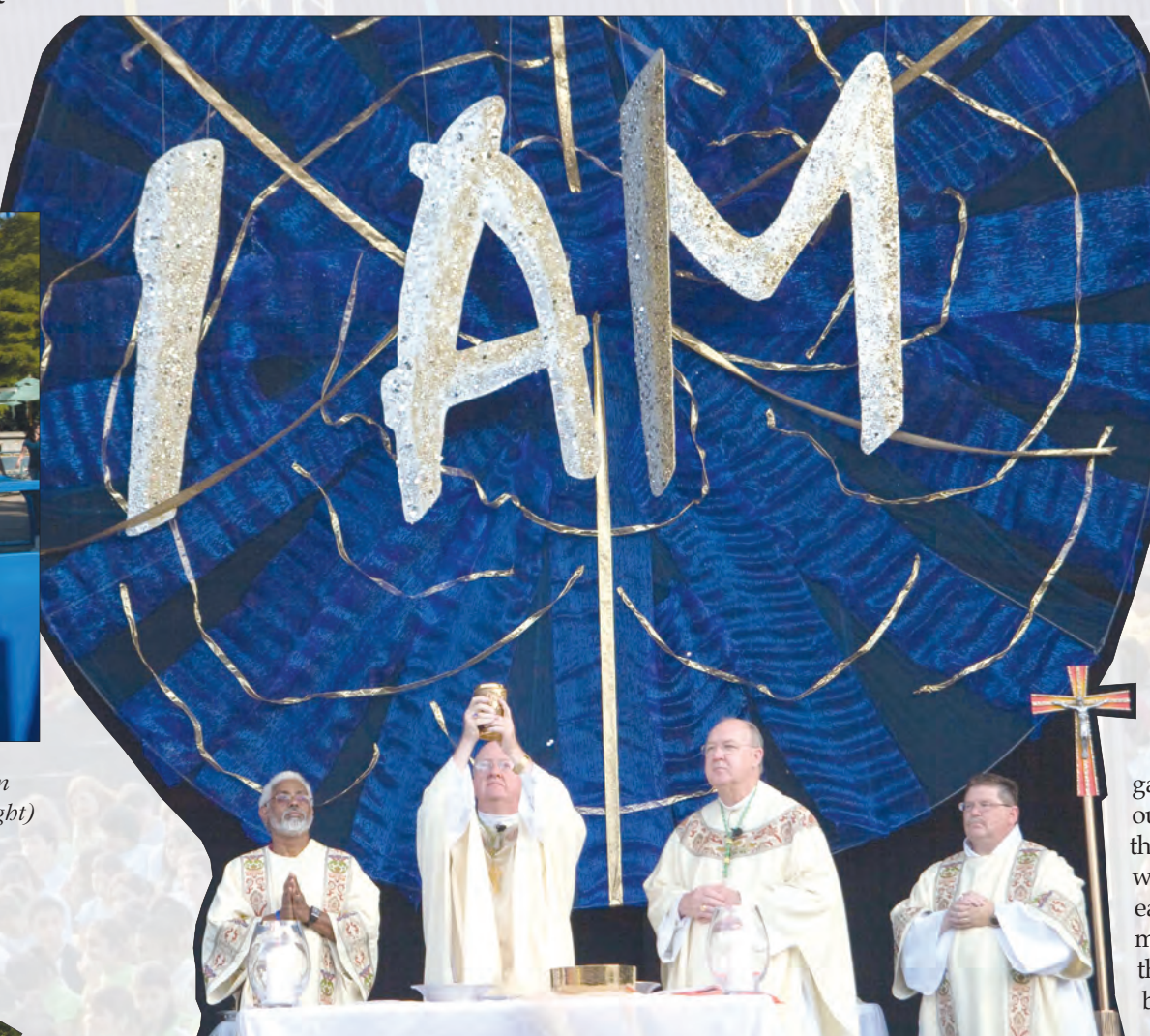
The annual celebration, held in North Texas since 1994, marks the United States' celebration of World Youth Day. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops named the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time as the national celebration of World Youth Day, and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry provides the themes for the annual event.

"I always love coming to World Youth Day," said Nicole Stevens, a 15-year-old parishioner of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller. "It's always great music, great prayer, and a great Catholic spirit."

Teens from many of the small town and rural parishes of the Diocese of Fort Worth come each year in caravans or rented buses for a day of fun in the theme park prior to the afternoon Mass.

"It's always a lot of fun," said Amber Nortman, 17, a parishioner of St. Peter Church in Lindsay, who has come to the annual celebration for the past six years.

Fellow St. Peter parishioner Emily Conaway, 15, who has attended the celebration for the past four years, agreed. "I love the music," she said. "And Bishop Vann is always great to see and hear at the Mass. He can relate to us really well."



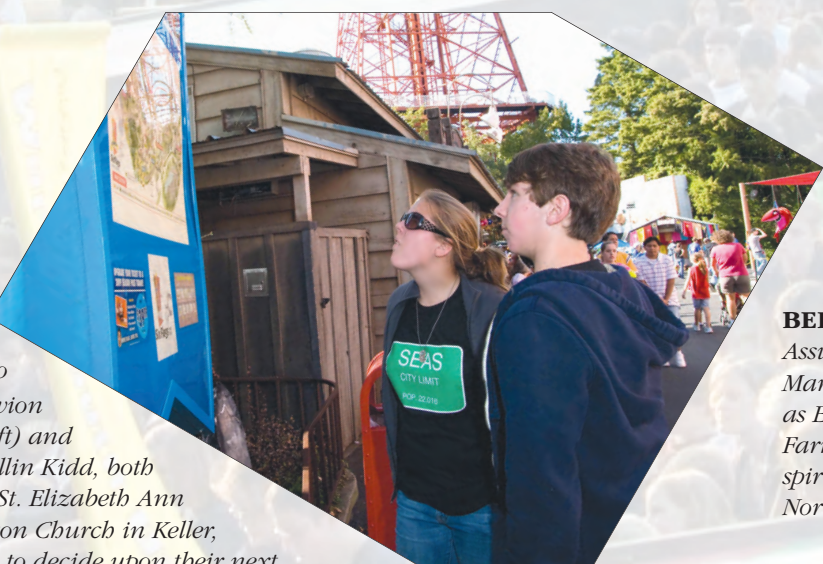
ABOVE: Deacon Denis Corbin of the Diocese of Dallas, Bishop Kevin Vann, Bishop Kevin Farrell, and Deacon Don Warner of the Diocese of Fort Worth pray during the consecration of the Eucharist beneath the striking backdrop created for the WYD celebration. **BELOW:** Teens from parishes throughout North Texas process into Mass, carrying banners representing their faith communities in the dioceses of Fort Worth and Dallas.



Youth from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Fort Worth carried colorful bell poles in the procession and were altar servers at the festive, outdoor Mass.



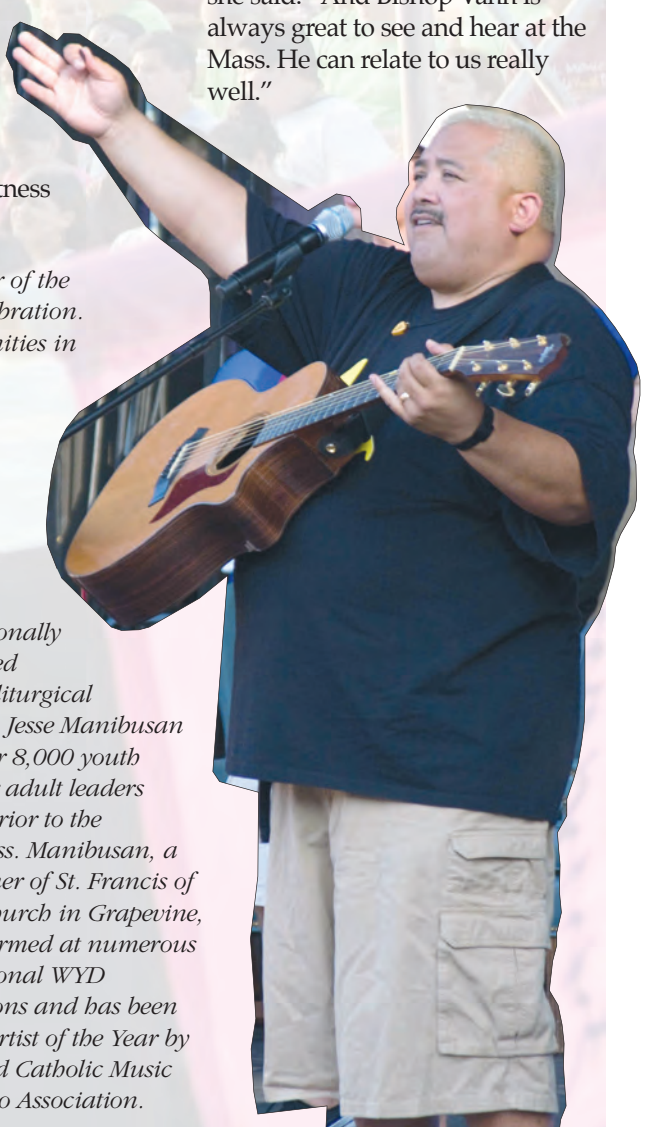
Youth from St. Francis Cabrini Church in Granbury enjoy attractions in the Six Flags theme park prior to the afternoon Mass. Pictured (left to right) are Maggie Berry, Ryan Luedeker, Ben Ewart, and Elise Decker.



Sao Savion (left) and Collin Kidd, both of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Keller, try to decide upon their next activity at Six Flags during the WYD celebration.



Internationally recognized Catholic liturgical musician Jesse Manibusan leads over 8,000 youth and their adult leaders in song prior to the WYD Mass. Manibusan, a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine, has performed at numerous international WYD celebrations and has been named Artist of the Year by the United Catholic Music and Video Association.



Teens from Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls enjoy the local World Youth Day (WYD) celebration at the Six Flags theme park. Pictured (left to right) are Luke McCarthy, Gabriel Barcie, and Eric Cantu.



St. Bartholomew Church parishioner Aly Chandonnet takes part in the afternoon WYD liturgy.



Young parishioners from St. Mark Church in Denton enthusiastically sang and used accompanying band gestures while participating in songs of praise and worship.



Cassie Hoffman Erazo, coordinator of youth ministries at Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, joins in the singing.



Members of the youth choir at Immaculate Conception Church in Denton lead the music at the WYD Mass. Pictured (left to right) are youth choir leader and middle school youth minister Ben Briones, Julia Moen, and Baily Chandler.



LEFT: Sisters Elizabeth (left) and Victoria Radford, parishioners at Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington, share some pizza at Six Flags.



RIGHT: Hugo Murillo, a parishioner at St. Matthew Church in Arlington, offered the first reading of the Mass in Spanish.

Bishops issue statements on economic crisis, authorize blessing ceremony for children in womb, adopt a new budget



Bishop Placido Rodriguez of Lubbock, center, and other U.S. bishops review a proposed statement on the U.S. political situation Nov. 11 at the meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. (CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec)

FROM PAGE 1

conference president on behalf of the bishops.

The final product was written under the supervision of Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, USCCB president, after the bishops weighed in with recommendations about its content, tone, and writing style. After an overnight writing session, the statement was read by Cardinal George to the body of bishops, who greeted it with applause.

Among other meeting actions, the bishops approved a statement on the economy, a blessing for children in the womb, and a second section of the Roman Missal translation. They gave five task forces the authority to develop church priorities up to 2011 on issues ranging from strengthening marriage to addressing cultural diversity in the church.

They also approved a budget of \$144 million, a 2.25 percent increase from 2008, and they elected a conference secretary-elect and chairmen-elect for five committees: pro-life activities, cultural diversity, communications, doctrine and national collections.

In their statement on the economic crisis, approved Nov. 11, they reminded people that "we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. We are all in this together."

Adopted in a voice vote, the brief statement released by Cardinal George on behalf of the bishops noted that "hard times can isolate us or they can bring us together."

"As pastors and bishops, we see the many human and moral consequences of this crisis," the statement said. Though the

impact of the crisis is greater in some regions of the country, families all across the nation are losing their homes, workers are losing their jobs and health care coverage, retirement savings are threatened, and people are losing the sense of hope and security, it continued.

But the church will continue to "reach out to those in need, stand with those who are hurt, and work for policies that bring greater compassion, accountability, and justice to economic life," the statement said. The bishops concluded by offering prayers for anyone who is "hurting, anxious, or discouraged in these difficult times."

Despite some continued criticism that the latest English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal is plagued by obscure wording and sentences that are too long, the U.S. bishops approved another lengthy section of the translation Nov. 11.

Needing affirmation by two-thirds of the 264 Latin-rite U.S. bishops, or 176 bishops, the heavily amended translation of the Proper of the Seasons—made up of the proper prayers for Sundays and feast days during the liturgical year—received 189 votes in favor and 30 against. During the bishops' meeting in Orlando, Florida, in June, the document failed to get the required two-thirds majority.

Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli of Paterson, New Jersey, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Divine Worship, called the translation "a step forward in the continual renewal of the liturgy" and said no document was ever likely to receive the unanimous

support of the bishops.

The translation now goes to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for *recognitio*, or confirmation. The first section of the missal came before the bishops in 2006 and was confirmed by the Vatican earlier this year.

To fill a gap in existing prayer books, the U.S. bishops overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, praised the new blessing as "a tangible way to witness pastorally and sacramentally to the life of the unborn child" and said it could also serve as an opportunity for parishes to bring together expectant couples for mutual support.

The document also must be sent to the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments for *recognitio*, or confirmation. The English-language version was approved 223-1 and the Spanish-language version 224-0.

The U.S. bishops later chose the *Revised Grail Psalter* produced by the monks of Conception Abbey in Missouri for liturgical use in the U.S.

The Nov. 12 vote was 203-5 in favor of accepting a recommendation of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship to adopt the *Grail Psalter* for use in all liturgical settings. The decision also must be confirmed by the Vatican.

There was little debate before the vote and no amendments could be made to the translated psalms.

In a report to the bishops Nov. 11, Auxiliary Bishop Roger P. Morin of New Orleans explained that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development cut off funding earlier this year to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, known as ACORN, for reasons unrelated to the organization's current troubles over voter registration and partisan politics.

Bishop Morin, chairman of the U.S. bishops' subcommittee on the CCHD, said the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program which supports community groups suspended \$1.13 million in previously authorized grants to ACORN affiliates in June. No new applications from ACORN for the coming year were approved, he added.

Bishop Morin explained that the CCHD action followed the revelation June 2 that Dale

Actions at a Glance

Key actions taken by the U.S. bishops' conference at its fall general assembly

- Warned the new administration and new Congress that lifting existing federal abortion restrictions would alienate tens of millions of Americans and could be seen as an attack on religious freedom.
- Issued a statement on the economic crisis saying the church will continue to reach out to those in need.
- Approved another section of the English translation of the third edition of the Roman Missal.
- Overwhelmingly approved a liturgical service in English and Spanish for blessing children in the womb.
- Approved a \$144 million budget and a list of plans and programs for 2009.
- Set goals on priority issues ranging from strengthening marriage to cultural diversity in the church.
- Chose the Revised Grail Psalter from Conception Abbey over the Revised New American Bible translation of the Book of Psalms for liturgical use.
- Elected Bishop George V. Murry of Youngstown, Ohio, as USCCB secretary-elect and chose chairmen-elect for five USCCB committees.

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Rathke, the brother of ACORN founder Wade Rathke, had embezzled nearly \$1 million from the organization and its affiliates in 1999 and 2000. Dale Rathke stepped down from his position with the national organization in June when the matter became public; no charges were filed against him.

That revelation "raised questions about transparency and governance of ACORN," Bishop Morin told the bishops. CCHD commissioned a forensic audit to determine whether any of the church's funds had been stolen or used inappropriately. A final report is pending, but he said the work so far has concluded that "our funds were not involved with those embezzled at the national office."

In an action related to key priorities established earlier by the bishops, the prelates agreed to grant five task forces the authority to tackle issues ranging from strengthening marriage to addressing cultural diversity in the church through 2011 and approved a host of goals for each task force for the next year.

The task forces are on faith formation and sacramental practice; strengthening marriage; the life and dignity of the human person; cultural diversity in the church; and the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

The task forces are expected to come back to the 2009 fall general assembly with detailed reports about meeting the American church's agenda on these issues,

said Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, conference vice president.

"It's a tremendous investment for the conference," Bishop Kicanas said. "These are more than goals and objectives. These are lifelong challenges."

Several U.S. bishops who attended the Oct. 5-26 world Synod of Bishops on the Bible in Rome discussed the moving experience they had and their rediscovery of the beauty of the word of God. They also said Pope Benedict XVI was present during much of the synod and was attentive to what was being said.

Almost lost in the busy Nov. 11 afternoon session was the 2009 USCCB budget. The bishops approved a budget of \$144 million, a 2.25 percent increase from 2008.

In one of the few votes on the meeting's first day, Nov. 10, the bishops agreed to a revised process for submitting *varia*—new issues that an individual bishop or group of bishops would like to see considered by the full body. The new process was designed to allow for flexibility but conform to criteria established under the USCCB reorganization last year.

The bishops also decided by voice vote to review the USCCB regulations on statements and publications in light of the reorganization. Revised regulations were expected to be submitted to the full body in June.

Contributing to this roundup were Chaz Muth, Nancy Frazier O'Brien and Patricia Zapor.

Diocesan / National / International

Obama phones pope to thank him for congratulatory message

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — U.S. President-elect Barack Obama telephoned Pope Benedict XVI to thank the pope for his message of congratulations on his election victory.

The pope was one of the many world leaders Obama has been contacting since his Nov. 4 win.

The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, confirmed to Catholic News Service Nov. 12 that the president-elect telephoned the pope Nov. 11 "to thank the pope for his telegram, his congratulations" on winning the U.S. presidential election.

Further details about the call were not known, Father Lombardi said.

Pope Benedict sent his congratulations Nov. 5, referring to the "historic occasion" of the election, marking the first time a black man has been elected president of



U.S. President-elect Barack Obama arrives in Chicago to speak to supporters with his wife, Michelle, and their children, Sasha and Malia, after being declared the winner of the 2008 presidential election Nov. 4. (CNS photo/Gary Hershorn, Reuters)

the United States.

Father Lombardi said Nov. 5 the pope prayed that "the blessing of God would sustain him (Obama) and the American people, so that with all people of good will they could build a world of peace, solidarity, and

justice."

The press office for Obama's presidential transition team said all conversations with world leaders are private, and no details would be released on this conversation or any conversation with world leaders.

Charities responds to increased need

FROM PAGE 1

Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia in the Richmond Diocese, said the agency's offices have seen a 25 percent increase in the number of people applying for housing and utility assistance, and they also have experienced a decrease in donations.

Reduced donations at a time when the population "is at its greatest need" is a major concern, he said.

"It is urgent for more foundations to change their priorities to funding social service needs

in a time like this, instead of arts and culture organizations," he added.

Catherine L'Insalata, a division director at Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, said she also has seen an increase in demand for services amid a simultaneous decrease in contributions.

She said there has been a 25 percent increase in people seeking services who have been recently unemployed. "For some that need food or shelter, we struggle to accommodate them

because there is not enough money available," she told CNS Nov. 12.

As she sees it, Catholic Charities agencies alone can't meet the needs of the increased number of clients.

"State and local governments need to respond to this crisis of health care, prescriptions, utility, and rent needs of the unemployed as fast as they have responded to the fall of big American companies," she said.

"These people need a bailout," she added.

Increase in Need

The stresses of unemployment, falling wages, higher food prices and the housing crisis pushed more people to seek assistance from local Catholic Charities agencies in the fall of 2008.

PERCENT OF CATHOLIC AGENCIES SEEING AN INCREASE IN...

- the working poor seeking services **91%**
- requests for financial assistance **86%**
- requests for utility assistance **82%**
- the need for food **77%**
- the need for rent or mortgage assistance **70%**
- requests for temporary housing **41%**

Source: Catholic Charities USA ©2008 CNS

Special Collection: Priest Care Fund

Parish Name	Parish Location	Priest Care May 2007	Priest Care August 2008
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Abbott	268.00	358.00
Jesus of Nazareth	Albany	1,096.00	128.00
Holy Redeemer	Aledo	1,286.00	1,384.75
Most Blessed Sacrament	Arlington	4,917.84	6,365.43
St. Joseph	Arlington	3,421.22	3,238.29
St. Mana Goretti	Arlington	935.00	7,841.00
St. Mary the Virgin	Arlington	358.00	419.00
St. Matthew	Arlington	1,080.99	906.25
St. Vincent de Paul	Arlington	2,118.00	2,127.00
Vietnamese Martyrs Community	Arlington	1,831.00	2,238.00
Holy Trinity	Azle	779.00	1,669.00
St. Michael	Bedford	9,149.00	3,923.00
St. Jerome	Bowie	172.00	130.00
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Breckenridge	342.58	670.14
St. John the Baptist	Bridgeport	934.49	652.55
St. Jude Thaddeus	Burkburnett	406.50	372.00
St. Ann	Burleson	1,854.00	2,170.00
St. Catherine of Siena	Carrollton	2,884.89	2,865.00
Holy Rosary	Cisco	99.07	110.00
St. Joseph	Cleburne	1,964.11	772.46
Holy Angels	Clifton	0.00	0.00
Good Shepherd	Colleyville	2,538.00	3,126.00
Holy Cross	The Colony	1,205.85	591.75
Sacred Heart	Cornamanche	100.00	0.00
St. Joseph	Crowell	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	De Leon	73.60	0.00
Assumption/Blessed Virgin Mary	Decatur	873.30	1,031.34
Immaculate Conception	Denton	1,664.00	2,789.80
St. Mark	Denton	3,305.37	3,463.10
St. Mary	Dublin	503.00	0.00
St. Francis Xavier	Eastland	72.00	63.00
St. Paul	Electra	69.00	56.00
All Saints	Fort Worth	1,682.33	1,092.25
Christ the King	Fort Worth	849.00	0.00
Holy Family	Fort Worth	4,903.00	5,422.00
Holy Name of Jesus	Fort Worth	0.00	0.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Fort Worth	3,950.00	2,181.28
Our Lady of Fatima	Fort Worth	846.75	216.26
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Fort Worth	336.00	2,959.00
Our Mother of Mercy	Fort Worth	1,168.00	0.00
San Mateo	Fort Worth	415.50	254.00
St. Andrew	Fort Worth	5,067.71	8,554.35
St. Bartholomew	Fort Worth	10,621.70	9,597.28
St. George	Fort Worth	891.00	1,749.00
St. John the Apostle	Fort Worth	1,745.00	1,465.00
St. Mary of the Assumption	Fort Worth	0.00	763.00
St. Patrick Cathedral	Fort Worth	6,713.50	5,640.00
St. Paul	Fort Worth	1,359.00	1,118.30
St. Peter the Apostle	Fort Worth	1,035.00	5.00
St. Rita	Fort Worth	198.00	503.00
St. Thomas the Apostle	Fort Worth	2,327.05	2,509.72
St. Mary	Gainesville	132.00	430.00
St. Rose of Lima	Glen Rose	232.00	302.00
St. Francis of Assisi	Graford	0.00	115.00
St. Mary	Graham	853.60	752.77
St. Frances Cabrini	Granbury	1,651.00	3,024.00
St. Francis of Assisi	Grapevine	4,616.00	3,019.00
St. Mary	Henrietta	175.00	120.00
Our Lady of Mercy	Hillsboro	0.00	0.00
Korean Martyrs	Hurst	0.00	0.00
Christ the King	Iowa Park	75.00	45.00
St. Mary	Jacksboro	66.55	112.00
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Keller	11,372.18	6,038.00
Santa Rosa	Knox City	183.00	0.00
St. Philip the Apostle	Lewisville	0.00	3,169.52
St. Peter	Lindsay	2,893.00	2,057.77
St. Jude	Mansfield	2,810.22	2,395.12
St. Mary of the Assumption	Megargel	40.00	150.00
Our Lady of Lourdes	Mineral Wells	0.00	0.00
St. William	Montague	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Morgan	0.00	0.00
Sacred Heart	Muenster	5,801.59	2,229.00
St. Joseph	Nocona	0.00	0.00
St. Theresa	Olney	100.50	66.00
Nativity/Blessed Virgin Mary	Penelope	0.00	196.51
St. Thomas Aquinas	Pilot Point	467.00	0.00
St. Mary	Quanah	114.00	88.50
St. Rita	Ranger	43.00	94.00
St. Joseph	Rhineland	390.00	1,384.00
St. Boniface	Scotland	393.00	221.00
Sacred Heart	Seymour	134.00	420.00
St. Brendan	Stephenville	467.30	0.00
St. John	Strawn	104.00	194.00
St. John	Valley View	260.00	0.00
Holy Family of Nazareth	Vernon	225.00	361.00
St. Stephen	Weatherford	0.00	2,099.00
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Wichita Falls	690.00	260.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Wichita Falls	1,572.31	1,546.09
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Wichita Falls	0.00	1,396.00
Sacred Heart	Wichita Falls	1,601.81	1,549.00
St. Mary	Windthorst	994.00	792.40

128,867.41 128,116.98

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



November 30, First Sunday of Advent.
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Gospel) Mark 13:33-37

By Jeff Hedglen

I can clearly remember sitting on the front porch with my brother and watching down the street for my uncle's car. We knew he was coming some time that day, and with him would be our cousins. We were not a patient duo. We had many plans of forts to build in the basement and, if it was winter, snowball fights to be staged. These plans burned in our minds, and every minute that passed meant one less minute to play.

To keep the boredom at bay, we would play tricks on each other. If I caught my brother not looking down the street, I would excitedly say, "There they — aren't!" He would do the same to me when I tired of gazing down the empty street.

Every now and then we would hear a car coming. We would crane our necks to see who it was, but be deflated when we realized it was not our uncle. After the momentary disappointment faded, we would go back to watching and waiting.

I think the Gospel writer had this kind of

"Be watchful! Be alert!

*You do not know
when the time
will come."*

— Mark 13:33



watchfulness in mind when he exhorted the faithful to stay on the lookout for the coming of the Lord. He said, "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come."

It is impossible to have this high a level of watching and waiting every day of our lives. For this reason the church brings us the season of Advent. It is, in effect, a time when the church sits on the front porch, eagerly longing for the coming of the Lord.

Through signs and symbols we are put on alert. In the Scriptures we wait with the Israelites

as they continue their watch for a Messiah. We also hold vigil with the early Christians as they anticipate (and we still await) the return of Jesus.

Advent is a time to switch gears, and, like my brother and me waiting for my uncle's car, we must stay alert and watch, for Jesus is coming. We don't want to miss it!

QUESTIONS:

Share a story of how it felt when you watched and waited for something or someone. How can we stay alert and watch for the Lord amid the busyness of the holidays?

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Pope: Pray for renewal of world in Christ, ridding it of violence, greed

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICANCITY — Christians must pray that Jesus comes into the lives of those who are suffering from selfishness and violence, including those in Congo and Sudan, said Pope Benedict XVI.

At his Nov. 12 weekly general audience, the pope focused on St. Paul's teaching about Jesus' second coming and how Christians are to live while waiting for the end of time.

In St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, the apostle used the words "Marana, tha!" or "Come, Lord Jesus" to indicate how this ancient Christian prayer shows the joyful expectation of Jesus' return and the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation, said the pope.

The pope said it was probably very difficult for people today "to sincerely pray that this world perish, that the new Jerusalem come, that the Last Judgment arrive."

"Certainly we don't want the end of the world to come now, but on the other hand we do want this unjust world to come to an end, and we do want the world to be fundamentally changed,"



Pope Benedict XVI waves as he arrives to lead his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 12. (CNS photo/Max Rossi, Reuters)

he said.

Christians yearn for a civilization of love, justice, and peace that is free from violence and hunger, he said.

But such a world only can

emerge with the real presence of Christ because "without the presence of Christ, a truly just and renewed world will never come," he said.

Given the dire circumstances

of the world today, he said, "we, too, must say with great urgency 'Come Lord!'"

Come to where there is drug abuse and violence, come to the refugee camps like those in Sudan

and Congo, come to the wealthy who have forgotten Christ and only live for themselves, he said.

The pope asked that people pray for Christ to enter into people's hearts and lives so that every Christian may become "God's light" and be a reflection of his living presence.

The pope said the faithful who all yearn to be united with God in heaven must not apathetically wait for the final judgment. Their love of God entails the great responsibility of using the talents and gifts God has given them to renew the world and spread the good news.

He said knowing Christ has conquered death and is in heaven means the faithful can live free of fear and full of hope even when life seems bleak.

"The future isn't a dark place where no one will have any bearings," he said.

"The Christian knows the light of Christ is stronger" than any fear about the unknown; therefore, he said, Christians can live with a hope that "gives certainty and gives courage to face the future."

Scripture Readings



December 7, Second Sunday of Advent.
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Psalm 85:8-14
- 2) 2 Peter 3:8-14
Gospel) Mark 1:1-8

By Jean Denton

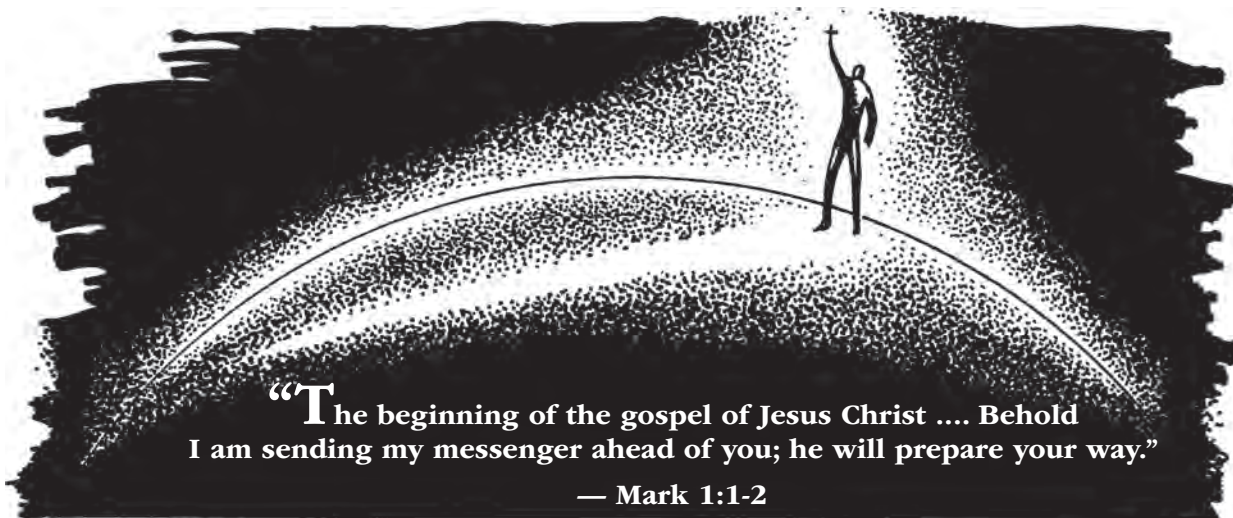
Paul was 70 years old before he heard the voice crying out in the wilderness.

He had been a good Catholic his entire life, attending Mass regularly. He was a loving, dedicated husband and father and a successful business executive. Then, one night shortly into his retirement, Paul heard the voice crying out, first in a dream.

It was so real to him that he listened. But the idea of such a dream was so irrational and unfamiliar that he was embarrassed to recount it to anyone. However, the dream recurred — several times — and he felt compelled to tell his wife, Chris.

"I dreamed I was building a school. In Guatemala!" he said incredulously. (He'd never been to Guatemala). It seemed a little strange to her, too, to be talking about this dream. But it struck her as significant.

Then the two of them together heard the voice crying out, this time at church in the person of



"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ Behold I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way."

— Mark 1:1-2

a visiting Haitian pastor. He wanted to build a school in a remote village in his country.

Recognizing the voice, the couple committed themselves to helping their parish fund construction of the school. A few months later Chris became terminally ill, and her final, urgent wish was to ensure that the school would be built. They donated the amount needed.

After Chris's death, Paul, fluent in French, and the Haitian pastor became close personal friends, and Paul became deeply involved in the life and development of his Haitian community.

Peter's words in this weekend's readings tell us that God doesn't mind that it took Paul 70

years to get to this place: "With the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day," he says.

What happened when Paul and Chris made straight the paths of the Lord to enter the life of a Haitian village. Unexpectedly, but just as powerfully, the paths also led to the transformation of their own life with Jesus.

This story was foretold in Isaiah. "A voice cries out ... the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all people shall see it together ... here is his reward with him."

Paul and Chris listened to the voice, opened the path and the Savior came.

QUESTIONS:

What obstacles in your life might keep you from hearing God's voice in an unexpected place? How can you clear the way for Christ to be present in your day-to-day living?

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Advent can help us welcome the **Light of the World**

By Jeff Hedglen

Family traditions are so important: everything from mealtimes to birthdays to Christmas trees. These customs add significance and depth to our experience of life.

Sadly, some of the richest traditions of the holiday season get overshadowed by the commercialization of this time of year. Add to this the squeeze on the family budget that holiday events and gifts create, and it is no wonder that we can be blinded by the glow of Christmas lights instead of illuminated by the Light of the World.

With a little effort and even less money, we can enter into the spirit of Advent and Christmas. Here are a few ideas and a personal story I hope will inspire you to look past the surface and find the profound presence of Jesus in the coming weeks.

Most parishes offer some type of bulletin insert or flyer with daily reflections for Advent. Four candles and some greenery can give you an Advent wreath. This coupled

Traditions are doorways to the divine. Open one (or two) this year.

with the daily reflection can provide a great way to start or end a day as a household. If your parish doesn't offer this kind of thing, look online at www.americancatholic.org/ scroll down to the "Update your faith" section and click on "Catholic Update." There you will find this resource: "Rest Stops for a Rushed People."

To sweeten up the daily reflection, you can purchase inexpensive Advent calendars with chocolates behind the little windows.

Christmas is not the only Holy Day in December. The liturgical calendar is full of special feast days. Here are a few of the highlights:

- Dec. 6 is the feast day of St. Nicholas. Some cultures have the children set one of their shoes outside the doors of their rooms for St. Nicholas to fill with goodies overnight.

- Dec. 8 is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. This is the day we celebrate Mary being conceived without the stain of original sin. This is the beginning of the final preparations for the coming of the Savior. Attend Mass and celebrate this great day.

- Dec. 12 is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This apparition of Mary has a powerful story. Check out this Web site to learn more: www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Dec1999/feature2.asp. Also, this issue of the *North Texas Catholic* has information about local parishes that will be offering celebrations for this feast.

Another great tradition that leads up to the birth of Christ is

the Posadas. This event begins nine days before Christmas, and it follows the Holy Family as they search for a suitable place for the birth of Jesus. Each night there is a reenactment of Joseph and Mary going door to door seeking a room. There are songs and prayers for each stop. This is a big tradition in the Hispanic community, and it is becoming popular in many parishes. St. Bartholomew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth has a bi-lingual Posadas. Check the next issue of the *North Texas Catholic* for other parishes that may be offering this celebration.

Finally I offer this suggestion as a way to heighten the expectancy of Christmas. My brother's family doesn't light their Christmas tree until Christmas Eve. In the days leading up to Christmas, they get the tree ready with lights, ornaments, ribbons, bows, and presents. Then on Christmas Eve they go to Mass as a family. When they return home, they gather around the tree and read the Christmas story from Luke's Gospel. Then they turn

out all the lights and plug the tree in for the first time.

When my brother told me about this family tradition I thought about how hard this must be for him to go against the flow every year. His kids must nag him every night to turn the tree on, "just for a few minutes — just for tonight." But the fortitude he displays provides his children a memorable and magical Christmas Eve, and it teaches them that Advent is a time to expectantly await Christmas.

With a little planning, we can all have a blessed Advent season, full of rich tradition, deep theology, and even a bit of whimsy. It doesn't matter if you join in with an established one, or start a new one for yourself, traditions are doorways to the divine. Open one (or two) this year.

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

Lo más destacado de la asamblea general de otoño de 2008 de la USCCB

BALTIMORE (CNS)—Durante la asamblea general de otoño de la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos, realizada en Baltimore del 10 al 12 noviembre, los obispos:

— Escucharon a su presidente, el cardenal Francis E. George, de Chicago, reconocer la importancia histórica de la elección del presidente electo Barack Obama y orar para que el presidente entrante pueda tener éxito en su tarea para el bien de todos.

— Advirtieron a la nueva administración y al nuevo congreso que eliminar las existentes restricciones federales sobre el aborto enajenaría permanentemente decenas de millones de estadounidenses y podría ser visto como un ataque contra la libertad religiosa.

— Dijeron que en tiempos de crisis económica la iglesia continuará extendiéndose hacia aquellos que están en necesidad, estará con aquellos que sufren y trabajará por políticas más justas y más compasivas.

— Aprobaron otra larga sección de la traducción al inglés de la tercera edición del Misal Romano, que ahora debe ser confirmada por el Vaticano.

— Escogieron el *Revised Grail Psalter*, producido por los monjes de la abadía Conception en Missouri, por encima de la traducción del *Libro de los salmos* que aparece en la *Revised New American Bible* para uso litúrgico en Estados Unidos.

— Aprobaron abrumadoramente un servicio litúrgico en inglés y español para bendecir los niños en útero.

— Eligieron al obispo George V. Murry, de Youngstown, Ohio, como secretario de la USCCB y eligieron directores para cinco



El obispo Plácido Rodríguez, de Lubbock, centro, y otros obispos estadounidenses el 11 de noviembre revisan una declaración propuesta sobre la situación política de Estados Unidos durante la reunión de la Conferencia Estadounidense de Obispos Católicos en Baltimore. (Foto CNS/Nancy Wiechec)

comités de la USCCB.

— Aprobaron un presupuesto de \$144 millones y una lista larga de planes y programas para la USCCB en el 2009.

— Establecieron una multitud de metas para cinco grupos de trabajo sobre asuntos, desde fortalecer el matrimonio hasta atender la diversidad cultural en la iglesia, como iniciativas prioritarias hasta el 2011.

— Escucharon un informe de la *Campaña católica para el desarrollo humano*, que a principios de este año retiró los fondos provistos a la *Asociación de organizaciones comunitarias para la reforma ahora*, conocida como ACORN, por razones no relacionadas con los problemas actuales por la inscripción de votantes y la política partidista.

— Votaron a favor de un proceso revisado para presentar *varia* — nuevos asuntos que un obispo individual o un grupo de obispos quisieran ver considerados por el cuerpo completo.

— Exploraron cómo las organizaciones caritativas nacionales e internacionales han encontrado estímulo y dirección provechosa en la primera encíclica del Papa Benedicto XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (*Dios es amor*).

— Se enteraron que la Universidad Católica de América en Washington ha tenido un año que estableció nuevos récords de matrículas de estudiantes del primer año y de recaudación nacional de fondos, pero perdió millones en inversiones durante el derretimiento económico del 2008.

Obispo de Little Rock defiende los derechos de inmigrantes en carta pastoral

Por Malea Hargett
Catholic News Service

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas — A cinco meses de distancia de su ordenación, el obispo de Little Rock, Anthony B. Taylor, ha publicado su primera carta pastoral con la esperanza de enseñarle a su rebaño lo que son los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes indocumentados.

“Yo era extranjero y ustedes me acogieron: *Carta pastoral sobre los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes*” se les presentó a los sacerdotes del estado, el 5 de noviembre, durante un día de estudio. Los empleados diocesanos se reunieron en el Centro San Juan para una reunión similar, el 7 de noviembre.

El obispo Taylor dijo que cree que los católicos no tienen la información propia acerca de los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes.

“Espero que la gente abra su corazón al llamado de Jesús en nuestros tiempos”, dijo en una entrevista con *Arkansas Catholic*, periódico diocesano de Little Rock. “Y más que eso, espero que pase de su cabeza a su corazón y que vea (la gente) lo que el Señor nos pide. ... Esto es el aspecto más amplio en donde las enseñanzas de la iglesia no son bien conocidas”.

El obispo Taylor, que habla el español con fluidez y que ha trabajado en el ministerio hispano durante 28 años, dijo que cree que la posibilidad de emigrar a otro país es “un derecho humano intrínseco”.

Dijo que es casi imposible que los inmigrantes, predominantemente provenientes de México, vengán a los Estados Unidos legalmente.

“Están aquí debido a que no hay forma en la que consigan docu-

“*Están aquí debido a que no hay forma en la que consigan documentos, y no porque no quieran los documentos*”, dijo. “*Uno no puede ser obligado a hacer lo que uno no puede. Las leyes de inmigración deberían corresponder a la realidad*”.

—El Obispo Anthony Taylor

mentos, y no porque no quieran los documentos”, dijo. “Uno no puede ser obligado a hacer lo que uno no puede. Las leyes de inmigración deberían corresponder a la realidad”.

La carta se distribuirá en forma de folleto en todas las parroquias y misiones, y estará escrita tanto en inglés como en español.

Para facilitar que los parroquianos lean y discutan la carta, el obispo Taylor le pidió a Cackie Upchurch, directora de *Little Rock Scripture Study*, que preparara una guía de estudio para compartirla en pequeños grupos durante las tres semanas de Adviento.

La carta pastoral será distribuida a los feligreses durante la fiesta de Cristo Rey, el 23 de noviembre, cuando se reproduzca una homilía grabada del Obispo Taylor en todas las Misas. Las sesiones de estudio se llevarán a cabo en las iglesias después de esa fecha y hasta el 20 de diciembre.

Obispo de San Antonio se une a carrera de antorcha en honor de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Por Catholic News Service

SAN ANTONIO — El obispo auxiliar Óscar Cantú, de San Antonio, se unió a una carrera de relevos con antorcha que se desarrolla desde México para terminar en Nueva York. Y el arzobispo de San Antonio, José H. Gómez, celebró una Misa en devoción a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe para darles la bienvenida a los corredores en la Catedral de San Fernando, el 5 de noviembre.

Los participantes en la *Carrera antorcha guadalupana* se encontraban al sur de Texas a la mitad de la

etapa de una carrera que se inició en la Ciudad de México y que finalizará en la catedral de San Patricio en la ciudad de Nueva York el 12 de diciembre, fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, emperatriz de las Américas.

Los corredores, miembros de la Asociación Tepeyac, y más de 300 residentes de la Ciudad del Álamo, rezaron por la intercesión de la Virgen en un esfuerzo “para promover amistad y solidaridad entre los grupos de la comunidad mexicanoamericana a lo largo del recorrido y presentar un eslabón

simbólico para las familias que se ven divididas por fronteras internacionales”, además de despertar conciencia sobre asuntos de inmigración.

La carrera, semejante al recorrido con la antorcha olímpica, se inició en la basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de México.

De acuerdo con la Asociación Tepeyac, patrocinadores de la carrera, el propósito que se persigue es el de representar “el fervor y la fe que los hispanos tienen por Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe,

uno de los principales símbolos de México y su cultura”.

El obispo Cantú, que a la edad de 41 años es, al presente, el obispo más joven de los Estados Unidos, dirigió el relevo, llevando la antorcha por las dos millas finales hasta llegar a la catedral de San Fernando, en el Centro de San Antonio.

El arzobispo Gómez recibió la antorcha en la catedral antes de que empezara la celebración de la Misa. Los corredores también fueron recibidos por un grupo de mariachi y otro de “matachines”,

danzantes religiosos de Corpus Christi. El arzobispo y el obispo auxiliar son dos de los 26 obispos hispanos católicos en servicio activo en los Estados Unidos.

El obispo Cantú les dijo a los periodistas que los obispos de los Estados Unidos han apoyado ya por bastante tiempo una reforma integral de inmigración, y que los corredores se reunirían con grupos que apoyan la reforma de inmigración durante su recorrido hasta Nueva York.

‘Somos guardianes de nuestros hermanos’, recuerdan obispos en declaración económica

BALTIMORE (CNS) — En tiempos de crisis económica, los obispos católicos estadounidenses emitieron una declaración el 11 de noviembre recordando al público que “somos guardianes de nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Estamos todos juntos en esto”.

La breve declaración emitida por el cardenal Francis E. George, de Chicago, presidente de los obispos, señaló que “los tiempos difíciles pueden aislarlos o pueden juntarnos”.

Ésta fue redactada durante la reunión anual de otoño de la Conferencia estadounidense de obispos católicos en Baltimore y aprobada por el cuerpo de obispos mediante votación verbal, el 11 de noviembre, como declaración del cardenal George a nombre de ellos.

“Como pastores y obispos vemos las muchas consecuencias humanas y morales de esta crisis”, dice la declaración. Aunque el impacto de la crisis es mayor en algunas regiones del país, las familias de toda la nación están perdiendo sus hogares, los trabajadores están perdiendo sus empleos y su cobertura de servicios médicos, los ahorros de jubilación son amenazados y la gente está perdiendo el sentido de esperanza y seguridad, continuó.

Pero la iglesia continuará “extendiéndose hacia aquellos que están en necesidad, estará con aquellos que estén sufriendo y trabajará por políticas que traigan mayor compasión, responsabilidad y justicia a la vida económica”, dice la declaración.

El obispo Leonard P. Blair, de Toledo, Ohio, quien sugirió la declaración, dijo en conferencia de prensa, después de su aprobación, que el ímpetu para ésta salió “de la preocupación muy básica que tenemos como pastores” que la situación económica sea enfrentada con entendimiento, compasión y un sentido de solidaridad con nuestros vecinos.

El día anterior en su estado, señaló, otro patrono importante anunció dramáticos recortes de empleos. DHL, compañía internacional de envíos, anunció que estaba eliminando 9,500 empleos, unos 7,000 de estos localizados en Wilmington, Ohio.

“Nuestra gente está sufriendo y los obispos quieren estar con ellos mientras están sufriendo”, dijo el obispo Blair.

El arzobispo George H. Niederauer, de San Francisco, quien preside el comité de comunicaciones de los obispos, dijo que los obispos creyeron importante aumentar la

conciencia de la gente sobre las necesidades de sus vecinos.

Aun antes del reciente descenso económico, muchas diócesis fueron fuertemente azotadas financieramente por pagos en acuerdos por reclamaciones de abuso sexual, señaló el arzobispo Niederauer. Pero en tiempos como estos ayudar al público en necesidad está lejos de tener que ver más con bienes reducidos de una diócesis que tener que ver con “llamar a que la gente dé un paso adelante” para ayudar a sus vecinos, dijo.

El obispo Blair dijo que Toledo tiene una larga tradición de persona ayudando a persona, particularmente en el nivel parroquial, y no ve que eso esté afectado particularmente por situaciones financieras diocesanas.

“Si toda la política es local, mucha de la caridad es también local”, dijo el arzobispo Niederauer.

Las colectas parroquiales, la campaña caritativa diocesana anual, la *Sociedad de San Vicente de Paúl* y las alacenas alimentarias locales son el tipo de ayuda que en el pasado el público ha apoyado generosamente para ayudar a sus vecinos y que los obispos tienen la esperanza de fomentar con la declaración, dijo.

Los obispos aprueban la ceremonia de bendición para bebés que están en el claustro materno

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Para llenar un vacío en los libros de oraciones existentes hasta ahora, los obispos de Estados Unidos aprobaron el 11 de noviembre por mayoría abrumadora una ceremonia litúrgica, tanto en inglés como en español, para la bendición de bebés que todavía se encuentran en el claustro materno.

El documento deberá ser enviado a la *Congregación de culto divino y sacramentos* del Vaticano para “su reconocimiento” o confirmación. La versión escrita en inglés fue aprobada por 223 votos en contra de 1; y la versión escrita en español fue aprobada por 224 votos con 0 en contra.

El obispo Arthur Serratelli de Paterson, New Jersey, presidente del *Comité de culto divino de los obispos de EE.UU.*, dijo que la bendición “fue preparada para darles apoyo a la mamá y al papá que esperan el nacimiento de un hijo, para estímulo en las parroquias a favor de la oración y del reconocimiento del precioso don que un hijo, que todavía está en el claustro materno, representa; y para promover el respeto de la vida humana en la sociedad”.

La bendición se puede usar dentro del contexto de la misa o fuera de ella, y para una mamá en forma individual, para una pareja o

para un grupo de padres y madres que esperan un hijo.

El obispo Serratelli dijo que el comité favorecedor de la vida ha recibido pedidos de “un buen número de diócesis” para adquirir tal documento.

En la bendición se incluye una intercesión “para que nuestro gobierno y dirigentes cívicos cumplan sus deberes con justicia y compasión; y al mismo tiempo, lo hagan con respeto por el don de la vida humana” y “por un proceso de embarazo seguro y sano para todas las madres que están en espera y por un parto seguro para dar a luz a su bebé felizmente”.

En el texto de la bendición también se expresa preocupación “por los bebés a los que no se quiere, a los que no se les ama, a los que están abandonados o son víctimas de abuso, para que el Señor inspire a su pueblo a fin de que los protejan y cuiden de ellos”.

Si la bendición se usa fuera de la Misa, en la ceremonia se incluyen oraciones introductorias, lecturas de *La sagrada escritura*, intercesiones, la bendición en sí a la madre y al bebé, y un rito de conclusión.

También se incluyen oraciones opcionales para los papás, la familia y la comunidad de la parroquia.

Mujer de Chicago recibe premio nacional por trabajo con padres

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Stephanie Garza, de 25 años de edad, es la ganadora del 2008 del *Premio nuevo liderato Cardenal Bernardin*, dado por la *Campaña católica para el desarrollo humano* (CCHD) de los obispos estadounidenses.

Fue reconocida por su trabajo con padres inmigrantes en Chicago.

El premio anual, que lleva el nombre del cardenal Joseph L. Bernardin, fenecido arzobispo de Chicago, honra a católicos jóvenes que demuestran liderato en la lucha contra la pobreza y la injusticia en Estados Unidos mediante esfuerzos basados en la comunidad.

Garza recibió el premio el 10 de noviembre, durante la reunión anual de otoño de la USCCB.

“Stephanie es un ejemplo claro de una líder joven inspirada por su fe para empoderar a personas de bajo ingreso para trabajar juntas para atender las causas radicales de la pobreza en sus comunidades”, dijo el obispo auxiliar Roger Morin, de Nueva Orleans, quien preside el subcomité de la CCHD de los obispos estadounidenses.

Garza trabaja con el *Proyecto*

organizador del suroeste, organización que recibe financiamiento de la CCHD. Opera el programa *Padres como mentores*, iniciativa en cuatro escuelas primarias públicas de Chicago que facilita la participación de los padres en las escuelas de sus hijos con la meta de ocupar a dichos padres en tratar los asuntos comunitarios.

Hija de padre inmigrante y madre méxicoamericana, Garza tiene una conexión especial con los participantes del programa, la mayoría de los cuales son madres inmigrantes. Garza describió su trabajo como “desarrollo de líderes para que hablen y actúen a favor de sí mismos, para que la gente de ingreso bajo pueda traer cambios a sus comunidades”.

En la Arquidiócesis de Chicago, Garza es también líder activa en la *Campaña católica para la reforma de inmigración* nacional. Dirige regularmente talleres educativos locales para las parroquias sobre la necesidad de una reforma abarcadora de inmigración, basada en los evangelios y en la enseñanza social católica.

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Defensores hacen un llamado para hacer que la erradicación del hambre esté a la cabeza en la lista de prioridades del país

Por Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Casi la mitad de los votantes de EE.UU. dicen que viven día de pago a día de pago, debido a que el precio de alimentos ha subido y la adversidad económica del país se ha profundizado, informa la *Alianza para erradicación del hambre*.

En una encuesta el día de las elecciones llevada a cabo con 1,000 votantes en varias partes del país, la alianza encontró graves preocupaciones que se desarrollan alrededor de lo que se llama "inseguridad de alimento". Tres de cinco votantes, o sea, el 59 por ciento, dijeron que han sentido los efectos de los altos precios de alimentos. Poco menos de la mitad, el 49 por ciento, dijeron que observan que la condición del hambre se empeora. Cerca de un votante en cinco, el 19 por ciento, dice que teme que ellos mismos o alguien que conozcan padezca de hambre.

En adición, casi todos los que respondieron, el 94 por ciento, dijeron que creen que el hambre

es un problema similar en otros países.

Tales respuestas demuestran una falta subyacente de confianza en las actuales condiciones económicas, causada en parte por el aumento del 7.5 por ciento en el precio de alimentos durante el año pasado. También no predicen una recuperación financiera rápida, a menos que se dirija un nuevo plan de estímulo económico hacia el nivel inferior de la escala económica, dijo el reverendo David Beckmann, presidente de la alianza.

"Cuando hablamos de la crisis económica, no le prestamos bastante atención al hecho de que la gente que ha sufrido más por la crisis son personas que no pueden alimentar más a sus hijos", le dijo el reverendo Beckmann al *Catholic News Service* el 6 de noviembre.

"El imperativo moral está bien claro", dijo, explicando que el país debe erradicar el hambre y poner un alto a la pobreza nacional e internacional en la lista de prioridades.

"Cuando hablamos de la crisis económica, no le prestamos bastante atención al hecho de que la gente que ha sufrido más por la crisis son personas que no pueden alimentar más a sus hijos".

—El reverendo
David Beckmann

El reverendo Beckmann, ministro luterano, cree que el hambre que se sufre en el mundo entero merece la misma atención, especialmente en algunas partes del mundo en donde experimentan carestía de alimentos. Han ocurrido desórdenes debido a la carestía de alimentos en varios lugares de África, el sur de Asia y

Haití en este año de 2008.

"Esto no se trata de la *Bolsa de valores*. Esto se trata de la muerte de infantes", dijo.

Los resultados de la encuesta se comparan a la realidad experimentada por las agencias de *Caridades católicas* en todo el país. En una encuesta llevada a cabo en octubre en 44 entidades de *Caridades católicas en EE.UU.*, se encontró que el 88 por ciento de las agencias informó que la cifra de personas que busca asistencia de comida ha subido en tres cuartas partes de las agencias.

A la cabeza de solicitantes se encuentran ciudadanos de mayor edad, gente pobre con trabajo y personas de la clase media, que acudieron a las agencias de *Caridades católicas* para pedir comida y ayuda en el pago de servicios domésticos, renta y pago de hipoteca.

Gus Hernández, especialista de alto rango de recursos familiares en *Caridades católicas* de Fresno, California, dijo que la base de clientes de la agencia se ha casi triplicado durante el año presente, 2008, de 40

a 50 familias por día a un promedio de 143 por día.

En los *Servicios católicos* de Utah se ha visto un aumento del 185 por ciento en pedidos de cajas de comida. En Omaha, Nebraska, la gente ha acudido buscando asistencia habitacional con un aumento de cinco veces más, debido a la lucha contra el desempleo y los altos precios de alimentos.

La alianza, en la que se incluye la *Conferencia de obispos católicos de Estados Unidos*, fijó el año 2015 como meta para que se elimine el hambre que sufren los menores de edad en los Estados Unidos, e hizo un llamado para el cambio substancial de acción política para que se reduzca el hambre mundial y la pobreza.

El senador Dick Lugar, R-Indiana, y el representante Jim McGovern, D-Massachusetts, presentes en la reunión, le hicieron un llamado al recién presidente electo Obama para que nombre a una "autoridad de alimentos" que supervise las acciones políticas nacionales e internacionales.

Opinión eclesiástica sobre matrimonio homosexual prevalece; fracasan otros esfuerzos de votación

Por Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — En votaciones sobre preguntas puestas en las papeletas del 2008 en todo el país prevaleció la opinión de la Iglesia Católica contra el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo, pero la mayoría de los esfuerzos católicos de influenciar la votación relacionada con el aborto, el suicidio ayudado, la investigación embrionaria usando células madres y los juegos de azar fracasaron.

Los votantes aprobaron la Proposición 8 de California, que enmendaría la constitución estatal para definir el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer, por un margen de 52 por ciento a 48 por ciento, aunque los opositores dijeron que el conteo de las papeletas de ausentes podría cambiar el resultado. Propuestas similares fueron aprobadas en Arizona (57 por ciento a 43 por ciento) y Florida (62 por ciento a 38 por ciento).

El cardenal Roger M. Mahony, de Los Ángeles, en una declaración del 5 de noviembre, agradeció a la comunidad católica por la aprobación de la Proposición 8. Dijo que el éxito también fue resultado "de una coalición sin precedentes de

muchas comunidades de fe y de otros ciudadanos que entienden la importancia de mantener la institución fundamental del matrimonio como ha sido vivida desde que comenzó la historia escrita".

En una gama de otros asuntos, sin embargo, los votantes rechazaron la posición apoyada por la iglesia sobre asuntos en las papeletas.

En Connecticut, donde el *Tribunal supremo* decretó el 10 de octubre que la prohibición estatal del matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo era inconstitucional, el 59 por ciento de los votantes rechazó un esfuerzo de convocar una convención constitucional, donde la cuestión habría podido ser reconsiderada. Los obispos católicos del estado habían pedido votos a favor de la convención.

Por un margen de 47 por ciento a 53 por ciento, los votantes de California rechazaron una propuesta apoyada por la iglesia de requerir notificación a los padres, o una declaración judicial, 48 horas antes que una menor de edad recibiera un aborto. Una medida en South Dakota que habría prohibido los abortos en el estado, a excepción de víctimas de violación sexual e incesto, también fracasó, 55 por

ciento a 45 por ciento.

En Colorado los líderes católicos habían asumido un enfoque neutral ante la *Enmienda de personalidad* de Colorado, que habría definido a "todo ser humano desde el momento de la fertilización" como persona bajo la constitución estatal. Los votantes rechazaron la enmienda propuesta, con solamente el 27 por ciento a favor y el 73 por ciento en contra.

Washington se convirtió en el segundo estado de la nación en permitir el suicidio ayudado por un médico, con una votación de 59 por ciento a 41 por ciento a favor de la *Iniciativa 1000*. Los obispos católicos del estado habían dicho que la propuesta no tenía salvaguardas adecuadas y que su aprobación amenazaría "la dignidad de toda la vida humana sin importar debilidad o definiciones sociales de utilidad".

En Michigan los votantes acordaron, por margen de 52 por ciento a 48 por ciento, ampliar la investigación embrionaria usando células madres y "prohibir las leyes estatales y locales que prevengan, restrinjan o desalienten la investigación usando células madres, terapias futuras y curaciones".

Cardenal tiene esperanza que foro abra nuevo capítulo en relaciones católico-musulmanas

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO — En la víspera de la primera reunión del *Foro católico-musulmán*, el cardenal responsable del diálogo dijo tener la esperanza que éste abra "un nuevo capítulo" en una larga historia de relaciones católico-musulmanas.

El cardenal francés Jean-Louis Tauran, presidente del *Pontificio consejo para el diálogo interreligioso*, ofreció entrevistas a principios de noviembre a *Radio vaticana* y al periódico católico francés *La Croix*.

Dijo a *Radio vaticana* que la reunión del 4 al 6 de noviembre con representantes de los 138 académicos musulmanes que comenzaron la iniciativa *Palabra común* en el 2007, ofrecería a los participantes una oportunidad de explicar sus credos mediante su comprensión de los mandamientos de amar a Dios y amar al prójimo.

Aunque los puntos teológicos son la base de la discusión, "propiamente hablando, uno no puede decir que tenemos un diálogo teológico", dijo en la entrevista del 3 de noviembre con *Radio vaticana*.

En vez, dijo, los diálogos del

Vaticano con los musulmanes se han enfocado en cuestiones éticas, en la espiritualidad y en la acción conjunta a favor de los sufrientes.

Dijo a *La Croix* el 2 de noviembre: "Por el momento el diálogo teológico verdaderamente no ha comenzado. Veremos con el foro, cuando hablaremos del amor de Dios, cuán lejos podemos ir juntos. Lo que es importante es conocer el pensamiento teológico de los demás" y compartir las riquezas que provienen de nuestras respectivas tradiciones religiosas.

Se espera que el segundo día de la reunión se enfoque en la dignidad humana y en el respeto mutuo. El cardenal Tauran tiene la esperanza que eso sea una oportunidad para que el Vaticano exprese sus preocupaciones por los límites de la libertad de conciencia y de la práctica religiosa que los católicos enfrentan en algunos países musulmanes.

El cardenal Tauran dijo que es natural querer reciprocidad y creer que la libertad que es buena para los musulmanes en Europa, por ejemplo, sea buena para los cristianos en el Oriente Medio.

Diocesan

Father Pacwa offered encouragement to those in attendance to keep on defending life



ABOVE: William Lopez holds his daughter playfully, as 8-month-old Jesliam charms the camera lens with her smile. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Once people stop discussing what's true and from God, society loses its ability to judge. "When that happens, we're simply reduced to those who can impose their will more successfully than those others who have the truth."

— Fr. Mitch Pacwa

FROM PAGE 1
day and offered counseling to the couple who were separated and troubled by mounting bills. During her pregnancy, Jessica received rent money, clothing, and baby items. She reconciled with her husband, and today William Lopez works two jobs to support his wife and three children.

The parish-based Gabriel Project guided the worried mother out of crisis and toward a more stable family life that includes a renewed spirituality.

"I came back to the faith that I was away from for so long," explained Lopez, a parishioner at St. Matthew Church in Arlington. "It helped me have faith once again."

A record-setting crowd of 730 people, who gathered inside Fort Worth's Hilton Hotel for the Nov. 1 dinner, applauded the young mother's testimony and the efforts of the Catholics Respect Life (CRL) organization to advance the pro-life cause in the diocese. Sponsored by Catholics Respect Life and the Diocesan Respect Life Office, the Bishop's Pro-Life Banquet raises money for various ministries that protect, nurture, and sustain human life from conception to natural death. Programs served include a Parish Resource Ministry that trains and educates pro-life coordinators, a sidewalk prayer and counseling ministry, Youth for Life, Rachel Ministries for women hurt by abortion, and The Gabriel Project.

In an address to supporters, CRL Director Angela Walters,

asked the gathering to reflect on the evening's theme, "You Have the Power To Save One."

"It's an invitation for you to consider how you can assist another human being," she said. "The power can come from the Holy Spirit or the power of God's grace in our lives."

Other sources of power are financial resources or spending time with a pregnant woman or dying person.

"We also have the power to pray for those involved in the abortion industry and those hurt by it," she said.

The CRL-sponsored Rachel Ministries has helped 250 people recover from the emotional and



ABOVE: CRL president Angela Walters offers support to Jessica Lopez as her husband William Lopez reads her account of how counsel and assistance offered by Project Gabriel helped her decide to give birth to her daughter. (Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

spiritual effects of abortion by offering help from priests, counselors, or their peers.

"The ministry has seen an increase in men and couples seeking help this year, so we've made sure team leaders are up to date on men's issues relating to abortion," Walters said, explaining new developments in the various ministries. "It's also expanded outreach to more churches and strengthened its ties to other abortion recovery groups in the area."

Keynote speaker for the banquet, Father Mitchell Pacwa, SJ, offered pro-life workers encouragement in an address that discussed Jesus Christ as prophet, king, and priest. A well-known biblical scholar and lecturer, the Jesuit priest established Ignatius Productions in 2000 to teach the Scriptures and educate Catholics about their faith.

"The ministry to promote life must be rooted in Jesus Christ our Savior," the popular EWTN host told the audience. "And when we are anointed in baptism, we share in Christ's three-fold roles."

A prophet speaks the word of God, but that message is often rejected by today's society.

"They're trying to remove God and any mention of Him from every aspect of the culture,"

ABOVE RIGHT: Fr. Mitch Pacwa, noted EWTN television personality, speaks to the banquet crowd.

RIGHT: CRL president Angela Walters stands beside Fr. Pacwa at the banquet podium at the Fort Worth Hilton.

the speaker pointed out. "They don't want God's word at all. They want their own solutions and ideas."

And once people stop discussing what's true and from God, society loses its ability to judge.

"When that happens, we're simply reduced to those who can impose their will more successfully than those others who have the truth," Fr. Pacwa added.

In order to be "truly Catholic," and share in the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ, Fr. Pacwa said, people must be willing to speak God's word in a society where everything is considered relative, and the powerful impose their will by force. "This is a tremendous challenge for us."

He encouraged his listeners to be countercultural in a social environment that is materialistic, narcissistic, and sees death as a friend and ally. With Catholics now the largest religious group in Texas and the U.S., Fr. Pacwa implored the audience to use their faith and influence to promote church teachings, Christianity, and hope.

"Say that God is life," the speaker said, as the audience erupted in applause. "That is not my idea; that is not my political party's; that is the word of God. As a prophet I simply must be



faithful to that word."

With the banquet scheduled on All Saints Day, Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann used the occasion to discuss how November's liturgical observances tie into the pro-life movement.

"I believe that All Saints Day and All Souls Day encourage all of us to reflect on the gift of life, the sacredness of that gift, and the eternal life in Christ to which we are all called," he said.

Like the obstacles faced by pro-life advocates today, many saints lived in difficult and challenging times. They were persecuted by society.

"But nonetheless, they were faithful to the Lord," the bishop added. "They are icons of faith and life, but, above all, they are icons of hope."

Bishop Vann asked the audience to observe All Souls Day by remembering and praying for the heroes and heroines in the pro-life and respect life movements whose lives and dedication remind us continually of the sanctity of human life.

"Thank you all for promoting a culture of life and giving of yourselves tirelessly, day in and day out, for those who are not yet born," he said in closing. "Let us never be discouraged in our work and in what we seek to do."

Diocesan / Regional

Costs have risen, but service remains job one

FROM PAGE 24
done in my lifetime.
"I am so proud that Catholic Charities has been serving this community for nearly 100 years," he said, "and in all those years we have remained true to our mission: to provide service to those in need; to advocate compassion and justice in the structures of society; and to call all people of good will to do the same."

Gibbs commended two groups of people, the Catholic Charities board of directors and the Building Hope board of directors, for their efforts over the past few years. He also thanked donors who had given to the project on any level, and especially the Catholic Charities staff who together raised some

\$20,000.
Moncrief reminisced with the audience, telling them he and his wife Rosie "were here when this campaign kicked off last March, and I remember asking many of you, and others, to dig deep and make this dream a reality. Well — you did!"

"You learned about the important work of Catholic Charities in our community — and you committed yourself to the work of this organization. And your efforts have taken us where we are today — breaking ground on a brand new future for Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth.

"We've still got a little bit more to do," the mayor said, "and you're going to be getting a few more

phone calls. Be prepared for those phone calls."

One surprise in the building effort, Reynolds said later in an interview with the *North Texas Catholic*, was an estimated cost jump from \$13.6 to \$15.7 million. "But there was no turning back," she said, "and if cutbacks would not do the agency justice, our board of directors has been very consistent in saying, 'What does the agency need?' not 'What can we raise?'"

"The board has been phenomenal in making this happen."

At the new location, Reynolds said, "We will continue our work of providing hope through caring for children, strengthening families, and welcoming the stranger. We will continue to provide safe



Bishop Kevin Vann moves some serious dirt in the groundbreaking ceremony.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11
from the un-neat and imperfect life that weddings eventually produce. It's called "family," and that's just the way it is.

Transcribing videotapes is enlightening, because you travel through people's ages and stages, receiving a microscopic view of all that happened. What amazes me about that process is the din of multiple, overlapping conversations. I missed many interactions then, but reliving them through video, I can hear them all now.

The youngest children frequently repeated the word "Mom" so many times, I wondered why I didn't answer! Did I have bananas in my ears? Or had repetition of "Mom" created a total lapse of meaning, like saying the word "tree" so many times it might as well mean "vacuum cleaner?"

After viewing our past through analog-to-digital transfer, I learned what years my children were well behaved, what ages they were the most inclined to avoid the camera (13), whose feelings got hurt most often, and who, as their grandmother always said, needed love most.

The ones who needed love most were the ones who deserved it least, Big Kate said. She was right.

But the greatest part about

seeing the videos has been enjoying the times again, even if some bring bittersweet memories of the family life that preceded or followed each scene. Whenever the camera shut down unexpectedly, that was when someone likely got "a talking to." Or, as Father Oscar Vasquez, former principal of Nolan Catholic High School would say, it was "a teachable moment."

Watching that happen makes me sad.

What makes me happy is watching shared experiences I knew would last all our lives, like using Gammy's recipes, even when she wasn't there to taste them. The way it all begins, I now know, is with repetition: repeated meals around splendid dining tables, repeated hours in the kitchen, creating fragrant and succulent delicacies — and memories.

About the middle of November this year, my grandchildren Sam and Natalie asked their mother if they could listen to Christmas music in the car. Meredith was not fully aware that at ages 7 and 5 they already had developed memories we define as tradition. She started to tell me this — that Sam knew the lyrics to his favorite Christmas song — but she choked up and couldn't finish her story.

Meredith's lips quivered. "I remembered when I was little and we would play my favorite Christmas records while we

were fixing Thanksgiving dinner," she said.

"It's like going to to Kansas," Meredith said. "Last summer when we drove to Grandma's for a weekend, I realized the kids remembered where they were — the neighborhood, the streets. It was like when we were little, driving to Gammy's house. We'd recognize the landmarks, and then we were finally there!"

"Now, when we go to Kansas for Thanksgiving, my kids know and understand that too." She sniffed as she told her story, understanding the implications of it.

Both the events and the repetition of them are life's true teachable moments. They reinforce love, repeated for generations.

Sometimes we are lucky enough to see it in the Super 8 movies our parents took, or in the VHS tapes we ourselves saved. All of us, though, can see and remember it in our hearts, where the tradition of love lives.



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew Parish, has five children, Meredith, John, Julie, Andrew, and Abby. In May, her column received the second place award for best family life column by the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada at the Catholic Media Convention in Toronto. In 2005, Kathy's column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

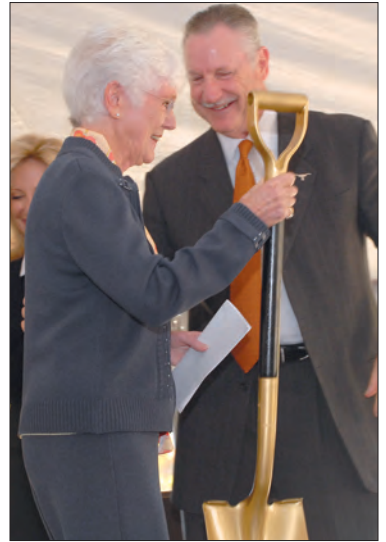
and secure shelter for children removed from their homes because of the abuse and neglect they've experienced.

"We will continue to provide both financial resources for families in crisis as well as the tools and education to help ensure our families become and remain strong, stable, and self-sufficient. We will continue to work with immigrants and political refugees to make their transition into productive, successful, and prosperous new citizens of our community as smooth and efficient as possible.

"Right now," Reynolds said to the gathered supporters of Catholic Charities, you are sitting in the future lobby of Catholic Charities of Fort Worth — and as you sit here, I want you to imagine the people that will walk through the doors of this new building. In many cases, we will be their last hope, the one 'yes' that can bring hope back into their lives.

"You may not be sitting in this room when they come to us," she said, "but you are the reason we can answer their cries for help."

"There is no greater calling than to help those less fortunate than us, those most in need," said



Jill Fischer carries the engraved "Building Hope" shovel past a congratulatory Mayor Mike Moncrief.

Jill Fischer, who was presented a ceremonial shovel engraved, "The Fischer Family Building Hope From the Ground Up, Catholic Charities, November 3, 2008."

"This is what Catholic Charities does, offering services to help refugees and abused children, families in crisis, housing for the elderly. With these services to those in need, they provide one of the most important gifts," she said. "Where there is despair, they create hope."

Umbert the Unborn



The Flock

By Jean Denton
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Calendar

RACHEL MINISTRIES

Rachel Ministries, a program that offers a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath, is expanding its outreach to include programs and services in Spanish. The expanded outreach program is currently seeking volunteers who can read and speak Spanish to help build the Spanish program. The ministry is also seeking Spanish-speaking licensed counselors to volunteer during the Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats. There are also opportunities for volunteers to be included on the referral list. Training will be provided to all volunteers. Anyone who is bilingual and is interested in this ministry is asked to contact Betsy Kopor at (817) 923-4757 or by e-mail to forgiven@racheltx.org.

CHRISTMAS BOOK AND GIFT SALE

The Catholic Renewal Center Bookshelf at 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth will hold a Christmas "Book and Gift Sale" Nov. 22-23. The book store, next door to Nolan Catholic High School, carries items such as first communion gifts, confirmation gifts, children and adult books, Bibles, cards, Christmas cards, music, jewelry, religious articles, and other gift items. The sale includes 10 percent off regular stock, with the exception of items already reduced, and without sales tax. The store will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and 12 to 5 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, call the Catholic Renewal Center at (817) 429-2920.

LAY CARMELITES

The Lay Carmelites invite those in search of a deeper relationship with Christ to join them on the second and fourth Sundays of the month for a time of prayer and fellowship. Those interested in participating are asked to gather at 2 p.m. in the chapel of The College of St. Thomas More, 3017 Lubbock in Fort Worth. Formation will take place in the college library from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.

DEAF MINISTRY

The Deaf Ministry Program is in need of a court reporter to help with CART (Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation) services. The Deaf Community celebrates a special Deaf Community Mass on the first Sunday of each month at 1:45 p.m. at San Mateo Church near downtown Fort Worth. The ministry would like to provide CART services for deaf persons who do not sign so they can read the simultaneous transcriptions and be a part of the special liturgy. To help with this service, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at (817) 284-3019 (Voice and TDD) or mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller; at 1301 Paxton Ave. (Padre Pio House) in Arlington; and at Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton at 2255 Bonnie Brae St. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.sampg.com, or e-mail to Mark at seamspurity@yahoo.com.

BENEFIT DANCE

HALOS (Hispanic Association Lending Others Support) Fort Worth will host its fifth annual dance Nov. 29 from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Hall at 4100 Blue Mound Rd., Fort Worth. Tickets are available for \$30 per person. Tables may be reserved with the purchase of eight tickets. Tickets will also be available at the door for \$35 per person. The dance will feature Little Joe and his band La Familia. The auction of a bicycle will also be held during the dance. Ice, sodas, and food will be available for purchase during the function. The proceeds from the dance will benefit Catholic Charities' children emergency shelter. All donations are tax deductible. To purchase tickets, call Mary Hernandez at (817) 923-5261, Flores Insurance at (817) 724-7673, or Lopez Plumbing (817) 923-9869.

To Report Misconduct

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

- Call Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at jlocke@fwdioc.org
- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 102 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

To Report Abuse

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

COURAGE GROUP

Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for those striving to live chaste lives according to the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality, meets every second and fourth Friday evening. For information, e-mail to CourageDFW@Catholic.org or call (972) 938-5433.

OLGHS DEVELOPMENT DINNER

Our Lady of Grace High School will hold its annual Development Dinner at 6 p.m., Dec. 6 at the Trophy Country Club located at 500 Trophy Club Dr. in Roanoke. The evening will feature guest speaker Patrick Reilly, founder of the Cardinal Newman Society, on the necessity of Catholic education from kindergarten to college. The presentation is geared toward parents considering sending their children to a Catholic university or college. Dave Palmer from Catholic Radio KATH-AM, 910 will serve as emcee. The Scanlan Foundation has offered a matching grant of \$75,000, and the school's goal is to raise enough funds to match the gift and build a school "worthy of our students' abilities and bright futures." The event will also honor the school's benefactors and supporters. Admission will be \$50 per person, which includes dinner, entertainment, information, and fellowship. A cash bar will also be available. For more information, or reservations, call (817) 933-6516 or visit the school's Website, www.olghs.com.

MINISTRY FOR GAYS, LESBIANS

The regular fourth Thursday of the month meeting of the Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Their Families will not be held in November and December, due to the holidays. All, including parents and friends, are invited to attend a 6 p.m. Mass Tuesday, Dec. 2, in the chapel of the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St. in Fort Worth next to Nolan Catholic High School. The Mass will be followed by a pot-luck dinner. The next regular meeting of the ministry will be held Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

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THANKSGIVING MEMORIAL MASS

The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus General Worth Assembly will celebrate its Annual Memorial Mass at 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27 at the Carmelite Convent at 5801 Mt. Carmel Dr. in Arlington. The Mass will honor the Sir Knights who passed away during the past year. The ciborium, on display at the Mass, will be engraved with the names of the following Sir Knights: James W. Wright, Milton Ray Townsend, John William Petrelli, Sr., and John J. Nykaza. This ciborium will be presented to Holy Trinity School for their use at Mass. Father Anh Tran, Faithful Friar, will celebrate the Mass and the Carmelite Nuns will provide the choir music. All Knights, Sir Knights, and the public are welcome to this Memorial Mass.

NTC DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

The *North Texas Catholic* is published twice monthly, except during the months of June, July, and August when it is published monthly. The deadline to submit information is noon on the Wednesday of the week before the paper is published. Items for the Dec. 5 issue must be received by noon on Tuesday, Nov. 25. Items for the Dec. 19 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 10.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE LECTURE

St. Patrick Cathedral, located at 1206 Throckmorton St., will offer a lecture and slide presentation on Our Lady of Guadalupe at 7 p.m. Dec. 11. There will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. Dr. Miguel Leatham, a renowned Catholic expert on Our Lady of Guadalupe, will speak on "The Image of Guadalupe in the Light of Science and History." The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, believed to have been miraculously imprinted upon the cloak of Saint Juan Diego, has been the subject of various critical examinations over its 475-year history. The talk will take the audience on an historical tour of the major studies and students of the image from the Spanish colonial era to the infrared study of 1979. Dr. Leatham will compare the findings of these investigations and will comment on their significance for understanding the image of Guadalupe and its history. Dr. Leatham is a sociocultural anthropologist on the faculty of Texas Christian University, specializing in the study of Latin American and Mexican-American cultures, with a teaching and research focus on religion, religious movements, and ethnic folklore.

ADVENT REFLECTION

Father Mel Bessellieu will present an Advent night of reflection at 7 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 11 at St. Ann Church in Burleson. Fr. Bessellieu's topic will be "Angels: God's Heavenly Messengers." The Adult Bible Study Groups will sponsor the event as a time to "slow down and direct our thoughts to Advent as a time of preparation for our Lord's Birth," according to promotional materials. Cookies and punch will be served in the hall following Fr. Bessellieu's presentation. For more information call the church office at (817) 295-5621.

GERMAN SAUSAGE MEAL

The Windthorst Knights of Columbus Council #1824 wish to invite everybody to their Annual German Sausage Meal from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, in the St. Mary's Parish Hall at 101 Church St. Food includes all you can eat homemade German sausage, spare ribs and sauerkraut, trimmings, ice cream, and tea. Take-out orders will be available. Tickets are \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children 12 and younger. Raw sausage will be sold for \$3 per pound, and home-baked goods will be available from the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Handicap seating and parking is available. For more information, contact Jerry Horn at (940) 423-6444.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE NOVENA

St. Catherine of Siena Church cordially invites everyone to participate in the parish's celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Friday, Dec. 12. A rosary novena to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held beginning Wednesday, Dec. 3 through Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the narthex of the church, except Monday, Dec. 8, when the rosary will be prayed at 6 p.m. According to information provided by the parish, a bilingual Mass will be concelebrated Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A Spanish choir, children, and youth of the parish, the Knights of Columbus, and the Matachines de María Inmaculada will participate in the celebration of this special Mass in honor of Our Lady. Following the Mass there will be a reception in Assisi Hall with hot chocolate, tamales, and pan dulce. The Matachines de María Inmaculada will also dance during the reception. St. Catherine of Siena is located at 1705 E. Peters Colony Road, Carrollton.

GUADALUPANA SOCIETY MEALS

The Guadalupana Society of San Mateo Church in Fort Worth will have a breakfast on Sunday Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to noon in the church hall at 2930 Pulido St. Menudo and breakfast burritos will be served. The society will also hold a Virgen de Guadalupe enchilada dinner fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5, in the church hall. The funds will be for the Dec. 12 celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe Masses. For more information, contact Rachel Rodriguez of the Guadalupana Society at (817) 994-6228.

MISSION AT OMM

Missionary priest Father Chester P. Smith, SVD, will preach Monday, Dec. 8 and Tuesday, Dec. 9 at an Advent revival with the theme "The Power of Waiting on the Lord." The revival will be held at 7 p.m. both nights at Our Mother of Mercy Church, located at 1001 E. Terrell Ave. in Fort Worth. All are invited to attend. Fr. Smith is one of three American priests who serve as members of the Bowman-Francis Ministry Project, which was founded by the Society of Divine Word in 1993 to foster spiritual development and an elevated quality of life for all people of African descent. Fr. Smith travels around the world, conducting church leadership development workshops, revivals, and retreats designed to strengthen families of African descent. For more information about the revival, contact the office at Our Mother of Mercy Church at (817) 335-1695.

ST. JOSEPH MISSION

Father Cedric Pisegna, CP, will lead a three-night mission and Mass at St. Joseph Church at 1927 SW Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington. Since ordination as a Passionist Priest in 1991, Fr. Cedric has dedicated his life to God and a desire to make a difference in peoples' lives by bringing them closer to Christ and the Holy Spirit. His messages are about the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ and are practical, inspirational, and orthodox Catholicism. Fr. Cedric preaches, writes, and produces to help people come to know Jesus in a personal way. He was touched by the grace of God when he was a 19-year-old student and called to make known the imperishable riches of the Holy Spirit. His personal surrender to Christ's calling and experiences in Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the core of the real life stories he shares in his mission talks. Fr. Cedric has produced numerous CD and DVDs on Christian living. He has also authored 12 books including *Living Passionately*, *Glorious Holy Spirit*, *Thy Kingdom Come* and his newest book, *You Can Be Happy: a lifestyle in Well Being!* Many of his books and CD/DVDs will be available for purchase and signing at the narthex each evening. Presently, Fr. Cedric appears on television in a number of major market areas including New York, Boston, Atlanta, San Antonio, Houston, Detroit, New Orleans and Cincinnati and nationally on the Angel, EWTN, and National Catholic radio networks. For more information about Fr. Cedric and to view some of his TV/radio interviews, visit his Web site at www.FrCedric.org. For more information about his three-day visit to St. Joseph, call Anita Favila at (817) 472-5181 or (Metro 817) 467-3049. All talks will begin sharply at 7 p.m. in the church. Parking is available on the west sides of the church.

HOME BUSINESS EXPO

St. Michael Church in Bedford will host a Home Business Expo on Sunday, Nov. 30 from after the 7:30 a.m. Mass to 3 p.m. Organizers say people should expect showcasing and selling services for religious craft items, jewelry, merchandise, realtors, herbal products, green companies, and much more. Organizers added that the event offers a "great opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts and at the same time support local parishioners as they work to sustain their families."

Classified Section

CEMETERY SPACES

Three cemetery spaces for sale in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Plaza Garden. Must sacrifice at \$1,200 each. This area permits double interment if desired. For information, call (972) 242-3744.

LITURGY COORDINATOR

Large Vatican II parish with five weekend Masses is looking for an energetic, engaging person to coordinate liturgical celebrations with style and reverence. Responsibilities will include training and scheduling ministers, planning weddings, funerals, and sacramental rituals. The coordinator will also be responsible for all liturgical articles and vestments. This is a full-time position with weekends and offers competitive salary and benefits. Send a cover letter and resumé to LC Search, St. Philip the Apostle Church, 1897 W. Main St., Lewisville 75067; office@stphilipcc.org; fax (972) 219-5429. No phone calls. Job description may be viewed at www.stphilipcc.org/job_board.htm.

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MAINTENANCE WORKER

Local Catholic retirement facility is seeking a maintenance worker. Applicant must have a/c and electrical experience. Send resumé to deanah@saintfrancisvillage.com

ACCOMPANIST

Accompanist with experience at three-manual pipe organ needed for three weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with up to two choirs weekly, holy day Masses; availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year is preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send a resumé to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Ave., Fort Worth 76107 or e-mail to dkain@hollyfamilyfw.org. For more information, call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104

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Good Newsmaker

Diocesan and city officials break ground for Catholic Charities to continue its

Dedication to Service

Story and Photos by
Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

It was a big day Nov. 3 when Catholic Charities broke ground for a new 83,000-square-foot facility in South Fort Worth. For the community, it had been a huge goal that would have enormous impact in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Donors had come through — in a big way — with pledged funds to finance the build.

But in addition to all of that, the groundbreaking day gave Bishop Kevin Vann and Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief the opportunity to drive heavy equipment. After welcoming speeches had been given, with applause all around, the men donned construction hats, climbed into the drivers' seats of an orange excavator and a yellow front loader, and turned the first dirt in the construction.

"The groundbreaking of this facility," said Jill Fischer, who, with her husband Charles, of the Harbison-Fischer Manufacturing Company, gave the initial contribution of \$3 million to the \$14.7 million project, "marks the beginning of the



ABOVE: Bishop Kevin Vann joins the mayor in the work of the day, as he uses an excavator to move soil at the groundbreaking ceremony.

LEFT: Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief drives a front loader, turning the first dirt in the construction project.

FAR LEFT: Heather Reynolds (left), executive director of Catholic Charities, is joined at the podium by agency benefactor Jill Fischer.

ABOVE: Officials ceremoniously break ground for a new, 83,000-square-foot Catholic Charities facility in South Fort Worth.

LEFT: Bishop Vann, joined by Mayor Mike Moncrief, offers the invocation at the beginning of the Nov. 3 celebration.

RIGHT: Dave Gibbs, director of the Catholic Charities board of directors, called the groundbreaking event a "historic" day for Fort Worth.

realization of all our collective dreams."

Heather Reynolds, executive director of the agency, expressed uncharacteristic wordlessness at the excitement of the day, noting that after the three years of planning, Catholic Charities knew it would be able to continue serving the one in 16 Tarrant County people it now serves.

"When we started on this journey," she said emotionally,

"we knew our needs had grown beyond the capacity of our current facilities, and that for every person we were able to help, there was still another that we had to turn away because of lack of resources.

"Most importantly," she said, "we knew that we were called to bring hope to our community and that could only happen if we took a bold step of faith. And what a step of faith it was! And how faithful God has been!"

The capital campaign, Building Hope, began publicly last March, after having had an earlier, private fund-raising effort in October 2007. The original goal of \$13.6 million was earmarked for a building that would combine the resources of three other facilities, putting all Catholic Charities services under one roof, and saving the agency an estimated \$260,000 yearly. The Diocese donated four acres of land near I-35

and Seminary Drive, and gave \$1million to be used to endow the building to ensure long-term sustainability.

Dave Gibbs, director of the Catholic Charities board, called the groundbreaking a historic day for Fort Worth, "because we embark on a new future. Many of you have heard me say this before, but I truly believe, with the exception of raising my children, this is the most significant thing I have

SEE COSTS, P.22

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Cardinal George, president of the USCCB, has issued a statement extending an offer of cooperation and goodwill to the president-elect, but also warning against the evils of FOCA. **2**

Charlie Balsam, with his background in family ministry in two Texas dioceses, now helps prepare people in the food prep business for family life and ethical behavior — tasty stuff. **8**

Bishop Vann and Bishop Farrell extended a welcome and celebrated the local World Youth Day Mass for 8,000 teens at Six Flags Oct. 26. It was Bishop Vann's fourth local WYD. **12-13**

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