

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Pope Benedict XVI greets Bishop Kevin Vann at the pope's weekly general audience, Nov. 11. Bishop Vann gestures toward the 500 plus pilgrims from the Diocese of Fort Worth, who were present among the crowd of 8,000 faithful packed into the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall.

Pope Benedict XVI greets Msgr. Charles King and Sr. Francesca Walterscheid, SSMN. The two were chosen to represent the diocese at the papal audience.

Fr. Kyle Walterscheid writes about the first day of the pilgrimage in his column on Page 3, and more coverage of the pilgrimage will appear in the Dec. 18 issue of the *North Texas Catholic*.

USCCB calls Senate health reform bill 'an enormous disappointment'

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The health reform legislation now before the Senate is "an enormous disappointment, creating new and completely unacceptable federal policy that endangers human life and rights of conscience," the chairmen of three committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said Nov. 20.

A letter from the three chairmen outlining the USCCB's problems with the Senate bill's provisions on abortion and conscience protections, coverage of immigrants, and affordability for low-income Americans went out about 24 hours before the Senate voted, 60-39, to begin debate on the legislation.

The debate was expected to begin Nov. 30 after senators returned from a weeklong Thanksgiving break.

The Senate's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, drawn up by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada from legislation approved earlier in two Senate committees, "does not meet ... moral criteria" outlined by the bishops, especially on the use of federal funds to pay for

In their letter, the committee chairmen said the Senate bill as currently written "does not live up to President (Barack) Obama's commitment of barring the use of federal dollars for abortion and maintaining current conscience laws."

abortions, the letter said.

"We believe legislation that violates this moral principle is not true health care reform and must be amended to reflect it," said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and Bishops William F. Murphy of Rockville

SEE BISHOPS, P. 21

Bishops, evangelicals, and Orthodox leaders sign Manhattan Declaration

U.S. religious leaders pledge renewed commitment to conscience issues

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — More than 140 Christian leaders issued a joint declaration Nov. 20 pledging renewed zeal in defending the unborn, defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, and protecting religious freedom.

The 4,700-word statement, called the "Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience," was signed by 14 Catholic bishops, evangelical and Orthodox leaders and other Catholics. The document pledges the group's "obligation to speak and act in defense of these truths" and stressed that "no power on earth, be it cultural or political,

will intimidate us into silence or acquiescence."

About 16 religious leaders who signed the document attended the Nov. 20 press conference in Washington to unveil it. Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl, who welcomed the group to Washington, said the document echoed "what needs to be said" today and did so "with a collective voice."

Several speakers pointed out that the issues highlighted in the "Manhattan Declaration" are not new, but there is a new urgency to defend them.

"Justice demands that we not remain silent," said Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia.

Some speakers mentioned

the possibility of civil disobedience, if necessary, to defend their beliefs.

"There are limits to what can be asked or imposed on our consciences," said Robert George, a member of the document's drafting committee and a jurisprudence professor at Princeton University.

George, who is Catholic, said any protests or acts of resistance "would be carried out respectfully" and with nonviolence.

The document states that the signers "will not comply with any edict that purports to compel our institutions to participate in abortions, embryo-destructive research, assisted suicide, and

SEE ECUMENICAL, P. 21



NTC photo by Juan Guajardo

40 Days for Life: 24/7 prayer to end abortion

Photojournalist Juan Guajardo made numerous trips at all hours of the day and night, to document the prayer of those who took part in the Fort Worth 40 Days for Life campaign this fall. At a Planned

Parenthood abortion center in the shadows of downtown, they kept their vigil, praying peacefully for an end to abortion. See Juan Guajardo's story and photos, on Pages 12 and 13.

Pope, Archbishop of Canterbury pledge continued dialogue

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While some pundits have sounded the death knell for ecumenical relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, the Anglican spiritual leader, pledged to move forward.

The pope and archbishop met privately at the Vatican for about 20 minutes Nov. 21.

A Vatican statement said the two leaders reiterated “the shared will to continue and to consolidate the ecumenical relationship between Catholics and Anglicans.”

And, it said, they discussed the work their representatives were to begin Nov. 23 preparing for a third round of study by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, the body for official theological dialogue.

The statement said the two leaders discussed “recent events affecting relations between the Catholic Church and Anglican Communion,” a reference to Pope Benedict’s apostolic constitution

establishing “personal ordinariates” — structures similar to dioceses — for Anglicans who want to enter full communion with the Roman Catholic Church while maintaining some of their Anglican heritage.

The announcement appeared to cause some tension, mainly because Archbishop Williams was not informed about the papal provision until shortly before it was announced publicly in late October.

Despite the Vatican’s clear statements that the move was a pastoral response to people who contacted the Vatican seeking to become Catholic, many headlines treated it as the Vatican taking unfair advantage of tensions within the Anglican Communion over the ordination of women as priests and bishops.

In an interview Nov. 21 with Vatican Radio, Archbishop Williams said he told the pope that the way the announcement was handled “put us in an awkward position,” but he also said media presentations of the announcement as a “dawn raid on the

Anglican Communion” were simply wrong.

“People become Roman Catholics because they want to become Roman Catholics, because their consciences are formed in a certain way and they believe this is the will of God for them. And I wish them every blessing in that,” the archbishop said.

“But I don’t think it’s a question of the Roman Catholic Church as it were trying to attract by advertising or by special offers,” he said, adding that for that reason “I don’t particularly worry about it.”

Asked for the pope’s reaction, the archbishop said, “the main message was that the constitution did not represent any change in the Vatican’s attitude toward the Anglican Communion as such.”

As for the issue of ordaining openly gay men and blessing gay marriages, which a few Anglican provinces have done, Archbishop Williams told Vatican Radio the official policy of the Anglican Communion remains opposed to such practices.

“We have to keep considering



Pope Benedict XVI speaks with Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, England, head of the Anglican Communion, during a private meeting at the Vatican Nov. 21. (CNS photo/L’OSSERVATORE ROMANO VIA REUTERS) SEE RELATED LOCAL STORY, PAGE 7.

this, praying about it (and) reflecting without creating too many facts on the ground that pretend the debate is settled,” he told the radio. At the same time, he said, it must be done in a way that shows how much “we value and appreciate the contribution made already by many faithful gay and lesbian people who serve as clergy and laity in the church.”

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for

Promoting Christian Unity, and Archbishop Williams both said they thought the next topic to be treated by ARCIC would be the relationship between the local and universal church.

Archbishop Williams told Vatican Radio that if ARCIC studied the topic, the question of the ordination of women probably would come up, at least in the context of the decision-making authority of local dioceses or provinces.

Cardinal DiNardo tells teens Jesus wants them ‘to be branches of the vine’

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (CNS) — Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston reminded thousands of teens who packed a Kansas City arena that Jesus is the vine and they are the branches and that in the Eucharist they become one with him.

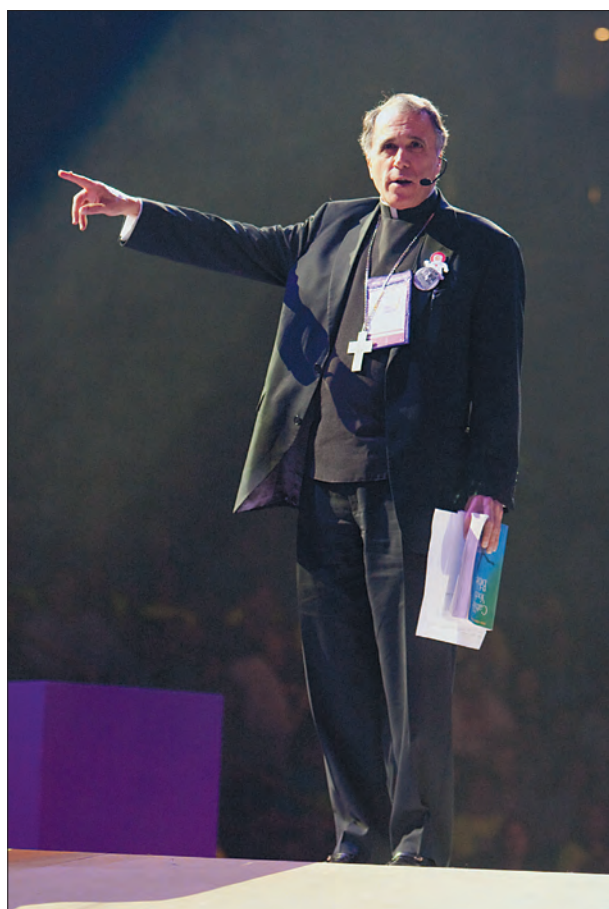
“Where does Jesus live?” he asked the teens. “He doesn’t answer to an address on San Jacinto Drive in Houston. Jesus abides with his Abba, his daddy, his Father. There are many houses in his home, and he wants all of you, and me, to be branches of the vine.”

The cardinal and his director of youth ministry, Brian Johnson, delivered the morning keynote address Nov. 20 at the first general session of the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference in the Sprint Center.

“It’s not enough to come to this weekend and act crazy and go ‘Woooooowoooo!’” said Johnson. “We need to be the hands of Christ in our world.”

The Nov. 19-21 conference, which had as its theme “Christ Reigns,” drew delegates from New York and Los Angeles, La Crosse, Wisconsin, and Galveston-Houston, the Diocese of Fort Worth, and points in between, and from several foreign lands.

Wearing T-shirts imprinted with their diocese’s name or a catchphrase, the teens streamed into the arena and found their places. Some donned silly hats



Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston addresses teens assembled for the 2009 National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, Nov. 22. Nearly 21,000 teens, 3,000 adult chaperones, and local volunteers attended the Nov. 19-21 event. (CNS photo/John Caulfield, CATHOLIC KEY)

topped with cows, lambs, crowns or cheese, denoting something about their home diocese.

Christian rock bands entertained the teens until musician and speaker Steve Angrisano entered the arena to sing and speak until it was time for the keynote.

All action on the stage was visible on four huge video screens hanging over the stage, and smaller TV monitors near

the floor.

In his remarks, Cardinal DiNardo recounted the Gospel story of the loaves and the fishes, and said: “Jesus is the bread of life. He said it himself, ‘The bread that I will give is my flesh that I will give for the life of the world.’”

The cardinal urged the teens to find intimacy with God through the Eucharist. “In the Eucharist, we become one with Jesus,” he

said.

He suggested they go to confession frequently, and talk to God, asking forgiveness often. “Two words melt the Father,” he said. “Those two words are ‘I’m sorry.’”

Johnson told a story about his stay in a hospital during Hurricane Ike. He was overlooked in the general melee of evacuation, so he got out of bed, grabbed his IV stand and went on his own.

“The Christ in us calls for us to get up and do something, not just lie there waiting for someone else to do it for us,” he said. “Our God is a God of second chances, over and over and over again.”

The young church in the United States knows how to put Christ in action, he said. “You have to walk the walk. It’s not enough just to talk it. ... Don’t hold Christ in. Share him; give Christ to others. That is the Eucharist.”

He then began to sing “Veni Creator Spiritus,” slowly encouraging 21,000 teens to join him.

Dressed in gold and burgundy vestments, Bishop Robert W. Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of the Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas, the heads of the two host dioceses, climbed the ramp to the stage for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

They were accompanied by several priests, deacons, and seminarians.

Deacon Justin McMenemy read the passage about the road to Emmaus from the Gospel of St. Luke: “Were not our hearts burning within us? ... He was made known to us in the breaking of the bread.”

On the altar the monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament gleamed in the flickering light of the candles. Images of it filled the video screens hanging from the ceiling and the floor-level TV monitors.

While the prelates, priests, and deacons knelt in prayer before the altar, teenagers bowed their heads or knelt on the floor, if they had room. Within a few moments, the huge arena was silent, except for muted singing from the “animators.”

After a time of silent prayer, the prelates rose and Archbishop Naumann lifted the monstrance.

The Knights of Columbus led the clergy off the stage, followed by Bishop Finn and Archbishop Naumann, who, with a gold humeral veil draped over his shoulders and covering his hands, held the monstrance.

With the prelates and priests in the forefront, a procession formed. Teens and adults left the Sprint Center, still quiet. Bishop Finn and Archbishop Naumann led the procession to the convention center, another venue for the conference where an adoration chapel had been set up.

Diocesan / International

Vatican officials say church must improve service to deaf community

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While the Catholic Church no longer considers deafness an impediment to ordination, there are only 13 priests in the world who were ordained deaf, said officials of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry.

Msgr. Jean-Marie Mpendawatu, undersecretary of the council, said eight of the 13 work in the United States, two minister in Great Britain and one each serve in Brazil, Congo, and South Korea.

Father Savino Castiglione, a member of the Congregation of the Little Mission for the Deaf, said the problem is not one of barriers imposed by the church, but is a result of practical educational difficulties.

A deaf seminarian needs a sign language interpreter or tutor for his six years of philosophy and theology classes, something which is expensive, particularly because "it is difficult to use sign language to translate such abstract concepts" as those found in philosophy and theology, Father Castiglione said.

The lack of deaf priests was one of the topics discussed Nov. 17 when the pontifical council presented the program for its annual international conference. The theme of the gathering Nov. 19-21 is "The Deaf Person in the Life of the Church."

Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the council, said there are more than 278 mil-

lion deaf people in the world, and at least 1.3 million of them are Catholic.

"That is a lot and the Church must act," the archbishop said.

Without adequately prepared priests and other pastoral workers and trained sign language interpreters, he said, the Church is making it difficult, if not impossible, for its deaf members to participate fully in parish life and liturgies, to learn about their faith, and to contribute to the life of the Church.

Msgr. Mpendawatu said he expected the conference to launch a strong call for seminaries to at least offer future priests training in sign language because the pastoral care of deaf Catholics requires it.

"Just think how hard it would be to go to confession" if one could not find a priest who would understand, he said.

Luca Lamano, who was born deaf and teaches deaf children, attended a Catholic school for the deaf in Rome where Mass was celebrated each week and the sacrament of penance was offered by a priest who knew sign language.

But his local parish did not have interpreters.

"My dad said it doesn't matter if you don't understand, it is important to participate, but I didn't like it," he said. He stopped going to Mass until he met his wife, a committed Catholic who knows sign language.

*Responding
to God's Call*

Our Christian heritage was made present in a trip to Rome

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

The roots of our Christian faith were made clearly visible on a recent trip to Rome as over 500 people from around the Diocese of Fort Worth joined together in a much-anticipated pilgrimage with Bishop Kevin Vann as part of the 40th anniversary of our diocese, 1969-2009.

I have heard it said that a trip to Rome has drawn many non-Catholic Christians back to their Holy Mother Church, as the sanctity and history of Christianity throughout the ages is made apparent. Most people on our pilgrimage had never been to Rome, and most considered it a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Indeed, it was a lifetime experience as Bishop Vann led our pilgrimage each day for a week with Mass in different basilicas throughout Rome and Italy while helping us better understand the great historical significance of each location.

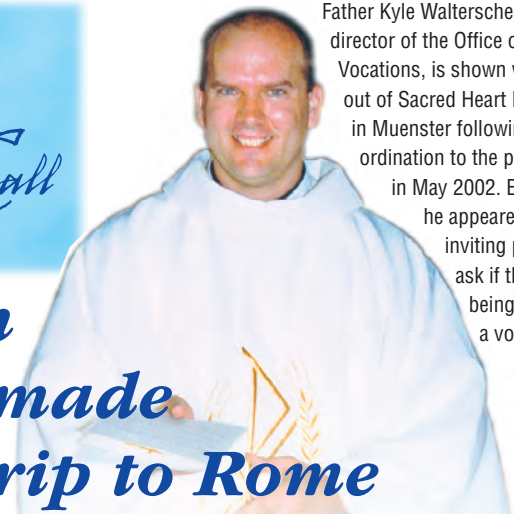
We started our time in Rome with a Tuesday evening Mass at St. Paul's Basilica Outside the Walls. Although the main body of the church was enlarged to its present size by the end of the fourth century, this Basilica was originally consecrated by Pope Sylvester I on Nov. 18, A.D. 324, soon after Emperor Constantine had ended the persecutions of Christians by proclaiming the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 and ordering the erection of a place of worship above the tomb

of St. Paul. One of the many incredible things about this Basilica is the tradition that began under Pope Leo the Great (A.D. 440-461) of placing large mosaic papal portraits of every pope from St. Peter to John Paul II around the upper rim of the Basilica 80 feet above the floor. As we gathered together that first night in this enormous Basilica, we could sense the constant care of the faithful throughout the centuries, their hard labor, great skill and expertise, excellence in the arts, and perseverance that give witness to our faith today.

The following morning we were set to see our beloved pope, Benedict XVI, at his weekly papal audience. It was amazing to gather together for prayer and an audience with the pope. In the papal auditorium, filled to capacity with more than 8,000 people representing Christianity from all over the world, we prayed and listened intently as the pope proclaimed a message that was part of a series of talks he has given to reinvigorate Christians. As you may know, he has been especially concerned about the diminished numbers of European faithful. This has come about even though they have received the greatest of blessings from our Lord and the richest of heritages through a history of saints and martyrs, heroes and heroines who have laid before us the deposit of faith from Christ himself.

Thus, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized in great detail the reforms made by the Cluniac Reform of the 10th and 11th centuries that restored the Rule of St. Benedict among the Cluny monks, emphasized the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, and elevated the Mass with more solemnity, hymns, and prayers. This renewed sense of the holy within the walls of the Cluny Benedictine Monastery began to spread all over Europe (1,200 monasteries in all). As these reforms were implemented, the monas-

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.



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The appearance of advertising in these pages does not imply endorsement of businesses, services, or products. Readers must exercise prudence in responding to advertising in all media.

Cursillo community plans second retreat for Cusillistas

The Fort Worth Cursillo Community will host a "Cursillo of Cursillos" Dec. 10-13. Cursillo of Cursillos, a three-day weekend for all Cursillistas, will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday evening and end Sunday afternoon. All attendees will be cloistered for the weekend.

The retreat material, which was originally in Spanish, has recently been translated into English. This weekend will be the second Cursillo of Cursillos in the United States to be held in English. The weekend consists of three days of talks and meditations that are spiritually challenging, enlightening, and enriching to Cursillistas who desire to grow and be renewed in their understanding of and commitment to the Cursillo Movement. The purpose is to become stronger leaders in the Cursillo Movement, both as individuals and as a community.

Space is limited, so those planning to attend should make arrangements as soon as possible. The application can be downloaded at www.fortworthcursillo.org. For more information, call Mary Jean Nagy at (817) 226-1110, or e-mail her at boonagy@yahoo.com.

Couple to Couple League offers Natural Family Planning classes

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the symptothermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. Since the course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to attend a course beginning at least four months before their wedding.

To register for a course starting Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills, contact Andrew and Samantha Mudd at (817) 284-5117. To register for a supplemental postpartum class (for those couples who have previously attended a CCL course) on Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9th St., Wichita Falls, contact Jacob and Lauren Morath at (940) 544-2515.

Visit www.ccldfw.org for more class dates and information.

Holy Family to celebrate Christian Unity prayer week Jan. 21

Holy Family Church and the Tarrant Area Community of Churches will celebrate the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" with dinner, prayer, and song Thursday, Jan. 21, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The celebration will be held at Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in Fort Worth.

For more information, contact theparishoffice at (817) 737-6768.

Advent reconciliation service for Deaf Community to be held Dec. 13

The Deaf Community Advent Reconciliation Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13, in the chapel at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills.

"Celebrate the season of Advent by preparing your heart and mind for Christ," says Mary Cinatl, director of Deaf Ministry. Father Ken Robinson will celebrate Mass and hear confessions in American Sign Language, English, and Spanish. Attendees are encouraged to bring their Bibles and rosaries to pray with while they wait. For more information contact Mary Cinatl at mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

Cardinal Newman Institute to offer 10-week course on the Old Testament

The Cardinal Newman Institute will begin a 10-week course on "The Theology of the Old Testament" Jan. 9. The study will concentrate on the meaning of significant passages, events, and terms as well as God's relationship with the primary biblical characters in salvation history. It will also demonstrate how the Old Testament prefigures and establishes the foundation for the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church. Although this course is especially appropriate for persons involved in Bible Study groups, all will find this course enriching for a deeper understanding of the Old Testament as well as its relevance today.

The course, co-taught by Gregory Golden and Christopher Tunnell, will be held at St. Maria Goretti Parish in the Holy Family Life Center, 1200 S. Davis, Arlington, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

For more information, contact the Cardinal Newman Institute at cni.info@yahoo.com or (817) 277-4859.

Annual Respect Life Mass to be celebrated Jan. 9 at St. Patrick's

All are invited to participate in the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St. in downtown Fort Worth. The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann, Saturday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. The diocesan liturgy, held each January, will mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. A candlelight procession will be held in remembrance of the millions of deaths that have occurred as a result of abortion.

For more information, call Chanecce Ruth-Killgore at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.



DEAF MINISTRY — Members of the Deaf Community joined the Knights of Columbus for their annual Bowlathon Nov. 15 at Showplace Lanes in Bedford. More than 60 bowlers participated in this fundraiser which helps support the Deaf Ministry Program in the Diocese of Fort Worth.

NTC publication deadlines

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.

Submit items to jrusseau@fwdioc.org. Items for the Dec. 18 issue must be received by noon on Dec. 9. Items for the Jan. 15 issue must be received by noon on Jan. 6.

Advent Lessons and Carols to be performed at St. Mary of the Assumption

The Offering of Song: An Advent Tradition will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 3 p.m. at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, 509 W. Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth. The St. Mary of the Assumption choir will perform the Lessons and Carols for Advent Sunday and all are cordially invited to join in the music and Scripture.

Father Bristow states that "The Lessons and Carols service has ancient roots, dating back to the medieval period in England. It began with the common peoples' desire to sing carols to Baby Jesus. The authorities did not consider their music suitable for use in the Church so the people would gather outside on the porch of their parish churches to sing the carols. Since then, the service of Lessons and Carols has grown to have a wide following and has been translated into many languages."

This offering of Lessons and Carols is part of the Centennial Music Series at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish. For more information, contact the parish office at (817) 923-1911.

Cardinal DiNardo to speak at Southwest Liturgical Conference

This year the Southwest Liturgical Conference Study Week, hosted by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Jan. 13-16, and held at George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, will explore the theme "Many Cultures: One Church at Prayer." Led by over 40 scholars, theologians, priests, religious, and professional pastoral ministers, conference participants will enjoy an abundance of formation opportunities as part of the 48th annual Southwest Liturgical Conference. The keynote address will be delivered by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston.

Early registration for the conference is \$130 through Dec. 11 after which it will rise to \$150. Single day registration is also available. Hotel accommodations are offered through Hilton of the Americas adjoining the conference center.

The conference brochure and secure registration is available online at www.swlc.org. Information for exhibitors is also available online. For more information e-mail studyweek@swlc.org.

St. Frances Cabrini to host Christmas concert Dec. 20

St. Frances Cabrini Parish, 2301 Acton Hwy., Granbury, will host "The Gift of Love Christmas Concert" Sunday, Dec. 20, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The concert will feature a variety of talent from St. Frances Cabrini Parish. Refreshments will be served following the concert. All are invited to enjoy the spirit of Christmas with family and loved ones.

Tickets are \$35 per family or \$20 per person and are available following each Mass and at the parish office. Proceeds from the event will benefit St. Frances Cabrini Church.

For more information, contact the parish office at (817) 326-2131.

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics announces holiday schedule

The regular monthly meeting of The Fort Worth Diocesan Ministry With Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities, and Their Families will not be held in December due to the Christmas holidays. All who are interested are invited to attend a vesper service at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Catholic Renewal Center Chapel, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. A pot-luck dinner will follow. Meat will be provided.

The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383, Dorene Rose at (817) 329-7370, or Sister Dorothy Eggering, SSND, at (817) 283-8601.

Courage group meets twice monthly

Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for Catholics striving to live chaste lives according to the Catholic Church's teachings on homosexuality, meets the second and fourth Friday evenings of each month.

For more information, e-mail to CourageDFW@Catholic.org or call (972) 938-5433.



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIZER PARISH — Deacon Eldon Gray, Father Sojan George, and parishioners gather Nov. 8 to bless the new classroom addition at St. John the Baptizer Church in Bridgeport. Six new classrooms were added by creating a new wing to the parish hall.

Mount Carmel Center to offer series on theology of revelation

Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas, will offer a two-part series, "Dei Verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation," presented by Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD. Part one of the conference, to be offered Jan. 16, will examine the theology of revelation as presented in the first half of the Vatican Council's document (Chapters 1-3). Part two of the conference, to be offered Jan. 23, will examine the theology of revelation in the second half of the Vatican Council's document (Chapters 3-6). Both sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon.

Registration deadline for part one is Jan. 9 and the deadline for part two is Jan. 16. Suggested minimum donation for each conference is \$25.

For more information, contact the center at (214) 331-6224 or visit the Web site at www.mountcarmelcenter.org.

UTA Catholic Community to sponsor respect life art competition

The University Catholic Community at UTA is sponsoring a juried art competition entitled "Amor Vitae: Love of Life! in April." Entries will be judged based on artistic quality and the artists' presentation of how they depict the Culture of Life, a respect for all forms of life that opposes abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, human cloning, stem cell research, contraception, and other social concerns. This show is open to high school juniors and seniors and undergraduate college students. There is a \$5 entry fee for each piece submitted.

To receive an application, call the University Catholic Center at (817) 460-1155. For more information check the Web site at www.utacatholics.org or look on Facebook for the "Respect Life Art show" group. Additional information may also be obtained by contacting Stephanie Milligan at the University Catholic Center at smilligan@fwdioc.org or Matt Redden at matthew.redden@mavs.uta.edu.

Diocesan

Why Catholic? participants finish first 6-week session, look forward to remainder of program

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

Bill Peters isn't reticent about sharing his hope for what the *Why Catholic?* program can do for his beloved parish, St. Bartholomew Church in Southwest Fort Worth.

"Our primary goal for *Why Catholic?* is that it will help us to build community within the parish," says Peters, who with his wife, Barbara, serves as coordinator of *Why Catholic?* sessions at St. Bartholomew. "Those of us who were fortunate enough to experience the RENEW program all those years ago wanted to revitalize the concept of share groups within the parish. We want people who attend one Mass regularly to know people who attend the other Masses. We want everyone to get out of their comfort zone and meet new people and get more involved."

More than 700 St. Bartholomew parishioners participated in *Why Catholic?* small groups in both English and Spanish this fall, Peters added, noting that many parents of children in religious education programs attended *Why Catholic?* sessions held at the church each week while their children were in class.

"The materials are excellent, and we have had so many people saying, 'My group is great, and we've gotten to know each other so much better,'" he adds. "We've also had several of our groups volunteer to take care of families in need this Christmas, especially families that have been affected by domestic violence. This program is a good way of reinforcing the message, 'If you're going to say you're a Christian, then walk the walk, and get involved in service.'"

Anthony Roffino, coordinator of *Why Catholic?* sessions at St. Rose of Lima Church in Glen Rose, has also seen positive results from the program, he says. "We're a small rural parish, so I was pleased to have two good groups complete the first six weeks of sessions," notes Roffino. "It's been great to see the response. People did not want another Bible study; they wanted something like this, with good discussion and sharing. No matter how much you know about the Church and its teachings, you



Parishioners of St. Jude Church in Mansfield gather at the beginning of their weekly *Why Catholic?* session for prayer. The group is one of 15 Spanish-speaking groups that met at St. Jude this fall to attend *Why Catholic?* sessions. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

can't help but learn something from these sessions. I know that I've looked forward to going each week."

Carla Gonzales a facilitator for *Why Catholic?* at St. Patrick Cathedral Parish wrote recently to the NTC about her experience just after her small group's first meeting in her home. "Father Richard Flores, rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral did a fantastic job, in getting the word out about the program," she wrote, "and more than 10 percent of the parish signed up."

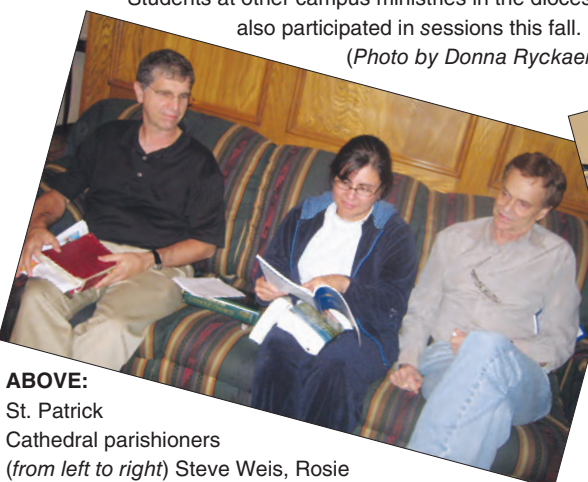
"At our first session, I was glad to hear the reasons many joined the *Why Catholic?*

program," she wrote. "Some were there to learn more about their faith so they could pass [it] on to their children. Others were there to study the faith through the *Catechism*," and some, she wrote, were using the *Catechism* as a reference for the first time and discovering the wonders of both the *United States Catechism for Catholic Adults* and the CCC while still others wanted to "get to know" the parishioner they sit by every Sunday.

Father Carmen Mele, OP, di-



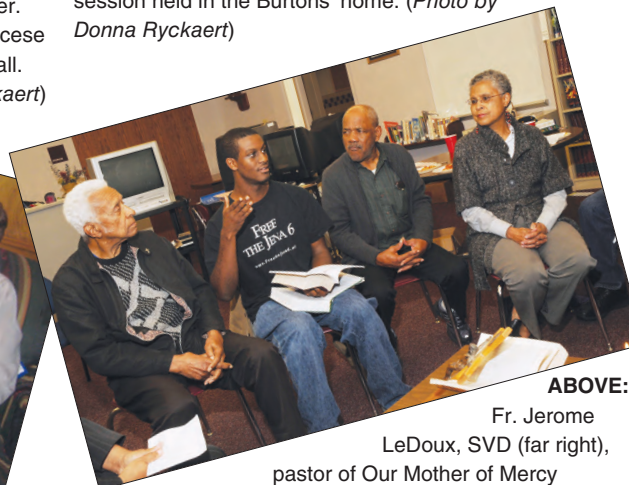
ABOVE: College students Shannon Bates, Ryan Lamb, Anne Marie Boeding, Adriana Saucedo, and Dina Sebikali pray during a Sunday afternoon *Why Catholic?* session held at the University of Texas at Arlington Catholic Center. Students at other campus ministries in the diocese also participated in sessions this fall. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)



ABOVE: St. Patrick Cathedral parishioners (from left to right) Steve Weis, Rosie Levitt, and Jim Bransford share a *Why Catholic?* booklet at a small group session at the home of Carla and Ismael Gonzales. (Photo courtesy of Carla Gonzalez)



ABOVE: Parishioners (left to right) Jim and Jane Burton, Monica and Roy Fehse, and Tim Habinak of St. Ann Church in Burleson discuss Catholic beliefs and traditions during a *Why Catholic?* session held in the Burtons' home. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)



ABOVE: Fr. Jerome LeDoux, SVD (far right), pastor of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth, listens to OMM parishioner Victor Taylor, II, with other parishioners Lorenzo Wilborn and Lana Wilborn during a Tuesday evening *Why Catholic?* session. (Photo by Donna Ryckaert)

Program encourages participants to open up in small groups

Why Catholic? Journey Through the Catechism, a ministry of RENEW International, a Catholic organization based in Plainfield, New Jersey, is an adult faith formation process based on Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. According to RENEW International officials, the four-year, 48-session process encourages learning in a prayerful, small community setting. Small group sessions are held in churches and in private homes.

Over 7,000 Catholics within the Diocese of Fort Worth are, with the encouragement of Bishop Kevin Vann, marking the 40th anniversary of the diocese through participation in *Why Catholic?*, a program that is partially funded by

the *All Things Possible* capital campaign. According to the program's diocesan coordinator, Father Carmen Mele, OP, participating parishes have now completed the first six-week session in the first of the program's four books, *The Profession of Faith: What We Believe*.

Additional sessions will be offered in parishes over the next three and a half years, with sessions based on topics such as the sacraments, integrating faith in daily life, social justice, and prayer.

For more information about how to participate in *Why Catholic?* in your parish community, contact your parish office, or call Fr. Carmen Mele, OP, at the diocesan office at (817) 560-2452, ext.262.

ocesan coordinator of the *Why Catholic?* program, says that he has received completed evaluations from most of the 55 parishes that offered *Why Catholic?* sessions this fall. "I've been very pleased by the positive response," he says. "Our parishioners are saying that *Why Catholic?*

helps us to better understand and appreciate our Catholic faith, and that's very satisfying to hear."

Bishop Kevin Vann's commitment and support for *Why Catholic?* have been invaluable, adds Fr. Mele. "He is extremely inclusive, and it was very important to him that we reach out to the different cultural groups of the diocese to make the program accessible to everyone. I know that has made a difference to our pastors, and strengthened their own commitment to getting parishioners involved in this way." Materials in Spanish, English, and Vietnamese have been provided to groups throughout the diocese, says Fr. Mele.

Christina Hoang, who with her husband, Deacon Michael Hoang, attended *Why Catholic?* sessions offered in the Vietnamese language at Our Lady of Fatima Church in East Fort Worth, says that the three groups of parishioners who attend the sessions have become gradually more comfortable with the faith-sharing format over the six weeks of meetings.

"Some of our members are very reserved, and not used to this kind of program, but people are finding out how good it is to just learn and talk together," she reflects. "It's enriching for everyone, and it has given people an opportunity to open up and just talk about their Catholic faith. I know people are looking forward to our next sessions. I think they will be offered again during Lent."

Diocesan

Diocesan Young Adult Ministry plans first 'Justice Rocks' social justice conference Jan. 23

By Michele Baker
Correspondent

On Saturday, Jan. 23 the Service and Justice Team of the Young Adult Council will host "Justice Rocks," a social justice conference for young adults. The day-long bilingual event will take place at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington beginning at 11 a.m. and will include group breakout sessions, exhibition booths for community service organizations, and an evening concert.

"This event is about Catholic Social Teaching," said organizer Brittany Caldwell of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fort Worth. "The Service and Justice Team of the Young Adult Ministry has done a number of service projects, but we really wanted to tie in those efforts with justice issues. That's one of the goals of our team."

The conference will feature keynote addresses from Ralph



Ralph McCloud



Heather Reynolds



Grace Pettis



Soundwave

McCloud, director of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Heather Reynolds, president and CEO of Catholic Charities of Fort Worth. Major talks of Justice Rocks will be in English, but simultaneous translation with headsets will be available. Couple of breakout

sessions will be in Spanish.

Austin-based folksinger/songwriter Grace Pettis will perform a concert from 8 to 9 p.m., followed by Christian band Soundwave from 9 to 10 p.m. Tejano band, Juntos con Cristo or JCC will be playing in another room from 8 to 10 p.m.

"I think the exciting part of

this is that Brittany Caldwell came up with this herself," said Kevin Prevou, director of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries for the Diocese of Fort Worth. "She got onto this notion of having a social justice conference. At first I thought there was no way that could happen at this stage in the council's development, but Brittany stayed with it. She took on everything from making budget proposals to enlisting the help of other team members to come up with the name 'Justice Rocks.'"


Prevou added that the Young Adult Council has been meeting for almost two years, and its purpose is to be the vehicle to help Young Adult Ministries grow in the diocese.

"At the heart of YAM was to figure out an organizational model to facilitate that plan. At present very few parishes have ministry programs geared specifically to young adults," Prevou said. "Our desire is to bring together young adults from the various parishes

throughout the diocese by offering programs designed to engage young adult Catholics.

"Justice Rocks promises to be a great day of faith and fellowship," said Prevou. "Hopefully, people will come away with a better idea of why the Church puts so much focus on social justice."

All adults between the ages of 18 and 35 are invited to attend "Justice Rocks." Registration is \$25 (\$35 after Jan. 4) and includes lunch, dinner, conference, and concert. Participants may register online at www.fwyam.org/justicerocks or contact the office of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries at (817) 560-2452, ext. 261.



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:
Heather Reynolds
 President/CEO of Catholic Charities

Ralph McCloud
 Director of Catholic Campaign for Human Development, USCCB

FEATURING:
Soundwave
www.myspace.com/soundwaveonline

Grace Pettis
www.gracepettis.com

Social Justice Conference for young adults promoting justice through discussion of the Catholic Social Justice Teaching and specific ways young adults can live their Catholic values in everyday life. Learn ways to serve, share fellowship with other young adults, and enjoy music from Catholic artists.

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Diocesan

Catholic Charities announces homeless prevention program

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc. has announced that a new homeless prevention program has been established, with the goal of expanding service to families in need throughout a 26-county region in North Texas.

"In a time when most people are tightening their purse strings, Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc., has seen an increase in the number of families in need, with many coming to the agency's doors for the first time," said Sara Ramirez, Catholic Charities vice president of development and public relations, noting that the agency is now serving an increasing number of unemployed clients who are experiencing financial crisis because of a lack of income and adequate health care.

The new homeless prevention program will significantly expand services outside of Tarrant County, said Ramirez, adding that the agency will now serve 26 of 28 counties in the diocese, including Tarrant, Denton, Cooke, Wise, Johnson, Parker, Palo Pinto, Erath, Hood, Somervell, Comanche, Eastland, Stephens, Shackelford, Jack, Young, Throckmorton, Montague, Clay, Archer, Baylor, Knox, Wichita, Wilbarger, Foard and Hardeman.

The homeless prevention program will provide rental and utility payment assistance, security deposits, case management, and credit counseling. The Fort Worth agency is partnering with local parishes and organizations to create office space in the counties where Catholic Charities is offering these services for the first time,

said Ramirez.

In addition to providing services to those at risk of homelessness, Catholic Charities will also lead efforts to establish homeless prevention councils in each of the areas served, with the goal of bringing community organizations together to coordinate service to the homeless and those at risk of losing their homes.

"Nationally, Catholic Charities USA has established the goal of cutting poverty in half by 2020; the agency feels that these new efforts will help contribute to the accomplishment of this important goal," concluded Ramirez.

Individuals in need of assistance may contact Catholic Charities' Central Intake program at (817) 534-0814 for more information and for access to the screening process for the program.

Catholic Charities seeks archival items centennial anniversary

By Nicki Prevou
Editorial Assistant

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Fort Worth, will celebrate the organization's centennial anniversary of service to North Texas in 2010.

"In just a few short months we will be celebrating our 100th birthday in serving this community, and we are working on collecting as much memorabilia as possible," said Sara Ramirez, Catholic Charities vice president of development and public relations. "We are currently working on putting together a Catholic Charities history book, as well as highlighting our history for all to see in our new building."

Construction of the organization's new, 83,000-square-foot facility, located in South Fort Worth at 201 Thornhill Road, is scheduled to be completed in early 2010.

"Although we have some records from our past, we are actively seeking pictures, articles, and items that reflect our rich history," added Ramirez. "If you or someone you know has a past connection with Catholic Charities we would love to get copies of pictures or items (ranging from 1910 to 2010) so that we can add them to our collection."

To loan or donate archival items, contact Rachel Wilkes at (817) 413-3916 or at rwilkes@ccdofw.org.

Diocese of Fort Worth commits to dialogue with Anglican diocese



Pictured (from left to right) are Rev. Tom Hightower, Fr. Jonathan Wallis, Bishop Vann, Rev. Christopher Cantrell, Fr. Jeff Poirot, Bishop Iker, Msgr. Charles King, and Rev. Timothy Perkins following their first meeting Oct. 16. Fr. David Bristow, and Revs. Christopher Stainbrook and Ryan Reed were added to the dialogue group after this meeting.

Bishop Kevin Vann and Fort Worth Anglican Bishop Jack Iker, along with a group of Catholic and Anglican priests, have begun meeting regularly as part of the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue.

The group has committed to meet regularly, in the words of Bishop Vann in an interview Dec. 2, "We've been looking at what things we have in common." He said that as part of that process of looking at the things shared, "We will be reviewing the Apostolic Constitution, using that as a vehicle for dialogue."

Bishop Iker in an interview Dec. 3 said "I've been grateful for the warm personal friendship Bishop Vann and I have developed since he's been the bishop here. We both wanted to extend that friendly relationship

among the clergy and laity of the two dioceses," he said. "We share a common mission," said Bishop Iker, "which calls us to work for deeper unity among all Christians."

Catholic priests involved in the dialogue include Father Jonathan Wallis, associate pastor of St. Mat-

thew Church in Arlington, Father Jeff Poirot, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mineral Wells, Monsignor Charles King, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, and Father David Bristow, pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Fort Worth.

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Missionary image of Our Lady of Guadalupe visits multiple locations in diocese

Story and Photos by
Juan Guajardo
Correspondent

Ralph Lira was having a bad day at work. But a visitor, traveling by FedEx, arrived at his home that afternoon and made his day.

"She came at three o'clock at the Divine Mercy hour," Lira said. "Exactly, right on the money at three o'clock, I mean the Chaplet of Divine Mercy was starting to play on the radio — amazing."

That visitor was a life-size missionary image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The image of Our Lady, which miraculously appeared on St. Juan Diego's tilma (a rough, woven cloth) in 1531 in response to first bishop of Mexico Juan Zumárraga's request for proof that the Virgin had visited Juan Diego, as he had asserted to him. That miraculous image helped convert an estimated 9 million Aztecs to Catholicism. It's now venerated by an average of 10 million pilgrims yearly at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico.

For one week, the missionary image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, under the care of a team of local parishioners known as the guardian team, visited various locations in Denton and finished the week with a Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral. Lira helped coordinate and gather the guardian team.

While not the 477-year-old original, the missionary image is a stunning, detail-rich digital replica measuring four feet by six feet. This replica has been blessed by Monsignor Diego Monroy, rector of the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City and has been touched to the original image. The missionary image that visited the diocese is one of eight in the world and one of only four traveling throughout the U.S.

Several faithful believe the missionary image has performed miracles.

"This particular image has been responsible for healing a little girl. She was actually dying and they placed the image over her and it healed her," image guardian Eileen Murphy said. "This particular image also, people say, has a fetal heartbeat."

During the visit, the image of Our Lady sparked interest and admiration among the community.

"It was breathtaking, beautiful.

[Mary's] presence is so strong," Murphy said of her first time to see the missionary image.

Murphy said the image made quite an impression at Immaculate Conception Catholic School where it was presented to the schoolchildren.

"I did not see the kids myself, but

they said it was just amazing to watch their reactions," Murphy said. "I believe there was one little girl who was just obviously touched by the power of the Blessed Mother and just stood in awe and got one of her little prayer cards and touched it to her and took it away."

Ralph Lira and his wife, Susan, spearheaded the effort to bring the image to the diocese. Ralph first saw the image on a trip to Kansas to visit his brother, Eric, who was seriously ill with lupus. While Lira was there, he went to a Catholic bookstore and saw the life-size image of Our Lady.

"I poured my heart out and I knelt down there in front of her," Ralph Lira said. "I was a little angry, you know. I had just seen my brother, and I knew he was dying. There was no cure, so I asked Jesus for what you would ask Jesus for."

Lira felt he was being selfish in his prayer though.

"I said 'Mary, I'm going to change my prayer. I know Jesus can save Eric, but if it's not his will, if it's Eric's time to go, I just ask that you take him quickly, he's suffered enough,'" Lira said.

As Lira looked up, he saw Our Lady's mantle turn a dark, deep red. He went to see the image again at Mass at a local church the next day. Our Lady's mantle was turquoise blue that time. Lira and his wife knew it was a sign but didn't know what it meant. Ralph went back home and the next day his brother Eric had passed away. After the funeral, he realized (with his daughter's help) that his prayer had been answered.

"My brother had already passed away on April 20," Lira said. "The 21st would have been my mom's birthday. So I think of it as a birthday gift that she got in heaven, her son Eric. That's an answer to the prayer though. In [her words] to Juan Diego she talks about 'Don't worry, give me your troubles, I'm your hope.'"

The missionary image visited St. Mark Parish on the first day of the visit. After the Mass, several parishioners came up to pray and touch the image and offer petitions.

"What makes something attractive? I think it is obviously the story," Father Tim Thompson, pastor of St. Mark said. "There are lots of images of Mary, and a lot of them are beautiful images. I think this is a beautiful image, but it is the story that is connected to it, the reaching out to the forgotten person and the whole transformation of the American scene by her presence."

Editor's Note: Pope John Paul II promulgated the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe as a feast day for all of the Americas in January 1999, also referring to her as the Star of the First and New Evangelization. Since Mary is depicted as being with child in the image, she is also known widely as the Patroness of the Unborn.



A family venerates the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe before Mass at St. Mark. The Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe visited St. Mark Parish in Denton on Friday Nov. 20 and stayed there for all weekend Masses. The Missionary image was blessed by the Monsignor Diego Monroy, rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico and then touched to the original image. There are only eight exact digital replicas and only four are in the U.S.

Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations throughout the diocese

ST. PATRICK CATHEDRAL, 1206 THROCKMORTON ST., DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH — 2ND CONSECUTIVE DIOCESAN CELEBRATION

5 a.m.: "Mañanitas" serenade in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Matachines from St. Peter the Apostle Church will pay homage to Our Lady with traditional sacred dances.

6 a.m.: Bishop Kevin Vann will preside at the bilingual Mass; Father Richard Flores, rector of the cathedral, will concelebrate as Mariachi Estampa de Mexico leads the congregation in song and local dance groups Ballet Folklorico de Fort Worth and Danza de Guadalupe perform special dances in honor of the Blessed Mother during the offertory.

Following the liturgy, an outdoor reception will be held and will include Mexican sweet bread, hot coffee and chocolate, and musical performances.

8 a.m.; 12:05 p.m.: Regularly scheduled Masses, with the cathedral adult choir honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe in song at the 12:05 p.m. Mass.

5 p.m.: The image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, having been carried in a procession from the St. Patrick driveway on Throckmorton Street in a horse-drawn carriage, will be brought into the cathedral and moved to a place of honor.

6 p.m.: A live re-enactment of the Apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego at Tepeyac.

7 p.m. Bilingual Mass will be offered with a reception following. Free hot coffee, hot Mexican chocolate and pan

dulce (Mexican sweet bread), provided by Esperanza's Café and Restaurant will be served.

Rosaries, prayer services, and performances by musicians, dancers, and choirs will be offered throughout the day. For more information, call the cathedral office at (817) 332-4915.

ST. ANN CHURCH, 100 SW ALSBURY RD., BURLESON

7 a.m.: Matachines dancers, featuring Los Dancantes Guadalupanos de Santa Ana. A procession and a reenactment of Our Lady's apparition to St. Juan Diego are going to be part of the festivities. Holy Mass will follow with Mariachis for the traditional Mañanitas.

ST. GEORGE CHURCH, 3500 MAURICE ST., FORT WORTH

7:30 p.m.: A Mass will include a reenactment of the apparition of Our Lady and a procession of Our Lady for the celebration with the Matachines' dance.

After Mass, Father Thu Nguyen will dedicate a recently renovated room inside the church that features a full-length, hand-painted mural of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe at dawn in the mountains of Mexico. Mariachis, Matachines' dances, Mexican food and festivities will culminate the event. All are invited to attend.

For more information about the OLG Mass and dedication, contact Fr. Thu Nguyen at tnguyen@charterinternet.com or call (817) 831-4404.

Diocesan

\$1 million organ to serve Arlington parish

Story and Photos by
Juan Guajardo
Correspondent

For years organist Todd Hughes played an old electronic organ prone to growling, rattling, and making distorted sounds. But last week, during a Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann, he played a brand new \$1 million pipe organ donated by an anonymous family at Arlington's St. Maria Goretti Church.

"[The family was] very taken with Pope John Paul II's funeral Mass and the glory of the organ music," Father Jim Gigliotti, TOR, pastor of St. Maria Goretti said. "They thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to have that kind of sound at St. Maria?' So they gave the diocese \$1 million specifically to be spent for a new organ at this parish."

The organ, built by local organ craftsman Dan Garland, took four years to build. It was no easy task, Garland said. The process required that the organ be built in the workshop and then disassembled and assembled again inside the church. Fr. Gigliotti said crews had been installing the new organ since March 2009. Last weekend was the first time the new organ was played during a Mass. Still, Garland said the organ needs about a month of fine-tuning.

Delays pushed back the date



the organ was first played to Nov. 22, the day of the feast of Christ the King and the 10-year anniversary of daily adoration at St. Maria.

"We saw how fortuitous it would be in the plan of God. It would be put off until it was the feast of Christ the King," Fr. Gigliotti said. "Organ music is called the king of music in the Catholic Church. All instruments give glory to God," said Fr. Gigliotti, whenever they're played with loving reverence, tastefully, and aesthetically, "but the organ in our tradition, since the seventh century, has always been the

premier instrument for giving glory to God."

Fr. Gigliotti says the organ is just one sign of the influence adoration has had on his parish community.

The new organ stretches across the entire back wall of the chorale terrace and houses a staggering 60 ranks of pipes holding 3400 pipes overall. It has two divisions: the gallery division, which sits in the chorale loft and the chancel division, which rests behind the main altar grate. The chancel division contains the pontifical trumpets — a unique feature often seen in grand basilicas. The organ has

four sets of keyboards as well.

"It's magnificent. I don't believe that building has ever heard such sounds," Hughes said. "There are tons of wonderful soft sounds, lyric [sounds] and beautiful flutes and strings and reeds, which are the festival trumpets which can overwhelm and inspire people to sing. It does have a purpose besides just being beautiful to look at."

Organ-playing requires lots of mental focus, familiarity with the keyboards and quick footwork for certain notes. The need for coordination between the organist, priest, and choir adds to the

complexity of the instrument, Hughes said. Hughes, St. Maria's organist for the past 12 years, is excited about getting to know the instrument better and playing it at many more Masses.

Bishop Kevin Vann said a blessing over the organ on Sunday while Father Michael Ciski, TOR, sprinkled it with holy water.

During the homily Bishop Vann said the organ would be beneficial to the parish.

"The gift of music helps us praise God," Bishop Vann said. "It helps us to raise our hearts, minds, and thoughts to God."



ABOVE: St. Maria Goretti Parish organist Todd Hughes plays the organ on the first weekend it was played during a Mass. Hughes has been the organist there for 12 years. An anonymous family donated a \$1 million organ to St. Maria Goretti Parish in Arlington. Bishop Vann blessed the organ as Fr. Michael Ciski, TOR, sprinkled it with holy water.

LEFT: The choir sings during the 1 p.m. Sunday Mass. They were accompanied by the new pipe organ for the first time.

Bishop Vann, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal serve dignity to homeless of Fort Worth Thanksgiving Day

By Michael Demma
Contributing Writer

On Thanksgiving morning 30 volunteers from Diocese of Fort Worth parishes joined Bishop Kevin Vann, Father Michael Kmietek, CFR, and the rest of the community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal serving smiles, hot coffee, pastries, and fruit to approximately 300 homeless of Fort Worth. The event took place at Unity Park near Lancaster.

The regular St. Benedict the Black volunteers hosted the event with other churches joining in serving and providing food. Other Christian churches and organizations helping included: Feed by Grace, U Turn, The Cowboy Church, and Webb Chapel Methodist. Volunteers provided fruit and pastries.

For some volunteers, the highlight of the day was visiting with the men and women, sharing smiles and stories, and seeing Jesus in their brothers and sisters.



Volunteers from various Christian organizations in Fort Worth serve the homeless on Thanksgiving Day.

Guests commented to Bishop Vann and Fr. Michael that St. Benedict's is a place of calm, peace, and friendship, an alternative to standing in lines. One homeless guest remarked to a volunteer on Thanksgiving, "The word is on the street that St. Benedict's is a special place. You don't know what peace you have brought to this area. Please never stop coming."

The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal opened St. Benedict the Black Mission with support from Bishop Vann and diocesan staff. Brother John Mary, CFR, heads the mission and the volunteer team serving dignity, love, and food every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Evangelization comes in the form of praying the "Angelus" with the homeless guests, and distributing



Bishop Kevin Vann visits with several homeless people who frequent St. Benedict the Black Mission.

Catholic literature and rosaries. St. Benedict's Mission has been a beacon of Catholicism among the homeless in Fort Worth.

According to Catholic Online, St. Benedict the Black was born a slave near Messina, Italy, but was later freed by his master, becoming a hermit. When Pope Pius IV disbanded communities of solitaries, he became a Franciscan lay brother and cook at

St. Mary's convent near Palermo. "He was appointed, against his will, superior of the convent when it opted for the reform, though he could neither read nor write. After serving as superior, he became novice master but asked to be relieved of this post and return to his former position of cook. His holiness, reputation for miracles, and his fame as a confessor brought hordes of visitors to see the obscure and humble cook. He died at the convent, was canonized in 1807, and is the patron of Blacks in the United States."

Br. John Mary is collaborating with the neighborhood association and other Christian organizations to ensure the dignity of the homeless is not reduced to just serving food but rather showing the love that each human being deserves as God's children. Other Christians who want to serve the poor in a calm and dignified manner can share the Unity Park facility.

Viewpoints

Faith is our response to revelation and leads to an intimate relationship with God

By Lucas Pollice

As we continue our journey through *Why Catholic?* and begin the season of Advent, it is very fitting that we now take a deeper look at the meaning and importance of faith. Faith is our response to what God reveals. It is not merely the intellectual assent to a revealed truth which we cannot fully understand; it is the full submission and surrendering of our whole self, our intellect *and* will, to all that he reveals to us.

Faith is at the very foundation of the Christian life because it is our response to the invitation of our Creator to have communion with Him. It is through faith that we completely open ourselves to Him and come into relationship with Him.

MAN'S SEARCH FOR GOD

Man is created by God in order to be in his presence and be filled with his life. When He created Adam, He "blew into his nostrils the breath of life" (*Genesis 2:7*). This breath of life is divine life, an intimate union and sharing in the life of God.

It is our very nature as human beings to desire God and to be in communion with Him. This is what is meant when the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "man is by nature a religious being" (see CCC, 28).

We all have a "God-sized" hole in our hearts, which only He can fill. We long to answer the questions of life, and fill our emptiness with truth, to have fullness of life. St. Augustine realized this profound truth about human nature when He beautifully wrote, "You made me O God to live forever in your love; my heart will not rest until it rests in you."

Because man's reason is darkened by sin, and because we are finite, physical creatures, we can come to know God only in a very limited sense and only through what He has created. This is why so many expressions of religious belief worshipped nature.

However, God loved us so much and desired to once again have communion with us, He unfolded his loving plan of salvation in which He chose to reveal Himself to man. He did this first, through his gradual revelation of Himself to his

Responding to faith does involve our intellect ... *But God does not just want us to know Him intellectually, He wants us to live in Him and know Him intimately! Therefore, a complete response of faith also involves the submission of our wills, a surrendering of all that we are and all that we do. Through our obedience of faith, God can transform us, heal us, and use us as his instruments, so that we can fully experience and participate in his life.*

chosen people as seen in the Old Testament, and then, in the fullness of time, He completely revealed Himself to us through his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the perfect man who completely reveals man to himself and once again offers to all people that union with God for which all men have been searching throughout history. That union with the transcendent, the divine, is what fulfills man's nature and gives life its ultimate meaning. "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (*John 10:10*).

FAITH: OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Faith is our response to this gift of revelation that God freely offers to us through Christ. It is not just a mere intellectual activity, or simply accepting something as true that cannot be "proven." Rather, it is the *complete submission of our intellect and will* to God who reveals Himself and offers salvation to us. It is an offering up to our Creator, a renting open of our hearts and minds to Him so that we may fully receive all that He desires to give us.

Our response to Him in complete submission is called the "obedience of faith." We hear and see what He has spoken to us, done for us and asks of us, and we accept it with our whole minds and hearts so that God's salvation may be accomplished in us. Vatican II teaches us this full meaning of faith:

"The obedience of faith" (Rom 16:26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) "is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals," and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him.

— DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION, 5

Responding to faith does involve our intellect; it is the assenting of our minds to revealed truths that we cannot yet fully know in this life. But God does not just want us to know Him intellectually; He

wants us to live in Him and know Him intimately! Therefore, a complete response of faith also involves the submission of our wills, a surrendering of all that we are and all that we do. Through our obedience of faith, God can transform us, heal us, and use us as his instruments, so that we can fully experience and participate in his life.

Have you ever heard the expression "Actions speak louder than words?" This is true because *action follows from being*, that is, it is our actions that express the true disposition of our heart and mind. Thus, if we truly believe in God, then all that we are and all that we do will flow from that core belief and our desire to be in union with Him. Our faith in Him will affect every aspect of our life, not only what we think, but even more profoundly, what we do.

For example, is it enough to just simply know I love my wife, but do nothing else to show my love? Shouldn't my actions, and the entire way I approach life, be a reflection of this love? As a matter of fact, aren't my actions the most profound statement of my heart?

The same holds true with our faith in God. If we truly desire to know and love Him, and to become a true follower of Christ, is it enough to just know Him or just tell Him we love Him without it being reflected in our lives? No! If we truly love Him, then our whole lives, everything that we say and do will reflect that love and show in our actions. This is exactly what St. James teaches us in his epistle:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says that he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

— JAMES 2:14-17

It is vital for us to remember that faith is the full submission of ourselves to that which we believe. It goes beyond mere intellectual belief in the fact that it is an act of intellect *and* will, requiring our whole response, our heart, our thoughts, and our actions.

THE LIFE-LONG JOURNEY OF FAITH

Faith is an ongoing process, not just a one-time event of "coming to faith" or receiving Christ for the first time. Our hearts and minds must be open to God and his salvation each and every day, so that He will be able to accomplish his work within us. Faith is the beginning of eternal life that will be fulfilled when we one day enjoy the fullness of God's presence in heaven. This openness, this "obedience of faith" to all that God has revealed to us through Christ is the disposition we ought to have throughout our lives. Life, for man, is a journey of faith and ongoing conversion in which we turn away from sin and toward God. We come to know that transcendent God who draws us into relationship with Himself through a continuous renting open of our hearts and minds to Him and all that He desires for us and desires to give us.

Therefore, through the obedience of faith, the complete submission of our hearts and minds to God, we completely surrender and open ourselves to his revelation so that we may become holy and pleasing in his sight and accomplish his works. *It is a total submission; it is holding nothing back.* We give Him our reason, our intellect, our will, who we are, and what we do; and we allow him to guide us and to help us to live the way that He wants us to live. This surrendering allows God to penetrate our life, our entire being, so that we may be transformed and become holy, allowing Christ to work in and through us so that we may share in his very life. "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (*Galatians 2:20*).

May we, during this Advent season, not only recognize this gift of faith in our lives, but also more fully surrender ourselves to Christ so that we may be an even brighter light of faith to a world that very much needs the hope and light of 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.

In the Spirit of St. Nicholas

By Kathryn Kent Rhadigan

When they opened the gift, I imagined their little faces would be confused.

"The money in this envelope is not for you," my letter to our children, nieces, and nephews began. "It is being sent, in celebration of St. Nicholas Day, so that you may learn, like the Patron Saint of Giving, the true joy that comes when you give to others."

I've been an aunt and mother long enough to know that when kids rank presents, the "HERE'S-SOME-MONEY-YOU-CAN'T-HAVE" gift might put me right up there with relatives who give socks. However, I had been inspired by an unexpected encounter, and sending the unusual present was a risk my husband and I were willing to take.

It was the week before Thanksgiving, in a crowded grocery store, where I was looking (as always) for the shortest check out line. Happily, I spotted a young woman, with two small children, who did not have much in her basket. "Lucky me," I thought, excitedly, as I zoomed in behind her. "I'll be out of here in no time!"

Quickly I began unloading my (very full) basket of turkey, vegetables, pies, and other treats when I noticed a slow-down. The young lady before me was counting out her money and searching through her pockets. The tired cashier said politely, "Do you think you have any coupons?" I stopped unloading and sighed — so much for the short line.

The young lady looked through her purse, and then again, through her pockets. (How valuable could the coupons be?) I continued waiting (a bit impatiently) as she carefully counted out her dollars and change for a final time. It was still not clear to me what was going on until I heard her whisper to the cashier, "Go ahead and take out the meat."

Finally, I understood.

The young mother in front of

The young mother in front of me did not have enough money to pay for all of her groceries and was asking the cashier to remove all of the meat she had wanted to purchase for Thanksgiving week.

me did not have enough money to pay for all of her groceries and was asking the cashier to remove all of the meat she had wanted to purchase for Thanksgiving week.

The cashier looked at her kindly, and said softly, "Are you sure? Maybe you could take something else out of your basket, instead of the meat?" The young woman shook her head quickly and tried to calm her now fussy children. It was obvious that she wanted to leave.

For a few seconds I stood there frozen — just a shopping cart behind her — debating about whether or not to step into a stranger's life.

"Can I pay for the meat, please?" My voice sounded strange as I said it. Both the cashier and the young woman looked up, startled. "No — no thank-you," the young mother said nervously, as her face started to turn red. I moved toward her. "Please let me. I would really like to do it. We've all had days like yours before..."

At that moment, the young woman put her face into her hands and started to cry. Both the cashier and I began trying to comfort the young mother. "It's okay... it will be okay... please don't cry!" She looked up at both of us. "It's so hard," she said. "I tried to make the money last..." and she started crying again.

"Please let me pay for the meat," I said once more.

Finally, she nodded yes. She then reached over and hugged me. The cashier was crying. The young mom was crying. And, of course, I was now crying. It was quite a picture: three strangers hugging and crying in a busy grocery store! "Go on," I told her. "Take your babies and have a Happy Thanksgiving."

The young woman walked away, and the cashier (who now seemed as familiar as an old friend) rang up my groceries. "May you continue to be blessed!" the cashier said, as she squeezed my hand and handed me my receipt. I walked slowly back to my car, thankful that God had placed me in that particular check out line behind that particular person. How truly wonderful it felt to be a tiny part of his hands on this earth!

And then I looked at the receipt.

Can you guess how much it cost to earn the hug of a stranger? How much it cost to feel like a tiny part of God's plan? Eight dollars. I was stunned at how such a small amount of money could make a difference.

The experience was powerful, and in the days that followed, my husband and I decided that we wanted the youngest members of our extended family to experience a similar joy.

So in early December, in celebration of St. Nicholas Day, envelopes containing money for others are sent. In the flurry of twinkling lights, decorated toy aisles, and slick television ads for the latest electronics — we send simple instructions and a small amount of cash. We have been surprised to learn of all the creative and thoughtful ways that the young people on our family tree spend "their gift." St. Nicholas, who spent his life helping others, I hope, would be proud.

Kathryn Rhadigan is a professional speaker/trainer and freelance writer. She has served as director of development at Holy Rosary Catholic School in Arlington and as an RCIA Adapted for Teens instructor at St. Joseph Parish in Arlington. She and her husband John have children attending both Nolan and Holy Rosary Catholic Schools.



I've been thinking about

A Christmas card for the Pope

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Today I saw a Web site that can mail my Christmas card to Pope Benedict.

A quick glance at the Web site surprised me, setting me thinking, and I immediately cocked my head, scratched my chin, and looked up in the air, where, as though I were in a line-drawn comic strip, I saw sketches of two potential Christmas cards.

First was a Texan card. My grandchildren and I were pictured on it, dressed in jeans, eating corny dogs at the Fort Worth Stock Show. On a ribbon overlay, in gold text, the card read, "Christmas Greetings to Your Holy Rome from Our Western Home." Nice.

The other card in my mind was locally relevant, and had a spirited theme. It showed purple-clad grandkids with me at a TCU football game: "All We Want for Christmas is a Great Big Bowl."

That idea was fun at first, but the longer I looked at it, seemed less and less practical for Pope Benedict. Who knows, he might not follow college athletics. Sure, he's a direct descendent of the original "Big 12," but his "Big 10" is a little different than football's.

Reluctantly slapping the grin off my face, I told myself this sort of materialistic jest was nowhere near what the Web site had in mind. They weren't thinking of people sending photos and detailed holiday letters to the Pope.

Imagine him leafing through all those glittery cards, printed with wreaths and snowy fences. Imagine him reading folksy holiday letters about everyone's summer vacations, pets, and retired husbands who have recently taken up golf.

But what the Web site suggested was more serious than that. They were proposing cards of support and love to the pontiff. Their advertised card was printed in red script circled with holly, and read, "We offer you our constant prayer, unwavering fidelity, and loving obedience, as you continue your apostolic mission as the Vicar of Christ and the successor of Peter."

This third variation, which was a real Christmas card to the pope, was the best. It was suitable, with a sincere thought. Oddly, however, after my immediate light-hearted view of the card-sending scenario, this real card made me sad.

I wanted to show respect to Pope Benedict. But I didn't want to send him a mass-produced e-greeting. Subconsciously I seemed to have thought it would feel better to send him a personal card. Maybe even talk to him directly.

SEE HAMER, P. 22

40 Days of growth, change

Participants witness effects of prayers

**Story and Photos by
Juan Guajardo
Correspondent**

People joined in singing on the last day of the 40 Days for Life campaign Nov. 1.



Katrina Pittman prays on Saturday morning Oct. 24, at the break of dawn. She was one of only two people out praying at the time. According to Jim Utterback, the other volunteer praying at that hour and a core member of the campaign, Mrs. Pittman would show up every Saturday at the same time to pray.



Robert Simmons and his wife Deborah pray together outside the Planned Parenthood facility on Henderson Street early on Friday morning Oct. 30. They came out often to pray; no matter the weather.

It's a cool October night and the streets are silent in front of Planned Parenthood except for the sound of the occasional car driving past or the hushed voices of the handful of individuals praying the Rosary as part of a coordinated international effort to speak out against abortion.

Since 2007, people of all ages and backgrounds have come together for a 40-day prayer-filled campaign called 40 Days For Life. 40 Days is an ecumenical campaign encouraging pro-lifers to pray in front of abortion clinics throughout the country at any hour of the day, making for a 24/7 prayer vigil that's racked up hundreds of thousands of hours of prayer, Rosaries, and Divine Mercy Chaplets all for the

cause of ending abortion.

Fort Worth's second campaign took place this fall outside the Planned Parenthood clinic at the intersection of Daggett Avenue and Henderson Street near downtown Fort Worth and drew larger participation than last year, according to campaign director Jeff Williams. He estimates at least 600 people came out to pray.

"The people who are going out there to pray, they all get the sense that what they're doing is making a difference, and they do receive a sense of fulfillment and experience personal growth," Williams said.

Williams believes the prayers did not go unheeded. He heard of people stopping to show support for the prayer participants. He even heard that a Planned Parenthood employee thanked the people praying. He also received a personal story of a participant who wrote that she witnessed some women turn away from a Planned Parenthood facility. The women, she said, later drove by and thanked the vigil participants.

The prayer vigil also touched the hearts of the countless participants who went out to pray. The campaign gave many an opportunity to experience moments that brought them closer to Christ.

On the Front Lines

Leslie Skero went out to pray whenever she could. She ended up going out to pray on 32 different days, often accompanied by her daughter, Josie. Skero said she felt a call to do more for unborn babies. So after a long day working at her two businesses, Skero, a single mother, would go out and pray for a half hour instead of going home to rest.

"That was a commitment I made and I'm glad I made it," she said. "It definitely brought me closer to God. It was definitely special. The closest I ever felt to Christ was as I was standing there on the corner of Daggett and Henderson holding the sign that says 'Pray to end abortion.'"

"For a while I left the Church. I used to be Catholic and pro-abortion believe it or not," Skero said. "At 23, I was all for women's rights, I was more feminist I guess you can say, and no man could tell me what I can or cannot do to my body. [Then] God gave me a sign saying, 'All My life is precious.' That's where I had my conversion. My heart changed and I knew abortion was wrong."

With a greater appreciation for life, Skero found a passion for promoting respect for life. This year, she took up the responsibility of teaching respect for life as a youth life coordinator at St. Peter

Husband and wife pray with a handful of others pray all hours of the night

the Apostle Church Settlement. She has a passion to the front of the street from Planned Parenthood.

Usually, Skero goes to the clinic on several occasions. She has an old pickup work truck look Skero in the eye. She gave a big thumbs-down. She saw it as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. Her daughter would pray for him.

"Josie and I do pray for his conversion," she said. "Hopefully he can be on our side in the opposite side." A sign that is illegal today, she said, "every American is a non-Christian ... exactly what was these abortion m

'A little miracle from God'

Katrina Pittman prays on Saturday morning outside the abort



Dozens of people came out to pray on the last day of the 40 Days for Life campaign Nov. 1 in front of the Trinity Valley Planned Parenthood Clinic.



prayer the rosary across the street from the Planned Parenthood facility on Henderson Street. They were among a group of people praying on Thursday night Oct. 23. This couple was praying the rosary after 9 p.m. People gathered to pray during the 24/7 campaign. Those who were by themselves remained until others came to relieve them.

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a.m. while her husband would take care of their young children. At that time it was still dark, and on most days she would be one of only two people there.

A stay-at-home mom, pregnant with her third child, she found the solitude helped her in prayer but also felt that providing a public presence might encourage others to join in and support the pro-life movement.

"I know you can pray from home, but I feel that when you're standing there, you're really focused on the task of praying to end abortion," Pittman said. "I was always touched and moved by Pope John Paul II, mostly his words to 'be not afraid,' to go out and be a visible presence, and witness the word of Jesus.

This was Pittman's first year participating in 40 Days for Life, and she was excited yet apprehensive on her first trip to pray outside the clinic. Pittman knew it would be dark and cold. But she didn't know if people would react harshly, or honk and be rude and distracting.

"The whole experience blends into one long day, but I just think it was very beautiful," Pittman said. "I was always standing there in the dark praying and one of the most memorable things I remember was when you kind of felt like 'Wow, I can't stand here much longer, my back's hurting or I'm tired, I'm cold,' and right then the sun would appear like a little miracle from God and kind of warm you up and remind you that it's a new day, there's a lot of hope in people's faith and in society."

'Prayer Can Move Mountains'

Knowing that abortions occur every week at Planned Parenthood on Henderson Street, Tim Schauf just couldn't sit back and watch. So he went out to pray on five different Saturdays. Some weekends his wife and two children would accompany him.

"My inspiration is just an overwhelming passion for this issue," Schauf said. "I truly

believe that we are in the midst of another holocaust, just like in Germany when people knew that Jewish people were being exterminated, and they didn't say anything about it. Of course, in Germany at that time you would fear for your life if you tried to speak out against it.

"It's a very powerful movement," he said, "and we know that prayer can move mountains, and we know that it is working, and the best way is just to pray and be there and not be confrontational and aggressive."

Schauf believes the silent prayer is beneficial to the women seeking abortions. Sometimes it helps deter them, but when it doesn't, the prayer may touch them later in life and help them realize abortion is not a solution. Schauf used to be a sidewalk counselor and has been active in the pro-life movement for a few years. He believes more people are supporting the movement and the quiet approach of prayer.

"We really care about our brothers and sisters. The Bible says we are our brother's keeper, and we can't just go about our business when we know innocent children are being killed on the other side of town every day," Schauf said.



Tim Schauf (left) and Jim Utterback (right) pray together outside the Planned Parenthood clinic early on Saturday morning Oct. 24.



Leslie Jo Skero (left) laughs with joy after giving another pro-lifer, an Anglican (right), her first rosary Oct. 23. Skero was accompanied by her daughter, 12-year-old Josie (center) outside the Planned Parenthood on Henderson. Skero and her daughter went out to pray every Thursday during the campaign.



Father Michael Kmietek, CFR, gives a short speech on the last day of the campaign to dozens of listeners.



On a chilly Monday evening Oct. 5, (left to right) Jennifer Jones, Mikaela Juarez, Lori Lantrip, and Rozann Carter showed up to pray outside of Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth for over an hour.



Two friends pray together outside the Planned Parenthood Clinic on Henderson Street on Friday morning Oct. 30. They drove together all the way from Gainesville.

NATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Immigration reform next up on bishops' wish list for Congress

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Over the years, hundreds of thousands of postcards have come from U.S. Catholics in organized efforts to influence members of Congress on issues ranging from partial-birth abortion to human cloning to health care reform. A new postcard campaign in 2010 will urge Congress to take up as its next priority comprehensive immigration reform that would reunite families, regularize the status of an estimated 12 million people in this country illegally, and restore due process protections for immigrants. "We want to increase Catholic grass-roots support for immigration reform, but we also want to show members of Congress a strong Catholic voice and strong Catholic numbers in support of immigration reform," said Antonio Cube, national manager of the U.S. bishops' Justice for Immigrants project, in a Nov. 16 conference call with reporters. The postcard campaign will coincide in most places with the bishops' National Migration Week, Jan. 3-9, although it might be held earlier or later in some dioceses, Cube said. It also is part of a multifaceted inter-faith campaign called "Home for the Holidays," designed to stress the family reunification aspect of immigration reform. Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration, predicted in a Nov. 17 interview with Catholic News Service that the prospects for Congress to pass immigration legislation will depend a great deal on how health care reform fares in the coming weeks.

Bishop says he asked congressman privately not to receive Communion

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (CNS) — The bishop of Providence said he was "disappointed and really surprised" Rep. Patrick Kennedy, D-R.I., made public a letter he wrote to the congressman almost three years ago about his practice of the Catholic faith and reception of Communion. "This comes almost two weeks after the congressman indicated to local media that he would no longer comment publicly on his faith or his relationship with the Catholic Church. The congressman's public comments require me to reply," Bishop Thomas J. Tobin said in a Nov. 22 statement. His remarks came after Kennedy told *The Providence Journal* daily newspaper that Bishop Tobin "instructed me not to take Communion and said that he has instructed the diocesan priests not to give me Communion." The newspaper said Kennedy declined to give details on when or how the bishop issued such an instruction. Bishop Tobin said that in a February 2007 letter to Kennedy he stated: "In light of the church's clear teaching, and your consistent actions, therefore, I believe it is inappropriate for you to be receiving holy Communion, and I now ask respectfully that you refrain from doing so." Kennedy supports keeping abortion legal.

Bishops choose chairmen-elect for committees at their fall meeting

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops chose new chairmen-elect for five committees in balloting Nov. 17. The chairmen-elect will serve for a year alongside the current chairmen before taking full direction of the committees. In electronic voting Nov. 17, members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops elected Archbishop Robert J. Carlson of St. Louis as chairman-elect of the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations; Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans, chairman-elect of the Committee on Divine Worship; Bishop Stephen E. Blaize of Stockton, California, chairman-elect of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, recently named to head the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, as chairman-elect of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth; Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of San Antonio, chairman-elect of the Committee on Migration.

Bishops OK marriage pastoral, ethical directives, liturgy translations

BALTIMORE (CNS) — The U.S. bishops took their final look at the English translation of the *Roman Missal* and approved documents on marriage, reproductive technologies, and medically assisted nutrition and hydration during their Nov. 16-18 fall general assembly in Baltimore.

Members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops completed their public work at midmorning Nov. 18 and spent the rest of the day in executive session. Bishop Michael J. Hoeppner of Crookston, Minnesota, was to lead them in a morning of prayer and reflection Nov. 19.

The approximately 300 bishops meeting in Baltimore also heard a preliminary report on the "Causes and Context Study" on clergy sex abuse being conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a staunch defense of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development against charges that it funds groups that opposed church social or moral teachings.

They passed a \$144.5 million budget for the USCCB in 2010 and approved a 3 percent increase in 2011 in the assessment on dioceses to fund the work of the conference, as well as priorities and plans and an operational strategy for the next two years.

The bishops made their own an earlier statement by Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, USCCB president, pledging continued efforts to keep health care legislation abortion-neutral and thanking House members who had supporting those efforts.

With overwhelming majority votes Nov. 17, the bishops approved the final five documents related to the *Roman Missal* — translations of the proper of the saints, specific prayers to each saint in the universal liturgical calendar; the commons, general prayers for celebrating saints listed in the "Roman Martyrology"; the *Roman Missal* supplement; the U.S. propers, a collection of orations and formularies for feasts and memorials particular to the U.S. liturgical calendar; and U.S. adaptations to the *Roman Missal*.

Each section must now go to the Vatican for approval before the missal comes into use in the United States, probably in 2011.

Approval of the pastoral letter "Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan" also came Nov. 17, despite the concern voiced by some bishops about the document's pastoral tone and content.

Nearly 100 changes in two rounds of amendments preceded the 180-45 vote, with three absten-



Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki of Chicago works on his laptop computer during the U.S. bishops' fall meeting in Baltimore Nov. 17. Just above him, Bishop Kevin Vann reads a meeting document. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

tions. Two-thirds of the USCCB membership, or 175 votes, were required for passage of the document. Final approval came after an effort to remand the document to committee failed 56 to 169.

The pastoral on marriage offers support to married couples and affirms true marriage can involve only a man and a woman. It is another component in the bishops' National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage, which began in November 2004.

The 15-page document "Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology" says that although the Catholic Church shares the pain of married couples facing infertility problems, some reproductive technologies "are not morally legitimate ways to solve those problems." It was approved Nov. 17 by a vote of 220-4, with three abstentions.

Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said the new document would "fill a true pastoral need" among U.S. Catholics for a better understanding of "the difference between the Catholic understanding and the secular understanding of human life."

The bishops also overwhelmingly approved a revision to the directives that guide Catholic health care facilities, clarifying that patients with chronic conditions who are not imminently dying should receive food and water by "medically assisted" means if they cannot take them normally.

"As a general rule, there is an obligation to provide patients with food and water, including medically assisted nutrition and hydration for those who cannot take food orally," says the revised text of the "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services" prepared

by the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine.

"This obligation extends to patients in chronic conditions (e.g., the 'persistent vegetative state') who can reasonably be expected to live indefinitely if given such care," the new text adds.

The bishops spent an hour Nov. 17 hearing and discussing a preliminary report on the John Jay study of the causes and context of clergy sexual abuse of minors.

Researchers Karen Terry and Margaret Smith told the bishops that early findings confirm "a steep decline" in sexual abuse cases after 1985. The findings also show diocesan responses to incidents of sex abuse have changed substantially over a 50-year-period, with an increase in administrative leave for accused abusers and a decrease in the number of accused abusers reinstated.

They also said information they have gathered so far shows no indication that homosexuality increases the chance that a person will be an abuser.

Commissioned by the bishops, the full study is expected to be released in December 2010.

The bishops ended the day Nov. 17 with a report from Bishop Roger P. Morin of Biloxi, Mississippi, CCHD subcommittee chairman, who responded to an attack from a coalition of Catholic groups promoting a boycott of this year's CCHD collection the weekend of Nov. 21-22. The coalition claims some organizations that receive funding are not in line with church teaching.

Bishop Morin called such claims "outrageous" and pledged "our ongoing efforts to ensure that all CCHD funds are used faithfully, effectively, and in accord with Catholic social and moral teaching."

SEE BISHOPS, P. 15

International / Bishops' Meeting

Cardinal George discusses role of priests, need for unity within church

BALTIMORE — Reflecting on what the church would be like without the sacrament of holy orders, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, called on his fellow bishops to reflect on their relationships with their priests and help them grow in holiness and unite with them around Jesus.

In his Nov. 16 speech opening the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore, Cardinal George also addressed ways of strengthening church unity, particularly with regard to Catholic universities, "to media claiming the right to be a voice in the church," and to organizations that do various work under Catholic auspices.

He also spoke about the challenges of the church being "a leaven

for the world's transformation," such as in the ongoing national debate about health care reform.

In his traditional presidential address at the beginning of the Nov. 16-19 meeting, the cardinal framed his thoughts on the role of priestly ministry as a part of the Year for Priests proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI in June.

Without a priestly ministry rooted in holy orders, he said, the ministry of teaching about the faith would fall primarily to professors, "whose obligation is first to seek the truth in the framework of their own academic discipline and whose authority to teach derives from their professional expertise."

Without ordained priests, the "only instance of real governance in any society would be that of

civil and political leaders," Cardinal George continued. While their authority comes from God through the people they have sworn to serve, he noted, that role confers no religious authority and "a civil government has no right to deprive the church of freedom to govern herself by her own laws and under her own leaders."

Cardinal George also noted that without ordained priests, the role of spiritual counseling would fall to therapists—"dedicated to their clients and skilled in examining the dynamics of human personality, but without consideration of the influence of God's grace."

And finally, without ordained priests "the church would be deprived of the Eucharist, and her worship would be centered only on the praise and thanksgiving."

Bishops...

FROM PAGE 14

The essential mission of CCHD is "to help the poor overcome poverty," he said. "If any CCHD-funded group violates the conditions of a grant and acts in conflict with Catholic teaching, CCHD funding is immediately terminated."

In other action Nov. 17, the bishops approved a \$144.5 million budget for 2010, representing an increase of less than 0.2 percent over 2009, and a 3 percent increase in the diocesan assessment to support the work of the USCCB in 2011. They also approved a priority plan titled "Deepen Faith, Nurture Hope, Celebrate

Life" and a series of "strategy and operational plans" for offices and departments of the USCCB for the next two years.

On Nov. 16, the first day of the meeting, the bishops heard a report on health care reform and reaffirmed as a body Cardinal George's statement expressing the bishops' commitment to keep health reform legislation in the Senate abortion-neutral.

A successful effort by USCCB leaders and staff members to press lawmakers to keep abortion out of the House's Affordable Health Care for America Act provides an example for the future, according to the chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

"It was a good example of how we as a conference can work

together to have a positive influence on legislation," said Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, New York, in a report to his fellow bishops.

Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York delivered a report on the activities of Catholic Relief Services, which included a four-minute video. He praised CRS, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, for its "life-saving work."

The meeting opened Nov. 16 with talks by Cardinal George and Archbishop Pietro Sambi, the Vatican's nuncio to the United States. Its public sessions ended at midmorning Nov. 18 with a viewing of the first of several planned videos promoting marriage and a report on the state of vocations to the religious life.

INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Luxury, waste are unacceptable when hunger is on the rise, says pope

ROME (CNS) — Opulence and waste are unacceptable especially when hunger — the cruelest form of poverty — continues to rise, Pope Benedict XVI told world leaders at a summit on food security Nov. 16 during the opening session of the United Nations' World Summit on Food Security. The pope condemned the greed that fuels speculation on food prices, aid that debilitates agricultural production and exploitation of the earth's resources. The three-day conference in Rome brought together leaders and delegates from countries around the world to find solutions to end hunger and malnutrition and find ways to stabilize food prices. The pope said the growing number of hungry people in the world is not directly linked to increased population. There is enough food to feed the world, he said, adding that food shortages are caused by the rising price of foodstuffs, "the reduction in economic resources available to the poorest peoples and their limited access to markets and to food."

Fresh palette: Artists say they're ready to support church's mission

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Ask and you shall receive. The art world is ready to collaborate with the church in creating inspirational modern art, said some artists who took part in a landmark meeting with Pope Benedict XVI. After decades of disinterest or suspicion, the rapport between art and religion is ready to be restored. If the church wants art to support its mission, all it has to do is call. "The artist is really at the service of society, but to serve you have to be asked," said John David Mooney, a sculptor and installation artist from Chicago. Polish film director Krzysztof Zanussi told Vatican Radio that the church has to take the first step in approaching artists "because it's for sure that artists will never take that step." Mooney and Zanussi were among the more than 250 international artists invited by the Vatican in an effort to revitalize dialogue and collaboration between the worlds of faith and art.

Philippine bishops support new rice strains to help fight hunger

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — The Philippine bishops' bioethics office said it supports efforts to develop new rice strains to solve a rice shortage in Asia as long as doing so does not harm the environment. Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi of Caceres told the Asian church news agency UCA News the church will back the introduction of new rice strains if they will help feed more than 1 billion malnourished Asians and Africans. He said Nov. 17 that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines initially was against genetically modified organisms when the technology was "not yet so well-defined." The archbishop noted "a gradual evolution" toward acceptance as it became apparent genetically modified organisms offered food safety and security as well as environmental sustainability. The archbishop spoke as more than 700 scientists and agriculturalists discussed new rice strains at the Sixth International Rice Genetics Symposium in Manila Nov. 16-19.

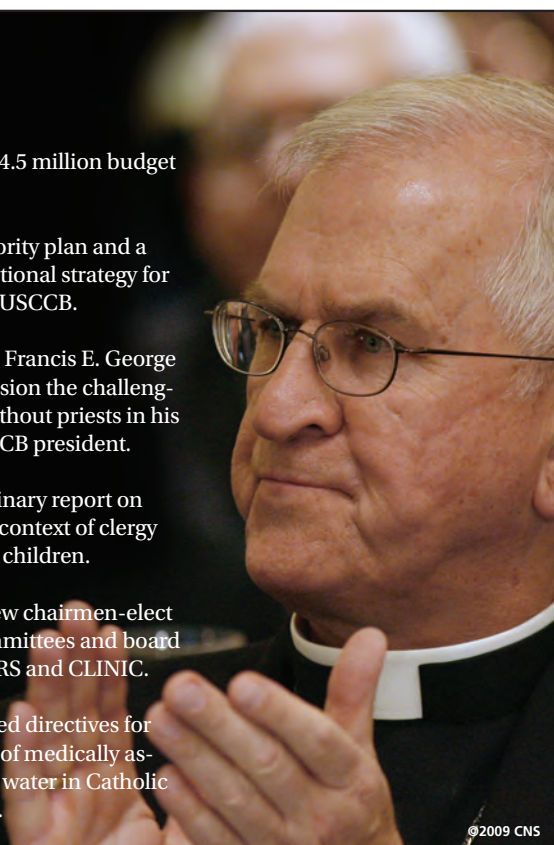
Pope names Notre Dame professor to theological commission

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has named John C. Cavadini, chairman of the University of Notre Dame's Department of Theology, to the International Theological Commission. The appointment was announced Nov. 19 by the Vatican. Cavadini also directs Notre Dame's Institute for Church Life and in September was named co-chairman of the university's new Task Force on Supporting the Choice for Life. The 30 members of the International Theological Commission conduct research on theological topics and serve as advisers to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Meeting Highlights

2009 USCCB fall general assembly

- Accepted the English translations and U.S. adaptations of the final five sections of the Roman Missal.
- Heard reports on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Synod of Bishops for Africa, Catholic Relief Services and a recent survey on religious vocations.
- Approved a document criticizing reproductive technologies.
- Approved a pastoral letter on marriage.
- Viewed the first of several planned videos on protecting and promoting marriage.
- Pledged to continue efforts to keep abortion out of health reform legislation.
- Agreed to a \$144.5 million budget for 2010.
- Approved a priority plan and a 330-page operational strategy for the work of the USCCB.
- Heard Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago envision the challenges of a world without priests in his address as USCCB president.
- Heard a preliminary report on the causes and context of clergy sexual abuse of children.
- Selected five new chairmen-elect for USCCB committees and board members for CRS and CLINIC.
- Approved revised directives for the withdrawal of medically assisted food and water in Catholic health facilities.



Scripture Readings



December 13, Third Sunday of Advent.

Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Psalm) Isaiah 12:2-6
- 2) Philippians 4:4-7
Gospel) Luke 3:10-18

By Sharon K. Perkins

A couple of years ago, I was able to visit my younger brother in California, and we spent an enjoyable two days touring several vineyards in Napa Valley. As a novice wine taster, I tried different vintages and learned about the primary factors — weather, the quality of the grape crop, and the skill of the winemaker — that make some vintage years better than others.

Historically, I've had good years, too — and some that were not so good. Like many people, I can pinpoint certain times in my life that seemed to bring one misfortune or hardship after another. In 12 months' time during 1994-95, my husband and I both lost our jobs, my childhood home was destroyed by a tornado, and I

was debilitated by an acute case of postpartum depression. Caught up in our troubled circumstances, we knew a discouragement that made it difficult to see how God was present or how things would ever get better.

The readings today hold several keys to not only surviving, but thriving, in tough times: prayer, thankfulness, and generosity. In St. Paul's epistle, he plainly tells us to "rejoice in the Lord always," and to "have no anxiety at all," but to offer our prayerful petitions to God with thanksgiving. In the Gospel, John the Baptist tells his expectant hearers to be satisfied with their wages and to share their resources with the needy. These were the preferred means of not only preparing for Christ's coming, but of recognizing Christ's presence in their midst.

Looking back now on the trials of 1994-95, I remember well the "crop" of challenging events and the stormy "weather" of our circumstances when it was difficult to maintain a positive attitude and proper perspective. Tough times can

indeed bring despair and discouragement. But ultimately, the Lord — the "skilled winemaker" — is able to be present in all our circumstances, filling every year, even in times of adversity, with his grace and peace.



"Fear
not, O Zion,
be not discour-
aged! The Lord, your
God, is in your midst."

— Zephaniah 3:16-17

QUESTIONS:

When have you experienced discouragement due to difficult circumstances? In this time of preparing for the Lord's coming, how can you replace discouragement with gratefulness and joy?

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Pope says contemplation, pursuit of understanding are keys to theology

By Sarah Delaney
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Although there are different approaches to the study of the Scriptures, theology is rooted in contemplation based on faith and the pursuit of understanding, Pope Benedict XVI said at his weekly general audience.

Illustrating the lives and teachings of two 12th-century theologians from the St. Victor monastery in Paris, the pope spoke Nov. 25 about the different ways Christian thinkers have sought truth from the Bible.

Hugh of St. Victor, who was a respected teacher at the abbey until his death in 1141, emphasized the importance of the literal or historical sense of the Scriptures "as the basis of theology's effort to unite faith and reason in understanding God's saving plan," the pope said.

His student, Richard of St. Victor, "stressed the allegorical sense of the Scriptures" as a means to present spiritual teachings to the faithful, the pope said.

Their examples "remind us that theology is grounded in the contemplation born of faith and



Pope Benedict XVI blesses the crowd during his weekly general audience at the Vatican Nov. 25. (CNS photo/Chris Helgren, Reuters)

the use of reason," the pope said. Once a person has reached equilibrium through a dialogue between faith and reason, he is ready to pursue contemplation, the pope said, explaining Richard's teachings.

Both of these "outstanding theologians" wrote about and taught the importance of the concept of the Trinity, the pope said. Richard, in his treatise "On the Trinity," explains that "Father and Son find themselves in an eternal exchange of love, happiness, and goodness, which requires the presence of a third person, the Holy Spirit," the pope said.

Understanding the Trinity should inspire men and women today in their own human relationships, the pope said.

"Think how the world would change if — in families, in parishes, and in other communities — relationships were made following the example of the three divine persons," he said. "Everyone would live not only with others, but for others and in others."

The pope delivered his talk in the packed Paul VI audience hall.

the pursuit of understanding," Pope Benedict said.

Hugh was above all a teacher and believed that theology was based on a "loving study" of the Bible, because "to know God, one must begin with that which God himself wished to reveal through the Scriptures," the pope said.

Hugh also gave particular at-

tention to the sacraments in his treatise "On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith," the pope said. In it Hugh described a sacrament as a "corporal or material element" that is able to represent "an invisible and spiritual grace," Pope Benedict explained.

Richard, who came from Scotland and who was prior of the

abbey from 1162 until his death in 1173, realized the importance of a literal study of the Bible, "but, unlike his teacher, he favored the symbolic, allegorical sense," the pope said.

Richard proposed a spiritual path by practicing virtue and learning to "discipline and order feelings and emotions through

Scripture Readings



December 20, Fourth Sunday of Advent.
Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Micah 5:1-4a
Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
- 2) Hebrews 10:5-10
Gospel) Luke 1:39-45

By Jeff Hensley

The time grows short until we celebrate the coming of our Lord Jesus as an infant. Our waiting in hope is soon to be fulfilled.

Many years ago during the season leading to Christmas — a time when, most of us would agree, Christmas is overcommercialized with too much tinsel and artificial snow, too many lights and too little connection to the underlying reason for the season — my wife stood along the upper rail of a mall overcrowded with Christmas shoppers. A wistful look came over her face, and a smile, and she said, “This is the one time of the year when you know that everyone here is thinking about what they can buy for someone else.” Of course, she was right.

Hope is more than a feeling, more than a bit of wishful thinking. It has substance.

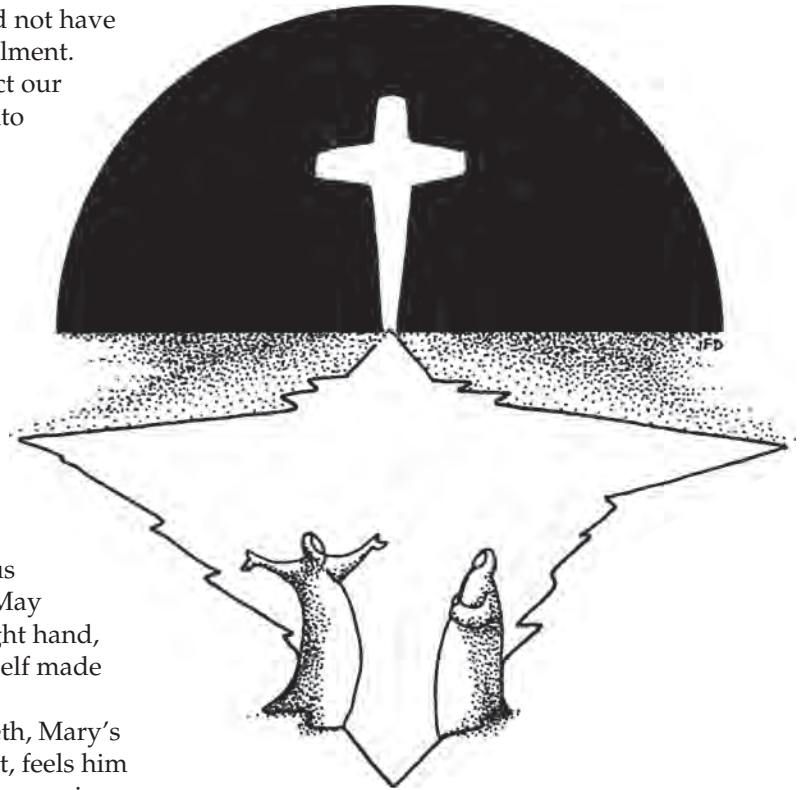
Some Scripture scholars have described more than 300 Old Testament passages that point to

the birth of Jesus. Many of them could not have been interpreted until after their fulfillment. But after the fact, they obviously direct our attention to how Jesus was to come into the world. At least three of them are found in the readings for today.

The Micah reading may be the most stunning of these, speaking as it does of one whose “origin is from of old” coming forth from Bethlehem, one who would “stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord,” whose “greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth,” who “shall be peace.”

Then the psalmist tells the Lord in his hymn of praise and supplication: “Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved. May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.”

And in the Gospel of Luke, Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin, pregnant with John the Baptist, feels him leap in her womb as Mary approaches carrying the yet to be born Jesus. She says, “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” Mary becomes, even then, before Jesus’ birth, our example in faith, the first to believe in the son of man.



“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

— Luke 1:42bc

QUESTIONS:

How can you nurture the virtue of hope in your life and the lives of those around you?

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Advent, Easter, and **Jesus** becoming present to us

By Jeff Hedglen

November 25 of this year on the social networking site Facebook a friend posted this remark: “I need to call an exterminator to get rid of all these humbugs ruining the Christmas mood.” To that I replied: “Christmas? It is not even Advent. Sounds like the Humbugs are sane people who know it is not Christmas yet, no matter what Wal-Mart wants you to believe.” My friend fired back with a comment that really got me thinking.

He said: “Excuse me, Mr. Hedglen, but perhaps you can explain to me why it’s acceptable to appreciate Easter-themed music year-round, and Christmas music during only certain times of the year (which ironically does not include the liturgical season of Christmas, itself)?”

As much as I hated to admit it, my friend was right. Easter-themed music is all over our Mass-music-number-boards and Christian radio stations no matter what month it is, but Christ-

The reality of Jesus continually coming in the past, present, and future is tied up with the Greek word *anamnesis*.

mas music is relegated to the six weeks prior to Dec. 25, and maybe a few days afterward.

When I clicked out of Facebook I started thinking about the implications of what my friend had said, and it dawned on me that Advent is a year-round holiday too. The three comings of Jesus celebrated in Advent — his coming in time 2000 years ago, his coming in our hearts every day, and his awaited second coming — are present every time we go to Mass.

At Mass we hear the Scriptures proclaimed. These words were written centuries ago, yet they have the power to touch and transform us today. Additionally they are packed with messages to point us to eternity. I am constantly amazed at the emotions these ancient words can evoke and how they can cause such longing for something more real than what this world offers.

We encounter a priesthood that began in Genesis chapter 14 when Melchizedek “brought out bread and wine, and being a priest of God Most High, he blessed Abram” (*Genesis 14:18*). Our priesthood is also rooted in the Levitical priesthood that offered blood sacrifices for the atonement of sin. These Old Testament embodiments of priesthood continue in our priests today as they offer the sacrifice of the Mass, which is made possible in Jesus the eternal high priest.

Most especially we encounter the three comings of Jesus every time we receive the Eucharist. Jesus offered his Body

and Blood at the last supper and on the cross. We receive this same Body and Blood in every eucharistic feast. It is this very same eating of Flesh and Blood that Jesus refers to when he says: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (*John 6:54*).

The reality of Jesus continually coming in the past, present, and future is tied up with the Greek word *anamnesis*. This word literally means remembrance, or memorial, but it is much more than simply recalling a past event. This word is used throughout the Bible when referring to the Exodus experience and the Eucharist.

For the Jewish people, God saving them from slavery in Egypt by passing through the Red Sea is forever memorialized in the Passover feast. But they do not simply remember the event. For them, every Passover makes present again the saving act of God.

This same kind of “remembering” or *anamnesis* happens at every Eucharist. The last sup-

per can be re-presented for us because Jesus the eternal priest is saying, through the ordained priest, the ancient words: “Do this in memory of me.”

Anamnesis is similar to when you smell a certain scent or hear a particular song and you are transported in your mind back in time to a specific time and place. The difference here is that it is not we who are transported; rather the event that happened 2,000 years ago is made present again before our eyes.

The advent of Jesus is truly a year-round event, but the Church highlights it in the four weeks prior to the celebration of Jesus’ birth, so that we can more deeply believe the words we say when we proclaim the mystery of our faith: “Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life, Lord Jesus, come in glory.”

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.

USCCB llama 'una enorme decepción' proyecto de ley de salud del Senado

WASHINGTON (CNS) — La legislación de reforma médica que ahora está ante el Senado es "una enorme decepción, creando política federal nueva y totalmente inaceptable que pone en peligro la vida humana y los derechos de conciencia", dijeron los directores de tres comités de la Conferencia Estadounidense de obispos católicos (USCCB) el 20 de noviembre.

La carta esboza los problemas que la USCCB tiene con las cláusulas del proyecto de ley del Senado acerca de protecciones en cuanto al aborto y la conciencia, la cobertura de inmigrantes y cuán asequible ésta es para los estadounidenses de bajo ingreso.

Se esperaba que el debate comenzara el 30 de noviembre. La Ley de protección del paciente y cuidado asequible, del Senado, redactada por el líder de la mayoría Harry Reid, de Nevada, partiendo de legislación aprobada anteriormente en dos comités del Senado, "no satisface ... los

criterios morales" esbozados por los obispos, especialmente en el uso de fondos federales de pagar por abortos, dice la carta.

"Creemos que la legislación que viole este principio moral no es una verdadera reforma de los servicios médicos y debe ser enmendada para reflejarlo", dijeron el cardenal Daniel N. DiNardo de Galveston-Houston y los obispos William F. Murphy de Rockville Centre, New York, y John C. Wester de Salt Lake City. "Si eso fracasa, la legislación actual debe ser opuesta".

Ellos dirigen, respectivamente, los comités *Actividades pro vida*, *Justicia y desarrollo humano nacional* y *Migración*, de la USCCB.

Además de su carta de tres páginas, ellos enviaron a cada senador una hoja de datos diseñada para refutar "varios malentendidos y reclamos falsos" sobre la enmienda Stupak aprobada por la Cámara de representantes la cual ellos llamaron "una medida modesta y razonable".

Informes dicen que el Papa Juan Pablo más cercano a ser declarado venerable

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Los cardenales (y obispos) miembros de la Congregación para las causas de los santos votaron unánimemente el 16 de noviembre para recomendar que el Papa Benedicto XVI reconociera formalmente que el Papa Juan Pablo II vivió heroicamente las virtudes cristianas, informaron los periódicos italianos.

El Vaticano no negó ni confirmó que la votación ocurrió porque se supone que el proceso sea secreto, hasta que el Papa Benedicto firme el decreto reconociendo la virtud heroica de su precursor y lo declare venerable.

El Papa Benedicto generalmente firma una docena o más decretos tres veces al año: en abril, en junio o julio y en diciembre.

Los miembros de la congregación de los santos se reúnen regularmente para estudiar las historias de la vida, el testimonio presencial y otra documentación promoviendo las causas de los santos propuestos. La información es contenida en un *positio*, o documento de postura, preparado por el promotor de la

causa del individuo.

Cuando los cardenales y los obispos están satisfechos que el *positio* está completo y demuestra que el candidato a la santidad vivió una vida santa extraordinaria, ellos recomiendan que el Papa firme el primer decreto.

Una vez que el promotor de una causa identifica un milagro potencial atribuido a la intercesión del candidato, la documentación es entregada a la congregación de los santos. Un panel de médicos, un panel de teólogos y los miembros de la congregación todos deben recomendar que el Papa firme un segundo decreto reconociendo el milagro.

Cuando los decretos que reconocen las virtudes heroicas y el milagro son firmados, una fecha es fijada para la beatificación del candidato.

Como milagro para la beatificación del Papa Juan Pablo, el promotor de su causa ha propuesto la curación de una monja francesa. Ella fue alegadamente curada de la enfermedad de *Parkinson*, la misma enfermedad que sufrió el Papa Juan Pablo.

Los obispos aprueban carta pastoral sobre matrimonio, directivas éticas y traducciones litúrgicas

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Los obispos de Estados Unidos dieron la última revisión a la traducción al inglés del *Misal romano* y aprobaron documentos sobre el matrimonio, tecnología reproductiva, y nutrición e hidratación con ayuda médica, durante la asamblea general de otoño que se celebró del 16 al 18 de noviembre en Baltimore.

Los integrantes de la Conferencia de obispos católicos de Estados Unidos, (USCCB, por sus siglas en inglés) terminaron su trabajo público a media mañana del 18 de noviembre, y pasaron el resto del día en sesión ejecutiva. El obispo Michael J. Hoeppner de Crookston, Minnesota, presidiría la oración matinal y la reflexión del 19 de noviembre.

Los obispos que se reunieron en Baltimore, y que aproximadamente alcanzaron la cifra de 300, escucharon también un informe preliminar sobre el documento *Causas y estudio en contexto* de abuso sexual de clérigos, que dirige el *John Jay School of Criminology*, y una firme defensa de la *Campaña católica de desarrollo humano*, en contra de grupos que provee fondos y se oponen a las enseñanzas sociales o morales de la iglesia.

Los obispos aprobaron un presupuesto de \$144.5 millones para la USCCB en 2010, y también un aumento del 3 por ciento para 2011 en la valuación de fondos alegados por las diferentes diócesis para el trabajo de la conferencia, como también prioridades y planes y una estrategia de operaciones para los siguientes dos años.

Los obispos hicieron suya una



El obispo Placido Rodríguez, de Lubbock, hace anotaciones durante la reunión general de los obispos estadounidenses en Baltimore, el 17 de noviembre. (Foto/Bob Roller)

declaración anterior, pronunciada por el cardenal Francis E. George de Chicago, presidente de la USCCB, comprometiéndose a la continuación de esfuerzos para el mantenimiento neutral de la legislación sobre el cuidado de salud, con respecto al aborto, y agradeciéndole a los integrantes de la Cámara de representantes que habían apoyado tales esfuerzos.

En otra decisión del 17 de noviembre, los obispos aprobaron el presupuesto de \$144.5 millones para 2010, que representa un aumento de menos de un 0.2 por ciento en comparación con el año 2009, y un 3 por ciento de aumento en la valuación de fondos que las diócesis aporta como apoyo del trabajo de la USCCB en 2011. También aprobaron un plan de prioridad, titulado *Profundiza en la fe, alimenta la esperanza, celebra la vida* y una serie de "estrategia y planes de operaciones" para oficinas y departamentos de la

USCCB, proyectados para los próximos dos años.

El arzobispo Timothy M. Dolan, de Nueva York, presentó un informe sobre las actividades de *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS), que incluyó un video de cuatro minutos de duración. El arzobispo alabó a CRS — agencia de auxilio y desarrollo a ultramar que depende de los obispos de los Estados Unidos — por su "trabajo de salvar vidas".

La asamblea se inició el 16 de noviembre con plática del cardenal George y el arzobispo Pietro Sambi, *nuncio* del Vaticano ante los Estados Unidos. Las sesiones públicas terminaron a mitad de mañana del 18 de noviembre, con la exhibición del primero de varios videos planeados en los que se promueve el matrimonio, y un informe sobre el estado de las vocaciones para la vida religiosa.

Obispos aprueban directrices revisadas sobre retiro de alimento, agua

BALTIMORE (CNS) — Los obispos estadounidenses aprobaron abrumadoramente una revisión de las directrices que guían las instalaciones católicas de servicios médicos, clarificando que los pacientes con condiciones crónicas que no están muriendo inminentemente deben recibir alimento y agua por medios "ayudados médicamente", si no pueden tomarlos normalmente.

"Como regla general, hay una obligación de proveer a pacientes alimento y agua, incluyendo nutrición e hidratación médica-

mente ayudadas para aquellos que no puedan tomar el alimento oralmente", dice el texto revisado de las *Directrices éticas y religiosas para servicios médicos católicos* preparadas por el Comité sobre doctrina de los obispos estadounidenses.

"Esta obligación se extiende a los pacientes en condiciones crónicas (por ejemplo, el 'estado vegetativo persistente') que pueda razonablemente esperarse que vivan indefinidamente si se les da tal cuidado", el nuevo texto añade.

La votación fue de 219 a 4

a favor de la revisión, el 17 de noviembre, el segundo día de la asamblea general de otoño de la Conferencia Estadounidense de obispos católicos en Baltimore.

El obispo William E. Lori, de Bridgeport, Connecticut, director del Comité de doctrina de los obispos, dijo que los cambios ayudarían a los obispos a ser "maestros de la fe", a que los médicos practicantes "sigan los protocolos médicos apropiados" y a "nuestra gente cuando enfrenta estas decisiones difíciles" para sí mismos o para sus seres queridos.

Celebraciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la diócesis

LA CATEDRAL DE SAINT PATRICK, 1206 THROCKMORTON STREET, EN EL CENTRO DE FORT WORTH—SEGUNDA CELEBRACIÓN DIOCESANA CONSECUTIVA

5 a.m.: Serenata de Las mañanitas en honor a la bendita Virgen María; Matachines de la iglesia St. Peter the Apostle rendirán homenaje a Nuestra Señora con bailes sagrados tradicionales.

6 a.m.: El obispo Kevin Vann presidirá la misa bilingüe; el padre Richard Flores, párroco de la catedral, concelebrará, mientras el Mariachi Estampa de México guiará la congregación en canto, y grupos locales de baile—como el Ballet folclórico de Fort Worth y Danza de Guadalupe—realizarán bailes especiales durante el ofertorio en honor a la Santísima Madre. Después de la liturgia, una recepción al exterior se celebrará e incluirá pan dulce mexicano, café caliente y chocolate, e interpretaciones musicales.

8 a.m.; 12:05 p.m.: Misas regulares, con el coro de adultos de la catedral honrando con sus cantos a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe durante la Misa de las 12:05 p.m.

5 p.m.: La imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe será llevada en procesión en un carruaje desde el camino de entrada de Saint Patrick en la calle Throckmorton, la entrarán a la catedral, y la pondrán en un lugar de honor.

6 p.m.: Una rendición en vivo de la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe a San Juan Diego de Tepeyac.

7 p.m.: Misa bilingüe seguida de recepción—café caliente gratis, chocolate mexicano caliente y pan dulce, provistos por Esperanza's Café and Restaurant.

Rosarios, servicios de oración y presentaciones teatrales por músicos, bailarines y coros se celebrarán a través del día. Para más información, sírvase llamar a la oficina de la catedral al (817) 332-4915.

IGLESIA SAINT ANN, 100 SW ALSBURY RD., BURLESON

7 a.m.: Bailadores de matachines, figurando Los danzantes Guadalupanos de Santa Ana. Una procesión y rendición de la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe a Juan Diego será parte de las festividades. Se seguirá con la santa Misa y Mariachis cantando las tradicionales Mañanitas.

IGLESIA SAINT GEORGE, 3500 MAURICE ST., FORT WORTH

7:30 p.m.: Una misa incluirá una rendición de la aparición de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y una procesión de la misma para su celebración, con un baile de los Matachines.

Después de Misa, el padre Thu Nguyen dedicará una sala recientemente renovada dentro de la iglesia, que muestra un mural pintado a mano en escala natural de San Juan Diego y Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe al amanecer en las montañas de México. Mariachis, bailes de los Matachines, comida Mexicana y celebraciones concluirán el evento. Todos están invitados a participar.

Para más información sobre la Misa de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y su dedicación, póngase en contacto con el padre Thu Nguyen at tnguyen@charterinternet.com o llame al (817) 831-4404.



Una familia venera la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe antes de la misa en la parroquia de Saint Mark el 20 de noviembre. La imagen misionera de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe tuvo una parada en Denton el viernes, 20 de noviembre, donde se quedó durante todas las misas el fin de semana. El obispo Diego Monroy, de la basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en México, bendijo la imagen misionera y luego hizo que se tocaran el original y la réplica. Solamente hay ocho exactas réplicas digitales, y solo cuatro están en los Estados Unidos. (NTC foto por Juan Guajardo)



Dos velas encendidas en la corona de Adviento el 29 de noviembre en la Iglesia de Saint John Vianney, en Prince Frederick, Maryland, marcan el segundo domingo de Adviento. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

El Papa hace petición por derechos de niños migrantes y refugiados

Por Sarah Delaney
Catholic News Service

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — El Papa Benedicto XVI pidió a gobiernos y organizaciones internacionales dar atención especial a los derechos de los niños inmigrantes, quienes en muchos casos son víctimas de explotación y abandono.

Los menores de edad obligados a inmigrar por razones de pobreza, violencia o hambre son los más vulnerables, dijo.

El Papa hizo los comentarios en su mensaje anual para el *Día mundial del migrante y el refugiado*, el cual será celebrado el 17 de enero en la mayoría de los países. El texto papal fue emitido en el Vaticano el 27 de noviembre.

El Papa dijo que los países anfitriones deben crear políticas que protejan a los niños inmigrantes y los ayuden a integrarse a la sociedad. Estos niños deben disfrutar de derechos básicos, tales como ir a la escuela y poder trabajar

legalmente, añadió.

A pesar de haber mayor conciencia de la necesidad de ayuda para los niños inmigrantes, el Papa dijo, “muchos son dejados a sustentarse por sí mismos y, de varias maneras, enfrentar el riesgo de la explotación”.

El Papa Benedicto se refirió a la *Convención de las Naciones Unidas sobre los derechos del niño*, la cual, en cuanto a los niños, reconoce “los derechos fundamentales como iguales a los derechos de los adultos”. Pero “desafortunadamente esto no siempre sucede en la práctica”, dijo.

El mensaje del Papa fue presentado en una conferencia de prensa en el Vaticano por el arzobispo Antonio María Veglio, presidente del *Pontificio consejo para la pastoral de los emigrantes e itinerantes*, y por el arzobispo Agostino Marchetto.

El arzobispo Veglio dijo que los niños llegan a ser migrantes de diversas maneras: los afor-

tunados son acompañados por sus padres o un guardián. Otros son enviados solos para salvarlos de una situación desesperada en sus países de origen, o para trabajar para enviar dinero a sus familias.

El arzobispo Marchetto dijo que los derechos, establecidos internacionalmente para que los menores migrantes tengan acceso a la escuela, los servicios médicos, un hogar y alimento, a menudo no son respetados en los países anfitriones.

En muchos países “hay una gran división entre los objetivos declarados y la verdadera práctica cotidiana”, dijo, y mucha gente todavía reacciona con prejuicio hacia los inmigrantes que están en sus países.

“Este comportamiento de discriminación, xenofobia y hasta racismo, debe ser atendido con políticas orientadas a proteger y reforzar los derechos de los refugiados”, dijo.

Mantenga presentes sus bendiciones durante Adviento, sugiere el Papa

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Adviento debe ser un tiempo cuando los cristianos mantienen presentes las pequeñas bendiciones que reciben cada día, bendiciones que son muestras del amor de Dios, sugirió el Papa Benedicto XVI.

“Mantener un tipo de ‘diario interno’ de este amor sería una tarea hermosa y sana”, dijo el Papa el 28 de noviembre, mientras celebraba una oración nocturna para marcar el principio de Adviento.

Dios entra en la vida de cada persona, dijo el Papa Benedicto.

Pero en la vida cotidiana la mayoría de personas aparenta “tener poco tiempo para el Se-

ñor y poco tiempo hasta para sí mismos. Terminan inmersos por las cosas diarias”, dijo.

Tomar un poco de tiempo cada día para reconocer las muestras de amor de Dios le recuerda a todos que “Dios está aquí; Él no se ha retirado del mundo; Él no nos ha dejado solos”, dijo el Papa.

El Papa Benedicto dijo que si la gente vive cada día con sus ojos abiertos a las muestras de la presencia de Dios, ellos sentirán plena alegría mientras esperan la llegada final del Señor.

Durante su discurso del 29 de noviembre y la oración del *Ángelus* del mediodía, el Papa habló sobre la espera y la esperanza de Adviento.

Plataforma de comunicación de Jesús es 'la persona humana', dice obispo

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (CNS) — Como los padres ya saben, si uno quiere hablar con un adolescente, envíe un mensaje de texto.

Antes de comenzar su homilía durante la Misa de cierre de la Conferencia nacional de la juventud católica el 21 de noviembre, el obispo Jaime Soto de Sacramento, California, sacó su teléfono móvil.

"Veamos. Uno pone el mensaje. Entonces el número. Entonces oprime 'Enviar'", dijo.

Arriba en la gigantesca pantalla de alta definición apareció su mensaje a los 21,000 adolescentes católicos reunidos en el Centro Sprint de Kansas City: "URGR8" (Eres estupendo).

"Somos un grupo bilingüe. Así que hay otro mensaje que quiero enviar", dijo, presionando más teclas en su teléfono. "SALU2 a TO2" (Saludos a todos) apareció en la pantalla. Entonces dijo que enviaría el mensaje de texto cristiano original: "IHS".

"Ustedes deben reconocer este", dijo el obispo Soto. "Es el mensaje de texto más antiguo dondequiera. Es el texto del santo nombre de Jesús".

Las nuevas formas de comunicación electrónica están en todas partes y están siendo reinventadas rápidamente, pero para Dios no importa, dijo el obispo Soto.

"Dios no compra un iPhone nuevo ni consigue una nueva 'app' (aplicación móvil). Su plataforma de comunicación es



El obispo Jaime Soto de Sacramento, California, se dirige a los jóvenes reunidos para la Conferencia nacional de la juventud católica de 2009 en Kansas City, Missouri, el 21 de noviembre. (Foto CNS/ Susan McSpadden, THE LEAVEN)

Steve Angrisano entretiene a jóvenes con música cristiana durante la Conferencia nacional de la juventud católica el 22 de noviembre. (Foto CNS/John Caulfield, CATHOLIC KEY)

la persona humana", dijo.

La explosión de la comunicación electrónica, continuó, es simplemente un reflejo de las ansias del corazón humano de tener lo que ofrece Jesús: una conexión al amor.

"El señor Jesucristo se está conectando en la página inicial del corazón de ustedes", dijo. "Él desea 'textear' la verdad de la misericordia de Dios en el alma de ustedes. Jesús es la palabra, el

más elevado Facebook de Dios, y les invita a que sean su amigo".

"Jesús no envía Twitter", dijo el obispo. "En vez, Él se hizo más humilde para poder conocerles, conectarse con ustedes y servirles en la caridad y en la verdad. Él es la dirección IP (protocolo de Internet) del camino, de la verdad y de la vida".

Hablando en un estadio que ha recibido conciertos de música rock y eventos deportivos, el obispo Soto retó a los adolescentes — quienes estaban sentados absortos y silenciosos — a no permitir que la conectividad de la nueva tecnología los apartara de Dios.

Su homilía durante la Misa en el Centro Sprint, celebrada por el obispo Robert W. Finn de Kansas City-St. Joseph, fue vinculada por televisión en circuito cerrado con una segunda Misa al otro lado del centro de la ciudad, en el Centro de convenciones H. Roe Bartle, celebrada por el arzobispo Roger L. Schwietz de Anchorage, Alaska, ante una audiencia desbordada, que también numeraba en los millares.

El obispo Soto dijo que la conexión por la cual la gente verdaderamente ansía es una conexión con Cristo.

"Cualquier verdad digna de conocer es fundamentalmente parte de una relación con Jesús", dijo. "La verdad es más persuasiva y atractivamente revelada mediante el nuevo pacto de la caridad, encontrado en el conocimiento y la conexión con el Señor Jesús".

Parroquias realizarán colecta anual — 'COMPARTAN SU CUIDADO' — a favor de religiosas, hermanos y sacerdotes religiosos ancianos

Colecta programada para el 12-13 de diciembre: cambiante composición demográfica de institutos religiosos deja planes de jubilación con fondos insuficientes. La generosidad continua de los fieles es alentadora.

WASHINGTON — La colecta anual a favor del Fondo para la jubilación de religiosos se llevará a cabo en la mayoría de las parroquias a nivel nacional los días 12 y 13 de diciembre. El tema de la colecta es "Compartan su cuidado".

En su vigésimo segundo año, esta colecta es coordinada por la Oficina nacional para la jubilación de religiosos (NRRO, por sus siglas en inglés), con sede en Washington, y beneficia a miles de religiosos y religiosas cuyas comunidades carecen de adecuado financiamiento para la jubilación de sus miembros.

"Esta colecta ha sido tradicionalmente la campaña más exitosa en la historia de la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos, la cual es un testimonio de la gratitud de muchos por los servicios que han recibido de las órdenes religiosas", dice la Hermana Janice Bader, de las Hermanas de la preciosísima sangre, de O'Fallon, Missouri, y directora ejecutiva de la NRRO.

"Me siento continuamente alentada por la abrumadora generosidad de los católicos hacia este fondo cada año", declaró la Hermana Bader. "Incluso en estos tiempos de dificultades financieras, los católicos en toda la nación encuentran formas de devolver su gratitud a los religiosos y religiosas que tanto se sacrificaron por nuestra Iglesia y nuestro mundo", comentó.

La colecta de 2008 recaudó 28.2 millones de dólares. Desde 1988, los católicos han donado cerca de 589 millones de dólares, en respuesta a esta convocatoria anual. Aproximadamente 95 por ciento

de estos donativos se distribuyen casi inmediatamente para apoyar el cuidado de religiosos y religiosas ancianos.

Por ejemplo, la colecta de 2008 permitió a la NRRO distribuir más de 23 millones de dólares a 483 institutos religiosos. Estos fondos contribuyeron al cuidado del día a día de religiosos ancianos y ayudaron a los institutos religiosos a implementar estrategias a largo plazo para su jubilación. La NRRO también distribuyó cerca de 3 millones de dólares en asistencia financiera específica, dirigida a proyectos de autoayuda, como instalaciones de salud colaborativas, emprendidas por institutos religiosos.

La crisis de los fondos de pensión para religiosos se desarrolló a medida que cambiaba la composición demográfica de los institutos religiosos, pues actualmente hay más miembros de mayor edad que jóvenes. El problema se agrava con los elevados costos de los servicios de salud, los cuales se han disparado. Hoy día, en los Estados Unidos, hay más de 35,000 religiosos y religiosas con edades por encima de 70 años, de los cuales más de 5,500 requieren cuidados especializados.

Históricamente, los religiosos y religiosas de edad avanzada trabajaron durante años por salarios muy bajos, que fueron reinvertidos en sus ministerios, como escuelas y agencias de servicios sociales. En el pasado, cuando había suficientes miembros jóvenes que se ocupaban de cuidar a los mayores, la jubilación no era una prioridad.

Se espera que en los próximos 10 a 15 años, el número de religiosos con edades entre 25 y 74 años decline de manera pronunciada, y que el ingreso de los institutos religiosos decaiga precipitadamente.

Para más información, visite www.retiredreligious.org.

La Diócesis Católica de Fort Worth presenta el...

Primer Congreso Católico de Hombres

"Jesús Sanando El Corazón del Hombre"

16 de Enero 2010

de 8:00 am a 6:00 pm

Conferencistas

Fr. Valdemar Gonzáles de México
Fr. Angel Infante de Fort Worth, TX
José García del Comité Diocesano

Costo: \$10.00 por persona

"El mismo, subiendo a la cruz, cargó con nuestros pecados para que, muertos a nuestros pecados, empecemos una vida santa. Y ^por sus llagas fueron ustedes sanados^"

1 Pedro 24

Más Información

Carlos Espinoza (817) 807-6762
Pedro Santa Cruz (682) 229-7188
Reynaldo Herrera (817) 437-7918
Andrés Aranda (817) 560-2452 Ext. 258

Lugar: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe
4100 Blue Mound Rd.
Fort Worth, Tx 76106



Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

jllocke@fwdioc.org

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

National

Web site offers resources for celebrating Advent, Christmas seasons

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Suggestions for daily prayer, reading, reflection, and action throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons and other resources are part of a new Web site created by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The site, www.usccb.org/advent, features interactive online calendars with a menu of resources for each day of Advent, which began Nov. 29, and the Christmas season, which ends

Jan. 10 with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Featured throughout the calendars are video clips of USCCB members and staff discussing their favorite Old Testament stories, passages, and characters.

The site includes Scripture resources focusing on the Old Testament; recommendations on holiday-themed movies from the USCCB's Office for Film & Broadcasting; selections from the USCCB publication *Catholic*

Household Blessings & Prayers; and suggestions for remembering the needs of immigrants and the poor throughout Advent and Christmas.

Also available are printable calendars in English and Spanish with ideas for daily family activities to mark the two seasons.

The U.S. bishops' Department of Communications created the site with funding from the Catholic Communication Campaign.



Two lit candles in the Advent wreath Nov. 29 at St. John Vianney Church in Prince Frederick, Maryland., mark the second Sunday of Advent. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

Ecumenical pledge to stand together for principles in public square gains support

FROM PAGE 1

euthanasia, or any other anti-life act; nor will we bend to any rule purporting to force us to bless immoral sexual partnerships, treat them as marriages or the equivalent, or refrain from proclaiming the truth, as we know it, about morality and immorality and marriage and the family."

When asked by a reporter about the issue of civil disobedience, Archbishop Wuerl said: "We hope it does not come to that."

Recent news reports have claimed that the Archdiocese of Washington and its social service arm, Catholic Charities, are threatening to stop providing social services if the District of Columbia City Council's proposed same-sex marriage bill pass.

The archdiocese said it will continue its outreach services, but its work would be significantly limited as the bill offers little protection for religious beliefs and

would require Catholic Charities to recognize and promote same-sex marriage in employment policies, and adoption and foster-care policies.

Catholic Charities' homeless shelter, counseling, and adoption programs are funded with \$20 million in government contracts and about \$10 million in funds from the archdiocese.

The Catholic Church also has been vocal in supporting health care reform that does not include coverage of abortion.

When asked by a reporter if it would be a sin for a Catholic legislator to vote for health care coverage that included abortion, Cardinal Rigali emphasized the desperate need for health care reform and simply stated that "abortion was out of the question."

The current health care debate in Congress, and local discussion about same-sex marriage laws, were not as pronounced last sum-

mer when the group of religious leaders first met in New York to draft this statement. Some of the signers noted that although the document could have been written years ago or even years from now, it has particular significance right now.

"We see an increase in the threat to human life," said George, noting that the current administration and Congress have supported abortion measures and also embryonic stem-cell research, an action which he said "ups the ante very much so."

On life issues, the declaration urges "all elected officials in our country, elected and appointed, to protect and serve every member of our society, including the most marginalized, voiceless, and vulnerable among us."

In its defense of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, it notes a progressive erosion of the culture of marriage due

to infidelity, high divorce rates, and out-of-wedlock births.

The document states that the "impulse to redefine marriage in order to recognize same-sex and multiple-partner relationships is a symptom, rather than the cause, of the erosion of the marriage culture" and it further adds that "no one has a civil right to have a nonmarital relationship treated as a marriage."

On the issue of religious liberty, the document highlights weakened or eliminated conscience clauses that force "pro-life institutions (including religiously affiliated hospitals and clinics), and pro-life physicians, surgeons, nurses, and other health care professionals, to refer for abortions and, in certain cases, even to perform or participate in abortions."

It also notes the use of "anti-discrimination statutes to force religious institutions, businesses, and service providers of various sorts to comply with activities they judge to be deeply immoral or go out of business."

The document's signers urged the public to sign the online ver-

sion of the document at <http://manhattandeclaration.org>. As of Dec. 4, the document had more than 250,000 signers, according to the Web site's counter.

One of the initial signers, Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis, one of 14 Catholic bishops and archbishops among the original signers, described the document as an attempt to "light a fire."

"Hopefully that fire will catch on and touch the troops in the rank and file," he told *The Catholic Spirit*, the archdiocesan newspaper, adding that parishes should take up the issues raised in the document.

"The church, by her very nature, is not a political animal," the archbishop added, "but the church has to continue to teach and to educate people in these very essential issues."

Editor's Note: To view the Manhattan Declaration in its entirety and the list of initial signers, go to [HTTP://manhattanproject.org](http://manhattanproject.org) or simply enter *Manhattanproject.org* in your browser.

Bishops find Senate health care bill falls short in many areas

FROM PAGE 1

Centre, New York and John C. Wester of Salt Lake City. "If that fails, the current legislation should be opposed."

They head the USCCB committees on Pro-Life Activities, on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and on Migration, respectively.

In addition to their three-page letter, the three leaders sent each senator a copy of a four-page fact sheet designed to refute "a number of misunderstandings and false claims" about the House-passed Stupak amendment, which they called "a modest and reasonable measure."

The amendment reflects "existing federal abortion funding policies in the context of health care reform," the fact sheet says. "Under this policy, anyone who actually wants abortion coverage can buy it with their own money; the government does not use

taxpayer funds for abortions; and no one who opposes abortion is forced through their health premiums to pay for other people's abortions."

In their letter, the committee chairmen said the Senate bill as currently written "does not live up to President (Barack) Obama's commitment of barring the use of federal dollars for abortion and maintaining current conscience laws."

"The bill provides federal funding for plans that cover abortion and creates an unprecedented mandatory 'abortion surcharge' in such plans that will require pro-life purchasers to pay directly and explicitly for other people's abortions," they said.

In addition, "the bill seriously weakens the current nondiscrimination policy protecting providers who decline involvement in abortions, providing stronger protection for facilities that

perform and promote abortion than for those which do not," the USCCB letter said.

The bishops also urged changes in other parts of the Senate legislation.

"We support the inclusion of all immigrants, regardless of status, in the insurance exchange... (and) the removal of the five-year ban on legal immigrants accessing federal health benefit programs," they said.

To bar undocumented immigrants from purchasing health insurance with their own money "would harm not only immigrants and their families, but also the general public health," the letter said. And to penalize legal immigrants would be unfair in light of the praise for them "in past immigration debates for their many contributions and for playing by the rules," it added.

The Senate bill also would leave more than 24 million people

without health insurance, the bishops said, urging the expansion of Medicaid eligibility for people living at 133 percent of the federal poverty level or less.

The federal poverty level for a family of four in 2009 was \$22,050; at the 133 percent level, families of four making up to \$29,327 would be eligible for Medicaid.

The letter also recommended changes to help keep out-of-pocket health care costs down for low-income families.

The bishops cited several aspects of the Senate bill that they support and urged that they be retained.

"Reforms that will strengthen families and protect low-income and vulnerable people — such as eliminating denial of coverage based on pre-existing conditions including pregnancy; eliminating lifetime caps; offering long-term disability services; and extending dependent coverage of uninsured

young adults — are significant steps toward genuine health care reform," the letter said.

The USCCB representatives said choices made in the health reform debate "are not just political, technical or economic, but also moral decisions" and that the questions they raise "are not marginal issues or special-interest concerns."

"They are the questions at the heart of the health care debate: Whose lives and health are to be protected and whose are not? Will the federal government, for the first time in decades, require people to pay for other people's abortions? Will immigrants be worse off as a result of health care reform?" they said. "This legislation is about life and death, who can take their children to the doctor and who cannot, who can afford decent health care coverage and who are left to fend for themselves."

Diocesan

Knights...

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pone the foreclosure by several months and negotiated with the bank to reduce her payments. But first, she had to show proof of insurance, which she didn't have. When her agent did a walk-through of the house, she was told the company wouldn't insure the house unless the roof was replaced. According to Anderson, estimates for a new roof ranged from \$7,000 to \$10,000.

Anderson knew some of his fellow Knights were in construction. "So I approached them and said, 'Listen, this is what's going on with this lady, is there any way we can help her?'"

The Knights responded by dedicating the proceeds from their annual golf tournament to helping Virginia. The council raised \$2,600 from the tournament, plus an additional \$1,000



Knights of Columbus Council 8493 from Holy Cross Parish helped to put a new roof on Virginia Fraser's home. Fraser, a widow who is legally blind, she cares for her 12-year-old granddaughter. Fraser faced losing her home, but Richard Anderson, a local lawyer and Knight helped her save it. The Knights' efforts allowed her to get home insurance.

the council earmarked earlier to buy supplies for the roof and other projects for Virginia's house.

On Saturday, Nov. 14, at 7 a.m. Deacon Tomas Baca blessed the project as members of Knights of Columbus Council 8493, and Holy Cross's ladies club and youth group, along

with other parishioners from Holy Cross, arrived to replace the roof. Allied Waste donated a Roll-Off Dumpster to make the clean-up process easier.

The group worked until 5 p.m., and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, with the men working on the roof and the women and youth cleaning the yard. As they removed shingles, they discovered part of the decking also needed to be replaced.

"We ended up replacing 16 sheets of plywood," said Grand Knight John Nowicki. "We finished at 2 o'clock Sunday ... the storms came in, and it was

nice to be sitting at home knowing the house was safe."

Other parts of Virginia's house are still in need of repair, partly due to previous water damage caused by her leaking roof, but the Knights plan to continue helping her.

"They kind of adopted her and took care of her," Fr. Holmberg said. "It was great: they banded together and held a golf tournament for the roof and other things that needed to happen. It's a good community service project for the Knights that will continue after they're done with this project."



Calvin Wolf (left), one of the Holy Cross youth group's leaders, and Jacob Anderson (right, in red) helped dump old shingles and roofing materials. A handful of youth group members showed up to help Knights put a new roof on Virginia Fraser's home.

RIGHT: Michael Sommerfeld takes off old shingles with the help of a shovel.



Virginia is now receiving \$800 from her husband's pension, and will start making payments in January.

"My roof was leaking everywhere. The community helped me get my roof. I'm very grateful for that," Virginia said. "I have my mortgage and insurance. Things are looking better. I just want to thank the people that helped me."



Jim Kinser (left) and Michael Sommerfeld (right) remove the old shingles on Saturday morning.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11

I imagined myself introducing the pope to my family. "These are my children, your eminence. This one played soccer, this one loves to draw, this one can make movies..." Pope Benedict might ask names and ages, significant questions, and — (what is the German word for schmooze?) — we would have a happy visit.

Immediately I asked myself how different was the thought of having that chat, or sending a card, not to the supreme pontiff on earth, but straight to our holy Father in heaven? (What is the word for schmoozing with the Lord Himself?)

God would have unlimited time to tear open our clumsily-constructed greeting cards; for personal meetings he would be unhampered by time and energy restrictions; there would be no scheduling difficulties, no security, no protocol and of course, no one else in his infinite mind would be as important to Him as we would be at that very moment.

That's the important part,

and it appealed to the child in me: No one would be nearly as important as we would be right then, to Him.

This year for Advent I have been using The Little Blue Book, a gift from my parish. A pocket-sized paperback of readings and reflections for 26 days of Advent and 17 days of the Christmas season, it is based on six-minute reflections on the infancy narrative of Luke. In its simplicity, it is exactly what I need in my life today.

The Little Blue Book lacks sophistication. It isn't cerebral or highbrow in presentation, yet it is insightful, with a depth of wisdom we require even when we don't know it's missing.

It is the book's simplicity that communicates with us as children, causes us to think honestly about our lives, and work on them in small, manageable doses.

The first day of Lent it spoke of Elizabeth, her barrenness, and the barren-like failures we endure in our lives. "God does things through us that we cannot do or even measure," the little book's lesson stated, simply.

The next day it spoke of

the angel who appeared to Elizabeth's husband Zechariah, telling him the Lord had heard his prayer to have a child. "Do not be afraid.... You will have joy and gladness," the angel said. The Little Blue Book summarized the event succinctly: "Sometimes we're afraid to pray for things that seem unrealistic."

So far, during Advent, I have been reminded my life is important, that God had something particular in mind when he created me. I also have been told not to be afraid, but to be open for God to do his work through me.

All these came from the Little Blue Book.

During Advent, the liturgical

season of preparation, we take on activities that in some ways oppose each other. In an intense period of prayer and introspection, we end up struggling to schedule the prayer, and setting our introspection aside until we can escape the biggest crowds most of us will see all year. It's a quagmire.

But somehow, today when I read about sending Christmas cards to the pope, I received a combined self-searching yet playful moment. I re-experienced ongoing respect for the vicar of Christ on earth and enjoyed the warmth of simple childlike love for my Lord in Heaven.

And I got to laugh in enjoyment of this season, which,

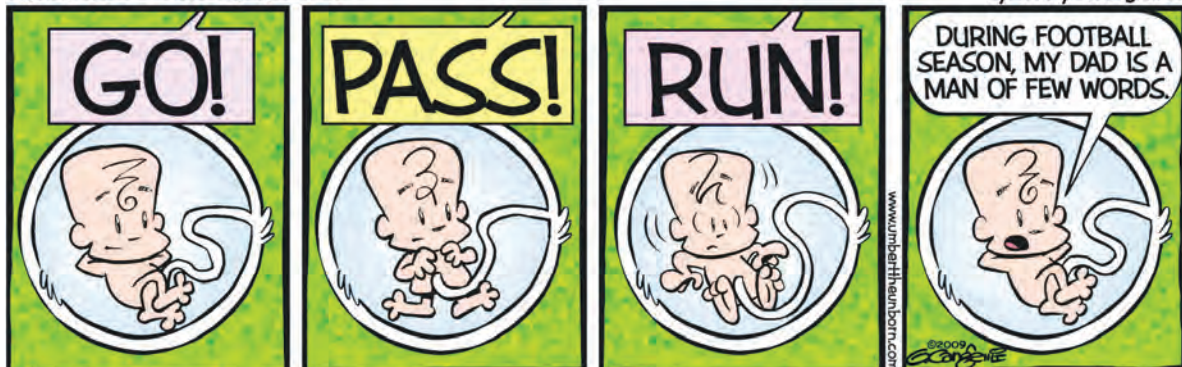
along with my Little Blue Book, will guide me directly to the solemn moment commemorating Jesus's birth.

This year, perhaps it was God who was sending Christmas cards.



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 for the second time in two years at the Catholic Media Convention in Anaheim. In 2005, Kathy's column was recognized with the first place award in the same category.

Umbert the Unborn



Calendar

'CURSILLO OF CURSILLOS'

The Fort Worth Cursillo Community will host a "Cursillo of Cursillos" Dec. 10-13. Cursillo of Cursillos, a three-day weekend for all Cursillistas will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday evening and end Sunday afternoon. All attendees will be cloistered for the weekend. The retreat material, which was originally in Spanish, has recently been translated into English. This weekend will be the second Cursillo of Cursillos in the United States to be held in English. The weekend consists of three days of talks and meditations that are spiritually challenging, enlightening, and enriching to Cursillistas who desire to grow and be renewed in their understanding of and commitment to the Cursillo Movement. The purpose is to become stronger leaders in the Cursillo Movement, both as individuals and as a community. Space is limited, so those planning to attend should make arrangements as soon as possible. The application can be downloaded at www.fortworthcursillo.org. For more information, call Mary Jean Nagy at (817) 226-1110, or e-mail her at boonagy@yahoo.com.

DEAF MINISTRY

Celebrate the season of Advent by preparing for Christ at the Deaf Community Advent Reconciliation Service to be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Drive, North Richland Hills. Father Ken Robinson will be the celebrant and will be available to hear confessions in American Sign Language English or Spanish. Participants are asked to bring a Bible or rosary to use while waiting for confession. For more information, contact Mary Cinatl, director of Deaf Ministry, at mcinatl@fwdioc.org.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

The Couple to Couple League offers classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning for married and engaged couples. Since the course consists of three classes at monthly intervals, engaged couples are encouraged to attend a course beginning at least four months before their wedding. To register for a course starting Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills, contact Andrew and Samantha Mudd at (817) 284-5117. To register for a supplemental postpartum class (for those couples who have previously attended a CCL course) on Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church, 1501 9th St., Wichita Falls, contact Jacob and Lauren Morath at (940) 544-2515. Visit www.cclfdw.org for more class dates and information.

CHRISTIAN UNITY PRAYER

Holy Family Church and the Tarrant Area Community of Churches will celebrate the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" with dinner, prayer, and song Thursday, Jan. 21, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The celebration will be held at Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in Fort Worth. For more information, contact the parish office at (817) 737-6768.

CALIX SUPPORT GROUP

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

ST. AUGUSTINE GROUP

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

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

RESPECT LIFE MASS

All are invited to participate in the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth. The Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann, Saturday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. The diocesan liturgy, held each January, will mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. A candlelight procession will be held in remembrance of the millions of deaths that have occurred as a result of abortion. For more information, call the Chanacee Ruth Killgore at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.

RACHEL'S VINEYARD RETREAT

Rachel Ministries will hold a weekend retreat Jan. 22-24 for healing following an abortion. This program helps those who struggle with grief, guilt, and pain following an abortion to find hope and healing. The retreats are open to all who feel the pain of post-abortion trauma. Come and experience the mercy, forgiveness and healing love of God on a Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreat. For more information or registration, call the Rachel Ministries confidential help line at (817) 923-4757 or e-mail forgiven@racheltx.org.

UNBORN BABY MEMORIAL

St. Andrew Adult Faith Formation and Outreach Ministries will offer a Memorial Service for Unborn Babies Friday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. at St. Andrew Church. All families who have lost a child due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion, are invited to attend this memorial service. A Naming Ceremony will take place prior to the service in the chapel at 6:30 p.m. Those wishing to take place in the Naming Ceremony are asked to indicate their intention when making a reservation. A reception will follow in the Pastoral Center. To make a reservation or for more information, contact Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383. Childcare will be provided with reservations made at least 48 hours in advance. For childcare reservations, call (817) 924-6581. The cost for childcare is \$5 per child. St. Andrew Parish is located at 3717 Stadium Dr., Fort Worth.

RESPECT LIFE HOLY HOUR

The Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth sponsors a Holy Hour from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral on the third Monday of each month. The hour begins with a rosary and is followed by Eucharistic Adoration. All are invited to come and pray for an end to abortion and all offenses to the sanctity and dignity of human life. For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, director of Respect Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257

GABRIEL PROJECT

Gabriel Project is a national and diocesan, parish-based ministry reaching out to women experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Gabriel Project volunteers, Gabriel Angels, are those trained to help women in their time of need, proclaiming the Angel Gabriel's message of good news that God is with them. Become a trained Angel by attending training two Saturdays in a row and an Angel Commissioning Mass at St. Michael Church, 3713 Harwood Rd, Bedford. The first training will be held Jan. 30 and the second will be held Feb. 6. The Commissioning Mass will be celebrated at the end of the second day. For more information, contact Mary Stroupe at (940) 464-3224.

MEN'S / WOMEN'S DISCERNMENT

The Vocations office sponsors a Men's Monthly Discernment the second Monday of each month for single men ages 16 to 50 and a Women's Monthly Discernment the third Monday of each month for single women ages 16 to 50. The groups meet at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., to pray together, share their vocational call, listen to God, break open the Word, and to share a meal together. For more information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of Vocations at (817) 560-3300 ext.110 or kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org.

DISCERNMENT AT OLV

Single women, ages 18 to 45 are invited to come for an evening of prayer, supper, and sharing, hosted by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, the first Friday of each month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Victory Center, 909 W. Shaw St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Sister Yolanda Cruz, SSMN, at (817) 923-3091 or sycruz@sbcglobal.net.

NTC SUBMISSION DEADLINE

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. 18 issue must be received by noon on Dec. 9. Items for the Jan. 15 issue must be received by noon on Jan. 6. Send information to jrusseau@fwdioc.org.

COURAGE SUPPORT GROUP

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

MINISTRY FOR GAYS, LESBIANS

The regular monthly meeting of The Fort Worth Diocesan Ministry With Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities, and Their Families will not be held in December due to the Christmas holidays. All who are interested are invited to attend a vesper service at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Catholic Renewal Center Chapel, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. A pot-luck dinner will follow. Meat will be provided. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383, Dorene Rose at (817) 329-7370, or Sister Dorothy Eggering, SSND, at (817) 283-8601.

MOUNT CARMEL CENTER

Mount Carmel Center, 4600 W. Davis St., Dallas, will offer a two-part series entitled "*Dei Verbum*: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation," presented by Father Stephen Sánchez, OCD. Part one of the conference, to be offered Jan. 16, will examine the theology of revelation as presented in the first half of the Vatican Council's document (Chapters 1-3). Part two of the conference, to be offered Jan. 23, will examine the theology of revelation in the second half of the Vatican Council's document (Chapters 3-6). Both sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. Participants may bring a lunch and stay for personal prayer following the presentations. Registration deadline for part one is Jan. 9 and the deadline for part two is Jan. 16. Suggested minimum donation for each conference is \$25. For more information, contact the center at (214) 331-6224 or visit the Web site at www.mountcarmelcenter.org.

ADVENT PERFORMANCE

The Offering of Song: An Advent Tradition will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, at 3 p.m. at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, 509 W. Magnolia Ave., Fort Worth. The St. Mary of the Assumption choir will perform the Lessons and Carols for Advent Sunday and all are cordially invited to join in the music and Scripture. Promotion material states that "The Lessons and Carols service has ancient roots, dating back to the medieval period in England. It began with the common peoples' desire to sing carols to Baby Jesus. The authorities did not consider their music suitable for use in the Church. Therefore, the people would gather outside on the porch of their parish churches to sing the carols. The current form of Lessons and Carols dates back to the early 19th century in England where, during the reign of Queen Victoria, there was a re-discovery of the nation's medieval roots. Since then, the service of Lessons and Carols has grown to have a wide following and has been translated into many languages." This offering of Lessons and Carols is part of the Centennial Music Series at St. Mary of the Assumption Parish. For more information, contact the parish office at (817) 923-1911.

CARDINAL NEWMAN INSTITUTE

The Cardinal Newman Institute will begin a 10-week course on "The Theology of the Old Testament" Jan. 9. The study will concentrate on the meaning of significant passages, events, and terms as well as God's relationship with the primary biblical characters in salvation history. It will also demonstrate how the Old Testament prefigures and establishes the foundation for the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church. Although this course is especially appropriate for persons involved in Bible Study groups, all will find this course enriching for a deeper understanding of the Old Testament as well as its relevance today. The course, co-taught by Gregory Golden and Christopher Tunnell, will be held at St. Maria Goretti Parish in the Holy Family Life Center, 1200 S. Davis, Arlington, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact the Cardinal Newman Institute at cni.info@yahoo.com or (817) 277-4859.

RESPECT LIFE ART CONTEST

The University Catholic Community at UTA will sponsor a juried art competition entitled "Amor Vitae: Love of Life! in April." Entries will be judged based on artistic quality and the artists' presentation of how they depict the Culture of Life, a respect for all forms of life that opposes abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, human cloning, stem cell research, contraception, and other social concerns. This show is open to high school juniors and seniors and undergraduate college students. Entries should not exceed 24x36 inches in size and should be mounted with wire for hanging. A limit of three pieces per artist is allowed. Entries can be in all mediums and multi-dimensional. There is a \$5 entry fee for each piece submitted. Artists will also be permitted to offer their work for sale with a 25% commission collected by the University Catholic Community to support pro-life initiatives in the Diocese of Fort Worth. There will be one first-place winner with a cash prize of \$100 and one second-place winner with a \$50 cash prize in each category. To receive an application, call the University Catholic Center at (817) 460-1155. For more information continue to check the Web site at www.utacatholics.org or look on Facebook for the "Respect Life Art show" group. Additional information may also be obtained by contacting Stephanie Milligan at the University Catholic Center at smilligan@fwdioc.org or Matt Redden at matthew.redden@mavs.uta.edu.

ST. GEORGE SCHOOL ALUMNI

Organizers for the St. George School reunion are searching for all alumni who have ever attended St. George School. All are invited to the Homecoming scheduled for March 7. In order to get information out, organizers need to update the alumni directory. All alumni are asked to contact the school at (817) 222-1221 or principalsg@charter.net.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS CONCERT

St. Frances Cabrini Parish, 2301 Acton Hwy., Granbury, will host "The Gift of Love Christmas Concert" Sunday, Dec. 20, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The concert will feature a variety of talent including Laura Gastinel, Maria Sirois and "Get This" Quartet, the Chiappe Family, Lorenzo Llanillo, Lisa Campbell, Mickey Parson, Joshlyn Davis, Brianna Mathis, David Fernandez String Quartet, Sam Perez, Mike Sager, Brady Overstreet, Bill Whitecotton, Lynn Roffino, and Terri Dillworth. Refreshments will be served following the concert. Tickets are \$35 per family or \$20 per person and are available following each Mass and at the parish office. All are invited to enjoy the spirit of Christmas with family and loved ones. All proceeds will benefit St. Frances Cabrini Church. For more information, contact the parish office at (817) 326-2131.

SOUTHWEST LITURGICAL

This year the Southwest Liturgical Conference Study Week will explore the theme "Many Cultures: One Church at Prayer" Jan. 13-16 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. The 48th annual conference, hosted by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, will feature over 40 scholars, theologians, priests, religious, and professional pastoral ministers. The keynote address will be delivered by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston. Also delivering addresses to the conference will be Father Ed Foley, Cap.; Dr. Richard McCarron; Sister Catherine Vincie, RSHM; Brother Rufino Zaragoza, OFM; and Father Juan Sosa, president of the Instituto Nacional Hispano de Liturgia. The event will host nearly 50 exhibitors to include Catholic bookstores, Catholic publishers, religious goods suppliers, architects, liturgical consultants and designers, artists and artisans, universities, and retreat centers. Early registration for the conference is \$130 through Dec. 11 and \$150 after Dec. 11. Single day registration is also available. Hotel accommodations are offered through Hilton of the Americas adjoining the conference center. The conference brochure and secure registration is available online at www.swlc.org. Information for exhibitors is also available online. For more information e-mail studyweek@swlc.org.

MUENSTER K OF C CENTENNIAL

The Knights of Columbus Council #1459 from Muenster will celebrate its centennial anniversary Saturday, Jan. 16, with a special Mass at 5 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish, 714 N. Main, Muenster. A banquet will be held following the Mass at 7:30 p.m. at Winstar World Casino Global Event Center. Reservations are requested by Dec. 20. For more information visit the Web site at www.muenstercouncil.org.

SSMN ANNIVERSARY

The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur will be celebrating 137 years of service in 2010. Friends of Sisters of St. Mary of Namur are making plans to celebrate the sister's years of service at events scheduled for Saturday, March 6, at Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth and Saturday, April 24, at Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas. All are invited to join in celebrating with the sisters. To volunteer for this celebration, e-mail ssmn137@gmail.com.

Classified Section

ST. JOSEPH LITANTY

To request a copy of the prayer card and litany to St. Joseph, send \$1 to St. Joseph Litany, PO Box 54642, Hurst, TX 76054.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Topsoil, sand, gravel, washed materials, driveways, concrete, backhoe, and tractor services. Custom mowing lots and acres. Call (817) 732-4083.

Good Newsmaker



James De Piazza, a local judge, takes out old nails from the roof.



Several Knights and parishioners from Holy Cross parish helped to put a new roof on a fellow parishioner's home.



Tyler Langford (right), Jacob Anderson (center, in red) and their youth leader Calvin Wolf (left) helped dump old shingles and roofing material.

Knights of Columbus lead a group of Holy Cross parishioners to repair a widow's roof, offering a

NEIGHBOR'S LOVE

By Tony Gutiérrez
Associate Editor

At 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 15, heavy rains hit The Colony, just two hours after a group of volunteers from Holy Cross Church, led by the Knights of Columbus, finished replacing the roof on Virginia Fraser's house.

"God was looking out for me," Virginia said. "He waited for everyone to finish with the roof before he started the rain."

The repairs were vitally needed for more than just keeping her roof from leaking. They allowed her house to be insured and eligible for a lower mortgage. When Virginia's husband, a Vietnam veteran, died in 2007, Fraser, who is legally blind, fell behind on her house payments and didn't know how'd she care for herself or her handicapped granddaughter. So she turned to the one place she believed could help her: the Church.

Upon hearing of her situation, Father Michael Holmberg, pastor of Holy Cross Church in



Johnny Baigen (center left) and Richard Anderson (center) take a quick breather before going back to work.

The Colony, enlisted members of the Knights of Columbus to use their individual professional expertise and collective manpower to see how they could help Virginia.

"I went to daily Mass, and our priest had given me a message that had Virginia's phone number," said Richard Anderson, an attorney and past grand knight for the local council. He set up a meeting with her in November of last year to discuss her situation.

The problem, Anderson said, was that her husband had tra-

ditionally handled the finances in the family, and when he died, she had to make payments close to \$1,600 per month.

"My husband's pension stopped, and I got behind on my payments because I didn't have any money except my Social Security," Fraser said. "Wells Fargo didn't want to deal with me because I was unemployed, and it took me three months just to deal with the shock of my husband passing away."

Anderson was able to post-

SEE KNIGHTS, P. 22



"God was looking out for me. He waited for everyone to finish with the roof before he started the rain."

— Virginia Fraser
Homeowner



Virginia Fraser was grateful for the Knights' work. Fraser's husband was a veteran of the Vietnam War but passed away in 2007.

MAILING LABEL: Please enclose label with address change or inquiries concerning mail delivery of your paper. Thank you.

Inside... This issue of the NTC

WHY CATHOLIC? small groups learning about the faith through study of the Catechism have caught fire across the diocese. More than 7,000 Catholics are taking part In 55 parishes. **4**

The missionary image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is a full-size photographic replica of the original in Mexico City, and it was here recently. To many it brought a message of hope. **8**

In their three-day fall meeting in November, the U.S. Bishops approved documents on marriage, reproductive technologies, nutrition and hydration, and more. **14-15**