

# North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, center, flanked by Father Gerald Goodrum, left, and Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio, leads the first "Pilgrimage for Life" hosted by the Texas Catholic Conference in Huntsville Nov. 24. The event began with a special Mass, and included a rosary procession from a local abortion referral office to the state's death-row facility about a mile away. See pages 8 and 9 for more details. (CNS photo/Erik Noriega, Texas Catholic Herald)

## Pope begins Advent by asking Christians to be signs of hope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In their prayers and through their actions in Advent, Christians are called to be signs of hope for a world marked by holiness and justice, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Advent is the spiritual season of hope par excellence, when the whole church is called to become hope for itself and for the world," the pope said Nov. 29 as he celebrated vespers on the eve of the first Sunday of Advent.

The pope's homily at the evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica, the morning Mass he celebrated Nov. 30 at Rome's Basilica of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls and his midday Angelus address at the Vatican focused on Advent as a time to remember that Christ became human, died for our sins, rose from the dead, and will return at the end of time.

Advent hope, he said during the evening prayer service, is a recognition of the ongoing need for salvation.

"We do not await the Lord as some beautiful decoration for a

world already saved," he said, but as the only one who can bring to completion the work begun with his incarnation, death, and resurrection.

In his Angelus address, the pope said Advent is a time when Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ by making sure they welcome him fully into their hearts and lives.

But, he said, it also is a time for Christians to set their sights on the end of time and to reform their lives in a way that shows they are ready for the Last Judgment.

"This requires a correct detachment from earthly goods, sincere repentance for one's errors, concrete acts of charity, and, especially, humbly and trustingly placing oneself in the hands of God, our tender and merciful father," the pope said.

Visiting the parish community at the Basilica of St. Lawrence Outside the Walls, the pope said the Gospel of the first Sunday of Advent urges believers to be watchful and stay awake.

## Bishop Vann to celebrate Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 7 p.m. Jan. 16

The Respect Life Ministry of the diocese invites all to join Bishop Kevin W. Vann Friday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. for the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St. in downtown

Fort Worth. The special diocesan liturgy is observed each January to mark the anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. The landmark ruling striking down all state laws

restricting abortion was handed down by the High Court Jan. 22, 1973. A candlelight procession will be held in remembrance of the millions of deaths that have occurred as a result of abortion.

## All are invited to come to St. Patrick Cathedral before dawn for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Friday, Dec. 12

Bishop Vann will be celebrating the first diocesan Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day celebration to be observed at St. Patrick Cathedral rather than the Fort Worth Convention Center, Dec. 12.

The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe honors the Blessed Mother's appearance, in 1531, to St. Juan Diego, a humble Native American at Tepeyac, a hill northwest of what is now Mexico City. In 1999, Pope John Paul II, during his third of four visits to the Guadalupe Basilica, declared December 12th as a Holy Day for all of the Americas.

According to the news release from St. Patrick's, a traditional "Guadalupana" celebration is planned at the Cathedral starting

at 5 a.m. with las Mañanitas (an hour-long serenade) by Mariachi Aguilas de Mexico, followed by a Mariachi Mass at 6 a.m.

The bilingual Mass will be concelebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann and Father Richard Flores, rector. "This joyous and colorful celebration will feature the faith and beauty of the 'pueblo,'" the release continues and will include matachines, with dances of the indigenous. Plan to join us, as together, we pay homage to the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe."

Following Mass the parish invites all "to stop in and enjoy delicious pan dulce," (Mexican sweet bread), hot coffee, and Mexican chocolate at the Religious Formation Building. Pan



This replica of the tilma of St. Juan Diego hangs in the lobby of The Catholic Center, facing the doors of the Chancery.

dulce will be provided courtesy of Esperanza's Café.

The parish announces that the 7 a.m. and 12:05 p.m. Masses will be celebrated at their regularly scheduled times.

Evening festivities will begin at 6 p.m. with a special re-enactment of Juan Diego visiting the Virgin Mary being presented from 6:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

The 7 p.m. Mass honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe will be concelebrated by Fr. Richard Flores and Father José Trinidad García Alonzo, visiting from Guadalajara, Jalisco, for this special occasion, according to information provided by St. Patrick's. "This Mass, with bilingual readings, will be sung in Spanish by 'Sembradores de la

Palabra' (Sowers of the Word) and will feature the traditional song, flower, and dance of the pueblo." Matachines will perform traditional dances in front of the Cathedral before and after the celebration of the Mass.

According to information provided by St. Patrick's, the Cathedral will be open to visitors throughout the day, to pray the rosary, sing, or offer flowers to Our Lady, the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.

Persons wishing to participate in any of these celebrations, are invited to contact Josefina "Josie" Villarreal, at the cathedral office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at (817) 332-4915.

# Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe allows Mary to draw us to her Son, reminds us to welcome immigrants

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

**W**e have just begun a new liturgical year with the recent opening of the season of Advent, a season of hope.

This beginning of a new liturgical year offers us a unique opportunity to embark once again, with new energy, on the path of discipleship in Christ. A discipleship that is expressed through our lives of dedicated faith and service within the many parishes of our Diocese of Fort Worth.

While Advent truly is our time of preparation and joyful expectation for Christmas, the remembrance of Christ's first coming, it is also a time of hopeful anticipation of Christ's triumphal second coming at the end of time. This expectation and anticipation, which is at the center of Advent, is beautifully expressed in the hopeful cry of the early Christians, which is also our prayer today, Maranatha! "Come, Lord Jesus!"

The hope that permeates throughout Advent is exemplified in a special way by the Blessed Virgin Mary who plays a prominent role in Advent. A role that will be reflected on with greater intensity during the second week of Advent because of two key Marian celebrations that fall within that week, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Monday, Dec. 8, Patroness of the United States, a holy day of obligation, and Our Lady of Guadalupe on Friday, Dec. 12, Patroness of the Americas.

It is important to reflect on how God's graciousness to us is manifest in both of these celebrations.

Through the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary we can see how God was preparing Mary for her role as mother of the Savior by assuring that she would be entirely born by God's grace. Paragraph 491 and 492 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church expresses this truth clearly:

*491. Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, "full of grace" through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first*



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

*She is a model for us of the concern and welcome we must have for all immigrants, especially our Catholic brothers and sisters from Mexico and Latin America. May our celebration of Advent be one filled with hope and, following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of joyful expectation in the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.*

*492. The "splendor of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son." The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person "in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" and chose her "in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love."*

God's graciousness to us is evident by the steps He takes to bring our Savior to us. Through the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary God prepares Mary for her role as mother of Jesus and as our spiritual mother also. We are truly blessed to have her as patroness of the United States.

But God's graciousness is also clear by the miraculous apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City to St. Juan Diego, whose memorial is also celebrated this second week of Advent on Tuesday, December 9th.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, in addition to being the Patroness of the Americas, is also the spiritual mother to many other important aspects of the life of the Church in the U.S., and in particular, our Diocese, in these days. Three of them are especially important.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, who on the miraculous image on the tilma of Juan Diego is depicted as an expectant mother, is the spiritual mother and patroness of the unborn. The pro-life efforts will always invoke her for guidance and assistance.

*and pastoral suggestions of that Synod, entrusting to the Mother and Queen of this continent the future of its evangelization.*

All of our catechetical work and teaching and evangelizing efforts in our diocese should look to her to lead us to her Son. At the end of his homily Pope John Paul II mentions, as part of a closing prayer, another spiritual patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Immigrants and Refugees. I would like to conclude my reflection with these words:

*O Mother! ...Accompany the Church which is working in the nations of America, so that she may always preach the Gospel and renew her missionary spirit. Encourage all who devote their lives to the cause of Jesus and the spread of his kingdom. O gentle Lady of Tepeyac, Mother of indigenous peoples and Afro-Americans, for immigrants and refugees, for the young deprived of opportunity, for the old, for those who suffer any kind of poverty or marginalization.*

She is a model for us of the concern and welcome we must have for all immigrants, especially our Catholic brothers and sisters from Mexico and Latin America. May our celebration of Advent be one filled with hope and, following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of joyful expectation in the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

God bless you always.

*Kevin W. Vann*

Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann  
Bishop of Fort Worth

Our Lady of Guadalupe is also the Star of the New Evangelization and it is her guidance that we ask as we continue our evangelization efforts in the Diocese of Fort Worth. In January of 1999, while in Mexico City, Pope John Paul II said in his homily:

*Today in this Basilica of Guadalupe, the Marian heart of America, we thank God for the Special Assembly for America of the Synod of Bishops — a true Upper Room of ecclesial communion and collegial affection among all the Pastors from the north, centre and south of the continent — shared with the Bishop of Rome as a fraternal experience of encounter with the risen Lord, the way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America... I have come here to place at the feet of the mestiza Virgin of Tepeyac, Star of the New World, the Apostolic Exhortation ECCLESIA IN AMERICA, which incorporates the contributions*



17 Years in a Row!

North Texas Catholic



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# Mother Teresa still has lessons to teach world, says priest-author

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — More than 10 years after her death, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta still has lessons to teach the world, according to the priest who co-founded the Missionaries of Charity Fathers with her and has written a new book about her.

Father Joseph Langford, a 57-year-old native of Toledo, Ohio, said he wrote *Mother Teresa's Secret Fire* (Our Sunday Visitor, \$19.95) to try to explain "what made Mother Teresa Mother Teresa" and how she sustained hope, joy and a belief in the possibility of change in the face of inner and external challenges.

"As America faces its own dark night of the soul," he said, Mother Teresa shows Americans and the rest of the world "how to live joyfully, creatively, in a way that leaves a legacy."

In a Nov. 18 interview with Catholic News Service, Father Langford said Mother Teresa asked him to write the book after she revealed to him in 1986 the details of her "call within a call" 40 years earlier.

On a day in 1946 that she came to call "inspiration day," as she was on a train to Darjeeling, India, to begin a retreat, Mother Teresa heard a call from God to give up her safe, relatively comfortable life as a schoolteacher and as a Sister of Loreto to live among the destitute and dying in Calcutta and establish a new religious community.

"She was not special, she was not unique, she had no special support system, and look what she did," the priest said.

Father Langford, ordained a priest of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in 1978, was inspired to join in Mother Teresa's work by another book about her, Malcolm Muggeridge's *Something Beautiful for God*. Together they founded the Missionaries of Charity Fathers in 1984; the order has its international headquarters in Tijuana, Mexico.

"My first meeting with her was mediated by a book," he said. "So I wanted to pay forward the blessing of having been close to her for 30 years."

The Albanian-born nun told Father Langford about her transformational experience as they were preparing a constitution for the priests' branch of the Missionaries of Charity.

"There were things I wanted to include in the constitution about her way of seeing things,

*The revelation that came to Mother Teresa on the train to Darjeeling centers on "the mystery of Jesus' thirst." Although Father Langford said the concept is too complex to summarize in a few words, Mother Teresa once called it "the depths of God's infinite longing to love and be loved."*

of experiencing things," he said. After she told her story, she told the priest, "One day you must tell the others."

The revelation that came to Mother Teresa on the train to Darjeeling centers on "the mystery of Jesus' thirst." Although Father Langford said the concept is too complex to summarize in a few words, Mother Teresa once called it "the depths of God's infinite longing to love and be loved."

"She was convinced that grace was given not only to a few but to everybody — for the poorest of the poor and for the rest of us, as much as we could accept our own poverty," he said.

The book features many of Mother Teresa's own letters and other writings, which Father Langford said show "a tremendous depth of theology that I think is going to surprise people."

He also said many people misunderstood the message contained in a collection of her writings published last year as *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*. In the book, Mother Teresa described her own crises of faith and said she felt for many years that God had abandoned her.

By revealing her own inner struggles, Mother Teresa showed others the way out of darkness, Father Langford said, praising her ability to "make life beautiful where it is ugliest."

"I have seen with my own eyes how her message can touch, heal, and change lives," he said. "My hope is that her message will transform the reader's life, even as it already has for so many others."

*Responding  
to God's Call*

## Prudent judgment with finances allows us to give more to the Lord

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

**O**ur country has been hit with a credit crunch as not seen in 60-plus years. We have on our hands the largest number of foreclosures on houses ever because people cannot keep up with their mortgages. What are we to make of all this?

I do not have ANY answers to these immediate problems as I am not competent to even talk about them. But, I do have a background in mathematics, was once a licensed structural engineer, and I have always balanced my checkbook. So, at the same time I am no dummy when it comes to calculations and personal finances.

That being said, I would like to share two short stories that I hope can help you and your loved ones in the future.

When I graduated from college and landed my first job I was on top of the world. However, I was pouring more money into my old car than it was worth. I went to an auto dealer to buy my first new car — actually I wanted a pickup. I spotted the truck I wanted and quickly sat down with the finance manager of the auto dealership. "Yes! Thank you, Lord, they approved me for the purchase!"

But then a twist happened. The finance manager was a prudent and wise man. He wanted me to think twice about the purchase, saying that I could do myself a favor by purchasing a less expensive vehicle allowing me to have more to put toward

other needs or to begin to build a savings account.

I went home that night, thought about his suggestion, and I returned the next day and purchased a wonderful car from his lot that was much less expensive and more in the price range I could afford.

"Thank you, Lord, for sending me a wise man who saved me thousands of dollars." But this purchase and savings pales in comparison to another type of purchase.

A good friend of mine I met in college got married while he was still in college, working full time and going to school part-time. Originally he and his wife could not afford to purchase a home, so they rented a small apartment.

After he graduated from college, he could have afforded a mortgage on a new house, but as a couple, they decided to wait.

They made the wise decision to wait until they had built up a large savings balance before purchasing a house. Even as their children came, they waited a few more years.

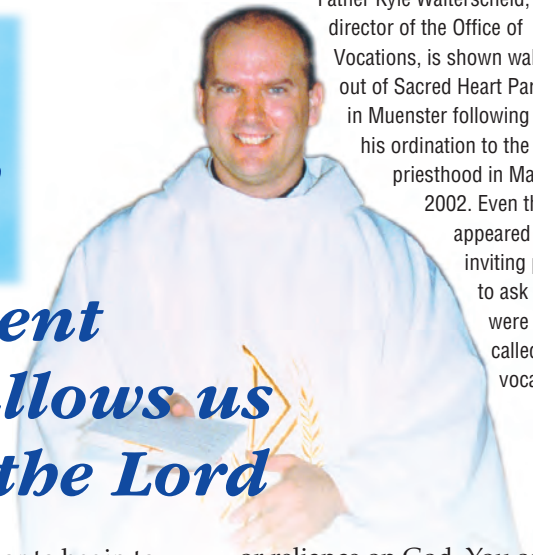
They loved the many small apartments they lived in. They didn't have any upkeep to worry about; all their taxes were included in the rent, and they had a low electric bill. Also, they usually had a nice pool, exercise equipment, and many more amenities.

Because of their prudence and wise decisions as a young couple, they always had plenty to give to charity and to their church while also taking annual vacations and seemingly lived worry-free in regard to their finances.

When they were 35, they had saved enough money to purchase a new home outright. No mortgages needed!

But we live in a culture that is heavily based on immediate gratification rather than on sacrifice, prudence,

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.



or reliance on God. You see, the person who obtains a 30-year mortgage of \$100,000 at 7 percent interest will actually pay more than \$250,000 dollars for their house.

Yes, that is correct!

Or, a \$200,000 mortgage will actually cost more than \$500,000! Why give \$150,000, or \$300,000, respectively, of your hard-earned money away? Why not give that to the Lord!

A wise banker, like the wise car dealership finance manager mentioned above, would much rather loan you a smaller, more stable, mortgage today to help you build up credit to be able to loan you the money for both smaller and larger purchases in the future.

To be honest, I have presented this case to more than 50 couples I have helped as part of their marriage preparation. Few, if any, have listened to these words of wisdom.

But now that the credit crunch has occurred, and seeing the many house foreclosures, I hope that this message will be heard much more clearly and accepted by young adults and newly married couples.

Happiness will never come from the size of house we have or by having a house at all. Rather, all our happiness comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

By living within our means our focus will remain on the ways of the Lord, and this in return will help more to hear their calling in life; single, married, or the religious life.

May we all stop now and listen to our greatest joy, the coming of our Lord and Savior as a little baby boy.

*Father Kyle Walterscheid is the director of Vocations for the Diocese of Fort Worth. He can be reached by e-mail to [kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org](mailto:kwalterscheid@fwdioc.org).*

## Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at 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.

## 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. Patrick and San Mateo pray joint OLG novena

St. Patrick Cathedral and San Mateo Parish are joining to pray a bilingual novena in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The novena is being prayed at San Mateo Parish at 3316 Lovell Ave. in Fort Worth at 6 p.m., Dec. 8, and 7 p.m. Dec. 9-11.

## St. Rita participates in OLG celebrations

St. Rita Church at 5550 E. Lancaster Ave. in Fort Worth invites everyone to participate in the continuing Our Lady of Guadalupe novena in Spanish at 7 p.m., every evening except Thursday, Dec. 11, when it will take place at 9:30 p.m. to pray the rosary and sing the Mañanitas with the matachines. For more information contact Monica Rodelo at st.ritakids@yahoo.com.

## Nine Lessons and Carols to be held Dec. 13

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, a format for a service of Christian worship celebrating the birth of Jesus traditionally followed at Christmas, will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13 at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine under the direction of Rendell James.

The service recounts salvation history from the first moment of human disobedience until the birth of the Messiah. The pattern of the service reflects the season's growing anticipation, both of the first coming of Christ and of that day when the prayer "Thy Kingdom Come" is finally and fully fulfilled.

For more information, call (817) 481-2685.

## Seminarians for Life director to visit St. Patrick

Father Bill Bellrose, CPM, director of Seminarians for Life will speak about "The Pro-Life Movement Around the World" on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009 at St. Patrick Cathedral located at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth. The evening will begin with a Holy Hour and rosary at 7 p.m., followed by Fr. Bellrose's talk.

Seminarians for Life was founded in 1989 by Father Paul Marx, OSB, as an outreach of Human Life International to be the worldwide pro-life educational apostolate for Catholic seminarians. SFLI currently reaches seminaries around the world via the SFLI newsletter and pro-life educational training. SFLI's pro-life seminary apostolate has reached countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and both American continents.

Fr. Bellrose has come to Human Life International from Most Sacred Heart Parish in Eureka, Missouri. Fr. Bellrose is a priest with the Fathers of Mercy, a small religious community that preaches parish missions. No RSVP is required. For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, director of Respect Life for the diocese at (817) 560-

## Introduction to Centering Prayer planned at St. John the Apostle

Tom Uhler of Contemplative Outreach-Fort Worth will explain the practice of "Centering Prayer" in an informal setting and facilitate a 20-minute prayer session from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 13, in the little chapel in the Formation Center at St. John the Apostle Church at 4101 Frawley St. in North Richland Hills.

"Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship," says Father Thomas Keating, a Trappist monk and founder of Contemplative Outreach.

For more information, contact Tom Uhler at (817) 874-2894.

## Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Jan. 22

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

The next regular meeting of the ministry will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

# People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



**HOLY ROSARY SCHOOL, ARLINGTON** – Teachers at Holy Rosary surprised students by dressing in 1950's attire to celebrate "The First Fifty Days of School!" 1950's music and special activities were also featured throughout the day. Assistant principal Melissa Gallagher, third-grade teacher Xavier Rodriguez, and computer teacher Jan Patterson answer questions from students.

## Cathedral to hold Our Lady of Guadalupe Lecture Dec. 11

St. Patrick Cathedral will offer a lecture and slide presentation on Our Lady of Guadalupe at 7 p.m. Dec. 11 at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth. There will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m.

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

## St. Ann to hold Advent Night of Reflection about Angels

Father Mel Bessellieu will present an Advent night of reflection at 7 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 11 at St. Ann Church located at 100 SW Alsbury Blvd. in Burleson about "Angels: God's Heavenly Messengers."

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

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

## NTC deadlines for submission

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

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

## Cardinal Newman Institute to offer 'Liturgy and Sacraments' course in January

The Cardinal Newman Institute of Fort Worth will offer its spring 10-week course on the liturgy and sacraments beginning Saturday, Jan. 3, 2009. The course will be offered from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the St. Maria Goretti Church's Holy Family Life Center, located at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington.

Participants will examine the fundamental liturgies of the Catholic Church, such as the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as the role and nature of the sacraments, their relationship to the plan of salvation and the history of their development.

The Institute "highly recommends" the course for religion teachers, those preparing others for the sacraments, and Catholics wishing to enhance one's participation in the Mass and sacramental life.

Students will examine basic documents of the Church as liturgical directives. Tuition is \$200, with at least half payable at the first class. Full-time employees working in the Church's catechetical, pastoral and educational ministries are eligible to receive a half-tuition reduction.

For information or to pre-register to obtain the reading list and begin to acquire resources, call (817) 277-4859 or e-mail at cni.info@yahoo.com.

## Loreto House to hold discernment retreat

The Loreto House pro-life ministry will hold a discernment retreat from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. followed by Mass on Saturday, Dec. 13, in the Immaculate Conception Church gymnasium, located at 2255 N. Bonnie Brae St. in Denton, for anybody 16 and older interested in Loreto House's mission to "serve the most vulnerable in society."

The Little Sisters of the Poor will lead the retreat. The Little Sisters of the Poor have a special charism for hospitality for the elderly, and will show how they share the "Gospel of Life" with those they serve.

The retreat will be free and a light lunch will be served. Organizers request that "people come with an open heart to see if God is calling them to volunteer in this most important apostolate – life."

The retreat will include information about how the ministry plans to serve the community in its visitation mission, which is serving women in unplanned pregnancies.

The morning portion of the retreat will focus on the "Gospel of Life." The Little Sisters of the Poor will lead the afternoon session and speak about serving the elderly and the dying. Loreto House is focused on the "book ends" of life issues.

For more information, contact Randy Bollig at (214) 850-4073 or Laurie Bollig at (940) 231-0971 or visit [www.loretohouse.org](http://www.loretohouse.org).

## St. Francis Advent Mission scheduled for Dec. 14-16

St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine will hold its Advent Mission, "A Call to 'Reality': Living with Mike Patin," from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 14-16 in the church at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine.

According to a flier for the event, Patin uses "energy, humor and stories to affirm the goodness of God's presence among us while inviting others (and himself) to take the 'next step' in our journey with God."

Patin has spoken in more than 95 dioceses, to groups with attendance ranging from 10 to 10,000. He has addressed youth, adult and family audiences in diocesan, regional, national and international settings.

For more information, contact Jeff Crumly at (817) 481-2685.

## Monthly vocational discernment event to be held Dec. 8

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

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

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

## St. Catherine of Siena Church celebrates Our Lady of Guadalupe

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

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

According to information provided by the parish, a bilingual Mass will be concelebrated Friday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. A Spanish choir, children, and youth of the parish, the Knights of Columbus, and the Matachines de Maria Inmaculada will participate in the celebration of this special Mass in honor of Our Lady.

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

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

## Diocesan

# Ministry Formation Day scheduled for Jan. 10 at Nolan Catholic HS



Father John Robert Skeldon, a locally popular homilist, workshop presenter, and instructor for the Biblical School at the University of Dallas, will offer the keynote presentation at Ministry Formation Day, Saturday, Jan. 10 at Nolan Catholic High School located at 4501 Bridge St. in Fort Worth. Fr. Skeldon, who serves as parochial administrator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Wichita Falls, will speak on the theme of the day, "Encountering the Living Word!"



Fr. John Robert Skeldon

The event will begin with registration and a light breakfast at 8 a.m.; the opening prayer and welcoming remarks will be offered at 9 a.m. Fr. Skeldon will give the keynote presentation in English at 9:30 a.m., and in Spanish at 10:45 a.m. Three breakout sessions, including sessions in Spanish and Vietnamese, will

be offered prior to and following the noon catered lunch.

Breakout sessions will include topics such as "Service Projects with Children," offered by Mary Moody and Susan Overcash of St. John the Apostle School in North Richland Hills; "Essential and Effective Catechesis

for RCIA," led by Lucas Pollice, diocesan director of Adult Formation; "Why a Year of St. Paul?" offered by Scripture scholar Sister St. John Begnaud, SSMN; "Reaching Out to Young Adults," by Marion Cannon, co-coordinator of the Diocesan Young Adult Council; "Encouraging Vocations Among the Next Generation," led by Father Kyle Walterscheid, diocesan director of Vocations; "Theology of the Body for the Family," presented by Diane Schwind, diocesan coordinator of Family Life; "The Sacrament of Marriage and Marriage Nullity Cases," presented by Meg Hogan, director of the diocesan Marriage Tribunal; and "Organizing a Youth Group: the Members' Perspective," to be offered by Diane Donahue, director of youth ministry at St. Vincent de Paul Church in

Arlington and a panel of teen youth group participants.

Ministry Formation Day is sponsored in two different locations within the diocese each year by the diocesan offices of Children's Catechesis, Adult Formation, Hispanic Pastoral Services, Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry, Worship, Catholic Schools, Peace and Justice, Marriage and Family Life, the Marriage Tribunal, Pastoral Planning, Stewardship and Development and Finance.

"All are invited to gather for an enrichment day that includes English, Spanish, and Vietnamese workshop sessions, exhibits, networking opportunities, and an exciting keynote presentation," said Joe Rodriguez, coordinator of the Ministry Formation Day event. "There will be something for everyone."

The early registration cost for the Jan. 10 event is \$25 and includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and materials. The cost at the door without prior registration is \$30. Partial scholarships are available; parishioners may register as individuals or as members of a parish group. For more information about Ministry Formation Day at Nolan, call Joe Rodriguez at (817) 560-3300 ext. 115 or e-mail to [jrodriguez@fwdioc.org](mailto:jrodriguez@fwdioc.org). For a complete listing of the day's schedule and workshop topics, or to obtain a registration form, visit the diocesan Web site at [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org) and click on "Faith Formation."

## Lewisville Knight appointed to state officer position

Michael L. McLaughlin of Knights of Columbus Council #9884, based out of St. Philip the Apostle parish in Lewisville, was selected to be Executive Secretary for the state by Texas State Council officers effective January 1, 2009.

McLaughlin will succeed Joe Ramirez who has served as Executive Secretary since Sep-

tember 1999 and will retire on Dec. 31.

McLaughlin and his wife, Dawnn, have been married for 32 years and have two daughters and three grandchildren. They will relocate from Flower Mound to Austin, the location of the state office of the organization, which has more than 700 local councils and 90,000 members.

McLaughlin joined the Knights of Columbus in 1972 and is also an active member of Pope Paul VI Assembly #2291. He has held several offices in the Lewisville council, including grand knight, deputy grand knight, chancellor, warden, trustee, and membership director, and has been honored twice by the council as Knight of the Year. He has also

served as a district deputy, Fort Worth diocesan deputy, Fort Worth chapter president, State Council charities committeeman, and state warden.

Council #9884 of the Greater Lewisville area has more than 300 members from Lewisville, Flower Mound, Highland Village, Lake Dallas, Argyle, Copper Canyon, and Corinth and was given the

Star Council Award this year.

With 1.8 million members, the Knights of Columbus is the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. It provides members and their families with volunteer opportunities in service to the Catholic Church, the community, families and young people.

## Sisters of Life to visit diocese Dec. 10-12

The Sisters of Life will spend a few days in Texas participating in a variety of programs throughout the diocese Dec. 10-12.

Sisters Mary Gabriel of the St. Frances de Chantal Convent in the Bronx, and Mary Claire of St. Paul the Apostle in Yonkers, will share their experiences with young women in Denton and Arlington, and participate in an Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration in Fort Worth.

The Sisters of Life, who describe themselves as members of a community that is both contemplative and active, are based in New York, and are currently comprised of 47 women religious representing several different states, Canada, and Great Britain. They were founded by New York Cardinal John O'Connor in 1991.

Like all members of religious communities, sisters take the three traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As a member of the Sisters of Life religious order, they are also

consecrated under a fourth vow to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life.

"We work a lot with them in New York with retreats and pro-life work," said Father Michael Kmiotek, CFR. The Franciscan Friars of the Renewal of Texas are sponsoring the sisters' trip.

The sisters will join the Little Sisters of the Poor on a visit to the University of North Texas Catholic Campus Center in Denton to speak to college-age girls from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10. For more information, contact campus minister Janet Wolf at (940) 566-0004.

The sisters will also host a series of "girls social" events Thursday, Dec. 11 at St. Mary the Virgin Church, 1408 N. Davis Dr. in Arlington: a homeschool "Girls Social" from 1 to 2:30 p.m.; an after-school "Girls Ice Cream Social" from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.; and a "High School Girls Social" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. To RSVP for any of these events, contact either Dana Heise at (817) 237-3846 or Mary

Myers at (817) 926-7308.

The main purpose of the various events, according to Fr. Kmiotek, is, "so young women would have an opportunity to meet sisters and hear their stories. Hopefully," he said, "some of the kids will come to realize [their own religious] vocation or at least realize this is a normal part in the life of the Church — to have consecrated women."

Finally, the sisters will join the friars for a children and youth eucharistic adoration in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at San Mateo Church at 3316 Lovell St. in Fort Worth. There will be a children's procession with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a re-enactment of the story of St. Juan Diego, prayers and a rosary, along with exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Confessions will be available and a reception will be held. For more information, contact Eileen Nelson at (817) 926-5399 or Alma Serna at (817) 909-9616.



The Fort Worth Metro Serra Club recognized six altar servers at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Granbury. Certificates of appreciation were presented to the altar servers by the coordinator, Jane Pretz on Sunday, Nov. 9. Pictured in the front row are (left to right) Sarah Pretz, and Kelly Rapp. In the back row are (left to right) Lindsey Mueller, Chelsea Rapp, Bridgette Pretz, Alisha Hall, and coordinator Jane Pretz.



Bishop Kevin Vann blesses Fr. Charles Gorantla (left) and Deacon Jim Novak and installs them as sacramental minister and pastoral administrator, respectively, for St. Joseph Church in Rhineland and Santa Rosa Church in Knox City.



Fr. Gorantla, Bishop Vann, and Deacon Novak are pictured at the reception following the Nov. 15 Mass held at St. Joseph Church in Rhineland. (Photos by Janet Dillard)

## Bishop Vann installs sacramental minister, pastoral administrator for western parishes

Bishop Kevin Vann commissioned Father Charles Gorantla and Deacon Jim Novak in their respective roles as sacramental minister and pastoral administrator of St. Joseph and Santa Rosa Churches in Rhineland and Knox City on Saturday, Nov. 15 at a liturgical celebration and reception held at St. Joseph Parish.

Glenmary Father Leo Schloemer, who served as pastor of the two Catholic communities since 1999, retired from active ministry in July of this year. The parishes are located in Knox County, in the farthest northwest portion of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

Fr. Gorantla, a native of Andhra Pradesh, India, was ordained to the priesthood Dec. 9, 2002. He holds an undergraduate degree in education and graduate degrees in American English literature and in philosophy of English.

Having served as a high school principal, as vice-rector at a minor seminary, and as a theology professor, Fr. Gorantla entered the Diocese of Fort Worth Dec. 1, 2006. He was appointed parochial

vicar of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, where he continues to reside as priest in residence. He was appointed sacramental minister at St. Joseph's and Santa Rosa Churches as of Aug. 1. He also serves as sacramental minister at Sacred Heart Church in Seymour and at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Megargel.

Deacon Novak, a native of Seymour and a longtime rancher and farmer, was ordained in 1995. He has also served as pastoral administrator at his home parish, Sacred Heart Church in Seymour, since August of 2007. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental design and a graduate degree in theology. After several years of military duty, Deacon Novak returned to Seymour in 1982 and worked for B-K Electric Cooperative for 17 years and as city administrator for two years. He and his wife, Rilda, are the parents of three children and have four grandchildren. Deacon Novak also serves as pastoral administrator of St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Megargel.

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

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

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

Applications are now available and must be submitted to

Lucas Pollice, M.T.S. Director of Catechesis at the Catholic Center, 800 W. Loop 820 S., Fort Worth, 76109, and be received by or be postmarked no later than Jan. 19, 2009.

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

The applications will be processed through the Department of Catechesis by the Committee

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

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

## Knights to sponsor End of Life Issues Workshop in Arlington, Jan. 21, 7 to 9 p.m.

Terms such as "medical directives," "health care proxies," and "living wills" may seem confusing, but "help is on the way," according to Jerry Hauck, a member of the Knights of Columbus, St. Jude Council #6269. The Knights will sponsor a workshop on end of life issues Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Knights' Council Hall, 2625 S. Cooper St. in Arlington. Father Tom Kennedy, associate pastor at St. Michael's in Bedford, will lead the workshop. The event is free.

Fr. Kennedy, an experienced hospital chaplain, will offer workshop participants the opportunity to work through the information in San Antonio Archbishop José H. Gómez's brief book, *A Will to Live: Clear Answers on End of Life Issues*. Participants will be provided copies of the book, and copies of the National Catholic Bioethics Center publication, *A Catholic Guide to End-Of-Life Decisions*.

According to Hauck, Fr. Kennedy will lead participants in working with the forms all Catholics should possess in case of a medical emergency. "Every attendee will leave the seminar with a witnessed health proxy [form] and an Advance Medical Directive that takes into account Catholic faith," said Hauck. "As Catholics who respect life, we not only care about the beginnings of life, we care about the end of our lives here on earth. One of the things we can easily prepare for is the eventuality of not being able to make decisions about our own health care. We do not want to end up without documentation that is in accordance with our Catholic teachings."

The "living will" is specifically designed to give medical instructions while a hospital pa-

tient is still able to make critical decisions, Hauck explained. "The proper terminology for Catholics is an Advance Medical Directive. This is a witnessed document that gives general and specific instructions to any care provider about your medical well being. You can add the specific instructions as you desire," said Hauck.

A witnessed health proxy

document, also known as a "durable medical power of attorney," provides a loved one with instructions for care in the event of an emergency. For more information about the workshop, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, diocesan director of the Respect Life office, at (817) 560-2452 ext. 257, or e-mail to [cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org](mailto:cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org).

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## National / International

# Retirement Fund for Religious helps make up shortfall for U.S. religious, assists Sisters of St. Mary of Namur

On Dec. 12, Catholics throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth will have the opportunity to participate in the annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious. The appeal, conducted by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C., has raised more than \$550 million since 1988. In 2007, \$159,527.13 was raised in the Diocese of Fort Worth; \$31,551.19 of this amount was subsequently awarded in an NRRO grant to the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur of the Western Province. Members of the religious order have served in a variety of pastoral and educational ministries in North Texas since 1873.

According to NRRO officials, the Retirement Fund for Religious collection has been the most successful appeal in U.S. Catholic Church history, and generous donations have enabled the NRRO to "seed and stabilize" retirement funds at hundreds of religious institutes across the country. By awarding grants to approximately 500 religious institutes of women and men each year, the NRRO has helped to ensure quality of life and adequate health care for thousands of women and men religious.

Of the 46 Sisters of St. Mary currently residing in North Texas, many are over the age of 80, and only three are younger than the age of 60, say local supporters of the religious congregation. Even



## Retirement Fund for Religious

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[www.retiredreligious.org](http://www.retiredreligious.org)

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Make your check payable to Retirement Fund for Religious.

Give at your local Catholic parish on December 13-14.

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as more sisters require special health care assistance, fewer are able to work, a situation that has become increasingly common in congregations across the United States.

According to statistics provided by the NRRO, only 54 religious communities in the United States — out of the 681 religious

communities providing data in 2007 to the NRRO — are adequately funded for retirement; 181 of these communities are less than 20 percent funded. Campaign materials note that many of the original convents and monasteries where elderly religious still reside lack handicapped access and air conditioning.

# Bishop: Discovery of Copernicus' remains highlights his contributions

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — The bishop who supervised a successful search for the re-

mains of Nicolaus Copernicus, a priest and the father of modern astronomy, said the discovery can represent the reconciliation of disputes between science and religion. "The conflict between interpretations of holy Scripture and empirical observations about the world resulted from a great misunderstanding which we've

gradually moved away from," Auxiliary Bishop Jacek Jezierski of Warmia told Catholic News Service Dec. 1. "Since Copernicus was a key figure in this process, we wanted to honor him by finding his bones and reinterring him in a fitting way, something previous generations couldn't do despite 200 years of searching." Copernicus' remains, discovered at Frombork's 14th-century cathedral in 2005, were identified positively in November with forensic and DNA testing in Poland and Sweden.

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

### Study: Overseas aid needed to keep poor from falling further behind

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Officials from several nongovernmental organizations have urged the United States to continue overseas development assistance despite the current global financial crisis. One official at a Nov. 24 press conference in Washington said relieving hunger in poor nations could be seen as a national security issue. At the press conference, marking the release of the 19th annual hunger report by Bread for the World, speakers noted that 100 million more people went hungry earlier this year because of fuel and food price spikes, coupled with the growing of crops for fuel rather than for food, and an additional 100 million have gone hungry since the financial crisis started in September. Ken Hackett, head of Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency, said concern for the poor and the vulnerable "must be at the foundation of any assistance." Overseas development assistance, as currently constituted, "is not responsive in any way to the needs of the poor," he said.

### More must be done to prevent children's suffering, death, says pope

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — More must be done to remedy the poverty, conflicts and neglect that lead to the suffering or death of millions of children around the world, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope said he hoped the gross imbalances between developed and underdeveloped countries and the rich and poor would be "repaired as soon as possible with resolute action in favor of our smallest brothers and sisters." Many children around the world urgently need help, the pope said Nov. 15 during a private audience with participants of a Vatican-sponsored conference on "The Pastoral Care in the Treatment of Sick Children." Participants in the Nov. 13-15 conference, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry, discussed ways the church and Catholic health care workers could address the medical, pastoral and spiritual needs of sick children and their families.

### Vatican confirms tentative plans for papal visit to Holy Land in 2009

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican has confirmed tentative plans for Pope Benedict XVI to visit the Holy Land in 2009. Israeli sources said the most likely time for the visit would be in May, with stops in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The pope was invited to visit Israel by Israeli President Shimon Peres in 2007. At that time, the pope made it clear he hoped to make the trip, but Vatican diplomats said the timing would depend in large part on efforts to calm the simmering Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In recent months, Israeli and Vatican officials began making more concrete plans for a papal visit. The contacts were first reported Nov. 27 by the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz and were confirmed by the Israeli Embassy to the Holy See. Ha'aretz said the most likely time frame for the trip was the second week in May.

### Placido Domingo says new CD highlights Pope John Paul II's humanity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Famed tenor Placido Domingo said his new album of songs based on Pope John Paul II's poetry illustrates the great humanity and wide interests of the late pontiff. "It's not supposed to be a religious record, but one that illustrates his humanity and his literary and intellectual capacity," Domingo told Vatican Radio Nov. 28. "I reflected on this a long time, and told myself the world needs to know what John Paul II has written," he said. The album, titled "Amore Infinito" ("Infinite Love"), features 12 songs in various languages that were inspired by the poetry Pope John Paul wrote before his election as pope in 1978. The themes include the world of manual labor, young love, war, nature and family relations. "This was an act of faith and at the same time an artistic endeavor," Domingo said at a Vatican press conference. He said the album treated the pope's poetic compositions with great respect.

# Texas pilgrimage promotes effort to defend life at all stages

By Erik Noreiga  
Editor, *Texas Catholic Herald*  
Catholic News Service  
Photos by Chris Kastner

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (CNS) —

**W**ith nothing more to protect them from the elements than the “umbrella of life,” more than 800 Catholics gathered in Huntsville to take part in the first “Pilgrimage of Life” Nov. 24.

Dark skies and showers earlier in the morning didn't dissuade those in attendance from participating in the mile-long rosary procession, which started at an abortion referral center and ended at Texas' death-row facility.

The Texas Catholic Conference hosted the pilgrimage in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston as an effort to promote efforts to defend life from its inception to its natural end. Members from dioceses throughout the state were present, including the Archdiocese of San Antonio and the dioceses of Tyler, Dallas, and Fort Worth.

“The goal is to show solidarity in the Church and that we all believe in the right to life from conception to death, and only God has the right to take that life,” said Deacon Len Sanchez, director of Community and Pastoral services for the Diocese of Fort Worth. “It shows all of us we are not an isolated church. Our church is universal, and it comes from many different people from many areas, especially in the state of Texas.”

With the encouragement and blessing of Bishop Kevin Vann, Deacon Sanchez led approximately 25 pilgrims from the Diocese of Fort Worth, including Director of Family Life Suzanna Ordoñez, Family Life Coordinator Diane Schwind, and Respect Life Director Chanacee Ruth-Killgore.

“I am pleased that a delegation from our diocese attended the pilgrimage in Huntsville,” said Bishop Vann, who added that he was disappointed that his schedule prevented him from attending, as he had originally planned. “I had the date on my calendar and looked forward to taking part in this event. It was a

special opportunity for us to pray with others who support life.”

The one-mile pilgrimage began in front of Planned Parenthood, passed through the Sam Houston State University campus, and ended in front of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Walls Unit, which houses death row, but not the death row inmates themselves.

The day began with a special Mass celebrated at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, which spilled over into the parish hall as well as an overflow tent erected on the parish grounds for the occasion. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston celebrated the Mass with Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio and about 10 priests concelebrating.

“We are not here today to demonstrate. We are here to pray. We are not here to make slogans. We are here to fall to our knees in intercession,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “We are not here today to show off. We are here today in a poverty of spirit.”

Chief among all pro-life efforts are those to protect the unborn, Cardinal DiNardo explained.

“We know that the announcement of the good news that a child is born at the beginning of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is not only a reflection on the birth of Jesus, though it is that,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “It is reflection on the conception and birth of every human being.”

“There is nothing more innocent than innocent human life at its beginnings. Therefore a claim is made on us for the protection of all human life; most especially that most delicate, brilliant and yet frequently violated human life through the act of abortion,” Cardinal DiNardo continued.

The Catholic Church and its members are “absolutely committed” to the eradication of abortion, Cardinal DiNardo said. The way to show that commitment is through prayer, he added.

“(We must) beg the Lord to transform first our hearts and then the hearts of all this culture by prayer and persuasion to respect this human life,” Cardinal DiNardo said.

The Catholic Church also opposes the death penalty, because at the core of the issue is the same basic question as abortion: the dignity of the human person.

“We are also in Huntsville today in another dimension of the pro-life movement which is guilty human life,” Cardinal DiNardo said. “For the last 25 or 30 years the bishops of Texas have quietly tried to

persuade, argue, and explain to the people of this state and beyond that in fact what is exercised as the death penalty is frequently unjust.”

Cardinal DiNardo said that while every effort must be made to be attentive to the victims of violent crimes, we must “find means of justice” that are less vindictive and support the dignity of the human person in these situations, too.

Again, Cardinal DiNardo urged those present and all people of good will to pray.

“None of this is easy, friends. If we thought that we would do it by pure human means, then we would be, as St. Paul says, the most pitiable of all,” Cardinal DiNardo added.

The procession was led by Cardinal DiNardo and more than twenty other priests, religious and deacons, including Deacon Sanchez of the Diocese of Fort Worth. As the pilgrims walked they recited the “Rosary for Life” (the joyful mysteries) and prayed for the life and dignity of all humanity from conception until natural death. Cardinal DiNardo concluded the event with a prayer and words of encouragement to all.

“It was a great inspiration for all of us to be led by Cardinal DiNardo and Bishop Cantú from San Antonio,” Deacon Sanchez said.

The sponsor of the day's events, the Texas Catholic Conference, is the public policy arm of the state's Catholic bishops.

The conference “works on issues across the life spectrum,” explained Jennifer Carr-Allmon, the conference's associate director. “Everything that we are here praying for today is the issues that we deal with on a daily basis in our advocacy efforts at the Capitol (in Austin).”

Carr-Allmon encouraged the pilgrimage participants to become informed about legislative measures directly connected to life issues, as well as other issues of interest to the church. She urged them to be advocates and contact their legislators to make their beliefs known.

In the upcoming legislative session, she said, she expected to see a bill calling for a moratorium on the death penalty and an initiative on a “Choose Life” license plate. The extra fees collected for the plate will promote adoptions and help with infant adoptions.

She said the conference also will fight any measure to promote embryonic stem-cell research and will support efforts to advance adult stem-cell research.

*\*Editor's Note: Respect Life Director Chanacee Ruth-Killgore of the Diocese of Fort Worth contributed to this article.*



**ABOVE:** Diaconate candidate Bruce Corbett (left) of St. Andrew Church in Fort Worth stands outside the Planned Parenthood clinic in Huntsville, where the mile-long rosary procession began.

**BELOW:** Diocesan staff members Suzanna Ordoñez (left) and Hilda Flores conclude the mile-long walk at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Walls Unit.





# Diocesan



**ABOVE:** Deacon Len Sanchez of the Diocese of Fort Worth (left) speaks with Father Dan Gonzalez, pastor of St. Francis of Tejas Church in Crockett in within the Diocese of Tyler.

**BELOW:** Representatives of the Diocese of Fort Worth who participated in the pilgrimage included (left to right) diocesan Respect Life coordinator Chanacee Ruth-Killgore; Bruce Corbett; Mission Council Coordinator Hilda Flores; and Family Life Director Suzanna Ordoñez.



**ABOVE:** Diane Schwind (center), coordinator of Family Life for the Diocese of Fort Worth, is joined on the walk by her daughter Madelyn Schwind (left) and by fellow diocesan staff member Chanacee Ruth-Killgore.

**BELOW:** Cardinal Daniel DiNardo (second from left), walks with Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu of San Antonio (right) in leading the pilgrimage. Father Gerald Goodrum, priest-secretary to the cardinal, is pictured to the right of Cardinal DiNardo.



**ABOVE:** Catholics representing each diocese in Texas participated in the pilgrimage, many rising before dawn to travel to Huntsville by bus or in caravans.

**RIGHT:** Catholics bearing the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe walk through Huntsville. Pilgrims prayed the rosary together as they walked from the abortion referral clinic to the prison.

**BELOW:** Martín Peña (right), director of Social Outreach and Pastoral Care at St. Michael Church in Bedford, walks with Thanh Nguyen, director of youth ministry at Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Arlington.



**RIGHT:** Cardinal DiNardo (center), offers concluding remarks and a prayer of dismissal at the completion of the walk. More than 800 Catholics from various parts of Texas participated in the Mass held at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Huntsville and the following rosary procession.

# Viewpoints

## Immaculate Conception reminds us of Mary's vocation and faith

By Lucas Pollice

**O**n Dec. 8, we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. However, if you ask people, including many Catholics, what the Immaculate Conception is, there is a good chance they will tell you that it is the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary.

In fact, the Immaculate Conception is the conception of Mary. The Immaculate Conception reveals to us that Mary was freed from the stain of original sin at the moment of her conception, and remained free from sin for her entire life.

### WHY WAS MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT ORIGINAL SIN?

It was intrinsic to God's plan of salvation that Mary was created without original sin. In Genesis 3, we see how sin first entered the world through our first parents Adam and Eve. Since Adam and Eve represented all of the human family, when they fell away from God, all of humanity fell away from him. Original sin was then passed on to their children, and to their children's children, all throughout human history. Thus, when we are conceived and come into existence, we are born into a natural separation from God and an inclination toward sin that is called original sin.

However, God's plan was to have his only Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity, assume a human nature so that as both God and man Jesus could accomplish the redemption of the human race. One problem: God is in complete and total opposition to sin. Anything sinful cannot even come into God's presence without being purified. How then would God the Son be able to intimately join Himself with a fallen human nature? This is where God's plan for Mary comes in. God chose her to be conceived without original sin, so that she would be able to give Jesus a pure and sinless human nature.

### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IS SCRIPTURAL

Where do we as Catholics get this teaching on the Immaculate Conception of Mary? First, it is revealed implicitly in Scripture as an important part of God's unfolding plan of salvation.

**G**od chose her to be conceived without original sin, so that she would be able to give Jesus a pure and sinless human nature.

**Genesis 3:15:** Let us first go to the book of Genesis where God is announcing for the first time his plan of salvation that will be accomplished through Christ:

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel (Genesis 3:15).*

It is important that we determine exactly who God is addressing and talking about. God is speaking to the serpent, and he says that the offspring of the woman will strike at his head. Who is the only one who will strike at the head of the serpent (who is Satan)? Jesus is the one who will come and strike at Satan's head and destroy his power. So if the offspring of the woman is Jesus, then the woman must be Mary.

Now God speaks of there being enmity between the serpent and the woman, and the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring. The offspring of Satan is sin, for it is sin that Satan desires to multiply and fill the earth. So therefore, there is enmity between Mary/Jesus and Satan/sin. What exactly does enmity mean? Enmity means total and complete opposition. If two things are in enmity with each other, they have nothing at all to do with one another; there is no cooperation or communion between the two whatsoever. Consequently, both Jesus and Mary are completely opposed to Satan and sin. They would have no cooperation or communion with Satan and sin whatsoever. Mary is given the same absolute and perpetual opposition to Satan and sin as Jesus.

Therefore, it is necessary that Mary would not have a fallen nature, since any participation is original sin or actual sin would destroy the enmity with Satan and sin. Thus, we see in the very first announcement of God's plan of salvation his plan of Mary being totally free from sin, so that Jesus would be able to assume a pure human nature.

**Luke 1:28:** We see an even more explicit reference to the Immaculate Conception of Mary in Luke's Gospel at the Annunciation when the Angel Gabriel appears to Mary to announce God's plan of having her be the Mother of Jesus. The Angel Gabriel's greeting of Mary reveals her immaculate state. His greeting properly translated is, "Hail, you who have been filled with grace." The Greek word *kekaritomene* is a perfect participle "have been filled." Mary has already been filled

with God's grace, for grace has already been infused into her at the moment of her conception.

Also notice that Mary is filled with grace. Anytime we sin, even the smallest sin, we lose at least some of God's grace. That is the nature of sin. Sin is a choice we make that rejects the grace He offers to us, which is his very life and love. If Mary is filled with grace, then she would have been completely free from sin, as any sin, even the tiniest, would have caused her to be deprived of at least some grace.

### THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Not only do we see the Immaculate Conception in Sacred Scripture, but it has also been constantly and clearly taught throughout sacred tradition from the earliest times of the Church:

- **St. Ambrose (d. 379):** Mary is "free from all stain of sin."
- **St. Severus, Bishop of Antioch (d. 538):** "She (Mary) formed part of the human race, and was of the same essence as we, although she was pure from all taint and immaculate ..."
- **St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 638):** "You (Mary) have found the grace which no one has received ... No one has been pre-purified besides you."

These are only a small sample of teachings that clearly show that the Immaculate Conception was a part of the Church's belief from the very beginning.

### POPE PIUS IX INFALLIBLY TEACHES

Finally in 1854, Pope Pius IX infallibly proclaims the Immaculate Conception as a part of divine revelation and a dogma of the Church to be definitively held by all the faithful:

*We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine that holds that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the instant of her conception, was preserved immune from all stain of sin, by a singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was revealed by God and must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.*

### HOW WAS MARY PRESERVED FROM ORIGINAL SIN?

How exactly, then, did God preserve Mary from original sin? Mary needed

Christ to redeem her just as much as we all do. She was redeemed by her Son's death on the cross, just like all of us. But how could Mary have been redeemed by Jesus' death on the cross before Jesus was even born?

It is because God is eternal and transcendent, and therefore, He is not bound by either space or time. Because He is outside of space and time, God sees all of time past, present, and future, right now. It is like looking at a very long train from a helicopter. The engines are creation; the caboose is the end of the world; and we are somewhere in between the two. God is able to operate outside of time. Therefore, he took the graces and merits of Jesus' death on the cross and applied them backwards in time to the moment of Mary's conception. Thus, Mary was redeemed by Christ as we all are, but through a "singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God" she was not only redeemed but also completely preserved from original sin.

### MARY IS OUR MODEL OF FAITH

Even though Mary was preserved from original sin at the moment of her conception, she could have still chosen to sin, because as a human being she had free will. She could have said "no" to the Father at the Annunciation. She could have also said "no" to the Father at the foot of the cross, where she surrendered her Son, and fallen into despair and cursed God.

However, Mary perfectly cooperated and surrendered herself to the great gift of grace that God had given her and lived the most extraordinary Christian life. That is why Mary is the model of faith and the model of the Church. We are all called to cooperate with whatever graces God chooses to give us so that we humbly and lovingly walk whatever path He chooses to give to us.

May the Immaculate Heart of Mary continue to inspire us on our journey of faith, especially during this season of Advent, that we may surrender ourselves fully to God through the "obedience of faith" and become Christ's instruments of hope and love.



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.

# One benchmark of learning: joy

By Mary Regina Morrell

*"The first duty of love  
is to listen."*

—Paul Tillich

Last week I went to visit a long-time friend and rediscovered the joy of young children.

No sooner was I in the door than a cherub-faced toddler grabbed my hand and began to give me a tour of her bedroom. Not to be outdone, her 5-year-old sister grabbed the other hand and dragged me to their playroom. Speaking in chipmunk tones, half-pronounced syllables and Ws instead of Rs, the youngest chattered contentedly and shared her goldfish snacks, while her sister read me poems and stories she had written; many of which adorned the walls.

While she was reciting one of the poems on the kitchen wall her mother drew my attention to her daughter's large printed signature. I laughed out loud when I saw that at the end of her name was a big exclamation mark! I was to discover that she adds one every time she writes her name — RACHAEL!

Wow! I said. Talk about making a statement!

I know who I am and I'm good stuff!

I am happy to be here!

There is important work for me to do and I plan on doing it!

For this young child, the important work is being a special part of her family, helping to take care of her baby sister and showing her the ropes, expressing herself through her art and stories and music (she sings a sweet "You are my sunshine!"), and going to church where she can talk to Jesus. And believe me, she talks!

What strikes me most in this child is the joy she exudes.

I remember thinking she would have been great as one

Speaking in chipmunk tones, half-pronounced syllables and Ws instead of Rs, the youngest chattered contentedly and shared her goldfish snacks, while her sister read me poems and stories she had written; many of which adorned the walls.

of Art Linkletter's kids; you know, the ones who said "the darndest things." Linkletter's radio and TV programs, in which he played straight man to the natural comic in hundreds of children, was a great hit in the late 1950s.

He once shared, in an interview, that he got the idea for children's interviews when he once let his 5-year-old son speak into a microphone at home, asking the child, "What did you do today?"

His son replied, "I went to school for the first time, kindergarten."

His dad asked, "How did you like it?"

The little boy answered, "I ain't going back."

Linkletter queried, "What do you mean you're not going

back? Why don't you want to go back?"

"Well," responded his son, "I can't read. I can't write. And they won't let me talk. I don't know why I should be there."

Wise child, as so many are.

The freedom to share thoughts and express creativity is integral to human growth and happiness. The need for such expression seems to be born with us, a part of our human spirit. But we often learn from an early age, especially in a classroom, that we are there to simply listen, to color within the lines and save the thoughts for another place and time.

Albert Einstein, one of the most influential people in human history, believed that the spirit of learning and creative thought were often lost through rote learning. He wrote, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

Einstein knew that when there is joy, there is learning. If this is so in the challenging realm of physics, it is certainly true in the worlds of Catholic education, catechesis, and family life. After all, joy is a hallmark of our faith.

When joy becomes a benchmark for learning and becoming, then catechetical leaders, whether they are Catholic school principals, catechists, or parents, might take a clue from comedian Joan Rivers who coined the phrase: "Can we talk?"

The experience of sharing faith stories, being allowed to ask questions and discuss ideas within a community of faith can be transformational. But once the talking starts, the next question must be:

"Can we listen?"

Regina Morrell works for RENEW International and is the former associate director of religious education for the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey. As a writer for THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT, diocesan newspaper of Metuchen, her writing earned several awards from the Catholic Press Association. Mary and her husband have six sons and live in Colonia, New Jersey.

Letting someone take control of your Mac is one thing, but when someone wants to mess with your traditional Advent/Christmas décor, maybe it's time to join...

## The Advent Conspiracy



An Advent wreath is depicted in a stained-glass window at Christ the King Church in Commack, New York. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC)

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

Sometimes, for ordinary people like ourselves, someone else takes over our computers.

For clarification, "ordinary people like ourselves" are non-techies. In fact, sometimes we are so far "non" that we are negative techies — not just "non," we are lower than non. Less-than-non-techies. Have I gotten into a double negative area here? I sure hope not because I have no time to confuse myself.

These days, someone else has the power to take over our computers when we have technical difficulties that need diagnosis, treatment, or an immediate cure, depending on how near to a breakdown we have come. And I don't mean computer breakdown, because we already have that. I mean the nervous breakdown that comes as a bonus with each complication added to the original computer problem.

So, technical services — the "help desk" — takes over.

When that happened to me, a short while ago, this is what appeared on my computer monitor: "Peter\* has requested permission to view and control your computer."

(\*not the apostle and saint)

It made me nervous when this happened because, like a woman expecting a housecleaning service, I became anxious about the appearance of my computer desktop. It was messy and full; did I have time to tidy up before Peter, even though he was not an apostle, took control?

My computer was disorderly and redundant because I had not discarded things I should have, and had even re-saved some with new names. I did this just to "make sure" I didn't trash something I might "really need" someday. And, I always assured myself, "I can clean this all up some afternoon when I have nothing else to do."

Ha.

At home I have my mother's old cast iron cookware, my daughters' homecoming mums, and, on a wall, with 30 autographs, the drum skin on which Andrew played snare with the marching band when he was in high school. So yeah, I probably have some extraneous stuff stored on my computer as well.

When I clicked my approval, allowing Not-Saint-Peter to take over my Mac, it was eery. The mouse went lifeless in my right hand; the keyboard rested uselessly inches away, both having become insignificant knickknacks, as I sat and watched my computer come alive by remote.

How strange it was to watch Peter root around my desktop for the tools I was certain he would use, the files I

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# Our Mother of Mercy brings people of different faiths and cultures together to worship Christ in

# Gospelfest

By Michele Baker  
Correspondent  
Photos by Donna Ryckaert

**N**early 200 people filled the sanctuary

of Our Mother of Mercy Church in Fort Worth to the brim Saturday, Nov. 8 for Gospelfest 2008. The celebration, organized by longtime OMM parishioner, Joi Bernard, was an ecumenical prayer, praise, and worship session that set the small building rocking with joyous song.

"It was a great mix of people," said Our Mother of Mercy's pastor, Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD. "All kinds of music representing several distinct cultures."

Whether it happened in popular gospel style with the Church on Rush Creek Choir from Arlington, with the spiritual underpinnings

in the playing of organist evangelist Betty Brooks from Deliverance Temple in Stop Six, or in the tongues of African languages presented by the African Choir from St. Joseph Parish in Arlington, the joyful noise raised the roof and the hands of those assembled.

Illustrating the phrase, "... And a little child shall lead them," the event opened with an interpretive dance by Our Mother of Mercy Catholic School student, Joy Flood, to the song "Here Comes the Sun." This youngster's fluid, confident movements — executed with grace and reverence — set the mood for an extraordinary evening of diverse cultures, ages and faiths coming together with a single purpose: to praise and glorify God.

"This was not the first Gospelfest we've hosted," organizer Joi Bernard said. "We've had at least five of them in the past. We used to have them often, but then we were between pastors for awhile, so we stopped. About nine months ago, though, I went to Fr. LeDoux to ask if we could start again because it's so unifying for us to praise God with other Christians."

That unity took various forms from dramatic moments, like OMM choir's rendering of the spiritual, "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning," enacted in the darkened sanctuary with choir members carrying lanterns, to moments of intense beauty as when Aletheia Temple Church Choir soloist Flower Phan took the

microphone.

And the evening was not without its lighter moments, too, as when Brother Mariano Demma of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal from New York explained his vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as "No bling-bling. No sweet thing. And serve only Christ the King." After the crowd roared with laughter, the bald and bearded friars proceeded to rock out with two dynamic praise songs and finish with a simple chant to the Blessed Mother.

Organizers say the OMM Gospelfest 2008 was so successful, that parishioners want to make it a more regular event. The next Gospelfest is scheduled for 7 p.m. on April 25. One thing is for certain: all will continue to be welcome in this place of worship.

"The diversity of the groups that participated was important to me," said Bernard. "God is not a God of division. I wanted more than just Catholics and Baptists. This was about all people. We're all alike. We're different in size, color, and age but we're all one."



**ABOVE:** Fr. Jerome LeDoux, SVD, pastor of OMM, welcomes participants and an enthusiastic audience of approximately 200 guests to Gospelfest.



**ABOVE:** Larry Martinez, a parishioner of St. Bartholomew Church in Fort Worth, sings at this year's event.



**LEFT:** Dancer Joy Flood, a student at OMM School, opens the evening program with an interpretive dance, set to the music, "Here Comes the Sun."



**ABOVE:** OMM parishioner Frederick Baum brings down the house with his rendition of the gospel song, "Sovereign."



**RIGHT:** Eric Phillips, worship pastor for the Church on Rush Creek, offers a solo at the 2008 Gospelfest.



**ABOVE:** Members of Aletheia Temple Church in Fort Worth join in the lively, ecumenical event at Our Mother of Mercy Church.



**ABOVE:** Holding lanterns and baskets, the OMM Choir performs the spiritual "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning" at the Nov. 8 Gospelfest.

**RIGHT:** Bea Brown of Christ Temple Holy Sanctified Church in Dallas shares her energy and musical talents with the appreciative crowd. Approximately 200 attended Gospelfest 2008.

**BELOW:** Members of the Church on Rush Creek in Arlington, formerly known as Rush Creek Baptist Church, have been regular participants in past Gospelfest events.



**ABOVE:** The Rev. George McKeller (top), along with other members of The Stars of Wonder Gospel Group brought vibrant music and rhythms to the Gospelfest program.

**BELOW:** Brothers Mariano Demma and Patrick Crowley, CFR, engage their listeners through music and personal testimony.



**ABOVE:** Janice Carr sings at the ecumenical event. Carr is a member of the Sunshine Historical Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which is now housed in the original Our Mother Of Mercy Church building, erected on Evans Ave. in Fort Worth in 1929.

**RIGHT:** OMM Gospel Choir members Dorothea Lee and (left) Maria Barks perform a musical skit about slavery.



## Dedicated Catholic Ministry Has Won Many Battles In Haiti's War on Poverty

Seeing the emaciated young Haitian boy sitting listless under a tree — skin and eyes sallow from dehydration — American-born nurse, Bette Gabrian, felt convicted before God.

"Here, an hour-and-a-half from Miami, children are starving," she said. "This can't go on. God is watching. We have to do something."

In addition to severe malnutrition, the five-year-old's back bulged grotesquely due to Potts Disease-tuberculosis of the spine.

"What was happening to this boy happens all too often in rural Haiti," explained Bette Gebrian, the Director of Public Health with the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF), a Catholic medical outreach with a long history of serving the country's rural poor. "His mother came home to the mountains to deliver her baby. She breast-fed for awhile, then she went back to Port-au-Prince because she had to find a job."

The boy's grandmother, whose own energy had waned with age, was not capable of caring for him properly. Although she loved the boy she nick-named "Raisin," the grandmother was unable to recognize the danger he was in, and her poverty kept her from having an adequate supply of nutritious food on hand. As a result, the boy was slowly starving to death.

And, as Bette Gabrian rightly says, situations like this are common in Haiti, where the population is destitute, medical care is inadequate and food is scarce.

Because of this severe poverty, Bette has had to see countless children die from heartbreaking — and totally preventable — maladies. But she has also won many battles, conquering such illnesses through HHF's programs, supported by Cross International Catholic Outreach.

Fortunately for Raisin, Bette happened to visit his rural village with her mobile vaccine

clinic. She recognized his classic symptoms before it was too late.

Responding to the boy's urgent needs, Bette took little Raisin to a nearby HHF facility where caring nuns treated his Potts Disease and anemia, de-wormed him, and lovingly fed him back to health. It took a whole year for the weakened boy to reach the level of health and vitality appropriate for a five-year-old. At that point, he could return home.

"But the important thing about this situation is that the boy wasn't simply brought home and left to fall back into his previous condition. We knew that was a risk, so we assigned a health agent to return to his village and do follow-ups," Bette explained. "That's the point of having resident village health workers, who are local people trained by HHF to provide health care to their own people. They do more than put a Band-Aid on the problem — they become part of a long-term process that improves the quality of life for the people in a meaningful way."

Cross International Catholic Outreach fully supports HHF's strategy, recognizing that the constant presence of a trained health worker greatly augments the care given by doctors who come to the village only for emergencies or for occasional wellness visits. Cross has supported these efforts and would like to find ways to expand and strengthen the outreach.

"Clearly, these resident health workers are essential to maintaining the work that's been accomplished by doctors and nurses. HHF has shown the creativity and commitment that marks most Catholic ministries for the poor. This isn't just a job for them. It's a mission and ministry. It's an expression of their love for God and love for others," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. "This is



precisely the type of ministry we American Catholics should be supporting overseas."

Cavnar added that HHF's method of training local people to better their own circumstances is also right in line with how Cross works. It's a method that is both empowering and extremely cost effective in the long run. And this too makes it a wonderful project for U.S. Catholics to support.

"Ultimately, it doesn't take a huge grant of aid to save lives in rural Haiti," said Cavnar. "Pennies can literally mean the difference between a child receiving a lifesaving antibiotic or losing a limb from a staff infection; an expectant mother getting access to medical care or dying in childbirth; or an infant getting vaccinated or succumbing to measles. It only costs us pennies to help — and therefore not helping can cost lives.

"Like Bette, we should all feel concerned when we see children suffering. We should

all wonder what God thinks as He watches our response," he added. "And as Bette says, something should be done... and it can. All it takes is a commitment to get involved and support dedicated Catholic ministries like HHF, and thereby stand with them in their struggle to help the poor. Then, when God watches... He will have reason to smile."

Readers interested in hearing Bette Gebrian describe HHF's lifesaving work in Haiti can listen to interviews posted at [www.crosscatholic.org/podcast](http://www.crosscatholic.org/podcast).

To make a tax-deductible contribution to Cross International Catholic Outreach and its work with Catholic ministries overseas, either use the enclosed postage-paid brochure or send contributions to Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00528, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

## Cross International Meets Needs of Haiti Hurricane Victims

In less than a month Haiti felt the impact of four major storms. They devastated cities and towns all over the country, claiming at least 600 lives and leaving thousands without homes or food. Within hours of the first storm's impact, Cross International Catholic Outreach sent thousands of dollars in cash grants to Catholic ministries in the country so they could purchase immediate necessities.

After Tropical Storm Hanna blew by Haiti — dropping sheets of rain and wind that caused flash floods and washed out roads — Cross responded by airlifting food and clean water to Gonaives where people called for help from rooftops where they had climbed to escape more than 12 feet of water.

Widespread flooding from Tropical Storm Hanna and later Hurricane Ike has left many areas completely under water. Around 70 percent of the country's crops have been destroyed, causing Haiti's already-high food prices to spike even higher, and places where homes used to stand are now piles of rubble.

In the months ahead Haiti confronts the massive task of rebuilding, as those who have lost their homes and livelihood start from scratch to survive. The latest estimate is that 86,000 people have been seriously affected by the hurricanes, while hundreds of thousands require some level of aid.

"People have been coming to us steadily for help. They need money to bury their



dead. They need food, shelter, clothes, anything — because everything they have is gone," said Gladys Mecklembourg, who operates a Cross-sponsored orphanage and school for poor children in the Montrouis area, near Port-au-Prince.

Working with several Catholic ministries throughout the country, Cross has turned its efforts to aid in building homes and providing for the long-term recovery needs so many face in the wake of the devastating storms.

"We have been working through our



ministry contacts in Haiti to assess the long-term needs of their communities. Cross is committed to helping them rebuild," said Jim Cavnar, Cross president. "With the help of our faithful donors and other compassionate American Catholics, we can help thousands get their lives back."

To make a tax-deductible contribution to Cross International Catholic Outreach and its outreach overseas, use either the enclosed postage-paid brochure or send donations to: Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00528, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.

## Cross International

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# Priest's Timely Rescue of Haitian Orphans "Wouldn't Have Been Possible" Without Help From U.S. Catholics

The men standing in Fr. Marc Boisvert's doorway had terrible news. A nearby orphanage had just collapsed under financial pressure, and sixty-four boys were in urgent need of help. Many of the children had already gone hungry for days, and some were sick and needed medical attention.

No one else was capable of dealing with the problem — could he help?

Having worked with orphans for several years, Fr. Marc could easily imagine what the children were going through as they awaited word of their fate. First there would be shock. Then loss and emptiness, followed by fear.

Ultimately, these children would relive the full, crippling sense of abandonment that overwhelms all orphans.

"When I heard about these kids, my mind raced, and I wondered if I could do anything about it. My own orphanage already housed hundreds of children and we were financially strapped ourselves," Fr. Marc recalled. "I knew I had the heart for the job, but there were so many practical and financial hurdles to overcome. Could I afford to take those children in? And on the other hand — could I afford not to? This is Haiti, I thought. What are their chances if I turn my back on them? They might not survive."

Knowing that some kind of outside help would be necessary to properly feed, shelter and educate the new children, Fr. Marc quickly contacted several large international charities seeking their support. All of them turned him down... except one.

Within hours of hearing from Fr. Marc about the plight of the orphans and his desire to help, Cross International Catholic Outreach made a firm pledge of support and wired all of the funds needed to get the rescue underway. Every one of those children was saved.

## Navy Chaplain Leaves Success, Opportunities to Accept Christ's Call for "A Few Good Men"

While serving in the U.S. Navy, Chaplain Marc Boisvert, a veteran of "Desert Shield/Desert Storm," made a trip to Haiti. He went, in part, to confirm stories he had been told about the plight of the poor living there.

What he saw changed his life forever — not simply because it altered his perspective on poverty or changed his political views, but because it moved him to act.

"What I saw — particularly the condition of the children — demanded my immediate action. I saw life or death situations, and I knew I could help... but only if I got deeply involved," Fr. Marc recalled.

After resigning his commission in the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps, Fr. Marc was honorably discharged as a Lieutenant Commander.

"I sold most of my worldly possessions — all 17 of them — and moved lock, stock and barrel to Haiti. That was on January 1st, 1998," He recalls. Today, Fr. Marc directs one of Haiti's finest Christian orphanages, serving hundreds of children (see story above).

"You don't have to be a brain surgeon to see how devastating poverty is for children here. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere and that is almost a death sentence to the kids here. Poor sanitation, polluted water, no access to decent medical care, no money for school

"The first week involved some adjustments," Fr. Marc explained. "They came in with nothing but the clothes on their backs, no shoes and many were clearly malnourished. They ate ravenously that first night. The next morning at breakfast, one of the kids seemed surprised and wondered if the food he was being served would be his only meal for the day. He wasn't used to eating every day — and certainly never more than once a day."

**"What are their chances if I turn my back on them? They might not survive."**

Fr. Marc Boisvert, Project Espwa

Over the next few weeks, Fr. Marc turned these new "visitors" into family. Meanwhile, Cross International has had to mobilize its programs to get the financial support that was needed.

"It's been a big undertaking," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. "Fr. Marc had to have beds, sheets and towels, clothing, shoes and school supplies, among other things. Funds were also needed to bring in a doctor to examine and treat children that were ill or suffering from malnutrition. Now we are working on supplying food and other day-to-day needs."

For Fr. Marc, it has been a tremendous relief to have so willing a partner help handle the emergency.

"Here in Haiti, a Catholic priest is constantly in the midst of life-or-death situations — people come to him because they're desperate for food or have dying children in need of



medicines or face some other urgent needs," he explained. "When they come to us for help, we want to respond, but we can't unless we have outside resources — food for the hungry, medicines to treat the sick or the other materials needed to get the job done. It's a real blessing to have Cross as a partner in times like those. In fact, without their support, taking in these additional orphans wouldn't have been possible... and these children wouldn't have the peace and hope they enjoy today."

Although the story of the rescued orphans is still unfolding, Cross is committed to providing Fr. Marc with the tools he needs to care for them... and give them new hope. To accomplish this, the ministry hopes to secure support from Catholics in the U.S.

"I'm confident that when Catholics in America hear about this urgent need and about Fr. Marc's goal of rescuing these children, they will want to help. We Catholics value life as a gift from God, and we have always supported our missionaries overseas," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross International Catholic Outreach. "This situation gives us an opportunity to put our beliefs into action. Our involvement is meaningful and it will have a tangible

impact — these children will have hope and a better life because we chose to become involved."

In addition to seeking help from U.S. Catholics for these rescued orphans, Cross is also hoping to gain support for Fr. Marc Boisvert's larger goal — the development of "Project Espwa," a major housing and self-help program for Haiti's neediest orphans. Its goal is to take children off the dangerous streets in Haiti and place them in a safe, rural setting where they can recapture their childhood and take part in educational programs that will help shape a new future.

"Espwa means hope, and that is what this project is all about. It includes safe housing and food — the basic necessities of life — but its staff is ultimately working toward self-sufficiency for the children who will grow up there," Cavnar said. "Their goal to educate the children and teach them skills on the farm is a wonderful plan we should get behind and support. This approach does more than meet the immediate needs of these children. It gives them the gift of a brighter future. It literally gives them espwa — hope."



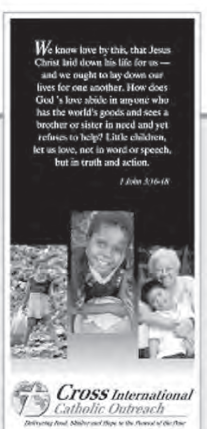
Fr. Marc, while serving in the U.S. Navy

and often no money for food."

"Still, some ask why I do this. In part, it is a response to Christ's words in Matthew 25. Jesus explains that in serving Him, we serve the poor. As a Christian, you can't read that and not take it seriously. You have to do something. You have to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and respond to the needs of the poor."

## How to Help:

Your help is needed for Cross International Catholic Outreach to bring Christ's mercy to the poorest of the poor. Use the enclosed postage-paid brochure to mail your gift or send it to Cross International Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC00528, 490 White Pond Drive, PO Box 63, Akron, OH 44309-0063.





December 14, Third Sunday of Advent.  
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11  
Psalm) Luke 1:46-50, 53-54
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
Gospel) John 1:6-8, 19-28

By Jeff Hensley

Jesuit Father Hubert Schiffer led quite a varied life as a priest. But his survival of the 1945 atomic bomb blast at Hiroshima is what brings him to mind in connection with today's Advent readings.

Having removed most of the glass embedded in his skin by the explosion, he and other surviving members of his religious order went about gathering up orphans, caring for their needs, and bringing them to the train station, so they could travel to safety away from the radioactive debris.

*Jesus is coming.*

Sister Mary Augustine Matzner, SSMN, had many stories of her service of others. One involved taking care of a number of infants in an isolated cabin in the Dakotas. A blizzard hit unexpectedly, and wood for the heating stove ran out. The only way she and her charges were able to survive the extreme cold was to huddle under blankets, the small children snuggled against her

**I** am "the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"

— John 1:23bc

body to draw on her warmth. And survive they did.

*Jesus is coming.*

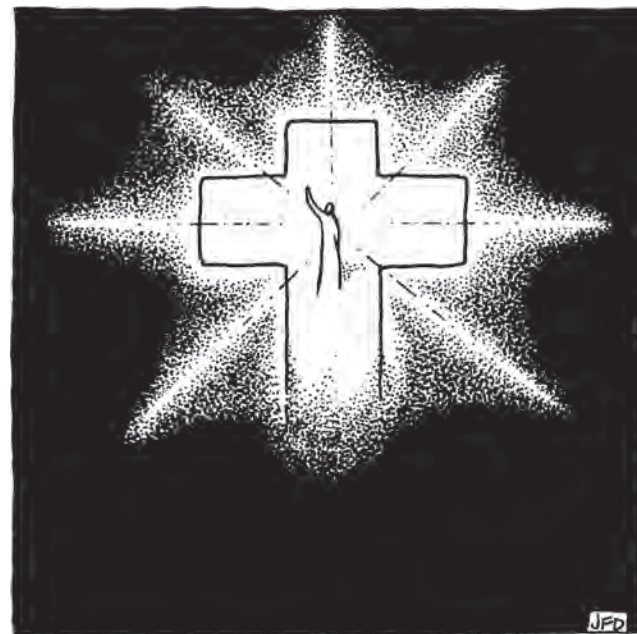
Another friend, Mary Schad, had a glow of holiness. Her simple, gentle nature was evident to anyone who met her. Mary would regularly join others to serve food to the homeless in the basement of a Dallas church. One day as she was dishing out cornbread, the line extended much further than the cornbread that remained in the serving tray. But as long as people came through the line, the meager amount of cornbread lasted.

*Jesus is coming.*

These are the acts of those who reflect the Isaiah Scripture: "He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted ... to announce a year of favor from the Lord...." They echo Mary's proclamation when she says, "He has filled the hungry with good things," and

## QUESTIONS:

As we walk through this season of waiting, can you identify people in your own life who have shown you evidence that Jesus has come? What did their revelation of God's presence teach you?



they reveal the One whom we await in Advent, the One of whom John the Baptist said, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

We know this to be true because we have seen the fruit of his coming in those who serve him.

*Jesus is coming.*

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## Pope: Real faith shows itself as love, concrete help for the poor

VATICAN CITY — (CNS) If Christian faith is not translated into love and concrete help for the poor, it is not real faith, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Real faith becomes love and expresses itself in charity. A faith without charity, without this fruit, would not be true faith. It would be a dead faith," the pope said Nov. 26 at his weekly general audience.

The gathering was held in the Vatican audience hall on the first day solar panels installed on the roof began generating energy for the Vatican's power grid.

The audience began with Pope Benedict entering the hall side by side with Armenian Orthodox Catholicos Aram of Cilicia.

The pope told an estimated 9,000 people at the audience that the visit of the Lebanon-based patriarch "is a significant occasion for strengthening the bonds of unity already existing between us as we journey toward that full communion which is both the goal set before all Christ's followers and a gift to be implored daily from the Lord."

Catholicos Aram told the pope that all Christian churches must work together to fight "the decay



of moral values" and to minister to a world "in dire need of spiritual transformation."

In his main talk, Pope Benedict continued a discussion he began the week before about St. Paul's teaching on how people are made just in the eyes of God and on the relationship between faith and good works.

St. Paul taught clearly that people can do nothing to make themselves just in the eyes of God, but rather that justification is God's gift to those who believe, the pope said.

"But this faith is not a thought, an opinion or an idea," he said.

Faith implies communion with Christ and conformity to him, the pope said. Those who have faith in Christ strive to act as Christ did.

Pope Benedict focused on St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, especially the passage that begins, "If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal."

Like the people of Corinth to

whom St. Paul wrote, he said, Christians today also can be tempted to think that because they are saved by faith alone, they do not have to worry about anything but their prayers.

"What would we be reducing the liturgy to if, at the same time as we turned to the Lord, we did not also serve our brothers and sisters? A faith that does not express itself in charity," the pope said, answering his own question.

Christianity is not a rulebook, he said. "The Christian ethic is not born of a system of commandments, but is the consequence of our friendship with Christ."

"The Christian life is nourished by the action of the Holy Spirit, which gives rise to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are the fruits of the spirit that grow from faith," he said.

"Believers know that love for God becomes concrete in love for one another," Pope Benedict said.

Pope Benedict XVI greets Armenian Catholicos Aram of Cilicia, patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Lebanon, after the pope's weekly general audience in the Paul VI audience hall at the Vatican Nov. 26. (CNS photo/Giampiero Spósito, Reuters)

## Scripture Readings



December 21, Fourth Sunday of Advent.  
Cycle B. Readings:

- 1) 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29
- 2) Romans 16:25-27  
Gospel) Luke 1:26-38

By Sharon K. Perkins

For the second time, we're getting ready to put a house on the market, which usually means going over it with a fine-toothed comb and looking for potential deal breakers. Then comes the inevitable question: Given our budget, what absolutely has to be repaired, remodeled, or replaced, and what can we let go?

Watching TV shows on home remodeling and "house-flipping" doesn't help. They prompt comparisons between our home and the showcases, inspiring more fix-up projects that require even more time and money. For us, it usually comes down to praying for guidance, making tough choices, and hoping we get it right in a real estate market we don't know.

In the first reading of this fourth Sunday of Advent, King David saw a problem and envisioned a building project that sounded good at the time — erecting a dwelling for the Ark of the Covenant — so that the house of the Lord of Is-

rael would measure up to those of his neighbors' gods.

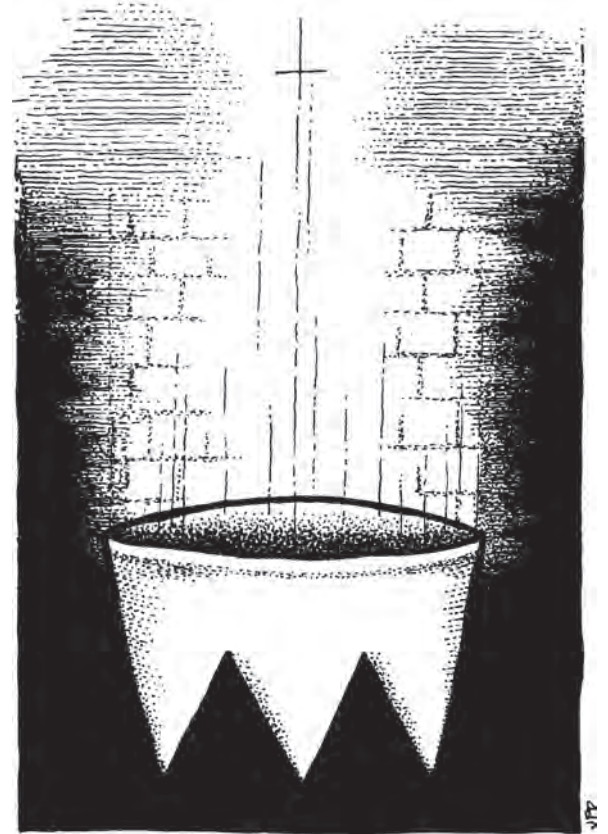
But neither David nor the prophet Nathan "got it right." In a play on words, God made it clear that the dwelling was not David's to build; rather, the Lord would raise up from David's descendants a royal "house" that would have a significance far greater than anything he could imagine.

Luke's Gospel picks up that theme and, not accidentally, mentions that Mary is betrothed to Joseph, a member of "the house of David." But in a startling turn of events, the angel Gabriel makes it clear to Mary that the child whose coming he announces will fulfill the promise made to his ancestor David — not through the intervention of flesh and blood, but by the power of God — and in this way, "the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." Though the outcome was beyond Mary's comprehension, she "got it right" by trusting in God's promise and its incredible implications for future generations.

Every day we find ourselves in situations that cry out for answers and appeal for "quick fixes," and too often we first look to our own insufficient resources for solutions. Christ's coming, announced anew every Advent, breaks through our shortsightedness, carries us beyond our inadequacies, and calls us to hope beyond our imagining.

### QUESTIONS:

In what present situation are you trying to rely on your own inadequate resources to "fix" a problem? How can you more fully rely on God's power and find hope in God's promises?



*"The Lord... will establish  
a house for you."  
— 2 Samuel 7:11*

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## A season of contrasts, waiting for Jesus' Light

By Jeff Hedglen

This season is full of what seem to be contradictions. On the one hand, we have the Christmas carol that extols this as the most wonderful time of the year; on the other hand the economy is suffering and stress is mounting.

All around us there are opposites. Outside the trees are losing their leaves; inside they are shiny and glowing. There will be parties with lots of great food — that add to the waistline. Some people are happier than they have been all year; others are more depressed than usual.

As joyous as this time of year can be, it is also full of darkness and shadows. As winter arrives, the earth seems to shrink back on itself. Trees go bare; grass turns brown; rain and cold roll in from the north. Soon the scenery around us will appear dead and lifeless.

The holiday season that is full of fun, laughter, and excitement can also be rough



Hope is entrenched in this season of darkness because light is coming

Photo by Jeff Hensley, North Texas Catholic

for many people we know. I know for me, Christmas always reminds me that my mother is no longer with us. This is true for so many people, especially those experiencing their first holiday season without their loved one.

In the midst of these swirling contradictions is something that can get missed at this time of year; winter holds deep within itself an implicit hope. Yes the trees are leafless, but not forever. Yes the air is cold, but not for long (especially in Texas). Yes times are tough and loved ones are missed, but there is a hope for new begin-

nings, or at least strength for the way.

Christmas comes at the time of the winter solstice, which is the shortest day of the year. Thus, although there are more dark hours than light, this time of year brings with it an anticipation of longer days and more sunshine. Hope is entrenched in this season of darkness because light is coming.

Of course the ultimate cause for hope is the Light of the Word. Jesus is the God-made-man who brings us out of darkness into his wonderful light.

As true as this statement is, it does not always penetrate

our reality in a significant way. The immediate situation we find ourselves in can easily overpower our experience of Jesus. This is not to say that Jesus is not there, rather it is our connection with Jesus that often is weak.

So how can we, when the darkness surrounds us, find our way into the light of Christ? I truly wish there was a one-word answer or switch we could flip to illuminate our life, but the best I can offer is a story from my life.

Years ago my wife and I were trying to start our family. Things did not go exactly as we had planned. In fact we experienced six miscarriages in 30 months. This was one of the darkest times in our lives, and I for one, never felt farther from God. Sure I "knew" that God was there, but I was not experiencing his presence.

What got us through was a combination of these things: community, prayer, community, sacraments, community, Scripture, community .... Are you sensing a pattern? I stress

the role of our friends and family because it is in union with others that prayer, sacraments, and Scripture have a deeper impact. We were able to lean on others in this time, and their faith, hope, and love picked up where ours left off.

On a dark night many years ago, a star illuminated the sky pointing the way to the Light of the world. A community of believers gathered to welcome the Savior. That same community stands ready today, still a light, still a connecting point, still reflecting the light that comes from above.

In the midst of the contradictions of this season, one thing remains constant: The Light from the Father's heart shines on. If you need it, reach out; if you have it, reflect it.

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](mailto:jeff@stbartsfw.org).



# La Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe permite que María nos lleve a su Hijo, nos recuerda que debemos acoger a los inmigrantes

**Estimados hermanos y hermanas en el Señor,**

**A**cabamos de comenzar un nuevo año litúrgico con la reciente iniciación de la época de adviento, época de esperanza.

Este comenzar del nuevo año litúrgico nos ofrece una oportunidad singular de emprender de nuevo, con nuevas energías, el camino del discipulado en Cristo, un discipulado que se expresa con nuestras vidas de fe y servicio dedicado dentro de las muchas parroquias de nuestra Diócesis de Fort Worth.

Mientras que el adviento es en verdad época de preparación y de alegre expectativa por la Navidad, la conmemoración de la primera venida de Cristo es también una época de anticipación esperanzada en la segunda venida triunfal de Cristo al fin de los tiempos. Esta expectativa y anticipación, que está en el centro del adviento, se expresa maravillosamente en el grito esperanzado de los cristianos de los primeros siglos, y que es también nuestra oración hoy, ¡Maranatha! “¡Ven, Señor Jesús!”

La esperanza que impregna al adviento es ejemplificada de una manera especial por la bienaventurada Virgen María, que desempeña un papel destacado en el adviento. Este papel será reflejado con mayor intensidad durante la segunda semana de adviento, debido a dos celebraciones marianas muy importantes celebradas en esa semana: la Inmaculada Concepción de la bienaventurada Virgen María, el lunes 8 de diciembre, Patrona de los Estados Unidos, día de obligación en los Estados Unidos, y el día de Nuestra señora de Guadalupe, el viernes 12 de diciembre, Patrona de México y de todas las Américas.

Es importante reflexionar en cómo Dios nos manifiesta su bondad en ambas celebraciones.

Con la Inmaculada Concepción de la bienaventurada Virgen María podemos ver cómo Dios preparaba a la Virgen María para su papel como madre del Salvador, asegurándose de que ella naciera enteramente de su gracia. El párrafo 491 y 492 en el Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica expresa esta verdad claramente:

491. A lo largo de los siglos, la Iglesia ha tomado conciencia de que María “llena de gracia” por Dios (Lc 1, 28) había sido redimida desde su concepción. Es lo que confiesa el dogma de la Inmaculada Concepción, proclamado



Monseñor Kevin W. Vann

**E**lla es un modelo para nosotros de la preocupación y actitud de bienvenida que deberíamos tener para todos los inmigrantes, especialmente nuestros hermanos y hermanas católicos de México y todo

Latino América. Que nuestra celebración de adviento sea una llena de esperanza y también, siguiendo el ejemplo de la bienaventurada Virgen María, una alegre expectativa en la venida de nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo.

en 1854 por el Papa Pío IX:

... la bienaventurada Virgen María fue preservada inmune de toda la mancha de pecado original en el primer instante de su concepción por singular gracia y privilegio de Dios omnipotente, en atención a los méritos de Jesucristo Salvador del género humano.

492. Esta “resplandeciente santidad del todo singular” de la que ella fue “enriquecida desde el primer instante de su concepción”, le viene toda entera de Cristo: ella es “redimida de la manera más sublime en atención a los méritos de su Hijo”. El Padre la ha “bendecido con toda clase de bendiciones espirituales, en los cielos, en Cristo” más que a ninguna otra persona creada. El la ha elegido en él antes de la creación del mundo para ser santa e inmaculada en su presencia, en el amor.

La bondad de Dios para con nosotros es evidente por los pasos que Dios toma para traernos a nuestro Salvador. Con la Inmaculada Concepción de la bienaventurada Virgen María, Dios prepara a la Virgen María para su papel como madre de Jesús y como nuestra madre espiritual también. Es una bendición especial el tenerla a ella como la patrona de los Estados Unidos.



(CNS photo/Nancy Wehner)

Pero la bondad de Dios también se manifiesta en las apariciones milagrosas de la Virgen María, nuestra señora de Guadalupe, en la colina de Tepeyac en Ciudad de México a San Juan Diego, cuya conmemoración también se celebra durante esta segunda semana de adviento, el martes 9 de diciembre.

Nuestra señora de Guadalupe, además de ser la Patrona de México y de todas las Américas, es también la madre espiritual de muchos otros aspectos importantes en la vida de la iglesia en los Estados Unidos, y en particular, en nuestra diócesis, en estos días. Tres de ellos son especialmente importantes.

Nuestra señora de Guadalupe, que en la imagen milagrosa de la tilma de Juan Diego se representa como mujer embarazada, es madre espiritual y patrona de los no nacidos. Los esfuerzos pro-vida la invocan continuamente para su dirección y ayuda.

Nuestra señora de Guadalupe es también la estrella de la nueva evangelización y le pedimos su guía a medida que continuamos nuestros esfuerzos de evangelización en la Diócesis de Fort Worth. En enero del 1999, mientras visitaba a la Ciudad de México, el Papa Juan Pablo II dijo en su homilía:

Hoy en esta Basílica de Guadalupe, corazón mariano de América, damos gracias a Dios por la asamblea es-

pecial para América del Sínodo de los obispos -auténtico cenáculo de comunión eclesial y de afecto colegial entre los pastores del norte, del centro y del sur del continente- vivida con el Obispo de Roma como experiencia fraterna de encuentro con el Señor resucitado, camino para la conversión, la comunión y la solidaridad en América. ...he venido aquí para poner a los pies de la Virgen mestiza del Tepeyac, estrella del Nuevo Mundo, la exhortación apostólica Ecclesia in America, que recoge las aportaciones y sugerencias pastorales de dicho Sínodo, confiando a la madre y reina de este continente el futuro de su evangelización.

Todos nuestros trabajos catequéticos y de enseñanza, además de los esfuerzos evangelizadores en nuestra diócesis, deberán guiarnos hacia su Hijo. Al final de su homilía el Papa Juan Pablo II menciona, como parte de una oración final, otro patrocinio espiritual de Nuestra señora de Guadalupe, Madre de los inmigrantes y refugiados. Quisiera concluir mi reflexión con estas palabras:

¡O Madre! ... Acompaña a la Iglesia que está trabajando en las naciones de América, de modo que ella pueda predicar el evangelio y renueva siempre su espíritu misionero. Anima a todos los que dedican sus vidas a la causa de Jesús y la extensión de su Reino. Gentil Señora del Tepeyac, O Madre del pueblo indígena y de los afroamericanos, de los inmigrantes y refugiados, de los jóvenes privados de oportunidades, de los ancianos, y de los que sufren cualquier clase de pobreza o marginalización.

Ella es un modelo para nosotros de la preocupación y actitud de bienvenida que deberíamos tener para todos los inmigrantes, especialmente nuestros hermanos y hermanas católicos de México y todo Latino América. Que nuestra celebración de adviento sea una llena de esperanza y también, siguiendo el ejemplo de la bienaventurada Virgen María, una alegre expectativa en la venida de nuestro Señor y Salvador, Jesucristo.

Que Dios los bendiga siempre.

+ Kevin W. Vann

+Monseñor Kevin W. Vann  
Obispo de Fort Worth

# El Cardenal George expresa esperanza en la administración de Obama, señala posibles obstáculos a nuestra deseada unidad

*Dada la importancia de este asunto en la reciente conferencia de los obispos católicos en los Estados Unidos este pasado otoño, la declaración del Cardenal George aparece aquí en traducción. Cabe notar que el Obispo Vann contribuyó a la discusión, ayudando a formar la tesis central de esta declaración sobre la protección de la libertad de conciencia de los profesionales de medicina. El Cardenal George asignó al Obispo Vann como enlace entre la Conferencia episcopal y la Asociación católica de la salud.*

BALTIMORE—El Cardenal Francis George de Chicago, Presidente de la Conferencia de obispos católicos en los Estados Unidos (USCCB, siglas en inglés) expresó esperanza por la administración de Obama pero señaló posibles obstáculos a nuestra deseada unidad, en una declaración del 12 de noviembre, al finalizar la reunión anual de otoño de la asamblea de USCCB.

“Los obispos de la Iglesia católica en los Estados Unidos reconocen este momento de tran-

sición histórica y esperan con interés trabajar con el Presidente-electo Obama y los miembros del nuevo congreso por el bien común de todos”.

El Cardenal añadió que “la unidad deseada por el Presidente-electo Obama y por todos los estadounidenses en este momento de crisis sería imposible de lograr”, si las políticas de la administración aumentan los abortos.

“Legislación pro-aborto agresiva, leyes y órdenes ejecu-

tivas alienarán permanentemente a decenas de millones de estadounidenses, y serán vistas por muchos como un ataque al libre ejercicio de su religión”.

“Expresamos de nuevo nuestro gran deseo de trabajar con todos aquellos que atesoran el bien común de nuestra nación”, añadió. “El bien común no es la suma total de deseos e intereses individuales; se logra en la labor por una vida común basada en la buena razón y la buena voluntad por todos”.

## Declaración del presidente de la Conferencia de obispos católicos en los Estados Unidos

*Si el Señor no construye la casa, en vano se esfuerzan los albañiles; si el Señor no protege la ciudad, en vano vigila el centinela. (Salmo 127: 1)*

Los obispos de la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos reconocen este momento de transición histórica y esperan con interés trabajar con el Presidente-electo Obama y los miembros del nuevo congreso por el bien común de todos. Debido a la historia de la Iglesia y la amplitud de su ministerio en este país, queremos continuar nuestra labor por la justicia económica y de oportunidad para todos; nuestros esfuerzos por reformar leyes sobre inmigración y la situación de la población indocumentada; nuestro procurar una mejor educación y servicios de salud para todos, especialmente para mujeres y niños/as; nuestro deseo de resguardar la libertad religiosa y promover la paz en nuestro país y en el mundo. La Iglesia esta dedicada en hacer el bien y continuará con gusto su colaboración con el gobierno y con aquellos que trabajan por estas buenas causas.

que sobreviven un aborto fallido. Las clínicas de abortos serían desregularizadas. La enmienda Hyde (Hyde Amendment) que restringe el uso de fondos federales para abortos sería eliminada. FOCA tendría consecuencias letales para la vida humana prenatal.

FOCA tendría un efecto igualmente destructivo en la libertad de conciencia de doctores, enfermeras y trabajadores de la salud cuyas convicciones personales no les permiten cooperar en la matanza privada de niños (as) por nacer. Amenazaría a instituciones católicas de la salud y a Caridades católicas. Sería una ley mala que dividiría a nuestro país aun más, y la Iglesia debe oponerse decididamente a este mal.

En este gran reto de lograr la protección legal de los niños/as por nacer, los obispos, el pueblo católico y otras personas de buena voluntad somos de un mismo sentir. También hay párrocos que han escuchado a mujeres cuyas vidas han sido disminuidas porque pensaron que no tenían otra alternativa que abortar a su bebe. El aborto es un procedimiento médico que mata, y las consecuencias psicológicas y espirituales están plasmadas en el dolor y la depresión de muchas mujeres y hombres. Los obispos ven este reto con singular claridad de mente y, sobre todo, con singular sentir de corazón.

Las elecciones recientes fueron decididas principalmente por la gran preocupación sobre la economía, la pérdida de trabajos, casas y seguridad financiera de familias aquí y alrededor del mundo. Si las elecciones son malinterpretadas ideológicamente como un referendo sobre el aborto, la

unidad deseada por el Presidente-electo Obama y por todos los estadounidenses en este momento de crisis sería imposible de lograr. El aborto no solo mata niños/as por nacer; destruye el orden constitucional y el bien común, el cual es asegurado sólo cuando la vida de cada ser humano esta legalmente protegida. Legislación pro-aborto agresiva, leyes y órdenes ejecutivas alienarán permanentemente a decenas de millones de estadounidenses, y serán vistas por muchos como un ataque al libre ejercicio de su religión.

Esta declaración es escrita por la petición y dirección de todos los obispos, quienes también quieren agradecer a todos aquellos que, con buena voluntad, trabajan en el ámbito político para proteger las vidas de los más indefensos entre nosotros. Aquellos en la vida pública realizan esta labor; muchas veces lo hacen con gran costo y sacrificio para ellos y sus familias, y estamos profundamente agradecidos. Expresamos de nuevo nuestro gran deseo de trabajar con todos aquellos que atesoran el bien común de nuestra nación. El bien común no es la suma total de deseos e intereses individuales; se logra en la labor por una vida común basada en la buena razón y la buena voluntad por todos.

Nuestras oraciones acompañan al Presidente-electo Obama y a su familia, y a todos aquellos que cooperan con él para asegurar una transición de gobierno suave. Muchos retos reclaman atención inmediata de parte de nuestro “centinela” electo (Salmo 127). Que Dios lo bendiga a él y a nuestra nación.

El bien fundamental es la vida misma, un regalo de Dios y de nuestros padres. Un buen estado protege la vida de todos. La protección legal por aquellos miembros de la familia humana aun por nacer en este país fue removida cuando la Corte Suprema de Justicia decidió *Roe vs. Wade* en 1973. Esta fue una mala ley. El peligro que los obispos ven en este momento es que una mala decisión de la Corte será engalanada en mala legislación, que es más radical que

la decisión misma de la Corte Suprema en 1973.

En el último congreso, un acta por la libertad de decisión — a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)— fue introducida de tal manera que, si se presentara de la misma forma hoy, haría ilegal cualquier ‘interferencia’ en la realización ilimitada de abortos. Tal acta privaría a los ciudadanos de la nación de la libertad que tienen ahora de frenar y regular modestamente la industria de aborto. FOCA forzaría a todos los

ciudadanos y residentes a subsidiar y promover el aborto con dinero de sus impuestos. Remetería contra todo esfuerzo sincero del gobierno o de otras entidades de buena voluntad por reducir el número de abortos en nuestro país.

Además, notificación a padres de familia y precauciones para un consentimiento informado estarían fuera de la ley, al igual que leyes que suspenden procedimientos tales como abortos de nacimiento parcial, y que protegen a bebés

## ¡Vamos todos a la catedral al amanecer! 'Fiesta de nuestra señora de Guadalupe', diciembre 12

El Obispo Kevin W. Vann celebrará la primera fiesta diocesana de nuestra señora de Guadalupe el 12 de diciembre; esta celebración festiva se observará en la catedral de San Patricio (*St. Patrick Cathedral*) y no en el centro de convenciones de Fort Worth. La fiesta de nuestra señora de Guadalupe rinde homenaje a la aparición de nuestra Santa Madre en 1531 a San Juan Diego, un humilde indígena de Tepeyac, en las colinas al noroeste de lo que es actualmente la ciudad de México. En 1999, el Papa Juan Pablo II, durante su tercera de cuatro visitas a la basílica de Guadalupe, declaró el 12 de diciembre como un día de festividades religiosas en todas las Américas.

De acuerdo a un comunicado de prensa de la catedral de San Patricio, la celebración guadalupana tradicional comenzará a las 5 A.M. con las *Mañanitas* (una serenata de una hora) por el grupo mariachi *Águilas de México*, seguida por una misa de mariachi a las 6 A.M.

La misa bilingüe será concelebrada por el obispo Kevin Vann y el padre Richard Flores, rector. "Esta celebración alegre y vivaz mostrará la fe y belleza del 'pueblo'". La nota de prensa continua: "Incluirá matachines con bailes de los indígenas. Están invitados todos a acompañarnos mientras ofrecemos un homenaje en honor a la virgen María de Guadalupe".

Después de la misa, la parroquia invita a todos "a visitarnos para saborear un delicioso pan dulce" (pan dulce mexicano), café caliente y chocolate mexicano en el edificio de formación religiosa. El pan dulce será cortesía del Café Esperanza.

La parroquia anuncia que las misas de las 7 A.M. y 12:05 P.M. serán celebradas en su horario regular.

Una misa a las 7 de la noche honrando a Nuestra señora de Guadalupe será concelebrada por el padre Richard Flores y el padre José Trinidad García



Esta reproducción de la tilma de San Juan Diego se exhibe en el pasillo del Centro Católico, a la entrada de la Cancillería de la Diócesis.

Alonzo, quien está visitando desde Guadalajara, Jalisco, para esta ocasión especial, de acuerdo a la información tramitada por la catedral de San Patricio. "Esta misa, con lecturas bilingües, será cantada en Español por los 'Sembradores de la Palabra' y expresará las canciones, flores y bailes tradicionales del pueblo". Las festividades de noche comenzarán a las 6 P.M. Una rendición exclusiva de Juan Diego cuando visita a la Virgen María se presentará entre las 6:15 y las 6:45 P.M. Mientras tanto, los matachines interpretarán bailes tradicionales en frente de la catedral antes y después de la celebración de la misa.

De acuerdo a la información proveída por la catedral de San Patricio, la iglesia permanecerá abierta todo el día, para rezar el rosario, cantar, u ofrecer flores a nuestra Señora, la virgen María de Guadalupe, patrona de las Américas.

Si está interesado en participar en cualquiera de estas celebraciones, contacte a Josefina "Josie" Villarreal, en la oficina de la catedral, de lunes a viernes desde las 8 A.M. hasta las 4 P.M., al número (817) 332-4915.

### 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 [jl Locke@fwdioc.org](mailto:jl Locke@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.

## Día de formación del ministerio en el colegio Nolan, el 10 de enero

El padre John Robert Skeldon, un predicador popular, presentador de talleres e instructor del seminario bíblico en la Universidad de Dallas, dará el discurso de orden durante el Día de formación del ministerio, el sábado, 10 de enero, en *Nolan Catholic High School*; la dirección es 4501 Bridge St., en la sección este de Fort Worth. El padre Skeldon, quien sirve como administrador parroquial para la iglesia *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* en Wichita Falls, presentará el tema del día: "¡Encontrando la palabra viviente!"

El evento comenzará con matrícula y desayuno ligero a las 8 A.M.; la oración inicial y palabras de bienvenida se ofrecerán a las 9 A.M. El padre Skeldon presentará el discurso de orden a las 9:30 A.M. Este mismo discurso de apertura se presentará en español a las 10:45 A.M. Tres sesiones con talleres, incluyendo sesiones en español y vietnamita, se ofrecerán antes y después del almuerzo a domicilio al medio día.

Se ofrecerán sesiones sobre una variedad de temas, incluyendo "Proyectos de servicio con los niños", presentado por Mary Moody y Susan Overcash de la escuela *St. John the Apostle* en North Richland Hills; "El catecismo esencial y efectivo para RCIA", dirigido por Lucas Pollice, director diocesano de formación de adultos; "¿Por qué un año sobre San Pablo?" ofrecido por la hermana St. John Begnaud, SSMN, erudita de Escrituras Sagradas; "Al alcance de los jóvenes", por Marion Cannon, co-coordinadora del consejo diocesano de jóvenes; "Promoviendo las vocaciones en la próxima generación", dirigido por el padre Kyle Walterscheid, director diocesano de vocaciones; "La teología del cuerpo a favor de la familia", presentado por Diane Schwind, coordinadora diocesana de planificación familiar; "El sacramento del matrimonio y los casos de la anulación del mismo", ofrecido por Meg Hogan, directora del tribunal diocesano sobre el matrimonio; y "Organizando un centro de jóvenes: la perspectiva de los miembros", formulado por Diane Donahue, directora del ministerio de jóvenes en la iglesia *St. Vincent de Paul* en Arlington, con una comisión de participantes jóvenes.

El día de formación del ministerio se lleva a cabo en dos



El padre John Robert Skeldon

lugares diferentes dentro de la diócesis cada año, y está siendo patrocinado conjuntamente por las siguientes oficinas diocesanas: *Catecismo para los niños, Formación adulta, Servicios pastorales hispanos, Jóvenes y ministerio universitario, Servicio de adoración, Escuelas católicas, Paz y justicia, Matrimonio y planificación familiar, Tribunal del matrimonio, Planificación pastoral, Administración y Desarrollo, y Finanzas.*

"Todos son invitados para reunirse durante un día de enriquecimiento que incluye talleres en inglés, español y vietnamita, exhibiciones, oportunidades de establecer contactos, y una presentación de orden emocionante", dijo Joe Rodríguez, coordinador del evento del día de formación del ministerio. "Habrá algo para todos".

El costo de matrícula, si se hace temprano, será \$25 para



El padre John Robert Skeldon, quien es un predicador popular y presentador de talleres e instructor del seminario bíblico en la Universidad de Dallas, dará el discurso de orden durante el Día de formación del ministerio.

este evento el 10 de enero; incluirá desayuno continental, almuerzo y materiales. Sin embargo, el costo ese mismo día, sin matrícula previa, será \$30. Hay becas parciales disponibles; los feligreses pueden matricularse como individuos o como miembros de una parroquia particular. Para más información sobre el día de formación del ministerio en Muenster, sírvase llamar a Joe Rodríguez al número (817) 560-3300, Ext. 115, o se puede mandar un correo electrónico a [jrodriguez@fwdioc.org](mailto:jrodriguez@fwdioc.org). Por un listado completo del horario del día y los temas de los diversos talleres, o para obtener el formulario de matrícula, sírvase visitar al sitio Web de la diócesis: [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org). Teclée la entrada "Formacion de fé" (Faith Formation).

### Dios te llama ¿Estás escuchando? El Obispo Kevin Vann te invita a un fin de semana Vocacional

el 23 al 25 de enero  
Catholic Renewal Center

Todo joven soltero o soltera entre los años de 18-35 que tiene alguna inquietud sobre la vida sacerdotal o religiosa está invitado.

El fin de semana se llevará a cabo en español. Cupo limitado.

Fecha límite para inscripción: 15 de diciembre

Para más información, comuníquese con:

1 (888) 560-3370

Sr. Yolanda Cruz, SSMN Ext. 114

Padre Kyle (817) 366-0439

Sr. Elvira Mata, MCDP Ext. 273

[www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org)

### FORMA DE INSCRIPCION Fin de Semana Vocacional

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Domicilio: \_\_\_\_\_ Ciudad: \_\_\_\_\_, TX Código Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_ Mujer: \_\_\_\_\_ Hombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_ Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

Parroquia: \_\_\_\_\_ Ciudad: \_\_\_\_\_

Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Selecciona uno: \_\_\_\_\_ Soltero \_\_\_\_\_ Divorciado \_\_\_\_\_ Viudo

Envía tu forma a:

## Tyler Bishop Corrada says Texas Catholic hospitals performed direct sterilizations

By Chaz Muth  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The bishop of Tyler, has concluded that Catholic hospitals in his diocese have violated ethical directives by performing sterilizations.

"As a bishop, I am deeply saddened and upset by this news," said Bishop Alvaro Corrada, in a Nov. 21 statement published in the *Catholic East Texas*, newspaper of the Diocese of Tyler. "As bishop of the Diocese of Tyler, I have to admit my failure to provide adequate oversight of the Catholic hospitals as regards their protection of the sacred dignity of each human person."

Bishop Corrada's statement follows an investigation by his diocese after a national Catholic newspaper reported claims last July that thousands of sterilizations, and possibly some abortions, took place in 23 Texas Catholic hospitals from 2000 to 2003.

Initially, officials from Trinity Mother Frances Hospital in Tyler and Christus St. Michael's Health System in Texarkana told the diocese they were in compliance with the U.S. Catholic Church's "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services," he said in the statement.

"Sadly, subsequent investigation reveals that there had been a serious misinterpretation of the ERDs and that in fact many direct sterilizations had been done and continued to be done at the time of the article," Bishop Corrada said.

"In response to their own investigation of the matter, Christus St. Michael's in Texarkana has discontinued all tubal ligations. Prior to the release of the report,

*"I continue to work directly with the Catholic hospitals in the Diocese of Tyler, and with my brother bishops in the state of Texas, to bring an end to immoral procedures and to put in place some method of ongoing accountability and transparency of monitoring both protocols and actual practices."*

—Bishop Alvaro Corrada

Trinity Mother Frances had experienced a 50 percent reduction in the number of tubal ligations," he said.

Last July the newspaper, *Our Sunday Visitor* in Huntington, Indiana, published an investigative story about the report released in June.

The report was made by a group of anonymous whistleblowers who compiled hospital diagnostic and procedure codes and concluded there had been 9,684 instances of purported unequivocal "sterilization for contraceptive purposes" from 2000 to 2003.

The group, which *Our Sunday Visitor* said it contacted through an intermediary, also cited data indicating 39 abortions were performed at Catholic hospitals.

Group members noted, however, the data could be subject to interpretation because it could include morally acceptable procedures such as surgery to remove a baby that had died in the mother's

uterus or emergency services for an abortion performed at another location.

Bishop Corrada's statement did not mention if his investigation found evidence of abortions being performed at the hospitals and telephone messages left with officials at Trinity Mother Frances Hospital and Christus St. Michael's Health System by Catholic News Service the Wednesday before Thanksgiving were not immediately answered.

John Haas, a moral theologian and president of the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, told *Our Sunday Visitor* in July that while U.S. bishops are "exercising far more ethical oversight of facilities than they have in the past," there are widespread misunderstandings about the U.S. bishops' ethical directives for health care facilities.

Haas said the misunderstanding was not "ill will, but just a shocking lack of understanding of the ethical principles and their application."

"The church has approved the 'Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services' as binding upon our Catholic hospitals to ensure the sacred dignity of each patient is protected and defended," Bishop Corrada said.

"Many causes and complications have resulted in this unacceptable situation," he said. "I continue to work directly with the Catholic hospitals in the Diocese of Tyler, and with my brother bishops in the state of Texas, to bring an end to immoral procedures and to put in place some method of ongoing accountability and transparency of monitoring both protocols and actual practices."

## 'Don't water it down,' says young Catholic about passing on the faith

LINTHICUM, Md. (CNS) — Megan Nappi didn't mince words as she sat in a circle with young adults from Baltimore and Washington, surrounded by some of the nation's leading adolescent catechesis experts during the four-day National Symposium on Adolescent Catechesis.

Asked what advice she would give on teen faith formation, the University of Maryland student and member of Our Lady of the Fields Parish in Millersville told the 100 attendees there: "Don't water it down."

The response drew audible gasps, and even applause, from the gathering of academics, educators, youth ministers, bishops, catechists, and other leaders.

The symposium, held Nov. 5-8 at the Maritime Institute and Conference Center in Linthicum, was a project of three national Catholic youth formation groups brought together in one organization called the Partnership for Adolescent Catechesis.

"We have a whole spectrum of spirituality here," Robert McCarty, executive director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, said at the event. "I think we have a real progressive kind of approach to spirituality and Catholicism and the traditional (approach). I think we've struck a nice balance."

Nappi's statement served as a wake-up call for some and a confirmation for others at the event, which had been in discussion for 10 years.

The symposium was created to help identify factors that impact adolescents' faith formation in

the United States and to create a universal manner in which to catechize them.

McCarty said faith formation opportunities must be seized at retreats, service projects, conferences, pilgrimages, and through personal conversations. The standard school setting is no longer completely effective in the education of young people, he said.

"That's a shift," McCarty said. "My generation grew up in a class, and whether it was in Catholic school or parish, we sat in desks and we had people present (information) to us."

The symposium had experts speak on the current state of adolescent formation, modern youth culture, and the outcomes of effective catechesis, among other topics.

It was Nappi from the Baltimore Archdiocese, though, who stole the show with her bluntness. She said that when she was in college peers who had recently joined the Catholic Church had a better grasp of the faith.

"I felt so gypped," she said. "I had been Catholic for 18 years and I knew nothing. Not that it was watered down, but I didn't have it."

Church leaders said such honesty was refreshing.

"They want to know the truth," Bishop Gregory M. Aymond of Austin said of young people.

"They may not accept it at that particular time and might not like the rules, but at least they're challenged by it. I thought that (Nappi's) advice was well-given and I hope we heard it in a very realistic way," he said.

## New Orleans religious communities receive grant to restore ministries

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic Charities USA has awarded more than \$2 million to congregations of women religious based in the New Orleans area to help them restore ministries to the poor that were destroyed or severely diminished by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The grant was approved by the Disaster Response Office of Catholic Charities USA, which is based in Alexandria, Virginia, and it will be administered by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The money is part of a larger fundraising effort under way for the last two years that is co-sponsored by LCWR and Foundations and Donors Interested in

Catholic Activities, or FADICA, a consortium of private grant-making agencies.

The Catholic Charities grant was announced recently in Washington by FADICA.

Among projects the grant will benefit are:

— Two early childhood learning centers, one sponsored by the Ursuline sisters and one staffed by Carmelite sisters.

— The rebuilding of a nursing home and day care center, run by the Sisters of the Holy Family.

— The renovation of a community center operated by the Marianites of the Holy Cross to serve low-income residents of the Ninth Ward.

In addition, the Sisters of St. Joseph, who lost a major facility to flooding and fire, will receive

funds for a program offering counseling and guidance to low-income New Orleans residents who are still navigating insurance and government programs to receive help.

Other grants will go to the Dominican sisters for scholarships for St. Mary's High School, serving low-income students from Girls Hope of New Orleans, and to the Sisters of St. Teresa for a mobile emergency assistance outreach program to assist families returning to New Orleans.

LCWR and FADICA began their New Orleans Recovery Project in 2006 after leaders of the two organizations visited the city to see firsthand how the hurricane damaged convents, schools and ministries to the

poor.

They saw the destruction of nursing facilities, schools, community and day care centers, and other services for the poor sponsored by congregations of women religious.

To help address the situation, LCWR and FADICA decided to work together to raise funds to assist eight communities of women religious in New Orleans.

An office for fundraising opened in 2007 with the involvement of SC Ministry Foundation, an agency of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati; several other FADICA foundation members; the Sisters of Charity of Cleveland Foundation; and the Allegany Franciscan Foundation of Florida.

As head of the office, Sister

Suzanne Hall, a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, had raised about \$5 million in grants for the religious communities from private foundations in the FADICA network prior to the Catholic Charities grant.

In August Sr. Suzanne developed and submitted an application to Catholic Charities on behalf of the religious communities in New Orleans.

With the receipt of the grant, the recovery project has brought in close to \$7.1 million to date, all of which has gone directly to the sisters for their ministries.

The Catholic Charities funds are part of a national appeal made in 2005 that generated more than \$160 million from U.S. parishes, dioceses, corporations and foundations.

## Diocesan / Mission



Father John Abts, OFM (standing), offers a blessing during a medical home visit. He is joined by (standing, at left) Carmelite sister Madre Ana Maria Chavajay, and by visiting volunteers (left to right) Carmina Freire, and Jean Meehan.

At the dedication of the new church in Chucuca, Ben and Mary Francis Dorskocil of St. Joseph Parish, Arlington, receive gifts of traditional Guatemalan clothing from their new friends.



## Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11

expected him to utilize. Most of the time he went another way, performing tasks that surprised me, while I unconsciously grabbed my mouse and tried to anticipate and become involved with the process that clearly did not need me.

Peter knew what he wanted to do. That's why he was the technical support guy, while I was the creative, who may have had too much stuff on her desktop, but had the file names listed in colors.

Peter, not even a saint, fixed everything. He did this by remote control.

Today I drove past a chic storefront that concentrates on interior décor, but at this time of year extends its services to holiday settings. The sign outside said they carried lighted trees and wreaths, centerpieces, yard art, and, yes, the sign boasted, "Consultations are Available."

Consultations? This place wants to come into my home, I realized, and tell me the stuffed gingham tree my sister made in 1974 needs to be thrown away because the jingle bells have rusted. Certainly, I thought, they would take away my mom's old kerosene lamp she decked out with plastic holly. Probably they would also trash Andrew's first-grade, white-daily angel ornament, topped with his cutout school portrait

— a combined cherubic representation and floating head. Absolutely not!

Acquiring a pre-Christmas helper who will invade the home and make educated judgments about my choices of red-and-greenness is as unacceptable as a remote set of eyes looking into the files on my computer desktop.

Have our holiday lives gone so far out of control that we can't hang our own garland? (Mine is weather-worn, and yes, decades old, so I don't want anyone else looking at it closer than the curbside view. This year, however, I plan to improve its appearance through simple needle transplant and treatment with a plastic growth hormone I discovered in a late-night fake greenery infomercial. I'll let you know if it works.)

Have we become so busy that our pre-Christmas activities have swelled, leaving us breathlessly wondering what we have left out? We transfer our to do's to digital calendars dubbed, "Christmas Lists," but are they really virtual "Rush Advent Lists?" Things go too fast. We can't catch up.

It occurs to me, however, that life at its very best has the potential to happen at these times.

In the context of seasonal one-day retreats, Nutcracker dance recitals, school band and choir holiday concerts, we have a clear path to Advent enrichment. We have limitless opportunities to see and love others,

the ones we know well and care about. But we also reap the fruit of the season — increased awareness of the needs of those we don't know, and a fresh desire to fill them.

Some people call this the Advent Conspiracy — give more, spend less, do more.

It all goes back to the three kings' conspiracy: Find Jesus. Give him your best gifts.

Let's treasure Advent, along with the small, tender, and intrinsic joys that mark the coming of the Lord. Let's increase the corporal works of mercy we should have been doing all along.

Advent is a symbol of hope, and a journey to the peace and love of Jesus Christ, the one person whose control we welcome into the disarray of our décor, and even the chaos of our computers.

Bringing Jesus into our hearts solves our own crises, and challenges us to carry his promise to others. That's his gift to ordinary people like us. It's divine remote control.



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

DONNA'S STORY CONTINUED, FROM P. 24

On Sept. 19 five parish members, and myself were privileged to attend the dedication of St. Joseph the Worker parish in Chucuca. The rain did not dampen the exuberant mood of the day. The joy that these Spirit-filled people exuded was infectious. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Gonzala deVilla y Vasquez and concelebrated by our own Father Jack McKone, associate pastor of St. Matthew Church in Arlington. Fr. Jack lived in Patzun for over a year and was thrilled to be there for the blessed event. The Mass was followed by cheerful celebrations with music and native food. It was truly an experience of a lifetime.

Still, the tough times continue. One evening, during prayer time with our youth team last summer, I tearfully commented on how the need is so overwhelming and astronomical. That day we had witnessed a destitute couple in their 80s, living in rubble, abandoned by their children. Did us being there for six days really matter? I asked Madre, "Do we even make a difference?"

Madre passionately replied that we bring the people the greatest gift of all, the gift of hope! She explained that knowing there are people outside their world who care and take the time to be with them means more than we could ever imagine.

This young girl is in El Cito, location of Madre's Catholic school.



Please contact St. Joseph Parish, Arlington; Immaculate Conception Parish, Denton; or St. John the Apostle Parish, North Richland Hill, or Hilda Flores in the diocesan Mission Council office (817) 560-3300, if you are interested in becoming involved in or offering support to the mission work of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

## The FLOCK

By Jean Denton

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# Calendar

## RACHEL MINISTRIES

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

## LAY CARMELITES

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

## MINISTRY FOR GAYS, LESBIANS

The regular fourth Thursday of the month meeting of the Fort Worth diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, other Sexual Minorities and Their Families will not be held in November and December, due to the holidays. The next regular meeting of the ministry will be held Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center. For more information, contact Father Warren Murphy, TOR, at (817) 927-5383 or Doreen Rose at (817) 329-7370.

## GLOBAL PRO-LIFE LECTURE

Father Bill Bellrose, CPM, director of Seminarians for Life will speak about "The Pro Life Movement Around the World" on Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009 at St. Patrick Cathedral located at 1206 Throckmorton St. in Fort Worth. The evening will begin with a Holy Hour and rosary at 7 p.m., followed by Fr. Bellrose's talk. Seminarians for Life was founded in 1989 by Father Paul Marx, OSB, as an outreach of Human Life International to be the worldwide pro-life educational apostolate for Catholic seminarians. SFLI currently reaches seminarians around the world via the SFLI newsletter and pro-life educational training. SFLI's pro-life seminarian apostolate has reached countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and both American continents. Fr. Bellrose has come to Human Life International from Most Sacred Heart Parish in Eureka, Missouri. Fr. Bellrose is a priest with the Fathers of Mercy, a small religious community that preaches parish missions. No RSVP is required. For more information, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, Director of Respect Life for the diocese at (817) 560-3300 ext. 257.

## DEAF MINISTRY

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

## ST. PATRICK/ SAN MATEO JOINT OLG NOVENA

St. Patrick Cathedral and San Mateo Parish are joining to pray a bilingual novena in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The novena is being prayed at San Mateo Parish at 3316 Lovell Ave. in Fort Worth at 6 p.m., Dec. 8, and 7 p.m. Dec. 9-11.

## 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](mailto:jlocke@fwdioc.org)
- Or call the Sexual Abuse Hotline (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-2452 ext. 102 and ask for the chancellor/moderator of the curia, Father James Hart

## To Report Abuse

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

## COURAGE GROUP

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

## LORETO HOUSE RETREAT

The Loreto House pro-life ministry will hold a discernment retreat from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. followed by Mass on Saturday, Dec. 13, in the Immaculate Conception Church gymnasium, located at 2255 N. Bonnie Brae St. in Denton, for anybody 16 and older interested in Loreto House's mission to "serve the most vulnerable in society." The Little Sisters of the Poor will lead the retreat. The Little Sisters of the Poor have a special charism for hospitality for the elderly, and will show how they share the "Gospel of Life" with those they serve. The retreat will be free and a light lunch will be served. Organizers request that "people come with an open heart to see if God is calling them to volunteer in this most important apostolate - life." The retreat will include information about how the ministry plans to serve the community in its visitation mission, which is serving women in unplanned pregnancies. The morning portion of the retreat will focus on the "Gospel of Life." The Little Sisters of the Poor will lead the afternoon session and speak about serving the elderly and the dying. Loreto House is focused on the "book ends" of life issues. For more information, contact Randy Bollig at (214) 850-4073 or Laurie Bollig at (940) 231-0971 or visit [www.loretohouse.org](http://www.loretohouse.org).

## ST. RITA OLG NOVENA

St. Rita Church at 5550 E. Lancaster Ave. in Fort Worth invites everyone to participate in the continuing Our Lady of Guadalupe novena in Spanish at 7 p.m., every evening except Thursday, Dec. 11, when it will take place at 9:30 p.m. to pray the rosary and sing the Mañanitas with the matachines. For more information contact Monica Rodelo at [st.ritakids@yahoo.com](mailto:st.ritakids@yahoo.com).

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## ST. FRANCIS ADVENT MISSION

St. Francis of Assisi Church at 861 Wildwood Ln. in Grapevine will hold its Advent Mission, "A Call to 'Reality': Living with Mike Patin," from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 14-16 in the church. According to a flier for the event, Patin uses "energy, humor, and stories to affirm the goodness of God's presence among us while inviting others (and himself) to take the 'next step' in our journey with God." Patin has spoken in more than 95 dioceses, to groups with attendance ranging from 10 to 10,000. He has addressed youth, adult and family audiences in diocesan, regional, national and international settings. For more information, contact Jeff Crumly at (817) 481-2685.

## NTC DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION

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

## OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE LECTURE

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

## ADVENT REFLECTION

Father Mel Bessellieu will present an Advent night of reflection at 7 p.m. on Thursday Dec. 11 at St. Ann Church at 100 SW Alsbury Blvd. in Burleson. Fr. Bessellieu's topic will be "Angels: God's Heavenly Messengers." The Adult Bible Study Groups will sponsor the event as a time to "slow down and direct our thoughts to Advent as a time of preparation for our Lord's birth," according to promotional materials. Cookies and punch will be served in the hall following Fr. Bessellieu's presentation. For more information call the church office at (817) 295-5621.

## SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

### PILGRIMAGE IN THE SPRING

Msr. Charles King, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Denton, is leading a pilgrimage from DFW to Spain and Portugal on April 13 returning April 27. The previous trips led by Msr. King to Italy and Greece have sold out completely and organizers say they hope to hear from participants soon. The group will visit Madrid, Avila, Salamanca and Santiago de Compostela in Spain and Porto, Lisbon and Fatima in Portugal to name a few of the destinations. For a copy of the itinerary and more information call Bob Wolfe at (817) 788-9383.

## ST. CATHERINE OLG NOVENA

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

## CARDINAL NEWMAN COURSE

A study of the liturgy and sacraments begins and continues Jan. 3 for 10 weeks on Saturday mornings, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at St. Maria Goretti Church's Holy Family Life Center, at 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington. Tuition is \$200 with full-time employees in select Church ministries receiving half-tuition. Pre-registration is encouraged so participants may obtain books in time. For information on this course and to pre-register, leave a message at (817) 277-4859 or e-mail at [cni.onfo@yahoo.com](mailto:cni.onfo@yahoo.com).

## 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](http://www.sampg.com), or e-mail to Mark at [seasmenspurity@yahoo.com](mailto:seasmenspurity@yahoo.com).

## SISTERS OF LIFE

The Sisters of Life from New York will spend a week in the diocese participating in a variety of programs. The Sisters will visit the University of North Texas Catholic Campus Center in Denton to speak to college-age girls from 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10. For more information, contact campus minister Janet Wolf at (940) 566-0004. The sisters will also host a Homeschool "Girls Social" from 1 to 2:30 p.m., an after-school "Girls Ice Cream Social" from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m., and a "High School Girls Social" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11 at St. Mary the Virgin Church at 1408 N. Davis Dr. in Arlington. To RSVP, contact either Dana Heise at (817) 237-3846 or Mary Myers at (817) 926-7308. Finally, the sisters will join the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal for a Children and Youth Eucharistic Adoration held in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at San Mateo Church at 3316 Lovell Street in Fort Worth. There will be a children's procession with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a re-enactment of the story of St. Juan Diego, prayers and a rosary along with Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Confessions will be available and a reception will be held. For more information, contact Eileen Nelson at (817) 926-5399 or Alma Serna at (817) 909-9616.

## CENTERING PRAYER

Tom Uhler of Contemplative Outreach-Fort Worth will explain the practice of "Centering Prayer" in an informal setting and facilitate a 20-minute prayer session from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 13, in the little chapel in the Formation Center at St. John the Apostle Church at 4101 Frawley St. in North Richland Hills. "Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship," says Father Thomas Keating, a Trappist monk and founder of Contemplative Outreach. For more information, contact Tom Uhler at (817) 874-2894.

# Classified Section

## ACCOMPANIST

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

## LITURGY COORDINATOR

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

## CEMETERY SPACES

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

## FITNESS COACHES

Looking for 20 fitness coaches for revolutionary new home based business. For info call 817-249-3371.

## MAINTENANCE WORKER

Local Catholic retirement facility is seeking a maintenance worker. Applicant must have a/c and electrical experience. Send résumé to [deanah@saintfrancisvillage.com](mailto:deanah@saintfrancisvillage.com)

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## Good Newsmakers

For Donna Ryckaert, involvement in mission in Guatemala came as a surprise.

She expressed her reaction this way:

# Who me? Mission work?

Story and Photos

By Donna Ryckaert



St. Joseph parishioner Donna Ryckaert, watches a woman weaving a tablecloth in a village near Patzun, Guatemala. The all-day task will earn her about two dollars.

Nurse practitioner Margaret Gariota, a clinical nursing instructor at UTA, listens to a young girl's heart during a medical mission trip by parishioners of St. Joseph's.



So, in June of 2003, I traveled with my 15-year-old son, Eric, a team of three doctors, three translators, and three teens on my first mission trip to Patzun, Guatemala.

The trip lasted seven days. We were invited guests of Madre Ana Maria Chavajay and stayed at the Carmelite convent in Patzun. Our mission was to travel to two "aldeas" (villages) a day ministering to the sick. A typical day started with breakfast at 7 a.m. followed by prayer in the chapel. We headed for the first village by 8 a.m. and scrambled for the coveted standing spots in the back of the pick-up truck. The ride, though rough and bumpy, showcased spectacular views of the breathtaking countryside and the many volcanoes.

Arriving at the village, we would set up our "pharmacy." During a visit, we saw anywhere from 20 to 80 patients. After a quick sandwich, we traveled to the second village and repeated the process.

Afternoons were always busier as workers returned from the fields and children from school. Most medical complaints were the same: headaches and body pain — the men from hauling 100 pounds of firewood or broccoli on their backs and the women from carrying large jugs of water or wet laundry on their heads! The dust also causes many skin and respiratory problems. Parasites and malnutrition are abundant as well.

To witness such poverty and basic medical need is heartwrenching. But you soon look past what they don't have to what they do have: huge smiles, generous hearts, and an unparalleled faith and love of God. It is evident in their homes — many have small altars where daily prayer is shared as a family. Their churches are important gathering places in their villages. While none have priests, they rely on "catechistas" for religious formation and prayer services. They joyfully look forward to Mass maybe three times a year with priests who travel to these outlying villages.

We returned each night to the convent exhausted, yet fulfilled, as we shared stories of the wonderful people, counted pills, and readied our medical supplies for the next day. That trip was emotionally and spiritually overwhelming for me.

Bishop Gonzalo de Villa y Vásquez, SJ, Bishop of Sololá-Chimaltenango, Guatemala, celebrates Mass at the dedication of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Chucuca. Concelebrating was Fr. Jack McKone (at left), associate pastor of St. Matthew's Arlington.



Village women return home after a day of working in the fields, demonstrating where the head and body aches the medical team treated originate.

**Background Photo:**

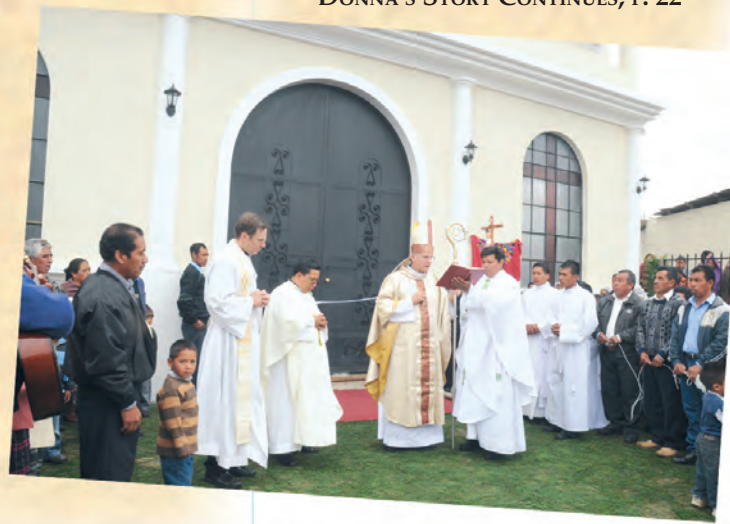
The new church, filled to capacity, holding hundreds of worshippers. The former church held about 80.

Since then, much has changed. Following the lead of St. John the Apostle in North Richland Hills and Immaculate Conception in Denton, who also host trips to Patzun, my own parish, St. Joseph in Arlington, established a parish mission council, which meets once a month to assess needs and plan two to three trips a year. For those who may be interested in mission work, we also host discernments. Upon our return from Patzun, we share information and medicine inventory with the other two parishes, and the next group traveling.

One of the villages we mission to, Chucuca, also has a parish of St. Joseph the Worker. We formed a special bond with them and learned that they had been saving for a new church for 30 years and now had enough to pay for a roof. Their current church held about 75 people, and they have approximately 1,200 people in their parish! We shared this information with our council, and we now had another purpose: to raise about \$60,000 for a new church.

The task was daunting. For the next four years, with the help of our Knights of Columbus, Women's Auxiliary, and various donors, we worked to reach our lofty goal. Although still a long way off, trust in God brought us a miracle. This past January a very generous benefactor offered to pay for the church! Construction started immediately. The money was used for materials only. The villagers, men and women alike, would build the entire church themselves.

DONNA'S STORY CONTINUES, P. 22



## Inside... This issue of the NTC

Our Mother of Mercy Parish's Gospelfest brought together a broad cross section of the Christian community to celebrate and praise God in unity. **8-9**

When Cardinal DiNardo led a crowd of around 800 from an abortion clinic to the Texas death row in Huntsville, they showed Catholic support for life, at all its stages. **12-13**

Columnist Jeff Hedglen helps us understand Advent as a time of darkness waiting for light, of mixed signals and conflicting scenes, still pointing to the coming of the great eternal light, Jesus. **17**

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