

North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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December 7, 2007



NEW CARDINALS — Pope Benedict XVI concelebrates Mass with the new cardinals in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 25. The pope elevated 23 prelates from around the world to the rank of cardinal in a ceremony the previous day. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

Pope elevates 23 cardinals from 14 nations

Group includes U.S. Cardinals Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston and John P. Foley, grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a liturgy that emphasized the church's cultural diversity and its unity of mission, Pope Benedict XVI created 23 new cardinals from 14 countries.

The group included U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley, grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, and Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston.

The pope, presiding over his second consistory, told the new cardinals that he had chosen them to be the "closest advisers and collaborators" of his ministry in

Rome, the church's traditional center.

At the same time, he said, the cardinals' geographical variety reflects Catholicism's global expansion and the fact that today the church "speaks every language of the world."

International groups of pilgrims who packed St. Peter's Basilica for the Nov. 24 consistory added emphasis to the pope's words, applauding, cheering, ululating, and even waving national flags when the new cardinals' names were announced.

The pope made a special appeal for peace in Iraq and said his

naming of Cardinal Emmanuel-Karim Delly of Baghdad, the Chaldean patriarch, was a sign of his closeness to the country's Christian population.

"They are experiencing in their own flesh the dramatic consequences of an enduring conflict and now live in a fragile and delicate political situation," the pope said.

"Together we want to reaffirm the solidarity of the entire church with the Christians of that beloved land and ask prayers for the beginning of the hoped-for reconciliation for all the peoples

SEE TWENTY-THREE..., P. 7

Diocese of Fort Worth passes audit assessing compliance with U.S. bishops' Charter

By Nicki Prevou
Staff Writer

In a letter sent Nov. 9 to all pastors and pastoral administrators within the Diocese of Fort Worth, Bishop Kevin Vann announced that the diocese has passed the 2007 independent audit for compliance with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People," a comprehensive set of guidelines developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002.

"During the week of October 15, 2007," wrote Bishop Vann, "the Gavin Group thoroughly reviewed our Safe Environment records, procedures, and programs and found us to be in compliance with the Charter as required by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops."

Two representatives of the Gavin Group, based in Winthrop, Massachusetts, conducted the audit at The Catholic Center Oct. 15-20, said Ruth Smith, director of

Child and Youth Protection for the Diocese of Fort Worth. "The two representatives met with Bishop Vann, with our chancellor, Father James Hart, and with our vicar general, Father Michael Olson," said Smith. "They also spoke with several of our school principals, members of our diocesan Review Board, and with members of our recently-established Safe Environment Advisory Council," she added.

SEE DIOCESE..., P. 8

People need God to have hope, pope says in new encyclical

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In an encyclical on Christian hope, Pope Benedict XVI said that, without faith in God, humanity lies at the mercy of ideologies that can lead to "the greatest forms of cruelty and violations of justice."

The pope warned that the modern age has replaced belief in eternal salvation with faith in progress and technology, which offer opportunities for good but also open up "appalling possibilities for evil."

"Let us put it very simply: Man needs God, otherwise he remains without hope," he said in the encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (*Saved in Hope*, on Christian hope), released Nov. 30.

The 76-page text explores the essential connection between faith and hope in early Christianity and addresses what it calls a "crisis of Christian hope" in modern times.

It critiques philosophical rationalism and Marxism, and offers brief but powerful profiles of Christian saints — ancient and modern — who embody hope, even in the face of suffering.

The encyclical also includes a criticism of contemporary Christianity, saying it has largely limited its attention to individual salvation instead of the wider world, and thus reduced the "horizon of its hope."

"As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: How can I save myself? We should also ask: What can I do in order that others may be saved?" it says.

It is the pope's second encyclical and follows his 2006 meditation on

Christian love. He worked on the text over the summer during his stay in the Italian mountains and at his villa outside Rome.

The pope said the essential aspect of Christian hope is trust in eternal salvation brought by Christ. In contrast with followers of mythology and pagan gods, early Christians had a future and could trust that their lives would not end in emptiness, he said.

Yet today the idea of "eternal life" frightens many people and strikes them as a monotonous or even unbearable existence, the pope said. It is important, he said, to understand that eternity is "not

SEE PRAYER IS..., P. 14



Pope Benedict XVI signs his encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (*Saved in Hope*, on Christian hope), at the Vatican Nov. 30. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)



UD STUDENTS IN ROME — Students from the University of Dallas, a Catholic university in Irving, applaud during Pope Benedict XVI's general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 28. The pope acknowledged the students in his remarks to English-speaking pilgrims. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Bishop Vann invites us to contemplate the role of Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas

Dear Friends in the
Diocese of Fort Worth,

As we begin the new liturgical year, through the various Advent celebrations and devotions, we can easily see how our Blessed Mother plays such a prominent role in the life of the Church.



Bishop Kevin W. Vann

Since Advent is the time in which we prepare for the birth of Christ it is only appropriate that we reflect on the life and mission of Mary because it is through her that we receive our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

On Dec. 8 we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the United States. Because she was conceived without the stain of original sin she was then the purest and most perfect vessel through which Christ our Lord could come into our world.

The following Wednesday we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. Both last year and only a few weeks ago I

The Blessed Virgin Mary is key in our efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world...

had the opportunity to visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. These have been two of the most important devotional experiences in my life. I ask that all of us make an effort to celebrate this feast day of our Blessed Mother either by participating in one of the eucharistic celebrations and processions or by joining in the traditional prayers and songs of Las Mañanitas. This is truly a grace-filled celebration for us all.

Pope John Paul II requested that this celebration be one for the whole American continent, and not just for Mexico, through his Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*. Let me share this quote from the document:

I welcome with joy the proposal of the Synod Fathers that the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother and Evangelizer of America, be celebrated throughout the continent on December 12. It is my heartfelt hope that she, whose intercession was responsible for strengthening the faith of the first disciples, will by her maternal intercession guide the Church in America, obtaining the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as she once did for the early Church, so that the new evangelization may yield a splendid flowering of Christian life.

As we celebrate this day I wish to focus on the perspective brought to this feast by Pope John Paul II. Mary was present at the first evangelization in Jerusalem and through Mary's maternal intercession the New Evangelization will become more fruitful and effective throughout our Diocese.

In this same apostolic exhortation Pope John Paul II also reminded us that:

The appearance of Mary to the native Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in 1531 had a decisive effect on evangelization. Its influence greatly overflows the boundaries of Mexico, spreading to the whole Continent. America ... recognized in the mestiza face of the Virgin of Tepeyac, "in Blessed Mary of Guadalupe, an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization." Consequently, not only in Central and South America, but in North America as well, the Virgin of Guadalupe is venerated as Queen of all America.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is key in our efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world because she is, and always has been, a sure path to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. Throughout all of Texas, from the time of the first evangelization, the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, has been strongly felt and has been an important path to bring the Gospel to this land.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is a beautiful example of perfect evangelization because she represents the unity

between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the culture of the people to whom the Gospel is proclaimed and to whom she appeared. True evangelization needs to penetrate and become part of the reality of those being evangelized. True evangelization occurs when the Good News of Jesus Christ penetrates culture without being watered down and without any reduction of the impact of the Gospel message.

We will know that our American culture is actually being evangelized when we as a nation begin to welcome the stranger among us, the immigrant who has come to our nation in search of a better life. When we as a nation welcome and celebrate the dignity of every human being, especially the unborn, then we can claim to truly be a nation where the Gospel has been inculturated.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the unborn, calls us to treat every human being with the same joy, love, and respect that we offer the Child in her womb. Next month, January, will offer us more opportunities to march for life with the portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe accompanying us.

I invite you to join me in offering to our Lord Jesus the following prayer taken from the closing words of Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in America*:

Teach us to love your Mother, Mary, as you loved her. Give us strength to proclaim your word with courage in the work of the new evangelization, so that the world may know new hope. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!"

Put your stamp on it: Holiday postage avoids seasonal sticking point

WASHINGTON (CNS) — During the Christmas season, when Christmas displays and the public outcry against them get almost equal billing, the tiny postage stamp dares to push the envelope, so to speak.

While some towns are battling over the use of Nativity scenes in parks, the tiny adhesive squares on billions of letters and packages this December will subtly remind postal workers and mail recipients about Christmas and other religious holidays.

This year the Postal Service has issued more than 2.6 billion holiday stamps. The majority of them are called "holiday knits" featuring Christmas images that look like hand-knit evergreens, snowmen, deer, and teddy bears. The rest of the seasonal stamps feature the Madonna and Child

and commemorate Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Muslim festivals.

According to a 2007 press release by the Postal Service, the Madonna and Child stamp has been a U.S. tradition since 1978. What it doesn't describe is the road it took to get there.

The series actually got its start in 1966, four years after the first Christmas stamp debuted with a wreath, two candles, and the words "Christmas 1962."

The first religious Christmas stamp owes its origin in part to the lobbying efforts of the late Anthony Coviello, a parishioner at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Waterbury, Connecticut.

The 1966 stamp, "Madonna and Child With Angels," started a trend of Christmas stamps featuring Renaissance paintings. The series was interrupted in 1977 when

the Christmas stamp featured a praying George Washington.

The next year the Postal Service resumed the Madonna and Child stamps, and the series has continued ever since, with a close call to stop production in 1995.

When a Postal Service advisory committee voted to replace the Madonna and Child stamp with a Victorian-era angel, a flurry of negative reaction from public interest groups and even then-President Bill Clinton, prompted an immediate reversal.

And in 2007, the Madonna and Child stamp is still sticking to its spot in the right corner of millions of pieces of mail. This year's "Madonna of the Carnation" is a detail of a Bernardino Luini painting of the same name from around 1515 and housed in Washington's National Gallery of Art.



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ADVENT SEASON — An Advent wreath is depicted in a stained-glass window at Christ the King Church in Commack, New York, Nov. 25. Advent, which began Dec. 2 this year, is a joyful period during which Christians prepare for the commemoration of Christ's birth. The wreath is a main symbol of the season, with a new candle lit each Sunday before Christmas. (CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemitz, LONG ISLAND CATHOLIC)

U.S. province of Holy Cross Sisters drops age restrictions

MERRILL, Wisconsin (CNS) — Spurred on by the vitality of their elderly sisters and the congregation's motto that "The need of the times is the will of God," the Holy Cross Sisters have dropped the age restriction that prevented women over 50 from being considered for entrance to the congregation.

"When we look at the energy and vitality of our elderly sisters ... we know that for us retirement has a very different meaning because there is always something that draws us to bring the good news to others, even at the age of 90."

— Sister Celine Goessl

tion and formation personnel to rethink and rewrite the criteria for entering the community.

Sister Kathy Wiesneski, director of vocations, said members of the congregation had seen around them "women of many ages who are seeking the 'will of God' in vowed religious life."

"Women tend to be able to productively work and minister longer," she added.

Each case will be considered separately as congregation members seek to help older women discern the possibility of a call from God to serve in the church at this stage in their lives.

Founded in Switzerland in 1856 as the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, the congregation now has more than 4,000 Holy Cross Sisters and Associates worldwide.

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Responding to God's Call

Vocation awareness — Texas Catholic roots: How did we arrive?

By Father Kyle Walterscheid

Christ arrived in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, but how did Christ arrive in Texas?

As Catholics poured into Texas from 1850 to 1900, I was always taught that they brought their own priests and sisters with them. Am I wrong?

As I mentioned in my previous column, the facts show that Catholics arrived from Europe and the Eastern United States in droves and often found their only support by bonding with others of their own ethnicity and language. Ironically, they came without their priests, searching for a better life. They likely assumed that their church, with her many priests and sisters, would already be here.

At the time, Texas was untamed and on the frontier. There were no highways, no easy or quick way to travel. Mother Nature was often harsh and relentless. Disease and death would come in cycles in the form of cholera and yellow fever. Yet, the people overwhelmingly pressed on as they saw God providing them with a land of their own and a land of opportunity.

It was the tireless godly labor of a few priests, sisters, and bishops that brought real consolation to the Texas

Catholic souls. In 1840, Father Jean Marie Odin, a French Vincentian priest, was given the task of establishing a new diocese in Texas. When he arrived in Texas, he saw hundreds of Catholics flooding into the state and yet only five or six priests, who were spread out from Houston, Galveston, Nacogdoches, San Antonio, and down to Laredo and Brownsville, trying to shepherd the souls residing in the vast territories.

On March 6, 1842, Fr. Odin was ordained a bishop at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans and was appointed as the vicar apostolic (placed in charge) of Texas. Two years after returning to Texas, moving with great urgency, Bishop Odin journeyed to Europe to find religious orders who were interested in participating in the missionary work in Texas.

From Ireland, three priests volunteered; from Germany, two; and several priests, seminarians, and sisters of the Ursuline order in France joined too. By the time Texas joined the United States in 1846, Bishop Odin still had only 11 priests serving Texas, as several had died during epidemics while faithfully serving the people of God.

In 1853, however, Bishop Odin secured a commitment from a French order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to supply the Brownsville area with priests, adding six priests that year. By 1861, when Bishop Odin became the archbishop of New Orleans, 40 priests were working in the diocese where Catholics had built

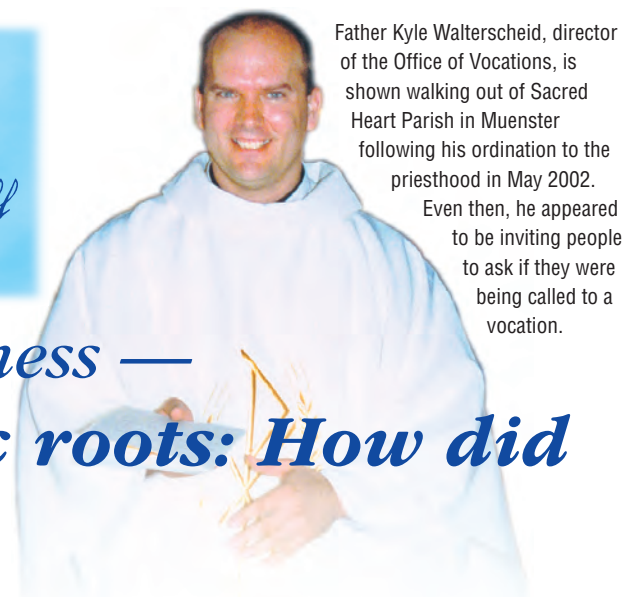
45 churches, five boys' schools, three girls' schools, two colleges, and one seminary. Bishop Claude Dubuis, Bishop Odin's successor in 1861 and also a native of France, recruited an additional 30 priests and religious from Europe in 1866.

Thus, in those first decades of Texas, most religious priests and sisters were personally recruited in Europe by Texas (French) bishops, while some religious orders were recruited from Canada, Mexico, and other U.S. states.

By this measure, the French, the German, and the Irish of 19th century Europe were better in recruiting Catholic vocations than we are today, as they supported and supplied thousands of sisters and priests who volunteered to serve in foreign missions. May Texans in the 21st century be able to return the favor of missionaries, as Western Europe now struggles with religious vocations.

The real solution for us Texans today is for us to take charge in praying fervently for religious vocations while we vigorously promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life from within our own communities and families. The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few.

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



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

Continuing education grants available to those in active ministry

Deadline for applications is Jan. 17

Persons who have been actively involved in ministry within the Diocese of Fort Worth for two years or longer and who are planning study programs that are in service of that ministry are invited to apply to the diocese for educational grant assistance.

Made available through the generosity of the people of the diocese, a sum of \$20,000 is allotted for distribution again this year. Applications must be submitted to Lucas Pollice, director of the Department of Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth, and must be postmarked no later

than Jan. 17.

Applicants will be asked to specify their intended course of study, its place and cost, and any other financial aid that they expect to obtain. A pastor's or supervisor's signature is required, as is information that will help establish financial need.

The applications will be processed through the diocesan

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 grant agreement indicating subsequent steps of the process. That agreement must be returned by April 1, and checks will be sent out between May 1

and May 15.

To receive an application, contact The Catholic Center by calling (817) 560-3300 ext. 260, or e-mail to lpollice@fwdioc.org. Forms may also be downloaded from the diocesan Web site at www.fwdioc.org by clicking on Ministry Preparation link, and then choosing Continuing Education Grants.

Ministry Formation Day in Fort Worth will be held Jan. 5

"Encountering the Living Christ" is the theme of the diocesan Ministry Formation Day, to be held Jan. 5 at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. The event is an opportunity for enrichment, fellowship, and development of practical skills for ministry.

Ministry Formation Day will begin at 8 a.m. with registration and the viewing of exhibits. Bishop Kevin Vann will welcome the participants at 8:45 a.m., and a brief prayer service will follow.

The English-language keynote address, to be offered at 9:30 a.m., will be presented by Mike Patin, a Catholic motivational speaker from Lafayette, Louisiana. The Spanish-language keynote, which will begin at 10:45 a.m., will be presented by Father Nathan Stone, SJ, from Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House.

During the English keynote address, a breakout session with Spanish-language workshops will be held, and while the Spanish keynote is offered, English-language workshops will take place. There also will be two more rounds of workshops offered in the afternoon, the first beginning at 12:45 p.m. and the second at 1:55 p.m. Workshops will also be offered in the Vietnamese language.

Ministry Formation Day will conclude at 3 p.m.

All involved in parish or school ministry are welcome to attend. The cost, which includes lunch, is \$20 per person prior to Dec. 22; after that date, the cost is \$25. Scholarships are available. For more information, call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-3300 or visit the diocesan Web site at www.fwdioc.org.

FOCUS to hold 2008 student leadership conference in Grapevine

The Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) will hold the 2008 National Student Conference Jan. 2-6 at the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, located at 1501 Gaylord Trail in Grapevine.

Convention speakers include Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR; sports star Mike Sweeney; author Jeff Cavins; and Eduardo Verastigui, star of the film "Bella." The Christian rock group Third Day will also perform.

Founded in 1998, FOCUS is a national student outreach organization serving both secular and Catholic college campuses. According to the organization's leaders, FOCUS "brings the teachings of Christ and the faith and moral traditions of the Catholic Church to college students and gives them the tools to help share those teachings with their friends and family."

The FOCUS conference is open to all young adults, campus ministers, priests, and members of religious orders. For a complete list of speakers and registration information, visit online at www.focusconference.org.

Cardinal Newman Institute to offer course on Catechism of the Catholic Church

"A Walk Through the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," a 10-week course offered by the Cardinal Newman Institute, will begin Saturday, Jan. 5, and will be held in the Holy Family Life Center at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington. Sessions will be held from 9 a.m. to noon.

According to course organizers, the sessions will provide participants with the opportunity to "re-visit or become acquainted with this great gift the church gave us some 13 years ago. Its appeal is not only to the mind, but also the heart, as one discovers the beauty and reasonableness of our faith that is so richly presented."

Sessions may be audited or may also be taken for credit toward certification in the institute's theological studies program. College credit is also available through the College of St. Thomas More in Fort Worth. Catholic school teachers and religious education directors/coordinators are offered half-tuition scholarships to defray course tuition of \$200.

Participants may register at the Jan. 5 class. For more information about required materials or to pre-register, call (817) 277-4859 or e-mail to cni.info@yahoo.com.

Program on 'Defending the Church' to be presented by John Martignoni

Nationally recognized speaker John Martignoni, known for his unique approach to apologetics, will present "Defending the Church" at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington, Saturday, Jan. 26. The event will begin with check-in and continental breakfast between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. and will conclude at 2:30 p.m.

Promotional material for the event describes the day as an opportunity to gain skills in using apologetics as a way of learning "how we can defend the one, holy, catholic, [and] apostolic church using Scripture as the primary reference. With these tools we can go out into the world and feel confident in sharing our Catholic faith with others." The program is suitable for all Catholics of junior high age and older.

John Martignoni is founder and president of the Bible Christian Society, a nonprofit Catholic apostolate based on education and evangelization. He has been a guest on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) and currently hosts EWTN Radio's Open Line, which can be heard locally each Monday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Catholic Radio KATH 910 AM.

There is no charge for attending the event. Optional box lunches are available for \$6 per person if ordered prior to Jan. 16. To register or for more information, contact John Cox at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226 or visit the parish Web site at www.smgparish.org.

People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



YOUTH MASS — More than 200 Catholic teens and youth leaders from several parishes within the northwest portion of the diocese gathered Sunday, Nov. 18, for a vibrant youth Mass and social, held at Holy Family of Nazareth Church in Vernon. Cheyenne Marrinan, volunteer coordinator of youth ministry at St. Mary Church in Henrietta, described the unity that was shown by the young people as amazing and "a wonderful experience to witness." The youth of the region are building on this unity by starting a social outreach project to collect soccer balls for injured Iraqi children; Bryan Webb, coordinator of youth ministries for Holy Family, will accept soccer balls and pumps through Dec. 15 and may be contacted at (940) 839-6604. The next liturgy for youth of the northwest parishes will be celebrated Feb. 17 at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Wichita Falls. For more information, contact Cheyenne Marrinan at (940) 781-7648 or e-mail to cmarrinan21@yahoo.com.

Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

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

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

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

Lay Carmelites invite others to join twice monthly gatherings

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

Those interested are asked to gather at 1:45 p.m. in the rectory chapel of St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 509 W. Magnolia Avenue in Fort Worth. Formation will take place from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the school building. For more information, call Phyllis Poth at (817) 457-1746.

North Texas Catholic 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. 21 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Dec. 12. Items for the Jan. 11 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 2.

Faith and Fiction group to meet Dec. 13

"Faith and Fiction: Conversations on Spirituality and Imagination," a venue for discussing novels and films with themes that shed light on the journey of faith, will meet Thursday, Dec. 13, at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in Fort Worth. The topic of discussion will be the film "Joyeux Noel," directed by Christian Carion.

The film is to be shown at 5 p.m. with a potluck supper to be served during the movie. The discussion session will begin at 7 p.m. and conclude at 8:30 p.m.

Future dates and topics include the following: Jan. 17, *The Book Thief*, by Markus Zusak; Feb. 21, *84 Charing Cross Road*, by Helene Hanff; and March 27, *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Bronte.

To ensure good conversation, space will be limited. To reserve a spot or for more information, call the Catholic Renewal Center at (817) 429-2920 or e-mail to danluby@udallas.edu.

Holy Family Advent celebration to include singer Jesse Manibusan

"Reflect and Rejoice!" an Advent celebration for the whole community featuring singer/songwriter Jesse Manibusan, will be presented Sunday, Dec. 16, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Holy Family Parish, 6150 Pershing Avenue in West Fort Worth.

An internationally recognized musician, storyteller, and Catholic evangelist, Jesse Manibusan will be sharing an Advent message of hope through words and song. A "cookies and cocoa" reception will follow.

"Take some time this Advent season to celebrate with the whole family!" encourage organizers.

There is no charge for admission, and all are welcome. For more information, contact Genni Sayers at (817) 737-6768 ext. 109.

Retrouvaille weekend Jan. 18-20 to offer help for hurting marriages

A Retrouvaille weekend, part of a program which offers help to married couples who are struggling in their relationship, will take place Jan. 18-20 in the Metroplex area. Offered through the Family Life Office of the Diocese of Fort Worth, Retrouvaille is a three-month process which combines a live-in weekend with post-weekend follow-up sessions.

Through the Retrouvaille program, couples who are distanced in their relationship learn how listening, forgiveness, and communication are powerful aids for building a loving and lasting union. All names and conversations will be kept confidential.

To register or for more information, call 1 (800) 470-2230, or visit online at www.retrouvaille.org.

Deaf Ministry Program announces Advent, Christmas activities

Members of the deaf and hearing-impaired community within the Diocese of Fort Worth will have the opportunity to participate in an Advent reconciliation service, to be held Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel at St. John the Apostle Church, located at 7341 Glenview Dr. in North Richland Hills. Father Ken Robinson, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Muenster, will be available for one-on-one confessions in sign and voice (English and Spanish). Family members are also welcome to participate.

Additionally, members of the deaf and hearing-impaired community will gather Wednesday, Dec. 19, in the Formation Center at St. John the Apostle Church at 7 p.m. to assist the parish social service department with a holiday project. Parents, adults, and children are welcome to participate.

The 8 p.m. Dec. 24 Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Church, located at 861 Wildwood Lane in Grapevine, will be interpreted in sign language. Special seating for the deaf and hearing-impaired will be reserved in the front right pews. Family members and friends are invited to join the community in celebrating the Christmas Eve liturgy.

For more information, contact Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, at mcinatl@fwdioc.org or by calling (817) 284-3019 (voice and TTY). More information may also be found on the diocesan Web site at www.fwdioc.org, by clicking on Deaf Ministry under the Pastoral Services icon.

'Celebration of Catholic Schools' to be held Jan. 26 in downtown Fort Worth

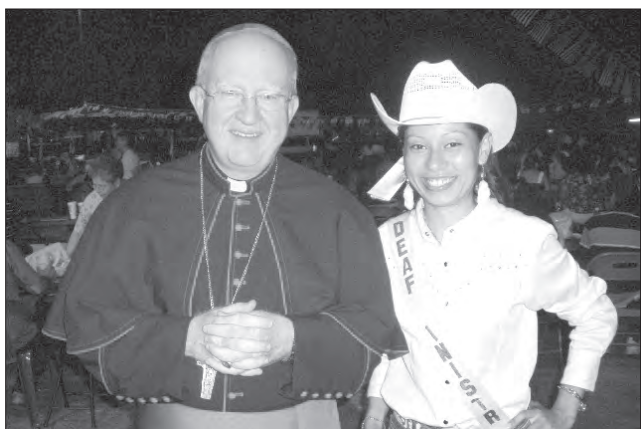
The 21st annual diocesan "Celebration of Catholic Schools" will be held Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom in downtown Fort Worth. The event will begin with a social hour at 6 p.m.; dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

A keynote address will be offered by Dr. Elinor Ford, recipient of the 2007 NCEA Seton Presidential Award.

The event is an opportunity to honor those people who have dedicated their lives in support of Catholic Schools. Twenty local honorees, each chosen by their representative diocesan Catholic school, will be recognized for the significant contributions which they have made in furthering the success of their school. This year's diocesan honorees, who will be receiving the 2008 Diocesan Leadership Award at the banquet, are the TOR Franciscan communities.

Tickets are available at a cost of \$75 per person. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Bishop's Scholars Fund. For more information, visit the diocesan Web site at www.fwdioc.org, then click on the Catholic Schools link; or contact Tessa Ross at (817) 560-2452 ext. 280.

People and Events



REPRESENTING DEAF MINISTRY — Yuri Castillo, pictured here with Bishop Kevin Vann, was a contestant in the Diez y Seis de Septiembre Fiesta celebration held at All Saints Church in North Fort Worth, Sept. 15-16. The young woman represented the Deaf Ministry Program in the event, in which she competed for the title of Queen. Castillo participated in many activities in conjunction with the fiesta, which included sponsoring fundraisers for the church; decorating a parade float and participating in two community parades; and learning folkloric dances which she and the other contestants performed at the fiesta. "Yuri gained a great deal of confidence by participating in this event," said Mary Cinatl, director of the Deaf Ministry Program, "and brought great pride to our community. The deaf community is very proud of her and her wonderful accomplishments."

St. Augustine Men's Purity Group meets weekly

The St. Augustine Men's Purity Group, a support group for men who struggle with sources of sexual impurity such as those found on the Internet, meets regularly at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller, in Room 213, and at the Padre Pio House, 1301 Paxton in Arlington. Those men interested in attending one of the upcoming sessions are asked to consult the group's Web site, www.sampg.com, for specific meeting dates and times.

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

Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Jan. 24

The next monthly meeting of the Fort Worth Diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities, and Their Families will be held Thursday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

Father Warren Murphy, TOR, coordinator of the ministry, encourages those interested to "come join us for prayer and sharing."

For more information, contact Fr. Murphy at (817) 927-5383 or Deacon Richard Griego at (817) 421-1387.

Notre Dame conducting study of American pastors

The University of Notre Dame, in conjunction with the Institute for Educational Initiatives, is conducting a national survey of pastors with oversight of Catholic schools. The current study seeks to explore and understand pastors' needs, perceptions, and attitudes as they pertain to Catholic schools and Catholic education.

According to a statement by Father Ronald Nuzzi, director of Notre Dame's ACE Leadership Program, the study will replicate elements of two previous national studies of pastors and respond to elements of the Notre Dame Task Force Report on Catholic Education.

Pastors with oversight of a Catholic school and who wish to participate in the study are encouraged to contact Fr. Nuzzi by e-mail to pastors@nd.edu or by phone at (574) 631-7730.

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.

Adoption orientation to be offered Dec. 12 in Dallas

The Maternity and Adoption Services of Catholic Charities of Dallas is seeking Christian families to adopt children, ages newborn through 18. These children are currently in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services. To learn more about this opportunity, an

informational session will be offered Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m. in the first floor conference room at the Catholic Charities offices, located at 3725 Blackburn in Dallas.

For more information, call Linda Christianson at (214) 526-2772 ext. 112.

'Fair trade' coffee house and chocolate tasting set for Jan. 11 at St. Michael's

All are invited to come to the parish hall at St. Michael Church, 3713 Harwood Road in Bedford, Friday, Jan. 11, between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., to taste a variety of "fair trade" coffees and chocolates.

Participants at the event will also have an opportunity to learn about Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and how the international organization assists coffee and cocoa farmers, their families, and communities in several countries, including Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Uganda, and Vietnam.

Participants may RSVP by calling (817) 283-8746 ext. 30, so that adequate amounts of coffee can be prepared. Childcare is available free of charge by advance reservation by calling (817) 283-8746 ext. 31.

For more information about CRS Fair Trade policies and products, visit the organization's Web site at www.crsfairtrade.org/coffee.

Catholic Life accepting scholarship applications

Catholic Life Insurance has announced that applications are now being accepted for the 2008 All American Scholar Program. Thirty non-renewable college scholarships, in the amount of \$1,000 each, will be given to graduating senior high school students. Applicants must be members of the Catholic Life Insurance program.

Scholarship recipients must demonstrate outstanding abilities in their academic achievement, leadership skills, and community service. Eligible seniors must be enrolled as full-time students in any private or public college, university, or trade school, beginning in the fall of 2008.

All applications must be received by March 1; scholarship winners will be announced in May. Interested individuals may obtain an application by contacting Catholic Life at (800) 292-2548, or by visiting online at www.cliu.com.

Beginning Experience Weekend to be held Feb. 22-24

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. Beginning Experience weekends are designed to allow participants to put closure on the past, and to create a new beginning in the present.

The next Beginning Experience weekend will be held Feb. 22-24 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth.

For more information, call metro (972) 601-4091 or send an e-mail to the Dallas-Fort Worth BE team at dfwbe@hotmail.com.



ST. MARTIN OF TOURS FEAST — On Nov. 9, children of Notre Dame School in Wichita Falls joined with children of the German School, a school for the children of the German pilots in the NATO training program at Sheppard Air Force Base, to celebrate the feast of St. Martin of Tours. The German School, which has facilities on the Notre Dame campus, hosted a traditional lantern-lit parade, complete with St. Martin on horseback. A few of the Notre Dame students are shown displaying their hand-made paper lanterns, as they wait for the parade to begin. "Notre Dame is privileged to have the German School on their campus and is fortunate to join in many of their celebrations..." says Marilyn Putthoff, first grade teacher, adding that the German students are invited to many Notre Dame events, as well.

Young adult women invited to learn about Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal

The Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, a religious order of women based in New York, will serve as the featured presenters at a gathering to be held at the Campus Ministry Center for the University of North Texas and for Texas Woman's University in Denton. The gathering will take place Dec. 11 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the center, located at 1303 Eagle Drive in Denton.

Janet Wolf, who serves as campus minister at the center, urges young adult women to come to meet and pray with the sisters, saying, "Find out how a former Olympic athlete and a music major found the love of their lives in the eyes of the poor. If you are a single woman between the ages of 18 to 35, we invite you to attend this unique event. Bring a friend!"

For more information about the event, call Janet Wolf at (940) 566-0004.

St. Maria Goretti Parish to host New Year's Eve party

St. Maria Goretti Parish, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington, will host its annual New Year's Eve party Monday, Dec. 31, in the parish's Family Life Center. The doors will open at 6:45 p.m., and a buffet dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m.

Among the evening's activities will be dancing, drawings by a caricature artist, door prizes, and a midnight toast. Beverages will be provided; attendees are also welcome to bring their own.

The cost is \$20 per adult (no children, please). Reserved tables are available. Tickets will be available until Dec. 22; no tickets will be sold at the door.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Michelle at (817) 795-3459 or e-mail to smg.parties@sbcglobal.net. To order by mail, send check to: M. Licater, 1861 Brown Blvd., Ste. 740, Arlington 76006.

New Year's Eve Dance to be held at St. Joseph's in Arlington

The Catholic Divorce Ministry, formerly known as the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, will be sponsoring a New Year's Eve Dance, to be held Monday, Dec. 31, at St. Joseph Church, 1927 S.W. Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington. The dance, which is being hosted by St. Joseph's Singles Ministry, will take place from 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

DJ music will be by Charlie V. Productions. Light snacks will be provided.

Everyone is invited to attend this dance in a "welcoming atmosphere," according to organizers. A donation of \$15 per person is requested. For more information, call Greg Mills at (817) 456-6750 or Vince Chairez at (817) 896-5726 or (817) 551-5251.



ACADEMIC MEET — St. Mary's School in Gainesville recently announced that its students received first place honors at the North Texas Independent League (NTIL) academic meet, held Nov. 16 at North Central Texas College. St. Mary's score was 537 points, surpassing scores of 462 by Immaculate Conception School in Denton and 360 by Sacred Heart School in Muenster, second and third place winners, respectively. St. Mary's School had 57 students from grades 2 through 8 participate in the meet, which included competitions in the areas of math, reading, writing, listening skills, art memory, and many others. The St. Mary's students are pictured showing off their medals and ribbons after the successful day.



Above: U.S. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston receives the red biretta from Pope Benedict XVI during the consistory in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 24. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)



Above: U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley receives the red biretta from Pope Benedict XVI during the consistory in St. Peter's Basilica Nov. 24 at the Vatican. (CNS photo/L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)

Cardinal DiNardo calls on flock to be energetic disciples like Mary

By Cindy Wooden

ROME (CNS)—Celebrating a Mass of thanksgiving in his "favorite church in Rome," Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston asked his family, friends, and flock to be energetic disciples like Mary was.

The congregation burst into applause when Cardinal DiNardo told them that, when he greeted Pope Benedict XVI after a Nov. 26 audience at the Vatican, the pope said "Texas needs a cardinal."

Joined by his brother and sister, friends from Pennsylvania and Ohio, and hundreds of pilgrims from Texas, the cardinal celebrated Mass Nov. 27 in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, which he said was "my favorite church in Rome since the day I walked in here in 1972 as a first-year student at the [Pontifical] North American College," the U.S. seminary in Rome.

Cardinal DiNardo said the basilica is a place where one is overwhelmed by beauty and serenity, rather than by majesty and space. It is the beauty of the story of God becoming human in Jesus Christ when Mary said yes, he said.

In the Gospel of Luke, he said, "everyone is always on a journey and traveling," beginning with



Pilgrims hold a Texas flag as they wait to enter a special audience with Pope Benedict XVI Nov. 26 at the Vatican. Catholics from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston were on hand to see their archbishop become a cardinal at the Nov. 24 consistory. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Mary who goes to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, almost immediately after the angel Gabriel proclaims she will give birth to Jesus.

"Everything about the Virgin Mary in the Gospel of Luke is dynamic. There are people who have said that somehow the Virgin Mary is passive. You could never get that from the Gospel. There is always energetic acceptance" of God's will in her life and her action, he said.

"Mary is our queen and our mother," Cardinal DiNardo said. "She is the energy of the church.

I beg you to stay close to her as she keeps pushing us in her Magnificat to magnify the Lord and to do his will."

Cardinal DiNardo and his group were welcomed to the basilica by Cardinal Bernard F. Law, the former archbishop of Boston who serves as archpriest of St. Mary Major. In addition to offering his prayers for Cardinal DiNardo, he also asked the congregation to pray for the success of the Middle East peace conference taking place in Annapolis, Maryland.

Cardinal Foley says St. Sebastian is reminder of defending faith

By John Thavis

ROME (CNS) — Celebrating Mass where St. Sebastian was killed under Roman persecution, U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley said the third-century martyrdom should remind modern Christians of the importance of defending one's faith.

St. Sebastian was executed because he refused to renounce his Christian beliefs to the Emperor Diocletian, Cardinal Foley said. Today his witness is a lesson in how pagan civilizations pass from the scene, he said.

"False religions will die. The true religion endures. No one can

kill the true faith," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Foley celebrated Mass Nov. 27 in the Church of St. Sebastian on the Palatine, which was symbolically placed under his pastoral care as part of his elevation to cardinal.

The church, whose founda-

tions date back at least to the 10th century, stands amid the ruins of imperial Roman residences. It was built on the site of ancient Rome's Temple of the Unconquered Sun.

The small interior was packed with pilgrims from Cardinal Foley's native Philadelphia, including friends, relatives, and former classmates.

The cardinal greeted them all from the altar and said it amazed him to think that even his eighth-grade teacher, Sister Elizabeth Gorvin, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, was in Rome to help him celebrate.

Sr. Gorvin said afterward that she never thought her young student would become a cardinal, but that he really hadn't changed much.

"He was the same then as he is now: a very simple, very nice person, with a great sense of humor," she said.

Also in attendance were white-robed members of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the chivalric order of which Cardinal Foley was made grand master earlier this year.

In his sermon, Cardinal Foley explained the story of St. Sebastian, who is usually depicted

in paintings as pierced with arrows. But according to tradition, the saint recovered from those wounds — only to defy the emperor again when asked to repudiate Christianity.

Roman soldiers then clubbed him to death and threw his body in a ditch near the site of the church. His body was eventually moved to the catacombs, but the tradition of worshipping at the place of his martyrdom goes back at least 1,000 years.

"Isn't it impressive?" Cardinal Foley said. "May we remain as faithful to Jesus Christ as did St. Sebastian and those Christians who have worshipped here over the centuries."

Among those who joined him for the Mass was Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia. The rector of the church, Father Alvaro Cacciotti, warmly welcomed the new cardinal and told him he should feel at home.

The church, which is mainly used today for weddings and retreats, holds about 90 people. Cardinal Foley said lack of funds and Rome building restrictions prevent making it any bigger.

He invited those in attendance to come back and join him for liturgies, but "in groups of no more than 50."



Above: U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley prepares to sign a document at the Church of St. Sebastian on the Palatine in Rome Nov. 27. Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia is pictured second from the right. The church was symbolically placed under Cardinal Foley's care as part of his elevation to cardinal. A titular church in Rome is designated for each new cardinal. (CNS photo/Alessia Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)

Far right: A Swiss Guard stands at attention as a cardinal arrives for a special Mass with the new cardinals at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Nov. 25. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters)

Right: New U.S. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo is greeted by other cardinals after receiving the red biretta from Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Basilica Nov. 24 at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Tony Gentile, Reuters)



Left: Pope Benedict XVI leads prayer during his meeting with the College of Cardinals Nov. 23 at the Vatican. The meeting was attended by 120 cardinals and the 23 churchmen the pope inducted into the college the following day. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Left: U.S. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston (center) sits among other new cardinals at a special audience with Pope Benedict XVI in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican Nov. 26. The audience was held for the 23 new cardinals, their family members, and friends. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Twenty-three elevated to cardinal

FROM PAGE 1
involved," he said.

During the consistory, each cardinal knelt as the pope placed on his head a red three-cornered hat, called a biretta. The pope told them the color was not only a sign of the cardinal's dignity, but also a visible reminder of their readiness to act with courage "even to the point of shedding your blood" in order to help spread the Christian faith.

Cardinal Delly, 80, received the biggest applause when he approached the altar to receive his red hat; the pope gave him the classic round hat of a Chaldean patriarch instead of a biretta.

Pope Benedict, wearing a gold cape and seated on a gilded throne, smiled as he watched the cardinals adjust their hats and receive the congratulations of the veteran cardinals, who filled the front of the basilica.

Cardinal Foley, a 72-year-old native of Philadelphia, spent many years as a Catholic journalist before being named to head the Pontifical Council for Social Communications in 1984. In June he was made head of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, a chivalric organization that responds to the needs of Catholics in the Holy Land.

Meeting reporters afterward, Cardinal Foley said he appreciated the great number of warm and positive articles about him in recent days.

"It's nice to be canonized without the inconvenience of dying," he quipped.

Cardinal DiNardo, 58, was the second-youngest of the new cardinals. He is the first cardinal from a Texas diocese, and his nomination was considered a sign of Pope Benedict's attention

to the growth of the Catholic Church in the U.S. Southwest.

"It's an honor, a responsibility, and pretty humbling for this kid from Pittsburgh," Cardinal DiNardo said of his elevation to the rank of cardinal.

Besides the U.S. and Iraq, other new cardinals came from Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Northern Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Poland, Senegal, and Spain.

Of the 23 new cardinals, 18 were under the age of 80 and therefore eligible to vote in a conclave. Those over 80 included Franciscan Cardinal Umberto Betti, 85, who processed into the basilica in a wheelchair; when he was given his red hat by the pope, whom he has known for more than 40 years, he appeared to be overwhelmed with emotion.

The consistory left the College of Cardinals with 201 members, a new record. Of those, 120 are under age 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave.

In his sermon, the pope underlined that being a cardinal was not about power and success, but a new form of service.

"True Christian greatness, in fact, lies not in dominating but in serving," he said. This is the ideal that should guide the cardinals in their new role, he said.

Each of the new cardinals was assigned a church in Rome as a symbol that they were becoming members of the clergy of Rome and were more closely bound to the bishop of Rome, the pope.

Cardinal Foley was given the Church of St. Sebastian on the Palatine Hill. Cardinal DiNardo received the Church of St. Eusebius, one of the city's oldest churches, on the Esquiline Hill.

The consistory liturgy had

been planned for St. Peter's Square, but was moved inside the basilica when bad weather was forecast. The overflow of several thousand people had to watch the consistory on big TV screens in the square. The crowd included a visitor from Houston who held a U.S. flag on a long pole.

In the end, it did not rain during the consistory. The pope walked out to the steps of the basilica afterward and extemporized a talk to those who waited outside.

Among those in the square was a large contingent from Senegal — many of them now living in Italy — who came to cheer Cardinal Theodore-Adrien Sarr of Dakar. They wore T-shirts with the cardinal's name and picture on the front and the phrase, "Where can we go, Lord?" written on the back in French.

Alphonse Mendy, a native of Dakar, said the nomination was especially important for the African country because it put the spotlight on the minority Catholic population in a country that is more than 90 percent Muslim.

After the consistory, the cardinals scattered to various receptions throughout the day, including a big open house held in the late afternoon in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

The next day, the pope celebrated Mass with the new cardinals and gave them each a gold ring to symbolize their special bond of communion with Rome.

The day before the consistory, the pope presided over a meeting with cardinals and cardinals-designate for discussions that focused on the state of the church's ecumenical dialogues.

Contributing to this story were Cindy Wooden and Carol Glatz.

Diocesan

Diocese found in compliance with 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People'

FROM PAGE 1

The auditors also spent time working with Smith and with diocesan Victims Assistance Coordinator Judy Locke, noted Smith. "We shared with the auditors the materials we use in our safe environment trainings and seminars; they examined the records for the background checks that are done on employees and volunteers within our parishes and schools, and they reviewed the extensive records that are kept to ensure the protection of young people and vulnerable adults in our parishes and schools," said Smith.

The Diocese of Fort Worth's original policies, which addressed the matter of sexual misconduct by clergy, religious, or lay leaders, were first adopted in 1993 and were further updated in 2002 to bring diocesan policies into accord with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People." The Charter was created by the U.S. bishops with the goal of preventing the sexual abuse of minors within the church.

The previous audit was held 18 months ago, explained Judy Locke. "This is our fourth audit since the Charter was adopted in 2002," she said, noting that the Diocese of Fort Worth has been found in compliance with the Charter during each audit. "The first three audits were held every 12 months, but the 18-month period was planned by the bishops as a way of giving us a more long-range perspective. The auditors' role is to see how we have been responding to victims and to examine the methods that we have put in place to protect all people in our faith communities, particularly our children."

The most recent audit was an opportunity for the diocese to share information about the safe environment training and orientation that is now being offered in schools and parishes for children and teens, said Locke. "The material that we use with

"The auditors reviewed our statistics, our record keeping process, and they spoke with many different individuals. I believe the audit results are a real sign to all members of our diocese that we are taking the work to protect our young people very seriously."

— Bishop Kevin Vann

our young people is superb," she added, noting that the programs were all written in cooperation with Praesidium, an organization that has worked extensively with the diocese in offering safe environment training.

A benefit of the audit process is the valuable advice and suggestions given by the auditors, added Locke. "Most of the individuals connected with the Gavin Group have been involved with law enforcement or other kinds of investigative work," she explained. "Additionally, the auditors have

been to many other dioceses, so quite often, they provide us with ideas that are helpful. There's a definite sense that we are all working together as a team to protect all individuals within our parish and school communities."

All audits in dioceses and eparchies across the United States will be completed by the middle of December, and the Office for Child and Youth Protection with the USCCB will then publish a comprehensive report of all audit results, said Locke.

Thanks to the hard work that is done by schools and parish staffs to keep comprehensive records and to comply with requirements for screening and for training programs, the auditors who met with Bishop Vann in October were "extremely complimentary about the Diocese of Fort Worth and our efforts to continue protecting God's children," said Bishop Vann. "The auditors were also very complimentary of all of our staff. The auditors reviewed our statistics, our record keeping process, and they spoke with many different individuals. I believe the audit results are a real sign to all members of our diocese that we are taking the work to protect our young people very seriously."

Special Collection: Catholic Communications Campaign

Parish Name	Parish Location	Communication Campaign August 2006	Communication Campaign August 2007
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Abbott	107.00	114.00
Jesus of Nazareth	Albany	197.00	151.00
Holy Redeemer	Aledo	726.27	514.10
Most Blessed Sacrament	Arlington	2,328.84	2,149.57
St. Joseph	Arlington	2,450.20	2,451.90
St. Maria Goretti	Arlington	1,923.00	1,448.00
St. Mary the Virgin	Arlington	137.00	0.00
St. Matthew	Arlington	253.25	635.00
St. Vincent de Paul	Arlington	705.50	425.24
Vietnamese Martyrs	Arlington	2,494.00	0.00
Holy Trinity	Azle	478.00	566.00
St. Michael	Bedford	2,020.00	1,755.00
St. Jerome	Bowie	50.00	0.00
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Breckenridge	334.40	281.88
St. John the Baptizer	Bridgeport	252.01	542.24
St. Jude Thaddeus	Burkburnett	277.00	286.25
St. Ann	Burleson	745.00	1,434.00
St. Catherine of Siena	Carrollton	1,661.00	1,746.00
Holy Rosary	Cisco	101.00	111.00
St. Joseph	Cleburne	349.13	0.00
Holy Angels	Clifton	46.00	185.00
Good Shepherd	Colleyville	733.00	705.00
Holy Cross	The Colony	277.00	325.00
Sacred Heart	Comanche	163.00	0.00
St. Joseph	Crowell	22.00	0.00
Assumption/Blessed Virgin Mary	Decatur	558.63	803.25
Our Lady of Guadalupe	De Leon	0.00	0.00
Immaculate Conception	Denton	286.00	1,037.00
St. Mark	Denton	1,911.50	1,914.25
St. Mary	Dublin	472.00	297.00
St. Francis Xavier	Eastland	68.00	58.00
St. Paul	Electra	0.00	0.00
All Saints	Fort Worth	1,966.31	1,447.11
Christ the King	Fort Worth	249.00	267.00
Holy Family	Fort Worth	1,543.00	1,403.00
Holy Name of Jesus	Fort Worth	108.00	304.00
Immaculate Heart of Mary	Fort Worth	2,436.68	2,431.00
Our Lady of Fatima	Fort Worth	1,238.00	889.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Fort Worth	1,854.50	1,582.00
Our Mother of Mercy	Fort Worth	103.00	252.00
San Mateo	Fort Worth	263.00	36.00
St. Andrew	Fort Worth	1,569.21	3,128.69
St. Bartholomew	Fort Worth	3,332.22	4,573.16
St. George	Fort Worth	605.00	695.00
St. John the Apostle	Fort Worth	930.67	918.00
St. Mary of the Assumption	Fort Worth	351.00	308.00
St. Patrick Cathedral	Fort Worth	2,310.00	2,782.00
St. Paul	Fort Worth	816.50	813.55
St. Peter the Apostle	Fort Worth	365.00	534.00
St. Rita	Fort Worth	124.00	97.00
St. Thomas the Apostle	Fort Worth	1,216.42	1,625.26
St. Mary	Gainesville	216.00	227.78
St. Rose of Lima	Glen Rose	156.25	217.91
St. Francis of Assisi	Graford	0.00	0.00
St. Mary	Graham	0.00	0.00
St. Frances Cabrini	Granbury	1,386.00	903.00
St. Francis of Assisi	Grapevine	1,527.00	0.00
St. Mary	Henrietta	60.00	0.00
Our Lady of Mercy	Hillsboro	299.44	443.00
Korean Catholic Community	Hurst	0.00	0.00
Christ the King	Iowa Park	0.00	0.00
St. Mary	Jacksboro	46.60	49.50
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Keller	2,966.00	2,653.00
Santa Rosa	Knox City	74.00	36.00
St. Philip the Apostle	Lewisville	2,449.85	2,727.15
St. Peter	Lindsay	1,193.50	1,731.55
St. Jude	Mansfield	338.00	890.60
St. Mary of the Assumption	Megargel	45.00	0.00
Our Lady of Lourdes	Mineral Wells	132.25	482.72
St. William	Montague	0.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Morgan	103.00	99.70
Sacred Heart	Muenster	1,614.26	4,453.00
St. Joseph	Nocona	45.00	0.00
St. Theresa	Olney	0.00	0.00
Nativity/Blessed Virgin Mary	Penelope	136.00	71.00
St. Thomas Aquinas	Pilot Point	160.00	215.00
St. Mary	Quanah	41.00	112.00
St. Rita	Ranger	66.00	50.00
St. Joseph	Rhineland	185.00	73.00
St. Boniface	Scotland	52.50	47.00
Sacred Heart	Seymour	115.00	0.00
St. Brendan	Stephenville	145.51	154.47
St. John	Strawn	131.00	56.00
St. John	Valley View	0.00	0.00
Holy Family of Nazareth	Vernon	246.00	259.00
St. Stephen	Weatherford	1,350.00	1,669.00
Immaculate Conception of Mary	Wichita Falls	540.00	0.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe	Wichita Falls	0.00	927.04
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Wichita Falls	529.61	672.25
Sacred Heart	Wichita Falls	660.00	521.00
St. Mary	Windthorst	550.57	534.00

61,068.58 64,297.12

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



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Sr. Bonaventure Mangan, SHSp, co-founder of Cassata High School, dies at age 93

Sister Mary Bonaventure Mangan, SHSp, a former associate superintendent of Catholic schools and a co-founder of Cassata High School, died at age 93 at Holy Spirit Convent in San Antonio Nov. 29. The funeral Mass was celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Holy Spirit Convent in San Antonio. Interment was at the cemetery located at the Holy Spirit Convent in San Antonio.

Known as "Sr. Bonaventure," the legendary educator was born in County Limerick, Ireland, Jan. 19, 1914, and joined the congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate in 1932. After receiving degrees from the University of Incarnate Word and St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Sr. Bonaventure taught in various schools administered by her congregation in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

She served as principal of Our

Mother of Mercy School in Fort Worth from 1962 to 1975 and as associate superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth from 1974 to 1983. In 1975, working with Sister Mary Venard Fulbright, SSMN, she co-founded Cassata Learning Center, an alternative school designed to meet the students' needs through nontraditional, personalized education. She worked at the school — now known as Cassata High School — until her retirement in 1998.

Sr. Bonaventure "opened her arms and heart to all and inspired us to be better persons," said longtime friend Jody Lancarte of Joe T. Garcia's Mexican Restaurant in Fort Worth. "She was an amazing woman who was ahead of her time. She thought that working hard would answer every problem."

Sr. Mary Fulbright called Sr. Bonaventure "an excellent educator who had a passion for inclusiveness.... [She] made every person whom she met feel special."

Sr. Bonaventure and Sr. Fulbright were in Fort Worth in April 2005 at a special 30th anniversary

celebration of Cassata High School, during which the two co-founders of the school were honored with a city proclamation. A multipurpose area of the school was also formally named the "Bonaventure-Fulbright" meeting room as part of the festivities.

Sr. Bonaventure richly deserved all the praise that she received, said Cassata High School President Sal Espino, who has served at Cassata for the past year. Espino and his wife visited Sr. Bonaventure at her convent in San Antonio this summer, he said.

"I have never met a more charismatic, a more spiritual person than Sr. Bonaventure," said Espino. "Her mind was perfectly clear, and she recounted a great deal of her life story to us. She continued to be very proud of Cassata, and she definitely still had the same passion about the students. She wanted to know all about the school and about our young people."

Calling his meeting with Sr. Bonaventure "one of the most wonderful experiences of my life," Espino said that more than

3,500 youth have graduated from Cassata over the past 32 years, "and her spirit is still alive at the school, as each child is still treated with absolute dignity and respect. Back in 1975, there weren't too many alternative high schools, as there are now. What she started was a pioneering effort to reach out to every young person in need of another option, another chance."

Sister Miriam Mitchell, SHSp, superior general for the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate, agreed that Sr. Bonaventure had a profound impact on many lives, including her own, saying that Sr. Bonaventure was "an inspiration" to her during the years that the two nuns served together at Our Mother of Mercy School in Fort Worth. "She had such a commitment to education, and to providing opportunities for those that needed help," said Sr. Mitchell.

"Sr. Bonaventure was very mentally alert until very recently," explained Sr. Mitchell. "She was very fragile, but it was only in the last few weeks that she had become much more frail. Until just a few weeks ago, she



Sister Mary Bonaventure Mangan, SHSp

was with us at Mass every single morning and at rosary and prayer every afternoon. She was, again, just such an inspiration until the very end."

Sr. Bonaventure is survived by two sisters, Sister Rosaline Mangan of England, and Bridie Kiely of Ireland, and one brother, John Mangan of Washington state, as well as numerous relatives and friends.

Memorial contributions may be made to Cassata High School, 1400 Hemphill Street, Fort Worth 76104, or to the Ministries of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, 301 Yucca Street, San Antonio 78203-2351.

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Viewpoints

Jesus Christ, Our True Compass

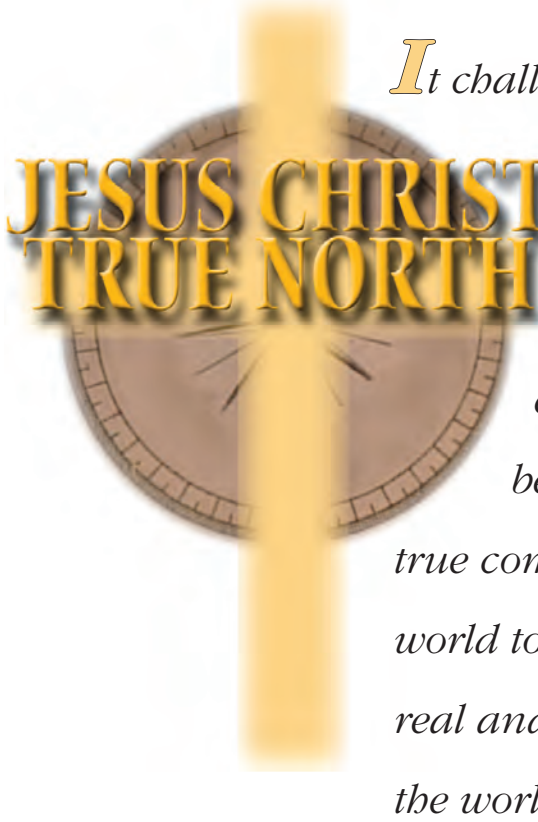
By Lucas Pollice

As we enter into the season of Advent, we are reminded of the powerful words of St. John the Baptist, "Prepare the way of the Lord and make straight his paths" (Matthew 3:3). This passage expresses what is at the heart of this season of Advent: to make the path to Christ smooth and free of all obstacles that may keep us from loving, knowing, and serving him.

Advent is the time set aside by the Church that calls us to remember that Jesus Christ is our true compass, for he shows us the way to the Father and the way to eternal life. During Advent, we not only prepare our hearts for the celebration of the first coming of Christ in the Incarnation, but for Christ's second coming for which we wait in great hope and anticipation. Thus, Advent calls us to examine our lives and to make an account of how we can grow to be more effective witnesses of hope and God's love and presence in the world, and the reality of his kingdom already established and working in our time through Christ and his Church.

Last week, Pope Benedict XVI gifted the Church with his second encyclical letter entitled *Spe Salvi* or *In Hope We are Saved*. In this marvelous work, the pope stresses the importance that as Christians, we are a people of hope, and that hope in Christ is especially witnessed in our daily lives. Benedict stresses that Christians are unique witnesses of hope because through our victory in Christ, we know that through all times and circumstances Christ remains the compass that guides us to eternal life and a destiny in the kingdom to come, a kingdom that is beyond our greatest hopes and dreams.

The Holy Father also warns against the threats to hope in our world, especially atheism, which in many ways continues to have a growing impact in the secular humanist culture which is especially pervasive in the Western World. Thus, Pope Benedict stresses all the more the importance of Christians to be a living and compelling witness to the hope that Christ offers to the entire world. He states:



It challenges us to demonstrate hope active and visible in our daily lives and examples, that we become like Christ, true compasses who point our world to the reality that God is real and present, working in the world every day.

Here too we see as a distinguishing mark of Christians the fact that they have a future: It is not that they know the details of what awaits them, but they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness. Only when the future is certain as a positive reality does it become possible to live the present as well. So now we can say: Christianity was not only "good news" — the communication of a hitherto unknown content. In our language we would say: The Christian message was not only "informative" but "performative." That means: The Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known — it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life (IN HOPE WE ARE SAVED, 2).

With all this in mind, Bishop Vann has asked me to comment on the release of the movie "The Golden Compass" this weekend. No doubt there has been a lot of press lately about this movie and its supposed anti-Christian elements. But it does not take much research to find out quickly that this movie, and especially the series of the children's books from which it is derived, does indeed pose a serious threat to the faith and values of our children and youth. In fact, *The Golden Compass* is the first in a trilogy of books for children entitled *His Dark Matters* by English author Philip Pullman, a professed atheist who openly admits that "My books are about killing God." Pullman also admits that he

despises C.S. Lewis' classic Christian-based series *The Chronicles of Narnia* and offers his series as the "anti-Narnia" to give the atheist perspective of reality. The movie itself is a watered down version of the first book with the same title which is actually the least offensive of the three books. Pullman's hopes are that the movie "The Golden Compass" will spark an interest in the books just in time for Christmas. The other two books in the series, entitled *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*, contain even more explicit and serious attacks against the idea of God and the Church and feature a young girl in an epic struggle against an evil and controlling Church called the "Magisterium." This struggle ultimately concludes with the death of the "Authority," a very close depiction of the Christian God who is portrayed throughout the books as a weak, insecure, and ultimately ineffective character. Though I simply don't have time here to get into the long list of other serious issues in these books that are clearly against Christian belief and morality, in a Nov. 14 interview with Zenit International, Pete Vere summarizes the disturbing elements featured throughout this series of books:

It's not OK for children — impressionable as they are — to read stories in which the plot revolves around the supreme blasphemy, namely, that God is a liar and a mortal. It is not appropriate for children to read books in which the heroine is the product of adultery and murder; priests act as professional hit men, [and] torturers and authorize occult experimentation on young children; an ex-nun

engages in occult practices and promiscuous behavior, and speaks of it openly with a 12-year-old couple; and the angels who rebel against God are good, while those who fight on God's side are evil. This is wrong. And while it's been softened in the movie — or at least that's what Hollywood is telling us — it's still there in the books.

What should our Catholic response to this be? For one, we should make our voices heard in the marketplace and not support this kind of attack against our faith. And certainly these books have no business being in the hands of our children.

This attack on Christian faith also points to the importance of catechesis, especially in the family, so that we and our children are not swept away by such winds that attempt to blow us to and fro in our culture today.

But ultimately, I think it challenges us, especially in this season of Advent. It challenges us to be witnesses of hope. It challenges us to demonstrate hope active and visible in our daily lives and examples, that we become like Christ, true compasses who point our world to the reality that God is real and present, working in the world every day. It challenges us to witness to the fact that life itself is the true gift of a Father whose love knows no bounds. If we as followers of Christ are not real and convincing witnesses of hope, then who will be?

In his new encyclical, our Holy Father challenges us to be this compelling witness of hope:

Our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: How can I save myself? We should also ask: What can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well (IN HOPE WE ARE SAVED, 48).

Thus, as we follow the true compass, Jesus Christ, we are led and lead others toward that fulfillment for which all humanity hopes — found only in the joy of eternal life!



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 four children, Cecilia, Nicholas, Timothy, and Christian.

Stem cells from skin cells

The Holy Grail of reprogramming

By Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk

The recent discovery that regular old garden-variety skin cells can be converted into highly flexible (pluripotent) stem cells has rocked the scientific world.

Two papers, one by a Japanese group, and another by an American group, have announced a genetic technique that produces stem cells without destroying (or using) any human embryos. In other words, the kind of stem cell usually obtained by destroying embryos appears to be available another way.

All that is required is to transfer four genes into the skin cells, triggering them to convert into pluripotent stem cells. It has been called "biological alchemy," something like turning lead into gold. Many are hailing "cellular reprogramming" as a breakthrough of epic proportions, the stuff that Nobel prizes are made of, a kind of Holy Grail in biomedical research.

As important as this advance may prove to be scientifically, it may be even more important to the ethical discussion.

It offers a possible solution to a longstanding ethical impasse and a unique opportunity to declare a pause, maybe even a truce in the stem-cell wars, given that the source of these cells is ethically pristine and uncomplicated. As one stem-cell researcher put it recently, if the new method produces equally potent cells, as it has been touted to do, "the whole field is going to completely change. People working on ethics will have to find something new to worry about."

Thus, science itself may have devised a clever way to heal the wound it opened back in 1998 when human embryos began to be sought out and destroyed for their stem cells. Dr. James



Genetic modifications in skin cells, shown here, were created by a scientific team from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and may negate the need for stem-cell research involving human embryos.

(CNS photo/courtesy of Junying Yu, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Reprogramming provides patient-specific stem cells as well, but without using women's eggs, without killing embryos, and without crossing moral lines.

Thomson (whose 1998 work ignited the controversy, and who also published one of the new breakthrough papers) acknowledged just such a possibility in comments to reporters: "Ten years of turmoil and now this nice ending."

Whether this nice ending will actually play out remains to be seen, but a discovery of this magnitude, coupled with a strong ethical vision, certainly has the potential to move us beyond the contentious moral quagmire of destroying human embryos.

Change never comes easily, however, and before we can really change, we need to see the reasons why we should change.

Each of us is, incredibly, an embryo who has grown up. This biological fact stares researchers in the face every time they choose to "disaggregate" a human embryo with their own bare hands. It makes many researchers edgy, touching them on some deeper level of their being. It makes many Americans queasy and eager to find alternatives.

Dr. Thomson, who has overseen the destruction of numerous embryonic humans himself, had the honesty to acknowledge this fact in comments he made to the *New York Times* recently: "If human embryonic stem-cell

research does not make you at least a little bit uncomfortable, you have not thought about it enough."

Reprogramming eliminates these ethical concerns even as it offers a highly practical and straightforward technique for obtaining pluripotent stem cells. As Dr. Thomson himself put it, "Any basic microbiology lab can do it, and it's cheap and quick."

Reprogramming is also important because it provides an alternative approach to "therapeutic cloning," a complex and immoral procedure used to obtain patient-specific stem cells. Reprogramming provides patient-specific stem cells as well, but without using women's eggs, without killing embryos, and without crossing moral lines.

The sheer practicality of the new reprogramming approach, coupled with its ethical advantages, really make it a no-brainer. Yet despite all these advantages, a number of voices can be heard arguing that the bio-industrial-complex emerging around destructive human embryo research must be safeguarded and expanded. There are at least three reasons for this.

First, the financial investment that has already been made in this arena

SEE FR. TAD, P. 22



The

Handwriting is on the Wall when the Omniscient Narrator of the Christmas Letter meets the 'Somewhat Less than Honest' Narrator

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

During Advent, scriptural readings remind us to awake, prepare, and be ready. Ironically for us, who plan for Christmas in secular as well as spiritual ways, it is the preparation that keeps us awake.

In the hours sometimes reserved for slumber, we find ourselves unpacking decorations, reading recipes, and typing holiday letters, usually written from the All-Knowing Narrator point of view, light-heartedly or sentimentally telling our friends and families what we have achieved all year.

Thank God there is no All-Knowing Narrator writing letters in our house. My choice for writer would be an Almost-Truth-Telling, Relatively-Unaware Narrator. He might write: "Kathy continued her busy schedule of quietly performing charitable outreach to the community, visiting shut-ins and reading to small, neglected children, while still managing to study oil-painting, the Russian language, and jazz dancing. She volunteered four days a week at a food bank, worked full time in a university that named her 'most indispensable person EVER,' and she never arrived anywhere late."

The All-Knowing Narrator, on the other hand, would be compelled to write: "Kathy lived contentedly with a small, overly energetic dog, whose unrelenting yip brought them a certain notoriety in the neighborhood. Kathy always washed the kitchen floor whenever the bottom of her white socks became the same color as her breakfast toast, and was thrilled to realize her house hadn't burned down, that time she accidentally left a scented candle burning all night. She also was thrilled she had scraped her car on the carport only three times all year."

After holiday letters comes another pre-Christmas task, unpacking decorations. I acknowledge this would not take place if we were living in a liturgically correct household, where we would decorate at the end of Advent. Modern cultural folkways, however, bring most of us to tree lots and discount stores early, as we ready our homes for the holidays, and the parties and family visits that accompany them.

This year, while staying awake and preparing, I opened a dozen tree ornaments and nativity scene pieces that had been carefully wrapped in a bag labeled: "Bro-

SEE HAMER, P. 22

Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art, at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, features Christian and Jewish art dating from the third to the sixth centuries. This unparalleled exhibit will be on display through March 30, 2008.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BEGINS TO TELL THE STORIES OF FAITH IN ART

By *Nora Hamerman*
Correspondent
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

A 'PILGRIMAGE' TO THE EARLIEST CHRISTIAN ART

It's a visual and intellectual treat for all Christians, but especially for Catholics: "Picturing the Bible," the exhibit of the earliest Christian art that opened Nov. 18 at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth.

This is the first exhibit that seeks "to illuminate how and why the new faith was given visual form." Scholars used to judge the earliest Christian art as part of the "decline of the Roman empire," but the curators of this show see the period from 200 to 600 AD as one of lively innovation. Many artists who carried out Christian commissions had been trained in Classical art. But the artists also drew upon the legacy of Jewish culture and reinterpreted Old

Testament heroes as symbols of sacred doctrine.

The 100 or so sculptures, ivory carvings, vessels, lamps, gems, books, and glass objects take the visitor back on a journey to the world of our Christian forebears from the first three centuries of persecution, to the new challenges that came after the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in 313.

To interpret the works, the curators turned to a closer reading of sacred Scripture

and also the early Church Fathers like Clement, Tertullian, Ambrose, and the brilliant convert whom Ambrose brought to the Catholic faith — St. Augustine. Those writers used "exegesis," a technique of interpreting the Old Testament in the light of the Gospel that has come down to us in the order of readings in the Catholic Mass.

New archeological finds are helping to fill out the picture, too.

Some of the most startling new clues come from tiny gems and coins, proving, for example, that images of the crucified Christ existed before Constantine. No one knows why the first Christian artists seemed to avoid representing the Crucifixion, a theme that was central to the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers. Perhaps some school child who sees this show will solve that puzzle some day.

What remains tells an amazing story. First are the catacomb paintings, represented by a set of photos taken a century ago under Vatican auspices and hand-colored by an artist, replicating the brilliant

The Ascension, from the Rabbula Gospels, Syria, 586; vellum. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence (Cod. Plut. I. 56, Fol. 13v)

Gold glass medallion with bust of Christ, Rome, late 4th century, The Trustees of the British Museum, London



pigments that have since faded in the actual catacombs. In large part devoted to illustrating Old Testament scenes or giving three-dimensional form to the image of Christ as Good Shepherd, third century Christian art was not aimed at telling a story, much less at "decorating," but at expressing symbolic meanings found in well-known tales. Daniel, Noah, and Jonah, seen over and over, foretold the death and resurrection of Christ.

DIVINE AND EARTHLY POWER

Progressing from the section on "the emergent Christian art" to "the Christian Empire," we discover that the ideas expressed in many of these treasures have a message for us today — for example, about the relationship between divine power and political power. One key piece (it does not photograph well: go to the Kimbell and see it) is a silver box discovered under the high altar of the church of San Nazaro in Milan, Italy.

The scenes on the four sides of the box illustrate biblical examples of the exertion of power — the judgment of Solomon, Joseph recognizing his brothers in Egypt, the three youths in the fiery furnace, and the homage of the three kings to the Christ Child. On the lid, Christ is shown in the guise of a Roman emperor teaching his disciples. Taken all together, the imagery celebrates "the divine majesty by whose grace imperial

power is granted," in the words of the catalogue entry.

This silver casket is so exquisitely carved that for decades many scholars thought it was a work of the Italian Renaissance. Modern scientific analysis shows that it is a work of the fourth century. In fact,

it was likely commissioned by the great St. Ambrose, a man who knew all about balancing religious and secular power.

Ambrose's feast day, Dec. 7, marks a turning point in Catholic history. Although most saints are celebrated on the day of their death, it was his ordination as



Reliquary Cross of Justin II, the Crux Vaticana, Constantinople, 568-74; gilded silver over a bronze core, with inlaid gems. Treasury of Saint Peter's (Capitolo di San Pietro in Vaticano), Vatican City.

bishop of Milan that happened on Dec. 7, probably in 374. Ambrose was a wealthy 33-year-old lawyer, the son of a prominent family, and imperial governor of Milan, the second-most important city in Italy. By then, Christianity was the official religion of the empire, yet many Romans, especially aristocrats, were still pagans.

Moreover, the Catholic faith was defied, especially in northern Europe, by the Arian heresy which denied the divinity of Christ. The bishop of Milan supported the Arian view, as did the emperor. When the bishop died, a riot broke out in Milan cathedral between Catholics and Arians. As governor, Ambrose rushed to the site and called on both sides for restraint. The people acclaimed him as their new bishop, even though Ambrose was not baptized. Forced to accept the post by the emperor, Ambrose not only quickly underwent baptism but gave up all his worldly goods and set about mastering theology and spirituality.

Ambrose became the great defender of Catholic orthodoxy against the Arians, and yet he refused to allow civil law to be used to persecute the heretics, believing instead in reason and moderation. Perhaps this was why the silver casket highlights the story of the judgment of Solomon, a rare subject in early Christian art: The enthroned monarch, endowed with heaven-sent wisdom, saves a child's life by appealing to a mother's love.

For Catholics, a visit to this show offers a spiritual pilgrimage, bringing us close not only to the spirit of Jesus, the Apostles, and the Church Fathers, but even to their physical presence. While most of the pieces have lost their original relics, the bejeweled golden Reliquary Cross of Justin II (sixth century), still holds a fragment of the True Cross.

THE KIMBELL ASSEMBLED AN HONORARY INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY of scholars, clergy, and museum officials to consult on "Picturing the Bible." **Bishop Kevin W. Vann** was among those consulted. Others consulted were **Sir John Boardman**, Emeritus Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology, Oxford University; **Professor Francesco Buranelli**, Director General of the Vatican Museums, Vatican City; **Professor Johannes G. Deckers**, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich; **Professor Robin Margaret Jensen**, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville; **Professor Herbert L. Kessler**, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; **Neil MacGregor**, Director, The British Museum, London; **Dr. Timothy Potts**, Director, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth; and **Professor Gemma Sena Chiesa**, Università degli Studi, Milan.

Ewer with Jesus Healing the Blind Man and the Traditio Clavium, Rome, late 4th century; silver. The Trustees of the British Museum, London

Ivory plaque with Pilate washing his hands; Christ bearing the cross; and Peter denying Christ, Rome, c. 420-30, from the Maskell ivories. The Trustees of the British Museum, London



A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The Kimbell Art Museum is the only venue for this extraordinary gathering of objects from collections in Greece, Italy, Algeria, Britain, France, and Germany as well as the U.S. Some are kept in diocesan treasuries rarely seen by the public. So many precious objects came from the Vatican, that these generous loans needed approval from the highest level, directly under the Holy Father.

There were once hundreds of illustrated Bibles dating from this period. Of the very few that remain, this exhibit has two: the fabulous Rabbula Gospels, containing one of the first images of Christ crucified; and what is left of the Cotton Genesis, a book that once contained some 600 pictures of the first book of the Bible. Although it was tragically

destroyed in an 18th century explosion, you will be able to see a few charred fragments and two watercolor copies that evoke its original beauty.

So unique is this exhibition that Sister Wendy Beckett, the 77-year-old English Carmelite nun whose enthusiastic appreciation of art has been featured in series on PBS and the BBC, made a special trip to Fort Worth and the Kimbell Nov. 30 to take it all in. And she did this, according to an article in the Dec. 1 *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, despite restrictions on her travel, bad knees, and the necessity of viewing the exhibit from a wheelchair.

In the *Star-Telegram* article by staff writer Gaile Robinson, Sr. Wendy is quoted, commenting on the early third-

century sculpture, "Statuette of the Good Shepherd," as saying, "Early Christians loved the Good Shepherd. They were an endangered people and protection mattered. Here you have this beautiful, strong, young Jesus caressing that sheep that he has lifted onto his shoulders.... We forget that at the beginning people didn't have the certainties that we have," she's quoted as saying. The earliest Christians, she continues, were groping to articulate their faith in a time when "there wasn't a church in the sense that we have it. The Scriptures weren't settled yet. There was no creed...."

The Kimbell Art Museum is located at 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd. in Fort Worth. For more information on times of opening, admission and special events, call (817) 332-8451 or visit www.kimbellart.org.

Book cover with scenes from the life of Jesus, northern Italy, second half of the 5th century; ivory with central figures of gilded-silver cell work inlaid with garnets. Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano e del Museo del Duomo, Milan



Prayer is 'school of hope,' pope says in new encyclical

FROM PAGE 1

an unending succession of days in the calendar, but something more like the supreme moment of satisfaction."

"It would be like plunging into the ocean of infinite love, a moment in which time — the before and after — no longer exists," he said. This is how to understand the object of Christian hope, he said.

The encyclical's main section examines how the emphasis on reason and freedom — embodied in the French revolution and the rise of communism — sought to displace Christian hope. Redemption was seen as possible through science and political programs, and religious faith was dismissed as irrelevant and relegated to a private sphere.

While praising Karl Marx for his great analytical skill, the pope said Marx made a fundamental error in forgetting that human freedom always includes "freedom for evil," which is not neutralized by social structures.

In the same way, the pope said, those who believe man can be "redeemed" through science and technological advances are mistaken.

"Science can contribute greatly to making the world and mankind more human. Yet it can also destroy mankind and the world unless it is steered by forces that lie outside it," he said.

The pope said that while Christians have a responsibility to work for justice, the hope of building a perfect world here and now is illusory. Hopes for this world cannot by themselves sustain one's faith, he said.

"We need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God," he said.

The second half of the encyclical discusses how Christian hope can be learned and practiced — particularly through prayer, acceptance of suffering, and anticipation of divine judgment.

The pope called prayer a "school of hope," and as an example he held out the late Vietnamese Cardinal Francois Nguyen Van Thuan, who spent 13 years in prison, nine of them in solitary confinement.

In this "situation of seemingly utter hopelessness," the fact that he could still listen and speak to God gave him an increasing power of hope, the pope said.

He emphasized that prayer should not be isolating and should not focus on superficial objectives. Nor can people pray



Pope Benedict XVI signs his encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (Saved in Hope, on Christian hope), at the Vatican Nov. 30. Archbishop Fernando Filoni, Vatican assistant secretary of state, is at right. (CNS photo/L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO via Reuters)

against others, he said.

"To pray is not to step outside history and withdraw to our own private corner of happiness," he said.

"When we pray properly we undergo a process of inner purification which opens us up to God and thus to our fellow human beings as well," he said.

Suffering is part of human existence, and the sufferings of the innocent appear to be increasing today, the pope said. He said Christians should do whatever they can to reduce pain and distress.

Yet suffering cannot be banished from this world, and trying to avoid anything that might involve hurt can lead to a life of emptiness, he said. Instead, Christians are called to suffer with and for others, and their capacity to do so depends on their strength of inner hope, he said.

"The saints were able to make the great journey of human existence in the way that Christ had done before them, because they were brimming with great hope," he said.

The pope recalled that in the not-too-distant past, many Christians would "offer up" to Christ their minor daily disappointments and hardships. Perhaps that practice should be revived, he said.

The pope said the idea of judgment — specifically the Last Judgment of the living and the dead — touched strongly on Christian hope because it promises justice.

"I am convinced that the question of justice constitutes the essential argument, or in any case the strongest argument, in favor of faith in eternal life," he said.

It is impossible for the Christian to believe that the injustices of history will be the final word, he said.

The Last Judgment should not evoke terror, however, but a sense of responsibility, the pope said. It is a moment of hope, because it combines God's justice and God's grace — but "grace does not cancel out justice," he said.

"[Grace] is not a sponge which wipes everything away, so that whatever someone has done on earth ends up being of equal value," he said. "Evildoers, in the end, do not sit at table at the eternal banquet beside their victims without distinction, as though nothing had happened."

The pope said the idea of purgatory, as a place of atonement for sins, also has a place in the logic of Christian hope. Heaven is for the "utterly pure" and hell for those who have destroyed all desire for truth and love, but "neither case is normal in human

life," he said.

Thus, the souls of many departed may benefit from prayers, he said.

The pope began and ended his encyclical with profiles of two women who exemplified Christian hope. The closing pages praise Mary for never losing hope, even in the darkness of Jesus' crucifixion.

The encyclical opens by describing a similar sense of hope in a 19th-century African slave, St. Josephine Bakhita, who after being flogged, sold, and resold, came to discover Christ.

With her conversion, St. Bakhita found the "great hope"

that liberated and redeemed her, the pope said.

The pope emphasized that this was different from political liberation as a slave. Christianity "did not bring a message of social revolution," he said, but something totally different: an encounter with "a hope stronger than the sufferings of slavery, a hope which therefore transformed life and the world from within."

To view the papal encyclical in its entirety, go to the Vatican Web site at www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm and click on the link "Encyclical Letter, *Spe Salvi*."

Advent is a good time to rediscover hope, read the encyclical, says pope

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI began Advent by summarizing his latest encyclical on Christian hope and encouraging people to read it.

The time before Christmas is a good period to rediscover the hope that Christ brought to human history, which can "change one's life," the pope said Dec. 2, the first Sunday of Advent.

He said he wrote his second encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (Saved in Hope, on Christian hope), for the entire church and for all people of good will. The 76-page text was released at the Vatican Nov. 30.

Addressing pilgrims at his noon blessing, the pope said the essence of Christian hope was an awareness of God and "the discovery that he has the heart of a good and merciful father." Christ's life and death gave God's love a human face, he said.

Emphasizing a point he made in his encyclical, the pope said modern science holds out much that is good, but "cannot redeem humanity."

"The development of modern science has increasingly confined faith and hope to a private and individual sphere, in such a way that today it is clear, sometimes dramatically clear, that man and the world need God — the real God — and otherwise remain without hope," he said.

On Dec. 1, presiding over

an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said Advent was the time to understand that Christian hope is not "vague and illusory" but is embodied in Jesus Christ.

The days leading up to Christmas can be a time of spiritual reawakening, a reminder that Christ "does not stop knocking at our door," he said.

The pope said he tried to make clear in his encyclical that Christianity brought something new to the pagan societies of old, but he added that it also spoke to the "paganism of our days."

Contemporary paganism, the pope said, is a "nihilism that corrodes hope in the human heart, leading the person to think that nothingness reigns inside and outside of himself: nothing before birth, nothing after death."

The Christian perspective, on the contrary, is that hope makes sense as the human response to a loving God, he said.

"What else moves the world forward, if not the trust that God has in man?" he said.

"This trust is reflected in the hearts of little ones, of the humble, when despite everyday problems and trials they try to do their best and accomplish that little bit of good which, however, in the eyes of God is a great deal: in the family, the workplace, in school, and in various sectors of society," he said.

South Texas community gives immigrant cemetery a touch of dignity

By Paula Goldapp
Editor, *South Texas Catholic*

SARITA, Texas (CNS)—There is little evidence of dignity in the deaths of the undocumented men, women, and children found among the South Texas cactus and brush over the past few decades.

Despite the circumstances that prompted them to cross the U.S.-Mexican border and regardless of their legal status in the eyes of the government, Father Piotr Koziel said lending dignity to their final resting place is "the right thing to do."

Seven years ago the priest made his first trip to Sarita Cemetery, located off a dirt road on the Kenedy Ranch. The site, overgrown with grass and weeds, impacted him in such a way that he recruited others to return and remember those who died in the area but were never identified.

Now each year in preparation for the Nov. 2 feast of All Souls' blessing of the graves, a group cleans the site and makes improvements to the area where the dead are all but forgotten.

But many of them live on in the memory of Rafael Cuellar Jr., born and reared in Sarita, and a 34-year law enforcement veteran who retired in 2000.

Just as remembering the dead is part of Fr. Koziel's job as pastor of St. Gertrude Parish in nearby Kingsville, Cuellar said his job as constable, deputy sheriff, and finally sheriff included retrieving



Father Piotr Koziel, pastor of St. Gertrude Parish in Kingsville, leads a Nov. 2 blessing of the graves of unidentified undocumented immigrants who died in South Texas after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Members of the Kingsville community cleared brush from Sarita Cemetery, which is off a dirt road on the Kenedy Ranch in South Texas. (CNS photo/Paula Goldapp, SOUTH TEXAS CATHOLIC)

the dead from the brush lands of Kenedy County.

"It was awful to see what I have seen," said Cuellar, who estimated that he buried more than 70 people at the cemetery during his tenure.

Last year, the U.S. government recorded the deaths of more than 450 who died while making their way through South Texas. The numbers dropped by about 100 for 2007. Dehydration, exposure to the extreme heat in the summer, and unexpected cold in the winter are among the factors that lead to death.

For Cuellar some of the most devastating deaths were those of people killed by trains in the middle of the night.

"They sleep on the tracks because they are afraid of snakes,"

he told the *South Texas Catholic*, newspaper of the Corpus Christi Diocese. Using a rail for a pillow, they fall asleep and become disoriented when awakened by the sound and blinding lights of the oncoming train.

Cuellar is no longer physically active because of complications from diabetes, but he said he wishes he still had the ability to search the brush. "I still think there are a lot of people out there, dead or dying," he said.

This year's cleanup of the cemetery involved a group of students from St. Gertrude School who gathered with their pastor and other members of the community to offer their prayers and labor for the dead.

Others participants were students from the Catholic student

organization and Baptist student union at Texas A&M University in Kingsville.

Meanwhile, a handful of parishioners made wooden forms in the shape of crosses and then poured concrete to make sturdy headstones to replace wooden ones. The elementary school students from St. Gertrude put a white coat of paint on each new cross.

On Nov. 2, many who had helped with the cleanup attended the blessing. After Scripture readings and a moment of silent prayer, Fr. Koziel blessed each grave with holy water. St. Gertrude students followed him, placing rosaries and flowers on the headstones.

"These are our brothers and sisters," said Armando Castellano, a junior at Texas A&M and

a member of the Catholic student organization there. "You know how much they suffered."

Castellano said it is common to meet those who have recently crossed the border on the streets of Kingsville. He added that the ones he has encountered are "very prayerful," and he believes "that's what got them here."

"I liked blessing the graves and praying for the people so they could go live in peace in heaven," said Josephine Bartolazo, a fourth-grader at St. Gertrude.

Sixth-grader Derek Valerio added, "I feel sorry for the people that died and that their family doesn't know it." His classmate, Matthew Hewitt, said, "It felt good to do something for them to help them."

Fr. Koziel said he had no doubt about the importance of his parishioners being involved in this essential work of mercy and hopes more people become involved in the ministry. And he said it is not the ones they pray for who are helped the most.

"They are dead and with God. It helps us, and we realize that we take a lot for granted," said the priest, a native of Poland, who feels that many immigrants are often misrepresented in the media.

"The way it's presented makes them look like they are all drug dealers and murderers." He said those people "have better ways of getting across. They are not the ones we find in Kenedy County."

French bishop says people today can identify with St. Bernadette

By Regina Linskey

WASHINGTON (CNS) — People today can identify with the weaknesses of St. Bernadette Soubirous and the message of her Marian apparitions, said a French bishop whose diocese includes Lourdes.

Everyone has limitations and flaws, Bishop Jacques Perrier of Tarbes and Lourdes said Nov. 27. The eldest of nine children, St. Bernadette was illiterate, and her family was so poor that they lived in a former prison, he said.

But St. Bernadette had a "kind of wisdom" and was "strong in the head," and Mary chose her, said the bishop.

When the 14-year-old girl was with Mary, she always was confident, Bishop Perrier told Catholic News Service through a translator.

Noting that today people are expected to be successful and make money off of their own experiences, he said St. Bernadette "made a choice to remain poor, and she was always very humble." St. Bernadette entered religious life in 1862 and remained

hidden from the world.

Bishop Perrier was in Washington to discuss the yearlong celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Marian apparitions at Lourdes. The jubilee year opened on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, and will be celebrated with pilgrimages, missions, conferences, and a papal visit to Lourdes. The events will involve places throughout the world associated with the name of Lourdes and St. Bernadette, including several hundred places in the United States.

On Feb. 11, 1858, St. Bernadette, her sister, and a friend went looking for wood and bones. As she was taking off her stockings and shoes to get ready to cross a canal, she heard a gust of wind and saw a young woman dressed in white. That was the first of 18 apparitions.

The message from Mary at Lourdes — conversion and penance — is needed every day, Bishop Perrier told CNS. He said people can change their behavior, have a conversion of heart and internal reconciliation with the past



Above: St. Bernadette Soubirous is depicted in an undated photo of a stained-glass window at the Church of the Epiphany in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

or with family, and strengthen their relationship with God.

Noting the millions of people who have experienced conversion and cures at Lourdes, he said someone might think, "If all these people experienced that before me, maybe I can experience that



BISHOP OF TARBES AND LOURDES VISITS U.S.

— Bishop Jacques Perrier of Tarbes and Lourdes, France, poses for a photo in Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Nov. 27. Bishop Perrier was in Washington to discuss the yearlong celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Marian apparitions at Lourdes. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

myself."

For those who cannot travel to Lourdes, Bishop Perrier said people can experience the celebrations by linking to the images and live pictures on the jubilee Web site — www.lourdes2008.com.

He added that a novena, which will be available online in

English, will be offered especially for those unable to visit Lourdes. Through the novena, all people around the world can experience the story of Lourdes, said the bishop.

More than 500,000 American Catholics are estimated to visit the sanctuaries at Lourdes annually.

Scripture Readings



December 16, Third Sunday of Advent.
Cycle A. Readings:

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

By Jeff Hensley

My friend Michael and his family endured a long, trying period of transition several years ago that parallels the admonition in this week's readings to wait patiently as the Lord accomplishes his purposes.

Michael had taken a job teaching at the University of Oklahoma's College of Law. But for his first four years there, he commuted between Norman and Austin, where his wife and four children remained until they could finalize the family move. Most weekends, he'd make the 400-mile trek home, only to reverse his path on Sunday for a long, lonely drive back to Oklahoma. It was a hard time for Michael, his wife Maria, and their children.

In James 5:7, the writer tells the Christian community to be patient until the coming of the Lord: "See how the farmer awaits the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm." The psalm

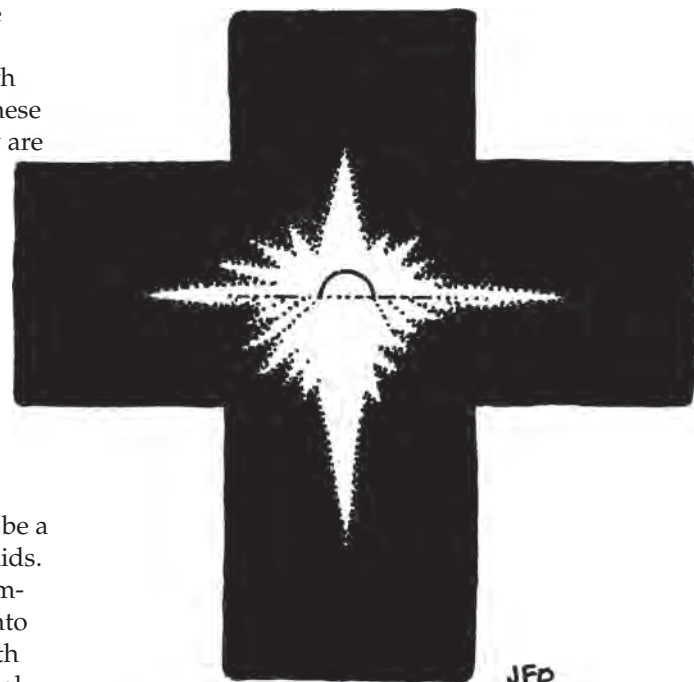
points to the hope we have because our hope is in the Lord, "who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed." These really are Advent readings, aren't they? They are all about waiting, but waiting with hope and confidence in the One who holds the future, in the One who is coming. And Jesus points to the somewhat amazing nature of God's promises to those who come into the kingdom he is initiating when he says in Matthew 11: "I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Michael's family's trial didn't last forever. There was a fruition. They found Norman to be a great place to raise their four quite talented kids. They became deeply involved in the faith communities there. Michael's teaching evolved into a tenured chair at the OU College of Law, with the budget to do things such as hold a national conference on Catholic perspectives on American Law at Catholic University in Washington. Maria's writing continued to prosper, and they co-wrote a book on Catholic pilgrimages.

Advent is a time of waiting, even, sometimes, of enduring, but Christmas comes. The birth of the Lord comes in this season of December, and it comes in our lives. Wait for it with hope.

QUESTIONS:

Are you in a time of waiting, of hoping for the Lord's coming into trying circumstances? Are there steps you yourself can take, or, realistically, is praying and having patience all you can do at this point?



"I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you."

— Matthew 11:10b

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Imitating Christ's humility is essential for Christians, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Imitating Christ in his humility is essential for Christian living, Pope Benedict XVI said at his weekly general audience.

It is by staying humble that "the Christian can enter into a relationship with the Lord," he said.

During his Nov. 21 general audience in St. Peter's Square, the pope focused his catechesis on Aphraates, "an outstanding figure of fourth-century Syriac Christianity."

This early Christian theologian said "Christian life is centered on imitating Christ, taking up his yoke and following him on the path of the Gospel," the pope said.

The most essential virtue for a disciple of Christ is the virtue of humility, he said.

He said Aphraates wrote that "if a person's roots are planted in the earth, his fruits rise up before the Lord." While the humble person remains grounded, his heart soars toward heaven, he said.



Pope Benedict XVI waves to pilgrims during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 21. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

Pope Benedict quoted the fourth-century sage: "God comes close to the person who loves, and it is right to love humility and stay

in a condition of humility."

Those who are humble are "patient, loved, whole, righteous, experts in the good, pru-

dent, serene, knowledgeable, tranquil, peaceful, merciful, open to conversion, benevolent, profound, thoughtful, beautiful

and desirable," the pope said, quoting Aphraates.

Aphraates often depicted Christ as a doctor and sin as a wound that could be healed only through penance, the pope said.

A person who sins and is in need of forgiveness should not hesitate to seek help, the pope said.

A strong faith in God creates in the individual "a temple where Christ himself lives," he added.

"Therefore, faith makes sincere charity possible that one expresses through love toward God and toward one's neighbor," he said.

True prayer happens "when Christ is living in the heart of a Christian" who is invited to dedicate himself toward helping those in need, Pope Benedict said.

Aphraates taught that prayer is also visiting the sick and offering comfort to the distraught, he said.

"Let us strive to show charity and forgiveness to all so that our prayers may be 'strong with the strength of God,'" the pope said.

Scripture Readings



December 23, Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 24:1-3, 4ab, 5-6
- 2) Romans 1:1-7
Gospel) Matthew 1:18-24

By Sharon K. Perkins

About 10 years ago I wrote a meditation on "obedience" in which I wondered what it would be like if I could do as dog owners do and send my children to obedience school, thereby outsourcing some of the challenging work of parenting.

At the time I had lots of food for my musings — my children were three, eight, and 12, and as I recall they were all testing parental boundaries in their own unique ways. Many times I felt that if they just paid attention and listened more closely, they could understand why my instructions were so important for their well-being. Of course, the whole point of the reflection was that when it came to obeying God, I probably didn't do much better than they.

The root of the word "obey" is the Latin word for "paying attention" or "listening." Fast for-

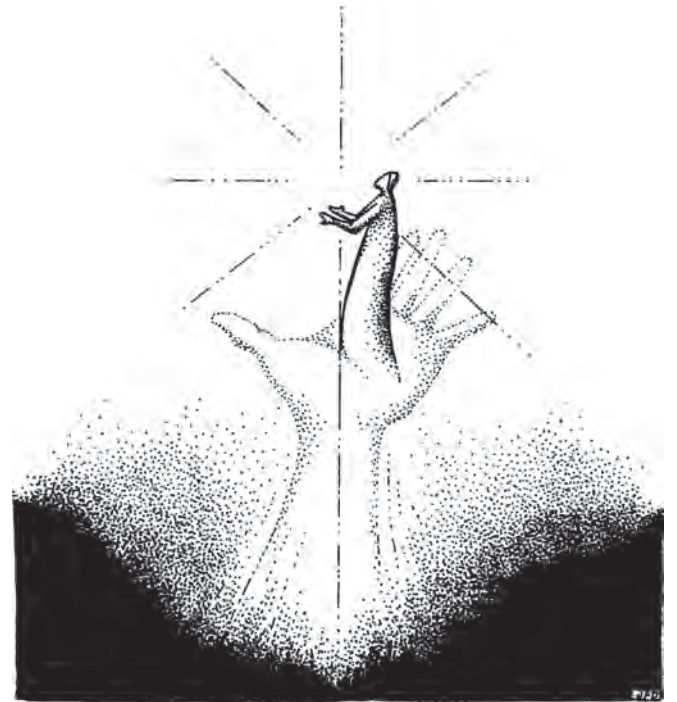
ward 10 years: The Scriptures for this Sunday are still about obedience, and I am still pushing the limits and wearying God, much like Ahaz is doing in the Isaiah reading when he refuses to ask the Lord for a sign. Ahaz isn't obeying because he just doesn't "get it," which means he isn't really listening to God but is hiding behind his own misguided piety.

In the Gospel, Joseph doesn't "get it" either, at least not at first. He already has decided, with the best of intentions, to quietly divorce his pregnant fiancée. Thankfully, he takes a nap which suspends his own thoughts and plans, giving God enough access to communicate an alternate and more marvelous way. It's to Joseph's credit and our eternal benefit that when he awakened, he not only "got it," he "did as the Lord commanded and took Mary into his home."

St. Paul tells us that the "obedience of faith" — our ability not only to "get it" but to act on what we've heard — is brought about by "grace," which is simply God's unobstructed presence accomplishing God's purpose in our lives. Advent is a time to suspend our own agendas, "pay attention," and surrender ourselves to that grace, no matter how many years it takes for the message to sink in!

QUESTIONS:

In what ways have you "wearyed the Lord" by stubbornly choosing your own way over God's? What can you do this Advent to pay closer attention to the message of grace?



"Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith."

— Romans 1:5

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The greatest gift: Christmas Presence

By Jeff Hedglen

I spent part of Thanksgiving weekend standing in a cold rain for nearly five hours. Even though there was a fire going, I was totally drenched. The strange part to this story is that it was a highlight of a weekend.

What made this experience so wonderful is that I was surrounded by an eclectic gathering of family connections: my dad and siblings, along with my stepmother and her children, their spouses and their spouse's families. All of us were loosely related, but tightly bonded by the shared experience of standing around a campfire on a rain-soaked Thanksgiving Day.

Time together with family is so great, but sometimes we have a tendency to take family for granted. It is experiences like this one that help us remember that the time we spend together is so valuable. But, sometimes the value of time together is highlighted when circumstances don't allow it. This happened to me when my

We can make Christmas be about God becoming a part of an earthly family, and we can celebrate the holiday gathered with the people we love, be they family or friends. The Scriptures tell us that the first Christmas was very similar to this.

sister's new job made it very difficult to get together with her, even during the holidays. This went on for almost two years. In that time I realized how much I had taken our family get-togethers for granted.

On the other hand, sometimes not having what we think we want, helps us realize what we want most. Take for instance the story of my wife's favorite Christmas.

That particular year was a lean one for her family. The five

children were told that there would not be very many gifts because of unexpected bills. Instead, she and her siblings were going to put on a Christmas play.

So all during Advent they busied themselves rehearsing and making costumes. They worked hard, spent a lot of time together, and shared a lot of laughs, and a few stressful times as well. When the big day came and they performed, they gave the gift of Christmas to

each other by living the story.

My wife says that the biggest gift that year was all the time they got to spend with their mother. Usually her time was taken up with the family business, and as a result there was not a lot of leisure time with the kids. But this particular year, she took time away from the business to write and direct the family production.

The gifts under the tree were meager. Each child got their own hook in the bathroom with a matching towel, wash cloth, and tooth brush in their favorite color; that is all they unwrapped. As my wife was telling me the story, she realized that these are the only Christmas gifts from her childhood that she could remember after all these years. Even though in other years the gifts were more lavish, this year the gifts were more personal, for they were gifts of time, laughter, and being together as a family.

I think we all know that materialism has taken over the celebration of Christ's birth in our society. But this does

not have to be the case in our homes. We can make Christmas be about God becoming a part of an earthly family, and we can celebrate the holiday gathered with the people we love, be they family or friends.

The Scriptures tell us that the first Christmas was very similar to this. An eclectic group of family, friends, and barnyard animals gathered around Jesus. Some people brought him gifts, but the most important gift brought that first Christmas was the gift of presence.

Jesus' presence in the world and the people present to him reveal the most perfect way to celebrate the holiday: Be present to each other and focus on the presence of Jesus in your life. Doing so makes every Christmas awesome — no matter what is under the tree.

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.

El obispo Vann nos invita ver cuán prominente es el papel que desempeña Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe

Queridos Amigos en la Diócesis de Fort Worth,

Al comenzar el nuevo año litúrgico, a través de las diversas celebraciones de Adviento, es fácil ver cuán prominente es el papel que desempeña



Monseñor Kevin W. Vann

nuestra madre espiritual la Bienaventurada Virgen María en la vida de la Iglesia.

Ya que el Adviento es el tiempo para prepararnos para el nacimiento de Cristo, es muy apropiado que reflexionemos sobre la vida y misión de María, pues es a través de ella que recibimos a nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo.

El 8 de diciembre celebramos la Solemnidad de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Bienaventurada Virgen María, patrona de los Estados Unidos de Norte América. Ella fue concebida sin mancha de pecado original y por eso es el más puro y perfecto vehículo a través del cual nuestro Señor Jesucristo podría venir a nuestro mundo.

El miércoles siguiente celebramos la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, patrona de todas las Américas. El año pasado, e incluso hace tan solo unas semanas, tuve la oportunidad de visitar la Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Ciudad de México. Estas han sido las dos experiencias piadosas más importantes de mi vida. Invito a todos a que hagan un esfuerzo por celebrar este día de Fiesta de Nuestra Santísima Madre,

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe ha sido un camino importante para traer el Evangelio a esta tierra.

participando en una de las celebraciones eucarísticas, procesiones o uniéndose a las oraciones y cantos tradicionales de *Las Mañanitas*. Esta es en verdad una celebración llena de gracias para todos nosotros.

El Papa Juan Pablo II solicitó que esta celebración sea una para todo el continente americano, y no solo para México, con su Exhortación Apostólica *Ecclesia in America*. Déjeme compartir esta cita del documento:

Acojo gozoso la propuesta de los Padres sinodales de que el día 12 de diciembre se celebre en todo el Continente la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Madre y Evangelizadora de América. Abrigo en mi corazón la firme esperanza de que ella, a cuya intercesión se debe el fortalecimiento de la fe de los primeros discípulos, guíe con su intercesión maternal a la Iglesia en este Continente, alcanzándole la efusión del Espíritu Santo como en la Iglesia naciente, para que la nueva evangelización produzca un espléndido florecimiento de vida cristiana.

Al celebrar este día mi deseo es que nos enfoquemos en la perspectiva traída a esta fiesta por el Papa

Juan Pablo II. María estuvo presente en la primera evangelización en Jerusalén y a través de la intercesión maternal de María, la Nueva Evangelización llegará a ser más fructífera y eficaz a través de nuestra diócesis.

En esta misma Exhortación Apostólica el Papa Juan Pablo II también nos recordó que:

La aparición de María al indio Juan Diego en la colina del Tepeyac, en el año 1531, tuvo una repercusión decisiva para la evangelización. Este influjo va más allá de los confines de la nación mexicana, alcanzando todo el Continente. Y América... ha reconocido en el rostro mestizo de la Virgen del Tepeyac, en Santa María de Guadalupe, un gran ejemplo de evangelización perfectamente inculturada. Por eso, no sólo en el Centro y en el Sur, sino también en el Norte del Continente, la Virgen de Guadalupe es venerada como Reina de toda América.

La Bienaventurada Virgen María es clave en nuestros esfuerzos por traer el evangelio de Jesucristo al mundo porque ella es, y siempre ha sido, un camino seguro para hacia Jesucristo, el Verbo Encarnado de Dios. A través de todo Texas, desde la época de la primera evangelización, la presencia de la Bienaventurada Virgen María, especialmente bajo el título de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, se ha sentido fuerte y ha sido un camino importante para traer el Evangelio a esta tierra.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe es un ejemplo hermoso de la perfecta evangelización porque ella representa la unidad entre el evangelio de Jesucristo y la cultura del pueblo a quien el evangelio se proclama, y a quién ella

se apareció. La evangelización verdadera necesita penetrar y convertirse en parte de la realidad de aquellos que son evangelizados. La evangelización verdadera ocurre cuando la Buena Nueva de Jesucristo penetra la cultura sin ser aguada, disminuida, y sin reducción alguna del impacto del mensaje del evangelio.

Sabremos que nuestra cultura americana se está evangelizando realmente cuando nosotros como nación comencemos a darle la bienvenida al extranjero que se encuentra entre nosotros; el inmigrante que ha venido a nuestra nación en búsqueda de una vida mejor. Cuando nosotros como nación le demos la bienvenida y celebremos la dignidad de cada ser humano, especialmente el no nacido, es entonces cuando podemos proclamar que somos una nación donde el Evangelio ha sido penetrado por la cultura.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, patrona de los no nacidos, nos llama a tratar a cada ser humano con la misma alegría, amor y respeto que le ofrecemos al Niño en su vientre. El próximo mes, enero, nos ofrecerá más oportunidades para marchar por la vida con el cuadro de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe acompañándonos.

Les invito a que me acompañen en ofrecerle a nuestro Señor Jesús la siguiente oración tomada de las palabras finales del Papa Juan Pablo II en *Ecclesia in America*:

“Enséñanos a amar a tu Madre, María, como la amaste Tí. Danos fuerza para anunciar con valentía tu Palabra en la tarea de la nueva evangelización, para corroborar la esperanza en el mundo. ¡Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Madre de América, ruega por nosotros!”

Becas disponibles hasta el 17 de enero

Becas de educación continua estarán disponibles para personas activas en el ministerio católico; fecha tope para la recepción de solicitudes es el 17 de enero.

Se invita a solicitar una beca educativa ante la diócesis de Fort Worth a toda persona activamente involucrada en el ministerio católico dentro de la diócesis por 2 años o más, y que esté planeando algún programa de estudio en servicio de su ministerio.

Gracias a la generosidad de la feligresía de la diócesis, la suma de \$20,000 ha sido asignada a becas educativas este año. Solicitudes deben ser introducidas ante Lucas Pollice, director del

departamento de catequesis de la diócesis de Fort Worth, con matasello fechado no después del 17 de enero.

Solicitantes deberán proveer información sobre el contenido, lugar y costo del curso de estudios planeado, y revelar cualquier otra ayuda financiera que esperen recibir. Asimismo, se requiere la firma de un párroco o supervisor, además de información que permita determinar necesidad económica.

El comité de becas de educación continua del departamento diocesano de catequesis procesará las solicitudes, esperándose decisiones al respecto a fines de febrero. Para entonces, los aspirantes seleccionados recibirán

un acuerdo de beca indicando entre otras cosas los siguientes pasos del proceso. Este acuerdo deberá ser retornado para el primero de abril, y los cheques serán enviados entre el primero y el 15 de mayo.

Favor contactar el Centro Católico para recibir una solicitud, llamando al número telefónico (817) 560-3300, extensión 260, o enviando un mensaje de correo electrónico a la dirección lpollice@fwdiocese.org. Solicitudes también podrán ser descargadas por Internet del sitio web diocesano, <http://www.fwdiocese.org>, siguiendo el enlace “Ministry Preparation”, y seleccionando luego el enlace “Continuing Education Grants”.

‘Lo que Dios unió no lo separe el hombre’

Por Abel Olmos

En el mes de julio pasado se llevo a cabo en las instalaciones de el Catholic Renewal Center el primer “Encuentro para comprometerse” en español a nivel diocesano, al cual asistieron 11 parejas de diferentes parroquias, las cuales vinieron muy dispuestas a aprender más respecto al compromiso sacramental que están a punto de recibir.

Hace unos días me preguntaron “si yo creía que el encuentro fue un éxito”. Yo quisiera decir que sí, por la atención de parte de las parejas a la hora de las pláticas, el tipo de pláticas y sobre todo la Misa tan especial, que es parte del programa y que fue celebrada por el Padre Ráphael Eagle, TOR.

Pero en verdad es muy temprano para afirmarlo, ya que en verdad esto solo lo vamos a saber cuando

veamos a estas nuevas parejas casadas, que en verdad dialoguen, se respeten, sean padres responsables, católicos responsables, que se amen y que estén dispuestos a cumplir el mandato de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, el de permanecer “unidos hasta que la muerte los separe”.

Lo único que sí puedo asegurar es que las parejas salieron muy contentas por las pláticas, atención y servicio que les brindó el equipo de voluntarios, que no tiene otro interés, más que servir a Dios, siendo instrumentos de su amor, y seguir fortaleciendo su propio matrimonio.

El siguiente Encuentro se llevará a cabo el día 12 y 13 de enero en el mismo lugar. Para más información, llámara Suzanna Ordóñez al (817) 560-2452 ext. 256.

¡Vivamos la alegre Esperanza!

Huyamos de la triste desesperación

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

Salvados en la esperanza, o en latín *Spe Salvi*, es la nueva encíclica del Papa Benedicto XVI. El título nos llega de Romanos 8:24 y es el foco principal de esta carta.

Precisamente en nuestro mundo actual es donde debemos llevar el mensaje de la esperanza. Necesitamos despertar en los corazones de todos los hombres una intensa hambre, un intenso deseo, de alcanzar la vida eterna junto a Dios y de buscar todo lo que fuera necesario para alcanzarla.

Es Jesucristo, nuestro encuentro y comunión con Él, que es nuestra segura salvación, donde comienza, aquí en la tierra, la vida eterna para nosotros. Jesucristo nos trae un encuentro salvífico con la divinidad, pues al encontrar al Cristo hemos encontrado a Dios nuestro amor, esperanza y eternidad.

Son muchos los lugares donde aprendemos y practicamos la esperanza, y el Papa nos menciona varias de ellas comenzando con la oración. En el número 32 de la carta el Papa nos dice que... *Cuando ya nadie me escucha, Dios todavía me escucha. Cuando ya no puedo hablar con ninguno, ni invocar a nadie, siempre puedo hablar con Dios. Si ya no hay nadie que pueda ayudarme..., Él puede ayudarme... el que reza nunca está totalmente solo.*

Actividad cotidiana seria y honesta es esperanza en acto. Esta perseverancia en el cumplimiento de nuestros deberes y responsabilidades diarias, a pesar de los diversos inconvenientes y las tentaciones para darse por vencido, es una importante manera de perseverar en, y dar testimonio de, la esperanza.

Los momentos cuando sufrimos y la manera en que vivimos estos momentos de dolor son expresiones claras para los demás de nuestra esperanza, pero además de llevar nuestras cruces con paciencia, debemos también hacer todo lo posible por aliviar el sufrimiento de los demás. Esto es amor fraterno y es sembrar la esperanza en los corazones de los demás.

Vendrá el día, pues a todos nos tocará, cuando después de dar nuestro último suspiro, viviremos como nunca antes la esperanza; me refiero al momento de nuestro juicio final. Fe en ese juicio es ante todo y sobre todo un acto de esperanza. Pero necesitamos recordar que somos comunidad y nadie vive solo, nadie peca solo y nadie se salva solo, nuestro existir está siempre en conexión con una comunidad. Es por esto que sería una gran equivocación solo limitarse a preocuparse por nuestra salvación individual desconectada de los demás. Debemos preguntarnos también sobre como podemos ayudar a que otros se salven y como podemos promover la esperanza en los demás.

Invoquemos a nuestra madre espiritual, María, estrella de la esperanza, con las palabras finales del Papa: *... tú permaneces con los discípulos como madre suya, como Madre de la esperanza. Santa María, Madre de Dios, Madre nuestra, enséñanos a creer, esperar y amar contigo. Indícanos el camino hacia su reino. Estrella del mar, brilla sobre nosotros y guíanos en nuestro camino.*



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

Los pueblos necesitan a Dios para tener esperanza, dice el Papa en una nueva encíclica

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — En una encíclica sobre la esperanza cristiana, el Papa Benedicto XVI dijo que, sin la fe en Dios, la humanidad queda a la merced de ideologías que pueden conducir a “las formas más grandes de crueldad y violaciones en contra de la justicia”.

El Papa advirtió que en la era moderna se ha reemplazado la creencia en la eterna salvación con fe en el progreso y tecnología, que ofrece oportunidades de bien pero que también abre “posibilidades espantosas para el mal”.

“Pongámoslo de una manera sencilla: El hombre necesita a Dios; de otra manera, se queda sin esperanza”, dijo en su encíclica *Spe Salvi* (sobre la esperanza cristiana), dada a conocer el 30 de noviembre.

En el texto que consta de 76 páginas, se exploró la conexión esencial entre fe y esperanza, a principios del cristianismo, y se enfocó lo que se llama “crisis de la esperanza cristiana” en tiempos modernos.

En la encíclica se criticó el racionalismo filosófico y el marxismo y se ofreció un perfil breve pero enérgico de santos cristianos, de la antigüedad y de la época moderna, que personificaron la esperanza, incluso cuando se enfrentaron al sufrimiento.

En la encíclica también se incluyó una crítica del cristianismo contemporáneo, afirmándose que se ha limitado la atención a la salvación individual en lugar de la de todo el mundo, y reduciendo como consecuencia “el horizonte de su esperanza”.

“Como cristianos que somos, nunca debemos limitarnos a preguntar: ¿Cómo puedo salvarme? Lo que debemos preguntar es: ¿Qué puedo hacer para que mis semejantes se salven?” se decía.

Ésta es la segunda encíclica del Papa y le sigue a la del año 2006 que es una meditación sobre el amor cristiano.

El Papa dijo que el aspecto esencial de la esperanza cristiana es la confianza en la salvación eterna lograda por Jesucristo. En contraste con seguidores de mitologías y dioses paganos, los primeros cristianos tenían un futuro y podían confiar en que su vida respectiva no terminaría en un vacío, dijo.

En contraste, la idea de “vida eterna” atemoriza a mucha gente y les afecta como una existencia monótona o incluso difícil de llevar, dijo el Papa. Es importante, dijo, que entendamos que la eternidad “no es una sucesión sin fin de días en el calendario, sino algo más como el momento supremo de satisfacción”.

“Será como sumergirse en un océano de amor infinito, un

“Pongámoslo de una manera sencilla: El hombre necesita a Dios; de otra manera, se queda sin esperanza.”

— el Papa Benedicto XVI en su encíclica *SPE SALVI*

momento en el cual el tiempo, el antes y el después, ya no existen”, dijo. Así es como se debe entender el objeto de la esperanza cristiana, dijo.

En la sección principal de la encíclica se examinó cómo mediante el énfasis de la razón y la libertad, representadas en la Revolución Francesa y en la aparición del comunismo, se buscaba desterrar la esperanza cristiana. La redención se veía como posible por medio de la ciencia y de programas políticos, y la fe religiosa se descartó como irrelevante y se relegó a la esfera privada.

Al tiempo que alababa a Karl Marx por su gran habilidad de análisis, el Papa dijo que Marx cometió un error fundamental al olvidar que la libertad humana siempre incluye “la libertad por/para el mal”, que no se neutraliza con estructuras sociales.

De la misma manera, dijo el Papa, los que creen que el hombre puede ser “redimido” por medio de la ciencia y los avances tecnológicos están equivocados.

“La ciencia puede contribuir enormemente para hacer que el mundo y el género humano sea más humano. Y sin embargo, puede también destruir al género humano y al mundo, a menos que sea impulsada por fuerzas que yacen fuera de ella”, dijo.

El Papa dijo que a pesar de que los cristianos tienen la responsabilidad de trabajar por la justicia, la esperanza de edificar un mundo perfecto aquí y ahora es una ilusión. Las esperanzas por este mundo no pueden por ellas mismas sostener la fe de uno, dijo.

En la segunda parte de la encíclica se estudió cómo la esperanza cristiana se puede aprender y practicar, particularmente mediante la oración, la aceptación del sufrimiento y la anticipación del juicio divino.

El Papa le llamó a la oración

“una escuela de esperanza”, y como ejemplo, destacó al pasado cardenal vietnamés Francois Nguyen Van Thuan, que pasó 13 años en prisión, nueve de ellos en encierro solitario.

En “esta situación de aparente y completa falta de esperanza”, el hecho de que podía todavía escuchar a Dios y hablar con Él le dio una fuerza creciente de esperanza, dijo el Papa.

Y enfatizó que la oración no debería aislar y no se debería enfocar en objetivos superficiales; ni tampoco, la gente puede orar en contra de otros, dijo.

“El orar no significa salirse de la historia y recogerse en el propio rincón de felicidad”, dijo.

“Cuando rezamos con propiedad nos sometemos a un proceso de purificación interna que nos abre para Dios y, consecuentemente, para nuestros semejantes también”, dijo.

El sufrimiento es parte de la existencia humana, y el sufrimiento de los inocentes parece que va en aumento hoy en día, dijo el Papa. Dijo que los cristianos deben hacer todo lo que puedan para reducir el dolor y la aflicción.

Sin embargo, el sufrimiento no se puede ahuyentar del mundo, y tratar de evitar cualquier cosa que implique pena puede llevar a una vida vacía, dijo. En lugar de eso, los cristianos han sido llamados a sufrir con otros y por otros, y su capacidad de hacerlo depende de la fortaleza de su esperanza interna, dijo.

El Papa dijo que la idea de juicio, específicamente el Juicio Final de vivos y muertos, se relaciona fuertemente con la esperanza cristiana debido a que es una promesa de justicia.

“Estoy convencido de que la cuestión de justicia constituye el argumento esencial; o en cualquier caso, el argumento más fuerte a favor de la fe en la vida eterna”, dijo.

Es imposible que los cristianos crean que las injusticias de la historia sean la última palabra, dijo.

Sin embargo, el Juicio Final no debe de evocar terror, sino un sentido de responsabilidad, dijo el Papa. Es un momento de esperanza, porque combina la justicia de Dios y la gracia de Dios; pero “la gracia no cancela la justicia”, dijo.

“(La gracia) no es como una esponja que limpia todo, de tal manera que todo lo que alguien haya hecho en la tierra termine siendo de igual valor”, dijo. “Los malvados, al final, no se sentarán a la mesa del banquete eterno al lado de sus víctimas sin distinción ninguna, como si nada hubiera pasado”.

Para estadounidenses convertirse en cardenales estuvo 'al borde' de ser día más feliz

CIUDAD DEL VATICANO (CNS) — Arrodillarse ante el Papa Benedicto XVI y convertirse en cardenal estuvo "al borde" de ser el día más feliz en las vidas de los dos nuevos cardenales estadounidenses.

El cardenal Daniel N. DiNardo, de Galveston-Houston, usó la frase "al borde" el 24 de noviembre, pero dijo que tenía que ser honesto: "El día más feliz de mi vida fue el día que, como obispo, ordené a mi primer sacerdote. Ningún día jamás probablemente iguale eso".

El cardenal John P. Foley, gran maestro de los Caballeros del Santo Sepulcro, también usó la frase "al borde", pero dijo: "El día más feliz fue mi ordenación como sacerdote. Eso es. Sigo diciendo que nunca he tenido un día infeliz como sacerdote y lo digo en serio".

Los dos nuevos cardenales estadounidenses hablaron con reporteros inmediatamente después del consistorio e inmediatamente antes de asistir a una recepción en su honor en el Pontificio Colegio Norteamericano, el seminario estadounidense en Roma.

El ambiente era alegre; el cardenal DiNardo explicó que él había tenido la esperanza de estar "muy compuesto" al arrodillarse ante el papa, pero que su nuevo



Católicos hispanos de la Arquidiócesis de Galveston-Houston saludan al cardenal Daniel N. DiNardo durante una recepción en el Pontificio Colegio Norteamericano en Roma el 24 de noviembre. Él fue nombrado el primer cardenal de Texas y estuvo entre los 23 preladados que se unieron al Colegio de Cardenales durante un consistorio dirigido por el papa Benedicto XVI. (Foto CNS/Paul Haring)

solideo, o gorro rojo, continuaba cayéndosele. El cardenal Foley usó la oportunidad para agradecer a la Asociación de Prensa Católica

por el regalo de sus sotanas rojas nuevas y preguntó: "A propósito, ¿me veo bien?".

El Papa Benedicto se reunió el

26 de noviembre con los nuevos cardenales, los miembros de sus familias y los peregrinos que vinieron a Roma para las celebraciones.

El papa pidió a los peregrinos que continuaran ofreciendo a los nuevos cardenales "amistad, cariño y oraciones, ayudándoles a continuar fielmente sirviéndole a la iglesia y ofreciendo un creciente testimonio abundante de amor".

"Según los nuevos cardenales aceptan la carga de este puesto, estoy confiado que ellos serán apoyados por sus oraciones constantes y la cooperación en sus esfuerzos para edificar el cuerpo de Cristo en la unidad, la santidad y la paz", dijo el Papa.

En la recepción en el Colegio Norteamericano el 24 de noviembre, seminaristas estadounidenses sirvieron como ujieres, camareros y entretenedores mientras miles de peregrinos estadounidenses estaban parados en línea para felicitar a los nuevos cardenales.

Roberto y Mira Martínez, de la parroquia St. Mary en Texas City, fueron parte de la peregrinación oficial de Galveston-Houston.

"Yo le envié un mensaje de correo electrónico a mi esposo en el trabajo y dije: 'No creas que estoy loca, pero necesitamos ir a Roma,'" dijo ella sobre cuando el viaje estaba siendo organizado. "Estamos viendo la historia y es emocionante ser parte de ella. Algún día nuestro arzobispo podría ser papa".

Avances científicos, éticos vistos en nuevos estudios de células madres

Por Nancy Frazier O'Brien

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Tanto científicos como éticos elogiaron como avances dos estudios que demuestran que las células humanas de piel pueden ser reprogramadas para funcionar tan eficazmente como las células madres embrionarias, negando así la necesidad de destruir embriones en nombre de la ciencia.

Estudios separados de equipos dirigidos por Shinya Yamanaka, de la Universidad de Kyoto, en Japón, y Junying Yu y James Thomson, de la Universidad de Wisconsin en Madison, fueron publicados respectivamente en la Internet el 20 de noviembre por las publicaciones Cell y Science.

"Los métodos esbozados en estos documentos conforman completamente lo que hemos tenido la esperanza de ver durante algún tiempo", dice una declaración del Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética en Philadelphia.

"Tales estrategias deben continuar siendo seguidas y promovidas fuertemente, ya que deben ayudar a dirigir el campo completo de la investigación usando células madres hacia

una dirección ética más explícita al evadir el atolladero moral asociado con destruir embriones humanos", añade.

Añadiendo cuatro genes a las células de piel, los científicos pudieron crear células madres que aparezcan genéticamente el donante y tienen la capacidad de convertirse en cualquiera de los 220 tipos de células del cuerpo humano.

"Las células inducidas hacen todo lo que hacen las células madres embrionarias", dijo Thomson en un comunicado de prensa de la universidad. Él aisló las primeras células madres embrionarias en 1998. "Eso cambiará totalmente el campo".

Thomson hizo un llamado a los científicos a continuar la investigación involucrando la destrucción de embriones humanos. Más estudio es necesario para asegurar que las células recién hechas "no se diferencien de las células madres embrionarias de una manera significativa clínicamente o inesperada", dijo, "por lo que no es tiempo de discontinuar la investigación usando células madres embrionarias".



UN PASTOR DE TEXAS BENDICE SEPULTURA DE INMIGRANTES — El padre Piotr Koziel, pastor de la parroquia de Santa Gertrudis en Kingsville, Texas, dirige una ceremonia de bendición, el 2 de noviembre, de las tumbas de inmigrantes indocumentados no identificados que murieron al sur de Texas, después de cruzar la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos. (Foto CNS/PAULA GOLDAPP, SOUTH TEXAS CATHOLIC)

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

Retired U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, known for pro-life efforts, dies at 83

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Henry J. Hyde, the former Republican congressman from Illinois whose name became synonymous with efforts to limit federal funding of abortion, died Nov. 29 at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Hyde's death was announced in Washington by House Minority Leader John Boehner, R-Ohio, who gave no cause of death for the 83-year-old Catholic political figure. Hyde retired from politics in 2006 after 32 years in Congress and eight years in the Illinois Legislature. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President George W. Bush Nov. 5 but was unable to attend the White House ceremony because he was recovering from quadruple heart bypass surgery in July. At the ceremony, Bush described Hyde as a "commanding presence" and "a man of consequence," who impressed colleagues with his "extraordinary intellect, his deep convictions, and eloquent voice." His son Bob accepted the medal, saying it "affirms the importance and value of his stance on many things, like right to life." He was named a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.

Catholic officials say Middle East peace possible, but U.S. must lead

BALTIMORE (CNS) — As key leaders from Israel, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and other nations gathered in Annapolis for a Nov. 26-28 Middle East peace conference and related meetings, local Catholic leaders said they were hopeful the meetings would trigger further discussions for making a lasting peace in the Holy Land. Peace is attainable, they said, but it will take assertive leadership from the United States to make it a reality. "I'm guardedly optimistic in the sense that I'm always happy when there's some kind of negotiation going on in the Middle East," said Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden, urban vicar for the archdiocese. Bishop Madden previously served as associate secretary general of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association and director of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine office in Jerusalem. He said the lack of strong leadership from the United States in recent years has been a contributing reason the peace process has stalled. He was hopeful the U.S.-led Annapolis conference would change that. The conference and related meetings included participants from 50 organizations and countries.

Pope says refugee youths have right to stability, serenity, security

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Children have a right to "stability, serenity, and security," Pope Benedict XVI said, urging that more be done in providing these essential conditions to young people trapped in refugee camps. In his message for the annual World Day for Migrants and Refugees, the pope highlighted young people whose futures are jeopardized by being forced migrants, victims of human trafficking, or refugees. The text for the pope's 2008 message, "Young Migrants," was released during a Nov. 28 press conference at the Vatican. The World Day for Migrants and Refugees is held on different days in different countries. In the United States, National Migration Week will be celebrated Jan. 6-12. The world cannot "remain silent before the distressing images of the great refugee camps" where children and young people live segregated "far from inhabited towns with no possibility normally to attend school," he said.

Pope invites Muslim scholars to meet with him, pontifical council

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has responded to a letter from 138 Muslim scholars by inviting a group of them to meet with him and with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The papal response, released Nov. 29, came in a letter to Jordan's Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, president of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman and architect of the Muslim scholars' project. The letter, signed Nov. 19 by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, said the pope wanted "to express his deep appreciation" for the statement of the Muslim scholars, "for the positive spirit which inspired the text, and for the call for a common commitment to promoting peace in the world." The statement, originally signed by 138 Muslim scholars but later endorsed by dozens of others, was addressed to Pope Benedict and the heads of other Christian churches. Entitled "A Common Word Between Us and You," the text was released in early October and called for new efforts at Christian-Muslim dialogue based on the shared belief in the existence of one God, in God's love for humanity and in people's obligation to love one another.

Vatican official says stem-cell studies show science can be ethical

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Recent studies showing that human skin cells can be reprogrammed to function as stem cells demonstrate that scientific progress can be achieved without violating basic ethical norms, said Bishop Elio Sgreccia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

"If this technique is validated, it would be a historic discovery," the bishop told Vatican Radio in late November.

Separate studies from teams in Japan and in the United States demonstrating success in creating stem cells without using and destroying human embryos were published online Nov. 20 by two scientific journals.

By adding four genes to human skin cells, the scientists were able to create stem cells that genetically match the donor and have the ability to become any of the 220 types of cells in the human body.

"The church conducted this battle for ethical reasons, encouraging researchers to move ahead with adult stem cells and declaring illicit the destruction of embryos," Bishop Sgreccia said.

The success of the approach, which the Japanese and U.S. researchers followed for scientific and not primarily for ethical reasons, demonstrates that progress does not have to violate ethical norms, he said.

"Ethics that respects the human being is useful also in research," Bishop Sgreccia said.



Junying Yu of the Genome Center of Wisconsin poses in a lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Nov. 19. Yu is the lead author of a paper describing a novel method of reprogramming adult stem cells to create cells that are indistinguishable from embryonic stem cells. The research was performed by a team in the laboratory of stem-cell pioneer James Thomson. (CNS photo/Bryce Richter, courtesy University of Wisconsin-Madison)

And, he said, the results demonstrate that "it is not true that the church is against research, only that it is against bad research, research which damages human beings, in this case the human embryo."

Bishop Sgreccia said it is a shame that so many human embryos have been destroyed and so many millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on embryonic stem-cell research when better results have been obtained without destroying embryos.

"It is true" that researchers do not know for sure what will

work and what will not when they begin a project, the bishop said, "but there were already indications that results could be obtained using adult stem cells, while from embryonic stem cells there have been no results."

"I do not know if those who have invested money and passed laws precisely to allow this [embryonic stem-cell research] will be able to recognize their error and turn back, but at least the scientists who want to achieve results will go looking where they have been proven to be found," Bishop Sgreccia said.

Pope offers prayers for families of AIDS victims

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI offered his prayers for the families of the estimated 2.1 million people who have died

of AIDS this year, and he asked all people to work to end discrimination against those living with AIDS and HIV.

At the end of his Nov. 28 gen-

eral audience, the pope spoke about the Dec. 1 commemoration of World AIDS Day.

"I am spiritually close to those who suffer because of this terrible disease and their families, especially those who have lost a relative," the pope said. "I assure all of them of my prayers."

"In addition, I want to exhort all people of good will to multiply their efforts to stop the spread of the HIV virus, to oppose the scorn which often strikes those who are afflicted with it and to take care of the sick, especially when they are still youngsters," he said.

According to figures released Nov. 20 by UNAIDS, "global HIV prevalence — the percentage of people living with HIV — has leveled off" and the number of new infections each year has fallen.

UNAIDS estimated that in 2007 about 33.2 million people were living with HIV, 2.5 million became infected, and 2.1 million died of AIDS.

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Fr. Tad explains why some rationales may not yield to the new discoveries

FROM PAGE 11
is significant, especially considering certain state initiatives like Proposition 71 in California which devote large sums of state taxpayer money to pursue research that depends on human embryo destruction.

Once large sums of money are involved, ethics often becomes the first casualty.

Second, some of the

Several astute commentators have noted recently how the whole field of embryonic stem-cell research seems to serve as a kind of "hedge" for abortion. In the same way that a garden gets a hedge placed around it in order to protect it, embryonic stem cells are becoming a place holder for abortion.

Hamer...

FROM PAGE 11
ken. Glue these." (The handwriting appeared to be that of the All-Knowing Narrator, who, between you and me, I think, is a trifle self-satisfied.)

I was willing to repair the decorations, which were precious enough to survive Christmases with scratched paint, missing hooks, jagged holes, or broken limbs, without being discarded. I set up a coffee-table repair station, stocked with a bottle of tacky glue and toothpicks, and began work.

Why hadn't I glued these earlier, I wondered, like before I packed them away last January? Tonight I would have been able to pull them out of the boxes and set them up. A time saver.

I answered myself immediately. The decorations had been packed away with the promise of future repair simply because, as in all things, we remain optimistic about events to come. Daily we postpone correspondence, phone calls, and social lunches, and if an office deadline is next Friday, we know we will finish by that morning... or certainly later the same day.

We will have time to polish silverware and rake leaves, we assure ourselves, narrating our lives through rose-colored glasses, adding that we will also have more money left from next month's paycheck.

What about the "What should I do first" quagmire? We are way behind schedule, but can't finish all our tasks too

early — some of them must be done at the last minute. More leaves will fall; the floors will need more wax; there will be a fresh coat of dust on the furniture. The first batches of cookies will have been eaten.

So really, there is nothing you can do first. Only last. At TCU (where I have the university's most important job — managing the yearbook) the student body, faculty, and staff have four weeks each year when they may have their pictures taken. But they all come the last day. If they can make it, they try to come the last hour of the last day.

The first five to nine days of each session, the two professional photographers read, eat, lounge, take breaks, look at their watches, and fidget. Now that I think of it, I should bring broken Christmas ornaments to school and let our photographers do the gluing.

When we were children, it seemed that Christmas would never come. An endless parade of school days stood between us and the fun of the holiday, so, with childlike ignorance of the ephemeral nature of life, we crossed days off our mind's calendar. "I can hardly wait!" we would squeal, whenever asked.

"I can't wait for the year to pass by," now seems a judgment error of the most sobering kind.

As adults, the months between Christmases seem mere moments. "When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man,

I put aside childish things" (1 Corinthians 13).

There are hundreds of things to do. Not enough time. Not enough money. (Next month there will be more money and time, the child inside insists on telling us.)

The child knows the final event will bring greatness — the best of all days, the most precious of all gifts, the most valuable of all possessions.

The adult feels inexorably lost in the journey, always in the state of preparation, and perhaps never ready for the reality of Christmas itself.

Perhaps we should prepare for Jesus' coming with an adult state of vigilance and readiness and a child's faith in the gifts He will bring.

Light. Peace. Everlasting joy. A glorious dwelling.

Then, in our holiday letter, the All-Knowing Narrator may write to friends, "In spite of accidents and miscalculations, uncertainty and weakness, the family kept trying, day after day, to make Christ present in the world, as he continued to be in their own hearts and lives."



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

scientists who advocate the destruction of human embryos have never really taken the moral concerns very seriously because the creed they subscribe to is the so-called "scientific imperative," namely, that science must go forward, as if it were the highest good. It must be able to do whatever it wants, wherever it wants, whenever it wants, and nobody should be pushing ethical viewpoints to limit what researchers do.

That, of course, is a completely untenable position because we regulate what scientists do all the time. The very mechanism by which we disperse federal money puts all kinds of checks and balances on what researchers can do, and there are certain types of research like germ warfare studies or nuclear bomb development that the government strictly regulates already.

Other kinds of research are criminal, such as performing medical experiments on patients who don't give their consent.

The idea that we have to allow science to do whatever it wants is little more than "pie-in-the-sky" wishful thinking.

The third reason embryo-destructive research will still likely be promoted has to do with abortion.

Several astute commentators have noted recently how the whole field of embryonic stem-cell research seems to

serve as a kind of "hedge" for abortion. In the same way that a garden gets a hedge placed around it in order to protect it, embryonic stem cells are becoming a place holder for abortion.

If embryo killing becomes incorporated into the way we cure illnesses and maintain our health as a society, then abortion on demand will be more likely to curry favor in our culture as well. If those trying to protect embryos carry the day, pro-abortionists fear that the same ethical arguments will prevail against abortion.

Several factors will therefore influence how this major new stem-cell discovery plays out in the future. One thing is clear, however: Those renegade researchers, lawmakers, and Hollywood personalities who have long dismissed ethical concerns and advocated human embryo destruction now find themselves at an important juncture because of this breakthrough.

We can only hope that in the wake of this discovery, the siren call of harvesting human embryos will cease ringing in their ears and allow for a new era of ethical science in our society.

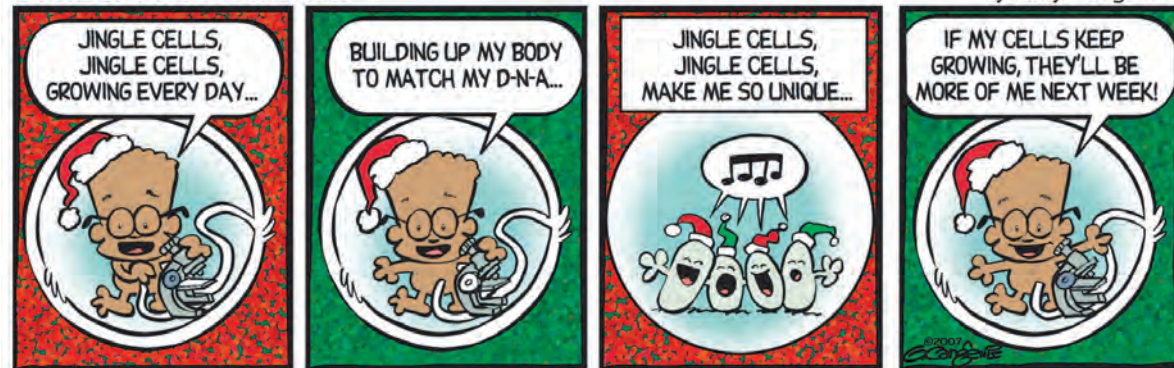
Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

The FLOCK

By Jean Denton
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Umbert the Unborn



Good Newsmakers

Rwandan woman says God saved her from genocide to be a Witness to Forgiveness

Editor's note: Readers should be aware that the following story contains descriptions of horrible violence.

By Beth Griffin
Catholic News Service
Maryknoll, New York

Dativa Nyangezi Ngaboyisonga, 34, believes that she survived the 1994 killings in Rwanda that claimed the lives of 800,000 of her countrymen because God wanted her to be a living witness to the power of forgiveness.

"Death skipped over me five separate times during the genocide. I thought my time was up, but here I am doing what God has spared me for," she said Nov. 13.

She is now superintendent of Rwanda's Kigali Central Prison, where one-third of the inmates are serving time for participating in the genocide.

Ngaboyisonga spoke at Maryknoll headquarters during a 10-day trip to visit prisons in New York.

Joining her at Maryknoll were Father Ron Lemmert, a New York archdiocesan priest and a chaplain at Sing Sing state prison in Ossining, who was one of three prison chaplains who visited Rwanda in July, and the Rev. Petero Sabune, an Episcopal chaplain at Sing Sing.

Ngaboyisonga said that when the government-encouraged genocide began in April 1994, she took refuge in a crowded church. "It was packed," she said. "Everyone was fighting to get in. The priests and nuns came and helped us prepare for death, but I didn't think we would die."

There was not enough room in the church, so Ngaboyisonga gave her space to her aunt and young nephew. After she left, she said, "the killers



came, shooting and throwing grenades. The place we thought was a sanctuary is where they were killed."

Chased by the gunmen, she ran with four boys, but could not keep up with them. "I fell. The killers passed me and killed the boys. I thought they would hunt me and kill me."

Ngaboyisonga said that she prayed to God: "If you spare me, I'll do whatever you want. I will serve you and even try to serve these people."

After hiding for five days in a forest and escaping a snake attack, she met up with other survivors, including members of her family. But they were captured by soldiers, who took whatever possessions they had and made them strip naked.

Ngaboyisonga described a daylong horror in which her father and aunt were among those tortured, killed and mutilated in front of her. Others were subjected to

random amputations, rape, and grenade detonations, she said.

"They said they wanted to see what a Tutsi baby looked like, so they cut a baby from a pregnant woman next to me and threw it on the ground. The mother bled to death," she said.

Ngaboyisonga said that each time it seemed to be her turn to be attacked, a gun-toting soldier told the others, "She's mine. I'll kill her later." She said, "I prayed to be killed quickly."

When that soldier removed her from the group, she managed to escape and fled in a downpour to neighboring Burundi. She was eventually helped by international relief groups.

After the killing ended, she returned to Rwanda, where a Canadian religious sister who was a former teacher of hers asked her to help as an interpreter for the child soldiers

Immaculee Ilibagiza is another Rwandan genocide survivor who has shared her story of survival and forgiveness in the book *Left to Tell, Discovering God amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*. Here she speaks at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Alexandria, Virginia, in 2006. She her husband and their two children live today in the U.S. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

who had been captured and imprisoned.

She was reluctant, but she remembered the promise she had made to God and agreed to do so. She took care of 448 child soldiers.

"I'm here to show you the love I've found since God spared me," she said she told them.

The children eventually began to call her "Mama." "I started to teach them that they had to start to ask for forgiveness," she said. All of the children were released and returned to their families.

Ngaboyisonga took a job in the Kigali Central Prison and progressed to superintendent, despite her age and gender.

She said some people do not understand how she can work for people who tried to kill her.

"It's possible to change their hearts," she said. "We have to build a society and try to rise above [the violence]. The Hutus and Tutsis lived together for centuries before colonial times. Now we need to find the love that cuts across all the differences."

Part of the solution is the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, established by the Rwandan government that came to power after the genocide. The process includes perpetrators confessing to their crimes and seeking forgiveness from survivors and victims' families.

"You start teaching it in

prison, and everyone in the prison takes part," she said.

Her experience gives her credibility with the inmates, she said. "I am a walking epistle. People see what I do, and they are curious, and it gives me an opportunity to talk about forgiveness. When I leave, they continue to discuss it — and sometimes you see prisoners crying for the first time in a long time. It must be God, because I can't do what I do by myself."

Fr. Lemmert talked about his trip to Rwanda.

"We thought we were going there as the experts to tell them how to fix their problems," he said. "It was a humbling experience to find out they were doing very well. The whole emphasis is on the gospel of forgiveness. These people have committed such horrific acts that they have to be treated with a lot of love. And the recidivism rate is practically nothing."

Fr. Lemmert described visiting a reconciliation village in Rwanda where the "killers are building houses for the families of victims and living side by side with them."

He said, "They could not keep the participants in the genocide locked up forever, so they have placed great emphasis on getting them to accept responsibility for their actions, so they can be rehabilitated."

Ngaboyisonga's message and method had particular resonance for Rev. Sabune. He is a Ugandan whose brother was killed by that country's dictator, Idi Amin. In introducing her, and translating Ngaboyisonga's comments from their native Kinyarwanda, he said it had taken him 20 years to forgive Amin.

"Talking about forgiveness is part and parcel of what we do at Sing Sing, but if we don't forgive and get reconciled, we don't get anywhere," he said.

Inside... This issue of the NTC

Holy Spirit Sister Bonaventure Mangin died in San Antonio at age 93. Sr. Bonnie, who co-founded Cassata High School, is remembered as a pioneer who showed respect to all. **9**

Lucas Pollice comments on the release of the movie "The Golden Compass" and the series of books by atheist author Philip Pullman, which seek to draw children away from God. **10**

"Picturing the Bible: the Earliest Christian Art" at the Kimbell brings us samples of the Christian art of the 3rd through the 6th centuries. Viewing it is like taking a pilgrimage. **12-13**

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