

# North Texas Catholic

Bringing the Good News to the Diocese of Fort Worth

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**MADONNA AND CHILD**  
— Mary and the Christ Child appear in this fragment from a larger 16th-century piece by Bernardino Luini. The Dec. 25 Christmas feast commemorates the incarnation of the divine word at the birth of Christ. (CNS photo/Erich Lessing, Art Resource)

## Pope Benedict XVI calls visit to Turkey an unforgettable spiritual experience

By John Thavis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI called his visit to Turkey an unforgettable experience and said he hoped it would lead to improved relations between Christians and Muslims.

The pope made the remarks at his noon blessing Dec. 3 at the start of the Advent season, addressing pilgrims two days after returning from a pilgrimage of dialogue in Turkey.

The pope thanked the organizers of the four-day trip, including Turkish authorities, for ensuring that the visit was “peaceful and fruitful.” He expressed his gratitude to “the friendly Turkish people” for giving him “a welcome worthy of their traditional

spirit of hospitality.”

He said the visit was “an unforgettable spiritual and pastoral experience, which I hope will help produce an increasingly sincere cooperation among all the disciples of Christ and a beneficial dialogue with Muslim believers.”

The papal visit was designed as a primarily ecumenical trip and featured important encounters with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

But the pope generated the most interest in Turkey and in the world by meeting with Muslim leaders and visiting the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, where he prayed alongside a Muslim cleric  
SEE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY..., P. 7

## Bishop Vann removes Fr. Gil Pansza from ministry because of a violation of the terms of the Charter

**Editor’s note:** Bishop Kevin Vann issued the following statement to a news conference, Thursday afternoon, Dec. 14, at The Catholic Center in West Fort Worth. The floor was then opened to questions put forward by reporters from area television and radio stations and the FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM. The video of the news conference is available at the diocesan Web site, [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org).

It is my sad duty to announce that I have removed Father Gilbert Pansza, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Wichita Falls, from active ministry in accord with the terms of “The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.”

In continuing to review the files of the diocese, we discovered an admission from Fr. Pansza

of sexual abuse of a minor that occurred in the early 1970s. The behavior to which Fr. Pansza admitted, as I said, occurred in the early 1970s before he was even a seminarian. We have turned the information about the incident over to the appropriate legal authorities.

Since his ordination to the  
SEE BISHOP VANN..., P. 2

## ‘Nativity’ producer has Fort Worth connection

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON (CNS) — It was “dumb Irish luck” that got “The Nativity Story” its Nov. 26 screening at the Vatican, according to Marty Bowen, the film’s Catholic producer.

“I was ‘altar boy of the year’ at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth, Texas, in ‘82 and ‘83. When you have that kind of clout, you

can make things happen,” Bowen joked.

In a more serious vein, Bowen said, “The church is looking for entertainment that will embrace its values, rather than be on the defensive with films like ‘The Da Vinci Code.’”

Bowen talked to Catholic News Service from Rome, where  
SEE BOWEN MAKES..., P. 21

## ‘Magi’ study by Da Vinci makes brief U.S. visit

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Blink and you’ve missed it — in more ways than one.

A study done around 1481 by Leonardo da Vinci for his painting, “Adoration of the Magi,” left Italy for only a very brief time, arriving at the Library of Congress in Washington for a U.S. exhibition lasting all of two days, Dec. 7-8.

The study measures 160 millimeters by 290 millimeters — not much bigger than a reporter’s notebook, which measures 4 inches by 8 inches.

Even so, exhibit patrons would benefit by viewing the enlarged detail of Da Vinci’s study as shown on big-screen plasma televisions to see the remarkable detail it contains.

The drawing is on loan from

the Uffizi Gallery in Italy, and Library of Congress spokesman Matt Raymond said Dec. 6 at a press preview that there were a limited number of days it could be outside of Italy. It is the first public showing of the drawing outside of Italy, and its first trip outside of Europe.

Maurizio Seracini, director of the Center of Interdisciplinary  
SEE DA VINCI’S..., P. 9



**SEEKING WARMTH** — Girls dressed as angels huddle around a bonfire as they wait to join a living Nativity scene outside Our Lady of the Lakes Church in Random Lake, Wis., Dec. 1. Despite a blizzard earlier that day, members of the parish presented the 30-minute program. (CNS photo/Sam Lucero, Catholic Herald)



**CHRISTMAS STAMP** — This Christmas stamp depicts the “Madonna and Child With Bird,” an oil-on-canvas painting by Ignacio Chacon which dates from 1765. It is part of the Engracia and Frank Barrows Freyer collection of Peruvian colonial art at the Denver Art Museum. (CNS photo/U.S. Postal Service)

## Bishop Vann announces the removal of Father Gil Pansza from ministry

FROM PAGE 1

priesthood in 2000, we have not received any accusations of abuse of minors against Fr. Pansza.

We are taking this action on the basis of our discovery of this information in the files. We have removed Fr. Pansza from active ministry because it is the right thing to do in protecting God’s people from any potential harm.

I have asked Father James Hart, in his capacity as chancellor, and Father Michael Olson, vicar general and overseer of the Conduct Review Board, to review all priest personnel files.

As I have said, this is a sad time both for me personally and in the history of our local Church. It is distressing to remove a priest, but this needed to be done.

Once again I recommit myself to the Church of Fort Worth and to all of you, to act in accord with the best interests and the safety of the vulnerable among us, and to be in accord with the



**BISHOP SPEAKS TO MEDIA** — Bishop Kevin Vann, flanked by Father Michael Olson (right), vicar general, and Father James Hart (left), chancellor, answers questions from members of the media at a news conference held at The Catholic Center in West Fort Worth, Thursday afternoon, Dec. 14. (Photo by Chris Kastner)

requirements of “The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.”

I want to again state that if anyone has been abused or knows of anyone who has been abused

by a priest or any employee or volunteer of the church, please contact Ms. Judy Locke, victims assistance coordinator, at (817) 560-3300 or Father Michael Olson at the same number.

## Chicago deacons help with rebuilding efforts in New Orleans

By Florence Herman

**NEW ORLEANS (CNS)** — A group of permanent deacons from Chicago has planned three trips a year to help repair and rebuild post-Katrina New Orleans.

Deacon Sal Lema, director of communications for the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary of the Carmelite Fathers and Brothers, enlisted help from fellow deacons in the Chicago Archdiocese after hearing about the needs from a member of his province who was in New Orleans after the August 2005 hurricane to offer help from the larger Carmelite community.

“He couldn’t believe what he saw,” Deacon Lema recalled during an October building trip to New Orleans. “When I heard it, my reaction was, ‘We’ve got to do something, and that something had to be a hands-on project.’”

Deacon Lema and Deacon Joe Windblad came to New Orleans at the invitation of Carmelite Sister Beth Fitzpatrick, congregational leader.

Both Sr. Beth and Carmelite Sister Camille Anne Campbell, president and principal of Mount Carmel Academy, an all-girls school that was inundated by more than 8 feet of floodwater but reopened in January, identified a great need: rebuilding a small print shop at the back of their complex that churned out



**NEW ORLEANS ASSISTANCE**

— Deacon Richard Ribski of Chicago cuts tile for a bathroom in the Sisters of Mount Carmel motherhouse in New Orleans in mid-October. Deacon Ribski was one of several deacons who made the trip to New Orleans to help rebuild the motherhouse, which was damaged in Hurricane Katrina. (CNS photo/Frank J. Methe, CLARION HERALD)

the thousands of pages needed to keep the school and community running and in touch.

After surveying the 1,500-square-foot building, measuring and figuring, the deacons flew back to Chicago. They preached and cajoled, and got all the materials necessary to completely rebuild the shop. A freight line arranged to transport 7,000 pounds of materials for free.

In January, Deacon Lema and five other deacons drove to New Orleans — “941 miles, we’ve got it down to a science,” Deacon Lema said — and after four and a half days of almost nonstop work from sunup to sundown they left a completed shop ready to be refitted with equipment.

However, the deacons saw much more that needed doing. “We went back and preached

about the needs that were still here,” Deacon Lema told the *Clarion Herald*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. “We found a lot of people who wanted to come and do hands-on work.”

Their next project was the sisters’ four-story motherhouse, which had both water and wind damage.

“We knew that we could get some areas of it up and running,” Deacon Lema said, adding that a volunteer plumber fixed all the leaky pipes and toilets, getting showers and lavatories working again.

By the time the deacons returned in June for their two-week stay, they had begun to organize their efforts as Project Hope. The subtitle, “Hope is on the way,” carried over to their Web address, [www.hopeisontheway.org](http://www.hopeisontheway.org). They all wear red T-shirts with “Chicago deacons” on one side and “Project Hope” on the other.

“The first time we came down, we’d raised \$16,000 in donations,” said Deacon Lema. “The second time, we raised \$4,000.” For their October work, the deacons raised \$14,000. Two weekends of preaching at his parish, Mother of Good Counsel in Homer Glen, Illinois, raised \$5,000, and a parish bake sale netted more than \$1,000.

Beginning in June, project volunteers stayed at a nearby

bed and breakfast, with the sisters providing lunch and school alumni families or local restaurants providing supper.

Deacon Lema’s consistent message to deacons and others interested in the project is “we gotta come; it’s a kind of commitment.” At a convocation of Chicago deacons, 12 signed on for the trips planned for January, June, and October.

In January, said Deacon Lema, they will help New Orleans Deacon Dwight Alexander, who has assisted them during previous trips, rebuild his flooded house and continue their work at the motherhouse.

He never knows what he’s getting in terms of volunteer helpers, said Deacon Lema. “But the people coming have the skill to do the jobs needed.”

In June, they pulled up flooring and tile at the motherhouse; in October, they re-laid flooring and readied the kitchen for new cabinets and counters.

From the beginning, Deacon Lema said, his Carmelite province has been generous, not just with donations but with time. “They’ve been giving me time to come here and do the work,” he said, adding that his wife joined him last June.

“It feels good to get your hands into the work, to get dirty,” he said. “Like bad pennies, we’ll just keep turning up.”

## Diocesan

# Cassata High School's new president, Sal Espino, plans on telling about school's success stories every chance he gets

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

When Fort Worth City Councilman Sal Espino addressed the Northside Rotary Club Nov. 28, he had more to offer the crowd than just news about community issues. On Nov. 13, the real estate attorney became president of Cassata High School, and the position has given his speaking engagements a new focus.

"I like telling the Cassata story — the success stories that start here," Espino says from his as yet undecorated office. "I'm going to use my contacts in the community to explain how this high school started and what it does, every chance I get."

And the school's rich, colorful history will provide the new president with a wealth of interesting material. Started by Sister Mary Bonaventure Mangan, SHSp, and Sister Mary Venard



**CASSATA PRESIDENT** — Fort Worth City Councilman Sal Espino checks the progress of Cassata High School student Ryan Micheletti. Espino was named president of Cassata in November and is eager to spread stories of the school's successes to the Fort Worth community. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

Principal Bill Hardisty.

"We asked why a city councilman would want this position. He said he always wanted to work for a nonprofit [organization] and do something positive for the young people in the Fort Worth area," the principal remembers. "Having someone of his stature, demeanor, and personality is an asset to the school. His selection was unanimous."

And the students seem to agree with the decision, Hardisty adds.

"They're excited to have someone from the Fort Worth City Council here," he says. "Frankly, our ability to draw someone of that caliber to this small school surprised us."

Buoyed by the support of students, parents, and staff, Espino says he's eager to roll up his shirt sleeves and go to work for Cassata. As president, his chief responsibilities involve public relations, development, and fundraising. Immediate goals include increasing the visibility and awareness of Cassata in the area, building a strong financial base, and raising the capital needed for upkeep and improvement of the school's facilities.

Now the bearer of two titles — city councilman and Cassata High School president — Espino is often queried by his constituents about the growing high school dropout rate. Solving the problem, he says, requires a three-pronged strategy — childhood literacy programs, quick intervention for at-risk students, and recovery.

"Cassata is part of the recovery process. It's another option for kids who have lost hope," he explains.

According to Espino, Cassata succeeds because it embodies the values the Catholic Church teaches — respect, dignity, tolerance, and support. "When students walk up the steps of this school, they know they'll find those things here," he says.

Fulbright, SSMN, in 1975, Cassata was designed to help students who had difficulty succeeding in a traditional classroom setting. Using a well-tested cur-

riculum that stresses small class size, individual attention, and self-paced goals, the alternative high school has graduated more than 3,500 at-risk students since its inception.

During his first month on the job, Espino has spent time getting to know the 121 young men and women currently enrolled at the Hemphill Street campus. Recognizing the obstacles some Cassata students must overcome to graduate, the school's nurturing administrator shares one tidbit of encouragement that he's always found helpful: Faced with a daunting task, it's not so much finishing first that counts, but that you finish.

"I like the idea that this school gives young people a second or even a third chance at an education," Espino says enthusiastically. "I'm coming into this job 100 percent energized."

Born in Mexico and brought to the United States as a 5-year-old, the Northside resident knows from personal experience the value of a high school diploma. A product of the Fort Worth public school system, he graduated as valedictorian of Polytechnic High School before earning a bachelor's degree in business administration from

Texas Christian University. After TCU, Espino went on to study law at Southern Methodist University and is now a member of the State Bar of Texas, the Tarrant County Bar Association, and the Mexican-American Bar Association. He currently serves on the tax increment finance boards for the Texas Motor Speedway, North Tarrant Parkway, Trinity River Vision, Lone Star, and the Fort Worth Sports Authority.


In addition to his civic and community obligations, Espino is an active volunteer at All Saints Church where he is involved in numerous parish groups and liturgical ministries. His dedication to the church and his desire to work for a nonprofit organization attracted him to the administrative opening at Cassata High School.

"When I read that Cassata was looking for president, I saw an opportunity," says Espino. "The mission of Cassata appealed to me. I want to help young people find their place in life through education." Espino and his wife Elizabeth have four children of their own.

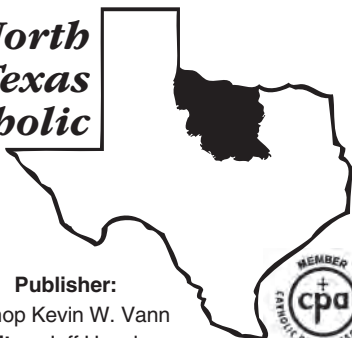
The councilman's heartfelt answers to questions posed by the selection committee won him the job, according to Cassata




Cassata President Sal Espino (right) confers with administrative assistant Cserdis Anderson in the school office. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)



**North Texas Catholic**





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### THREE-DAY RETREATS

*Thursday evening until Sunday lunch*

| Men:          | Women:        |
|---------------|---------------|
| Jan. 11, 2007 | Feb. 1, 2007  |
| Jan. 18, 2007 | Feb. 22, 2007 |
| Mar. 15, 2007 | Mar. 1, 2007  |
|               | Mar. 8, 2007  |

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## Ministry Formation Day in Fort Worth to be held Jan. 6

"Who Do You Say That I Am?" is the theme of the diocesan Ministry Formation Day, to be held Jan. 6 at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth. The event, which will be offered in English and Spanish, is an opportunity for enrichment, fellowship, and development of practical skills for ministry. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m.

The keynote address — first in English, at 9:30 a.m., and then in Spanish, at 10:45 a.m. — will be presented by Bishop Kevin Vann. 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 another round of workshops in the afternoon, prior to the conclusion of the event at 3 p.m. Three sessions in the Vietnamese language are planned.

Workshops will be offered on a variety of topics, including "Volunteers: Y'all Are Called to Serve," "Catholic Response to Moral Quandaries," "How to Get Pro-Life Committees Started in Your Parish," "Marriage — Living the Sacrament," and "Hands-On Lenten Ideas for the Classroom."

All involved in parish or school ministries, whether volunteer or paid staff, are welcome to attend. The cost, which includes lunch, is \$20 per person prior to the early registration deadline of Jan. 2. After that date, the cost is \$25 per person. Scholarships are available.

For more information, call The Catholic Center at (817) 560-3300 or visit the diocesan Web site at [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org).

## Good Shepherd Parish invites distanced Catholics to 'Come Home'

The Adult Faith Formation team of Good Shepherd Church, 1000 Tinker Road in Colleyville, has a message for inactive, disconnected, or alienated Catholics within the Diocese of Fort Worth. "Please accept this invitation to Come Home," say members of the formation team. "Your church misses you."

The Come Home Ministry at Good Shepherd Church will offer a five-session program, beginning Tuesday, Jan. 9, and concluding Tuesday, Feb. 6. Each Tuesday evening session will begin at 7 p.m. and will conclude at 9 p.m.

Topics to be addressed in the sessions will include: an introduction to the Come Home program, Jan. 9; stories of separation and return, Jan. 16; a discussion of the sacraments, Jan. 23; a tour of the church at Good Shepherd, Jan. 30; and information about the Catholic Church, its teachings on divorce, and the annulment process, Feb. 6.

Those active in the Come Home Ministry at Good Shepherd offer a safe, welcoming environment for conversation about a return to active participation in the life of the Catholic Church. For more information, contact Karen DeFilippis at (817) 421-1387, or Diane Kruse at (817) 488-7092. For childcare reservations, contact the parish office at (817) 421-1387 prior to Jan. 1.

## Dr. Mark Goodwin to speak on 'Making Sense of the Gospels' Jan. 11, 18

Dr. Mark Goodwin, author and professor of biblical studies and theology at the University of Dallas, will present a two-part series on "Making Sense of the Gospels in the 21st Century" at Good Shepherd Church, 1000 Tinker Road in Colleyville, Jan. 11 and 18. Each session will begin at 7 p.m. and will conclude at 9 p.m.

The Jan. 11 session will focus upon the question, "What are the Gospels and how do we make sense of them?" The Jan. 18 session is entitled "Making Sense of the Gospels: The Four Faces of Jesus."

Dr. Goodwin, a parishioner of St. Michael Church in Bedford, has served on the UD faculty since 1993. He is author of the book *Paul: Apostle of the Living God*, published in 2001.

The course fee is \$5; childcare is available by registration prior to Jan. 1. Participants in the program may register online at [www.gsc.net](http://www.gsc.net) or by calling the parish office at (817) 421-1387.

## St. Maria Goretti Church to host 'Theology of the Body' seminar

St. Maria Goretti Adult Faith Formation will present a five-week seminar on the "Theology of the Body," Pope John Paul II's teaching on human sexuality. The series will be held on five consecutive Fridays, beginning Jan. 19 and concluding Feb. 16, from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the cafeteria at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Dr. in Arlington.

The seminar will begin with a dynamic presentation by the Theology of the Body Evangelization Team (TOBET) from the Diocese of Dallas. The four remaining sessions will include viewing of a DVD series by writer and speaker Christopher West, with questions and discussion to follow each presentation.

Pizza and drinks will be served each evening after 6:30 p.m. with the program beginning at 7 p.m. Cost will be \$5 per person for the study guides and \$5 per person each week for pizza and drinks. Childcare will be provided.

Registration is required prior to Jan. 17. For more information or to register, contact Lucas Pollice at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226, or e-mail to [lpollice@smgparish.org](mailto:lpollice@smgparish.org).

## 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 Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, 2016 Willis Lane in Keller.

For more information, visit the group's Web site at [www.sampg.org](http://www.sampg.org) or e-mail to Mark at [seasmenspurity@yahoo.com](mailto:seasmenspurity@yahoo.com) or call the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish office at (817) 431-3857.

# People & Events

of Importance for the Church of Fort Worth



**LITTLE SAINTS AND ANGELS** — The students, faculty, and staff of Our Lady of Victory School in Fort Worth welcomed Father Robert Wilson, pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Aledo, in November for the celebration of an All Saints Day Mass. Second graders came dressed as their favorite saints, while kindergartners portrayed little angels. Fr. Wilson is shown pausing for a photo opportunity with a few of the youngsters. (Photo by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen)

## Retrouvaille weekend Jan. 19-21 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. 19-21 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](http://www.retrouvaille.org).

## Support group offers help for grieving divorced, widowed, and separated

Starting a New Life, a structured, confidential support group sponsored by the diocesan Family Life Office, is available to those grieving the loss of a spouse through death or divorce. A new 10-week cycle will begin Monday, Jan. 22, during which participants, supported by peers, will work through the stages of grief and pain that accompany the loss of a spouse. Meetings will be held Monday evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth.

All faiths are welcome. For information, contact Helen Engle at (817) 261-9706 or e-mail to [hengle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hengle@sbcglobal.net); or Kevin Gamble at (817) 626-9382. More information may also be found on the diocesan Web site at [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org).

## NTC deadlines for submission

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

Items for the Jan. 12 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 3. Items for the Jan. 26 issue must be received by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

## Rachel's Vineyard retreat, Jan. 5-7, to offer post-abortion healing

A Rachel's Vineyard retreat, designed to offer healing for women and men struggling with the psychological and spiritual pain of abortion, will be held Jan. 5-7 in Fort Worth.

Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer a safe, non-judgmental, and supportive environment to those struggling with abortion's aftermath. The retreat team, which includes a priest and a licensed counselor, provides the confidential support needed to help participants work through feelings of anger, shame, guilt, and grief, so that they may be open to experiencing the healing love and mercy of God.

Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and former participants in the abortion industry — anyone who has been hurt by abortion — are welcome to attend.

For more information or to register, call the confidential help line at (817) 923-4757 or e-mail to [forgiven@racheltx.org](mailto:forgiven@racheltx.org). All inquiries are strictly confidential.

## Annual Respect Life Mass to be celebrated Jan. 19

All are invited to participate in the annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton Street in downtown Fort Worth, Friday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m. The diocesan liturgy, held each January, will mark the 34th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion.

"Your presence and participation in prayer and worship will be an important sign of support to the efforts of many people who serve diligently to protect the most vulnerable — the unborn, the disabled, the chronically ill, and the elderly," said Deacon Richard Stojak, director of the diocesan Family Life Office, in urging attendance at the Jan. 19 liturgy.

For more information, call the Family Life Office at (817) 560-3300.

## Young Serrans awards banquet set for Jan. 27 in Dallas

All are invited to attend the Young Serra Community (YSC) of Dallas 2007 Award Presentation and Banquet to be held Saturday, Jan. 27, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. The banquet will be hosted at the parish hall at All Saints Church, 5231 Meadowcreek Drive in Dallas. Entertainment for the event will be provided by DJ Brian Kidd.

The YSC is dedicated to spiritual growth and fellowship within its membership and to supporting vocations in the church. The YSC also works to foster openness to religious vocations within Catholic youth.

The banquet cost is \$30 per person, or \$40 per person after the Jan. 13 reservation deadline. Semi-formal attire is requested. All guests are invited to bring their own wine. For more information, contact Lauren Hampson at (972) 238-0601 or by e-mail to [L\\_Hampson16@yahoo.com](mailto:L_Hampson16@yahoo.com).

## Advent, Christmas services for the deaf announced

The diocesan Deaf Ministry Program has announced that a Christmas Eve liturgy will be celebrated for members of the deaf community and their family and friends.

The members of the deaf community are invited to gather at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 861 Wildwood Lane in Grapevine, for a signed and interpreted Christmas Eve Mass at 8 p.m. Father Ken Robinson will celebrate the Mass in sign and voice, and the Deaf Ministry Sign Choir, as well as deaf leaders, will participate in this liturgy. Family and friends are welcome to join in this special celebration. Reserved pews for the community will be located at the front right side of the church, in front of the baptismal font. Those participating are encouraged to arrive early.

There will not be an interpreted Mass at St. John the Apostle, All Saints, or St. Francis of Assisi churches on the morning of Dec. 24. Instead, the 5:30 p.m. Saturday evening Mass at St. Francis of Assisi will be interpreted to fulfill the fourth Sunday of Advent obligation. For more information, contact the Deaf Ministry Program office at (817) 284-3019 (voice and TTY).

## Faith and Fiction group to discuss Dostoevski novel, Jan. 18

"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, Jan. 18, at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. The topic of discussion will be *The Brothers Karamazov*, a novel by Fyodor Dostoevski.

Those planning to participate are asked to read the book, reflect on it in light of personal experiences, and come to the session with questions, insights, or observations to share. A potluck supper will be served at 6:15 p.m., and the discussion will take place from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Faith and Fiction will also meet Feb. 15 to discuss *Stones from the River* by Ursula Hegi.

To ensure good conversation, space will be limited. To reserve a spot or for more information, contact Dan Luby at (817) 560-2452 ext. 259, or by e-mail to [dluby@fwdioc.org](mailto:dluby@fwdioc.org).

## Calix support group meets monthly at Holy Family

Calix, a monthly support meeting for Catholics who are alcoholic and others who are struggling with addiction and seeking recovery, is offered the first Saturday of each month at Holy Family Church, 6150 Pershing Ave. in West Fort Worth. The next meeting will be held Jan. 6, 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 or Tim S. at (817) 735-1519.

## People and Events



**PLANNING LIFE RALLY** — The Youth Leadership Team from St. John the Apostle Church, North Richland Hills, recently held a planning meeting in preparation for the 2007 Life Revival Youth Rally, to be held Jan. 12-13 at the parish. Scott Whitley writes potential topic names on the chalkboard for the team's consideration. Topics considered included "2 Smart 2 Start," a workshop on drug and alcohol prevention; "Live and Let Live," covering teen suicide prevention; and "In List 4 Life: How is God uniquely calling you in your life?" focusing on vocations.

### St. Maria Goretti Parish to present 'H3: Holy Happy Hour' Jan. 16

St. Maria Goretti Church of Arlington is presenting a monthly series entitled "H3: Holy Happy Hour," an opportunity to learn and to discuss contemporary issues with the truths of Catholicism in an informal setting. The next "happy hour" will be held Tuesday, Jan. 16, at J. Gilligan's Restaurant, located at 400 E. Abram St. in Arlington. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the presentation will begin at 7 p.m.

The guest speaker will be Father Stephen Sanchez, OCD, who will give a presentation entitled "But There is No Room in my Blackberry for Prayer." The program will offer ideas about how to be a spiritual and prayerful person in the midst of our busy lives and culture.

Fr. Sanchez, a priest of the Discalced Carmelites of the Province of St. Therese, serves as director of the Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas. He is a retreat leader with expertise in the writings of St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.

For information, contact Lucas Pollice at (817) 274-0643 or e-mail to [lpollice@smgparish.org](mailto:lpollice@smgparish.org).

### Plan now to celebrate World Marriage Day Feb. 11

World Marriage Day is celebrated nationally on the second Sunday in February. This year it falls on Feb. 11.

"With all of the things to be celebrated, let's not forget the one thing we should all cherish — marriage," states a press release from the diocesan Family Life Office.

Now is the time to gather a committee to plan this day of celebration, encourages Deacon Dick Stojak, diocesan director of Family Life. "The Family Life Office has a package of ideas and suggestions for making your World Marriage Day the best ever," he says.

For a copy of the material, call (817) 560-2452 ext. 256. Materials are also available online at [wwme.org](http://wwme.org).

### Life Revival Youth Rally to be held Jan. 12-13 at St. John's

The Youth Ministry of St. John the Apostle Church will host its annual Life Revival Youth Rally Jan. 12-13 at the church, located at 7341 Glenview Drive in North Richland Hills. The doors will open at 6 p.m. on Friday evening, and the rally will conclude at 9:30 p.m. on Saturday. The theme for the two-day event is "Life Revolution! It's More Than You Know. It's Deeper Than You Think. It's Now!"

Tarek Saab, a contestant from NBC's television program "The Apprentice," will speak at the event. Other speakers will include Father Bernard Murphy, CFR, and other members of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal; Carol Everett, a former abortion clinic owner; and Anthony Meyers, a youth pastor from the Potter's House in Dallas.

Live music will be featured, including The Remnant Band, Daniel diSilva of the Crispin Band, the Joe Languell Band, John Flynn of the John Flynn Band, Jessica Volcansek of Entertaining Angels, and the teen "Landmark Band."

Mass will be celebrated Jan. 13 at 6 p.m. with Bishop Kevin Vann presiding.

In conjunction with the rally, a Life Studios Contest will be offered, calling on the creative songwriting, artistic, and dance gifts of youth members of the church. Teens are encouraged to produce songs, artwork, and dance moves that promote the pro-life theme of the rally. All entries must promote a culture of life and love, as explained in the introduction of the *Gospel of Life* encyclical. More information about the contest may be found online at [www.liferevival.com](http://www.liferevival.com).

All high school teens and their parents are welcome to attend the rally, which is geared toward helping youth understand the dignity of every human life, including their own. Admission is free. Food, drinks, T-shirts, CDs, and more will be available for purchase.

For more information, contact Suzette Chaires by e-mail to [schaires@sjtanrh.com](mailto:schaires@sjtanrh.com) or call (817) 284-4811 ext. 209, or e-mail to Sue Laux, Youth For Life, at [laux4life@yahoo.com](mailto:laux4life@yahoo.com).

### Cardinal Newman Institute to offer series on 'Western Theological Tradition'

The Cardinal Newman Institute will offer its second series within a six-course sequence leading to a certificate in theological studies, issued jointly with the College of St. Thomas More in Fort Worth. The series, offered in 10 weekly classes entitled "Western Theological Tradition I," will be taught by Paul Menge.

Each class, beginning Jan. 13, will be held on Saturday mornings from 9:45 a.m. until noon in the conference room at St. Mary the Virgin Church, located at 1408 N. Davis Drive in Arlington. The course will investigate the growth and development of Catholic doctrine. No previous studies are required.

For more information or to register, call (817) 277-4859, or visit the College of St. Thomas More Web site at [www.cstm.edu](http://www.cstm.edu).

### Ministry with gay, lesbian Catholics to meet Jan. 25

The regular monthly meeting of the Fort Worth Diocesan Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics, Other Sexual Minorities, and Their Families will not be held in December because of the Christmas holidays. The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, Jan. 25, at 7 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth, adjacent to Nolan Catholic High School.

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

For more information, contact Fr. Murphy at (817) 927-5383; Deacon Richard Griego at (817) 421-1387; or Hank and Dottie Cummins at (817) 861-5772.

### Dr. Sandra Kennedy to speak on 'What is a Catechist?' Feb. 1

Dr. Sandra Kennedy will offer a presentation entitled "What is a Catechist?" at Good Shepherd Church, 1000 Tinker Road in Colleyville, Thursday, Feb. 1, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Dr. Kennedy is a national consultant for William H. Sadler, Inc., a publisher of religious education materials. Kennedy holds a doctorate in education and religion from Columbia University in New York.

All catechists, directors of religious education, and others with an interest in religious education are invited to attend the free presentation. Ginny Phoenix and Mary Kelly, coordinators of religious education at Good Shepherd, encourage all to attend, saying, "Dr. Kennedy's presentation is dynamic, humorous, and full of practical suggestions."

For more information, contact Mary Kelly or Ginny Phoenix at (817) 421-1387.



**MAKING CROSSES** — In remembrance of All Saints Day and All Souls Day, members of the Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas — KJZT Junior Division Society #104 of Abbott gathered to make crosses to place on infants' and children's graves at Fatima Cemetery. Pictured creating the small, white crosses with blue ribbon are (l. to r.) Ronda Ballew, Tammy Nors, Danielle Nors, and Ashley Ballew.

### New Year's Eve Dance to be held at Fort Worth KC hall

The annual New Year's Eve Dance benefiting the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics Region 10, will be held Dec. 31 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 4500 Columbus Trail in Fort Worth.

Music will be provided by Blueprint, which will play "soul-shaking funk and rock," according to organizers. A Charlie V. Productions DJ will also offer musical selections. Limited hors d'oeuvres will be included, and black-eyed peas will be served at midnight.

This event has a high attendance of singles, according to organizers. Parents with children are welcome.

The cost is \$15 per person. Reservations are encouraged. For table reservations, call Charlie Valdez at (817) 247-1809 or (817) 921-2576. For more information, contact Vince Chairez at (817) 896-5726 or (817) 551-5251.

### Beginning Experience offers help to those grieving loss of spouse

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. The next weekend session will be offered Jan. 19-21 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street in East Fort Worth, next to Nolan Catholic High School.

The program is designed to help those grieving the loss of a spouse to put closure on the past and to create a new beginning in the present. The ministry, although rooted in the Catholic tradition, is open to people of all faiths.

For more information or to register, call the Catholic Renewal Center at metro (817) 429-2920 or visit online at [www.beginningexperience.org](http://www.beginningexperience.org).

### SWLC Study Week set for Jan. 17-20 in Oklahoma City

The Southwest Liturgical Conference will hold its 44th annual Study Week Jan. 17-20 at the Cox Business Services Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

Study Week speakers will include Father Paul Holmes, Father J. Michael Joncas, Father Kevin Irwin, Pat Kerwin, and Bill Huebsch.

To acquire a registration brochure or for more information, call (405) 721-5651 ext. 158 or send mail to The Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123. More information is also available online at [www.swlc.org](http://www.swlc.org).

### Courage group meets twice monthly

Courage D/FW, a spiritual support group for Catholics striving to live chaste lives according to 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](mailto:CourageDFW@Catholic.org) or call (972) 938-5433.

### St. John the Apostle Parish to host dinner, Christmas concert Dec. 22

A dinner and Christmas concert will be presented Friday, Dec. 22, at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Drive in North Richland Hills. The event is sponsored by the combined choirs of the parish as well as the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas.

The Knights of Columbus will serve dinner from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the gym. The cost for the dinner is \$6.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children. Those participating may pay at the door; no reservations are needed. The Catholic Daughters will also host a bake sale during the dinner hour. This will be a perfect time, according to organizers, to pick up some holiday goodies.

Following the dinner, at 8 p.m., the combined choirs of St. John's, accompanied by members of the Northeast Orchestra, will present "The Voices of Christmas" by Joseph M. Martin. There is no charge for the concert.

All are welcome. For more information, call the parish office at (817) 284-4811.



**CAREER DAY** — St. George School in Northeast Fort Worth hosted a Career Day Oct 18 for children in grades Pre-K through four. Joe Rangel, an employee of Atmos Energy, allows student Jaymond Marks to spend some time behind the steering wheel of his company truck. Rangel spoke to the St. George students about the vehicle's function and the work that he does for the natural gas company.



**POPE AT MOSQUE** — Pope Benedict XVI and Mustafa Cagrici (right), the grand mufti of Istanbul, pray in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30. When the mufti said he was going to pray, the pope bowed his head, folded his hands, and moved his lips in silence for about a minute. The historic visit marked the second time a pope has entered a mosque. (CNS photo/Anatolian News Agency, Reuters)

## In sign of respect to Muslims, pope prays in Blue Mosque

By John Thavis

ISTANBUL, Turkey (CNS) — In a gesture of respect to Muslims in Turkey and around the world, Pope Benedict XVI prayed in Istanbul's famed Blue Mosque, his first papal visit to an Islamic place of worship.

As the pope walked with Mustafa Cagrici, the grand mufti of Istanbul, to the "mihrab" niche that points the way toward Mecca, the mufti said he was going to pray.

The pope stood alongside him, bowed his head, and moved his lips in silence for about a minute.

The Nov. 30 encounter was warm and cordial, and contrasted sharply with recent controversies and tensions between the pope and the Muslim world.

The pope accepted the gift of a ceramic tile inscribed with the word "Allah" in the form of a dove.

Placing his hand on the tile, the pope said: "Thank you for this gift. Let us pray for brotherhood and for all humanity."

"Your Holiness, please remember us," the mufti replied.

Built by Sultan Ahmet I in the early 1600s, the Blue Mosque, with six minarets and cascading domes, is one of the most

famous religious buildings in the world.

The pope entered its carpeted prayer hall after taking off his shoes and donned a pair of white slippers, listening carefully as his guides explained the architectural history of the mosque and the religious significance of its spaces.

He looked up to admire the arabesque designs of the domes and the intricate blue tiles that give the mosque its name and its distinctive atmosphere.

Then, as they drew close to the carved marble "mihrab," the grand mufti told the pontiff: "In this space everyone stops to pray for 30 seconds, to gain serenity."

The mufti told the pope he was going to pray. The pope, his arms folded over his pectoral cross, stood next to the mufti and moved his lips, a moment shown in close-up on Turkish TV.

When they turned away, according to a reporter on the scene, the pope told the mufti, "Thank you for this moment of prayer."

Asked to elaborate afterward, the Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, said: "The pope paused in meditation, and certainly he turned his thoughts to God."

## At Divine Liturgy, pope, patriarch affirm commitment to unity

By Cindy Wooden

ISTANBUL, Turkey (CNS) — Claiming the brotherhood of their respective patron saints — the apostles Andrew and Peter — the spiritual leaders of the world's Orthodox and the world's Catholics joined together in prayer and solemnly affirmed their commitment to the full unity of their churches.

Incense and ancient hymns chanted in Greek set the atmosphere as Pope Benedict XVI paid homage to the Orthodox church by attending a Nov. 30 Divine Liturgy celebrated by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

The liturgy at the Orthodox Church of St. George in Istanbul marked the feast of St. Andrew, patron of the patriarchate.

The pope and patriarch greeted each other with kisses on the cheek, but then the pope moved to a raised wooden throne at the side of the church while the patriarch celebrated the solemn liturgy.

After the almost three-hour liturgy, Patriarch Bartholomew led Pope Benedict to a balcony overlooking a courtyard. They both blessed the crowd, then the patriarch took the pope's hand and held it aloft as they waved and smiled at the applauding crowd below.

"In the liturgy, we are reminded of the need to reach unity in faith as well as in prayer," the patriarch said in his homily.

"Therefore, we kneel in humility and repentance before the living God and Our Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious name we bear and yet at the same time whose seamless garment we have divided," the patriarch told the pope and other members of the congregation.

"We confess in sorrow that we are not yet able to celebrate the holy sacraments in unity," Patriarch Bartholomew said. "And we pray that the day may come when this sacramental unity will be realized in its fullness."

As the Orthodox faithful processed up for Communion, they bowed to the pope before receiving the consecrated bread and wine. But one little boy, dressed in a dark suit and tie, stepped out of the line to kiss the pope's ring.

Although the Orthodox church in Turkey has fewer than 5,000 members, Pope Benedict told reporters that the patriarchate's standing in the Orthodox world as the "first among equals" made a visit almost obligatory.

"Numbers, quantity, do not count," the pope told reporters Nov. 28 on the way to Turkey.



**JOINT DECLARATION SIGNED** — Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew sign a joint declaration at the Orthodox Cathedral of St. George in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30. The declaration committed the Catholic and Orthodox churches to continuing dialogue and greater practical cooperation. (CNS photo/Catholic Press Photo)

"It is the symbolic, historical, and spiritual weight that counts" and the fact that the patriarchate "remains a point of reference for the whole Orthodox world and, therefore, for all of Christianity."

Addressing the congregation at the end of the liturgy, Pope Benedict said the service was an opportunity "to experience once again the communion and call of the two brothers," Peter and Andrew, chosen by Jesus to be his apostles and sent to different cities to preach the same Gospel.

The fact that the brothers also had different roles within the Christian community, with Peter and his successors in Rome having a "universal responsibility," has "unfortunately given rise to our differences of opinion, which we hope to overcome, thanks also to the theological dialogue which has been recently resumed," Pope Benedict said.

While Orthodox generally recognize the importance of the church of Rome, they object to the way in which popes have tried to exercise direct jurisdiction over all Christian communities.

Pope Benedict said he wanted to "recall and renew" the invitation issued by Pope John Paul II for a discussion among Christians on possible ways for exercising the papal ministry to serve the unity of all Christians.

"It is only through brotherly communion between Christians and through their mutual love

that the message of God's love for each and every man and woman will become credible," the pope said.

Like the patriarch, he expressed his sadness at the fact that although they share the same faith and recognize the validity of each other's sacraments, Catholics and Orthodox cannot regularly share each other's Eucharist.

"May our daily prayer and activity be inspired by a fervent desire not only to be present at the Divine Liturgy, but to be able to celebrate it together, to take part in the one table of the Lord, sharing the same bread and the same chalice," the pope said.

At the end of the liturgy, he gave Patriarch Bartholomew a chalice as a gift.

The patriarch, in turn, gave the pope a Book of the Gospels, expressing his hope that Catholics and Orthodox would be imitators of Christ and would allow love, unity, and peace to prevail.

After the liturgy, the pope and patriarch signed a joint declaration committing their churches to continuing theological dialogue and greater practical cooperation, especially in promoting Christian values in increasingly secularized societies.

They also expressed their concern for the poor and for victims of violence — especially in the Middle East — and terrorism, and for those whose religious freedom is not recognized fully.

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# Pope encourages Turkish Christians to live in harmony with Muslims

By John Thavis

ISTANBUL, Turkey (CNS) — Closing out a four-day pilgrimage of dialogue in Turkey, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass with the tiny Christian community in Istanbul and encouraged it to live in harmony with the Muslim majority.

"Brothers and sisters, your communities walk the humble path of daily companionship with those who do not share our faith, yet profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us adore the one, merciful God," the pope said in a sermon.

"You know well that the church wishes to impose nothing on anyone, and that she merely asks to live in freedom, in order to reveal the one whom she cannot hide, Christ Jesus," he said.

About 300 people packed into the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit for the Dec. 1 Mass. Several hundred more stood in the cathedral's inner plaza and in the courtyard of a nearby church, following the liturgy on a TV screen.

Turkey has only 32,000 Catholics in a population of 72 million. Most of them live in Istanbul, which has for centuries been a bridge to the West.

The pope, wearing red vestments to mark the work of the Holy Spirit, processed into the small church and listened as Armenian Catholics chanted the entrance song. A Chaldean choir of youths, dressed in blue tunics, sang a hymn in Aramaic.

The seven languages used in the liturgy were meant to express the diversity of the Catholic community in Turkey.

The pope paid tribute to this rich variety, asking Turkish Catholics to continue to live the faith in a humble manner with a sense of service to others.

"To live by the Spirit is not to

live for oneself alone, but to let oneself be conformed to Christ Jesus by becoming, like him, the servant of his brothers and sisters," he said.

As a minority in a Muslim country, he said, Catholics should be attentive to all those who seek justice, peace, and dignity.

"Live in harmony, in accordance with the words of the Lord: 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another,'" he said.

To one side of the altar sat Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who had hosted the pope the day before in a liturgy at his Istanbul headquarters, the ecumenical focus of the pope's visit.

The pope recalled that his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in a Mass 26 years earlier in the same cathedral, had urged new efforts for full Christian unity. Unfortunately, Pope Benedict said, that hope has not yet been realized, but "the pope still longs to see it fulfilled."

He urged all Christian leaders to act for the good of all, "putting ecumenism at the forefront of our ecclesial concerns and not committing our respective churches and communities to decisions that could contradict or harm it."

Those words appeared to refer to potential problems not so much with Orthodox churches as with the Anglican Communion. Several Anglican member churches have decided to ordain women priests and some to ordain women bishops, decisions the Vatican says create a serious barrier to full union with the Catholic Church.

Patriarch Bartholomew joined the pope for the final blessing. Then the pope processed down the main aisle, smiling broadly

and greeting many of the enthusiastic faithful who reached out from either side. One man waved a Turkish flag.

Before the Mass, the pope blessed the statues of two popes in the courtyard of the cathedral: Pope John XXIII, who served for 10 years as apostolic nuncio in Turkey and was considered a good friend of the country; and Pope Benedict XV, who during World War I built hospitals in the region and made diplomatic moves in favor of Turkish prisoners.

The larger-than-life bronze statue of Pope Benedict XV was unveiled in 1921, at a ceremony attended by many Muslim Turks. It bears an inscription hailing the pontiff as "the benefactor of all peoples, regardless of nationality or religion."

After blessing the statues, the pope released four doves, one at a time, as symbols of peace.

The Mass was the final event of a trip that included political and ecumenical encounters. Before leaving for Rome from Istanbul's airport, the pope thanked city authorities and told them, "I am leaving a part of my heart in Istanbul."

The evening before, several hundred young Catholics paid an unscheduled visit to the pope's residence at the apostolic nunciature in Istanbul. After they prayed and sang outside his window for more than a half-hour, the pope came to the window and offered a blessing and words of appreciation, telling the young people he would always keep them in his prayers.

Earlier Nov. 30, the pope joined Armenian Orthodox Patriarch Mesrob II at his cathedral in Istanbul for a prayer service. The pope spoke again of the importance of ecumenism, in view of the "tragic divisions" among



**SYMBOL OF PEACE** — Pope Benedict XVI releases a dove Dec. 1 during a visit to the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul, Turkey, on the final day of his four-day visit to the Muslim country. (CNS photo/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters)

Christians that "give scandal to the world."

"Precisely by the witness of their faith and love, Christians are called to offer a radiant sign of hope and consolation to this world, so marked by conflicts and tensions," the pope said.

"We must continue, therefore, to do everything possible to heal the wounds of separation and to hasten the work of rebuilding Christian unity," he said.

The pope also appeared to refer indirectly to the Armenian massacre when he said that the faith of Armenian Catholics has been transmitted "often in

very tragic circumstances, such as those experienced in the last century."

An estimated 1.5 million Armenians — more than half the Armenian population at the time — died in a forced evacuation by Ottoman Turks in 1915-18. Turkey rejects the accusation of genocide, saying the deaths were due largely to disease and famine.

In private encounters later that evening at the apostolic nunciature, the pope met with Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan Filuksinos Yusuf Cetin and with Turkish Chief Rabbi Ishak Haleva.



**ECUMENICAL GESTURE** — After a Divine Liturgy at the Orthodox Church of St. George in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30, Pope Benedict XVI and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople greet the faithful from the balcony of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They both blessed the crowd, then the patriarch took the pope's hand and held it aloft as they waved and smiled at the applauding crowd below. (CNS photo/Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters)

## Catholic community in Turkey lives in continuous experience of Advent, sustained by hope, says pope

FROM PAGE 1  
while facing Mecca.

The pope recalled with special affection the "dear Catholic community" in Turkey. He said that despite its small size, the Catholic minority is rich in enthusiasm and faith, and carries out its pastoral life "in conditions that are often not easy."

The pope said Turkish Catholics are, in effect, living in a continuous experience of Advent, sustained by hope and trust that God is coming.

The message of Advent, he said, is that Christ "is coming into human history, to knock at the door of every man and woman

of good will, to bring the gift of brotherhood, harmony, and peace to every individual, every family, and every people."

As Christians await the celebration of the birth of Christ, they should renew this sense of hope with prayer and with concrete demonstrations of love, he said.

At an Advent vespers service the evening before in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said the coming of Christ was a sign that "the real God ... is not a God who stays in heaven, uninterested in our history."

"He is a father who never ceases to think of us and, in great

respect for our freedom, wants to meet us and visit us," he said.

As part of spiritual preparation for Christmas, the pope encouraged people to pray during Advent, and emphasized that good works should go hand in hand with prayer.

"In this sense, Advent is more than ever a time of communion with all those — and thank God, there are many — who hope for a more just and fraternal world," he said.

The commitment for justice should be a meeting ground for people of every culture and every nationality, including believers and nonbelievers, he said.

# Diocesan / National



**SCHOLARSHIP FUND ESTABLISHED**  
 — Marianist provincial representative Brother Michael O'Grady, SM, signs documents establishing a scholarship fund in memory of Father Bob Lewandowski, SM. Joining Br. O'Grady are (others, l. to r.) Pat Miller, associate director of Development for the Catholic Foundation of North Texas; Father John Klobuka, SM, pastor of St. Mark Parish, Denton; and Elaine Schad, principal of Immaculate Conception School, Denton.

## Continuing education grants available to those in active ministry

*Deadline for applications is Jan. 16*

Persons actively involved in ministry within the Diocese of Fort Worth for two years or longer and 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 Dr. Dan Luby, director of the Division of Christian Formation at The Catholic Center, and must be received or post-marked no later than Jan. 16.

Applicants will be asked to specify their intended course of study, its place and cost, and any other financial aid they expect to obtain. The pastor's (or supervisor's) signature is required,

as is information that will help establish financial need.

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

For an application, contact The Catholic Center by phone at (817) 560-3300 ext. 254, or by e-mail to [bquast@fwdioc.org](mailto:bquast@fwdioc.org). Forms also can be downloaded from the diocesan Web site at [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org), by clicking on "Ministry Preparation," and then choosing "Continuing Education Grants."

## Permanently endowed scholarship fund established in memory of Fr. Lewandowski

Through the generosity of the Society of Mary (Marianists) Province of the United States and members of the Denton religious and lay Marianist community, a permanently endowed scholarship fund has been established in the Catholic Schools' Trust of the Catholic Foundation of North Texas in memory of Father Bob Lewandowski, a Marianist priest who, prior to his death in 2003, ministered in Denton for many years.

This new scholarship fund will benefit Immaculate Conception School in Denton and will boost dollars distributed for financial assistance to students and their families in need, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

"We are so grateful to the Marianists, both lay and religious, for their desire to create this endowed fund in memory of Fr. Bob," said Elaine Schad, ICS principal.

The signing ceremony took place at St. Mark Church in Denton in early November, with Marianist Brother Michael O'Grady, provincial representative, and Father John Klobuka, SM, pastor of St. Mark's, in attendance. Also present were members of the Denton lay Marianist community, Principal Schad, and Pat Miller, associate director of Development for the Catholic Foundation of North Texas, Diocese of Fort Worth.

## Catholic Digest partners with NCCW

NEW LONDON, Connecticut (CNS) — *Catholic Digest* and the National Council of Catholic Women have announced a partnership that they hope will both benefit the bottom line for the women's organization and boost circulation for the magazine.

In 2007 and 2008, the more than 50,000 NCCW members have the option to enhance their membership by adding a subscription to *Catholic Digest*, which currently has a worldwide readership

estimated at 2.4 million.

"We are eager to give women the opportunity to join with other Catholic women nationwide who strive to live their faith and serve the church," said Ellen Bachman, NCCW president, "and we are delighted to also offer them the opportunity to enrich this faith by reading *Catholic Digest*."

Kathleen Stauffer, *Catholic Digest* president and publisher, said the partnership "is a wonderful opportunity for two established

Catholic institutions to further their missions via mutual empowerment."

The NCCW was established 75 years ago, and *Catholic Digest* has been published for 70 years.

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 March 10-18, 2007 \$1,899 or 1 night extra - S. Giovanni Rotondo (St. Padre Pio) - March 10-19, 2007 - \$1,999 per person  
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## In Theatres Everywhere December 15



## NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWSBRIEFS

### Pope celebrates Mass for Turkey's 'little flock' of Catholics

EPHESUS, Turkey (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI asked Turkey's tiny Catholic community to live their faith with courage, hope, and optimism. The pope celebrated the first public Mass of his four-day trip to Turkey Nov. 29 under the shade of pine and olive-laden trees next to the House of the Virgin Mary at Ephesus. When he addressed the "little flock" of Catholics in Turkey, he was not referring literally to the fewer than 200 people present for the Mass high on a hill over Ephesus, but it felt that way to the congregation. The Mass in honor of Mary was a brief aside dedicated to Catholics in a trip dominated by outreach to the country's Muslim majority and by celebrations at the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Pope Benedict told those present that he wanted "to convey my personal love and spiritual closeness, together with that of the universal church, to the Christian community here in Turkey, a small minority which faces many challenges and difficulties daily."

### Bill requiring notice about fetal pain in abortions fails in House

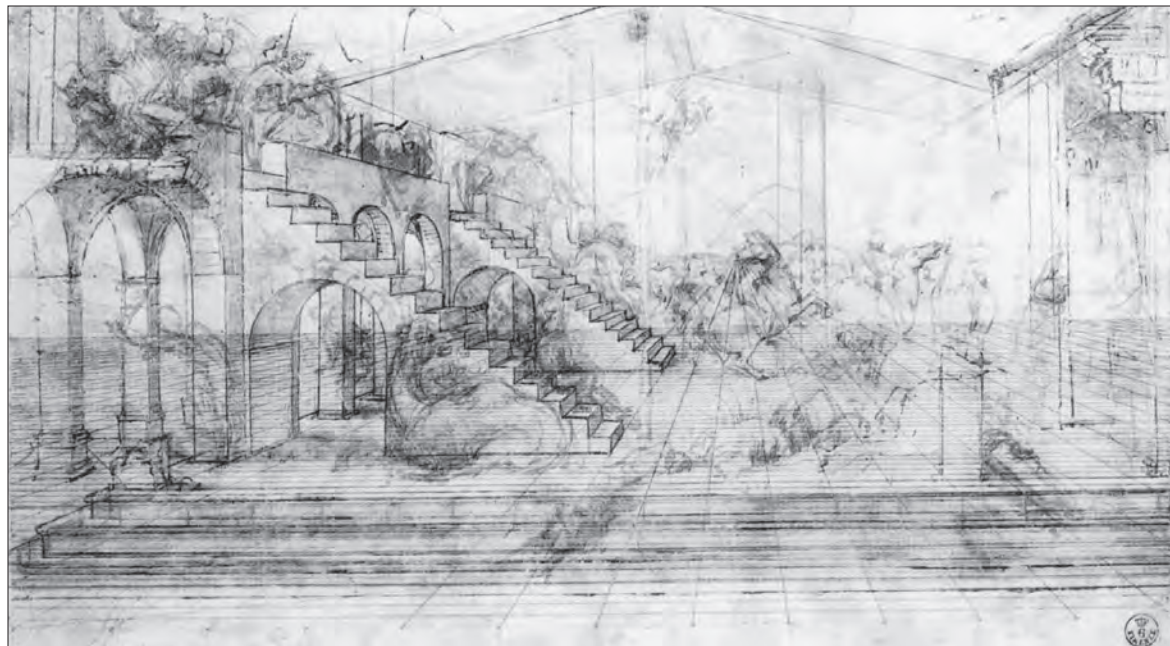
WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. House of Representatives failed to reach the two-thirds majority needed Dec. 6 for passage of the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. The legislation, which would have required that women undergoing an abortion at least 20 weeks into their pregnancy be informed that an abortion causes pain to the fetus, had been backed by President George W. Bush. The U.S. Catholic bishops had not taken a stand on the bill. The vote in the House was 250-162 in favor of a move to suspend the rules and pass the legislation. A two-thirds majority was needed for such a procedural move. During floor debate on the bill, Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, its chief sponsor, cited expert testimony showing that unborn children have "a developed system of pain perception and response" by 20 to 22 weeks into the pregnancy.

### Religious leaders call attention to growing atrocities in Darfur

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Religious leaders in the Save Darfur Coalition urged prayer the weekend of Dec. 9-10 to call attention to the ongoing atrocities in the Darfur region of western Sudan. "Nobody knows the exact number" of those killed in the conflict, said David Rubenstein, executive director of the coalition, although he estimated 400,000 have died in the violence. "There are people dying every day, and at risk of death every day," Rubenstein said during a Dec. 5 conference call with reporters. "They are being burned from their homes and villages." "Mostly, what they need is security," said Rubenstein, adding that "3.5 million people ... have been affected by this conflict, and the systems of survival have shut down." In a related matter, 78 religious organizations, including five Catholic groups, signed a full-page ad in the Dec. 5 issue of *USA Today* issuing a "call to your conscience" on Darfur. Catholic signers were the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Pax Christi USA, and the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

### CATHOLIC DIGEST takes young readers back to Mary's time in Nazareth

NEW LONDON, Connecticut (CNS) — What was it like to grow up in Nazareth in Mary and Joseph's time? What did people eat for dinner? Did children go to school? What did people do for fun? Through a new booklet produced by *Catholic Digest*, young Catholics can get answers to those questions and more, as the national monthly magazine takes them on a journey back in time to explore daily life in Nazareth with young Mary. A 24-page booklet, "If I Grew Up in Nazareth ... Take a Trip Back to the Time of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus," includes an interactive account of the life of the young Mary, packed with activities and crafts, vocabulary words related to the Catholic faith, and educational writing exercises. Geared for third through seventh graders, the colorfully illustrated booklet also features fun facts about "The Nativity Story," a movie filmed in 2006 about young Mary and Joseph. Copies of "If I Grew Up in Nazareth" may be ordered by calling (800) 321-0411, or online at [www.catholicdigest.com/nativity](http://www.catholicdigest.com/nativity). The booklet is 99 cents per copy, and a minimum order of 10 copies is required.



**DA VINCI DRAWING** — This drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, entitled "Adoration of the Magi," was on display for two days, Dec. 7-8, at the Library of Congress in Washington, its only U.S. venue. It was on loan from the Uffizi Gallery in Italy. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

## Da Vinci's 'Adoration of the Magi' study makes brief appearance at Library of Congress

FROM PAGE 1  
Science for Art, Architecture,  
and Technology at the California  
Institute for Telecommunications

and Information Technology,  
which is part of the University of  
California-San Diego, noted how  
such techniques as X-ray fluores-

cence, infrared reflectography,  
3-D modeling with structured  
light, ultraviolet fluorescence,  
and pseudo color infrared were  
used to examine the drawing,  
which was used as a model for  
the painting.

"We were able to see a wonderful drawing," Seracini said. He showed where one portion of the study that did not make it to the finished artwork could be found in a Da Vinci painting 24 years after the study was completed.

"It's remarkable. The size of the paper was so small, (yet) he was able to include so many figures, so many ideas," Seracini said. The artist created a perspective grid, drawing the ground first, then a plan for the buildings. He then animated the scene with figures of people and animals.

"Perhaps no other man personifies the concept of Renaissance man so completely as Leonardo da Vinci," Raymond said.

The project was funded by Finmeccanica, an Italian defense contractor. Da Vinci "brought science to art, and art to science, which is a remarkable achievement for the time in which he lived," said Stephen Bryen, Finmeccanica's U.S. president. "He was a genius for his time, a genius for all time."

"Adoration of the Magi" was commissioned by the monks of the San Donato a Scopeto monastery near Florence, Italy, in 1481; Da Vinci's father was an accountant for the monastery. He was supposed to finish the nine-foot painting in 30 months but Da Vinci moved to Milan in 1482 and never completed it. In 1497, the monks commissioned Filippino Lippi to finish the painting, which is also at the Uffizi.

The drawing was the subject of an Italian TV special earlier this year, Bryen said.



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# Viewpoints

## Our striving for peace must be authentic (the Prince of Peace gave his life for it)

By Dan Luby

The choir members stand in massed dignity, regal in long black dresses or tuxedos. Their eyes move as one from their sheet music to the hands and face of their conductor and back again. Their voices swell in glorious song.

They are performing Handel's "Messiah," the much-loved musical re-telling of the life of Jesus, so popular during the Christmas season. Relying on the stately English of the *King James Bible*, the power and beauty of "Messiah" touch even those whose musical tastes ordinarily run to less lofty fare.

One of the piece's lyrical highlights comes from the prophet Isaiah (9:6), listing some of the names of honor given the long awaited Messiah: Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

The last of those titles reinforces our seasonal emphasis on the angels' greeting in Luke's story of Jesus' birth. "Peace on Earth!" graces everything from greeting cards to homemade sweatshirts to messages of civic exhortation in the lighted windows of skyscrapers.

So we honor Christ as the "Prince of Peace." We proclaim "Peace on earth!"

*During this graced season we celebrate the ancient and still astounding news that God invites us into his very own life, not from a distance, by messenger; but from within human history and life itself.*

in the Christmas Gospel; we sing it in carols; we write it in our holiday letters to friends and family; and we wish it in our own hearts. It is a Christmas blessing to hope for and extend to our fellow inhabitants of this weary and troubled world.

And what are we hoping for when we hear Handel's "Messiah," when we sign those cards, sing those carols?

Many of us hope first for peace on the global stage — a cease-fire for wars, large and small, an end to terrorism and genocide as strategic tools to gain the upper hand in an endless battle for national or ethnic supremacy.

Most of us hope for a more local kind

of peace as well. We hope that political parties and social factions will give up the personal attacks and incendiary language which poison public discourse. We look for businesses and civic communities to put aside the "kill or be killed" mentality which taints commercial and civic competition.

And with our Christmas hopes for peace, we most of us also yearn for something much more personal. We hold out hope for peaceful relationships in our families and parishes and places of work. We hope, most longingly I suspect, for peace in our own hearts. During these Christmas days, perhaps our longing can prompt us to examine how we might cooperate with the grace of God's peace.

First, we have to recognize, as recent popes have said repeatedly, that peace is more than simply the absence of conflict. Peace enforced by the threat of violence, whether between nations or within households, whether physical or emotional, is always false, never lasting. We have to decide that the peace we seek is not simply the avoidance of unpleasantness or stress, but true peace, for all.

Second, we have to look into our own hearts to examine our attitudes and values. Authentic peace, rooted in a genuine respect for the inherent dignity of each human person, demands a commitment to protect and honor that dignity, from conception to natural death, even at great personal or communal cost. As Pope Paul VI famously said, "If you want peace, work for justice."

Finally, the peace of which Jesus is prince calls us to confront the warring

factions in our own lives. The conflicts of conscience, of affection, of action which stir within each of us must be named and brought to prayer. The gaps between our professed values and faith on the one hand, and our concrete actions on the other, must be recognized, and reconciliation must be sought.

Long sad experience makes clear that genuine peace — at whatever level, for whatever duration — is a discouragingly difficult goal. We hope for it, yes, but when it comes to living it out, even in those areas of life in which we have the most control, we fall short, time and again.

The good news is that, though God asks our full-hearted cooperation, he commits himself to transforming and empowering us so that, in the end, our ultimate success is assured. During this graced season we celebrate the ancient and still astounding news that God invites us into his very own life, not from a distance, by messenger; but from within human history and life itself.

May the Prince of Peace fill us with the disquiet we need to move us from the false peace of complacency to the courage and love of true peace.



Dan Luby is the director of Christian Formation for the diocese. In May, for the third time, his column received first place honors among regular columns on spiritual life in the Catholic press of the U.S.

and Canada. Dan's column earned the same recognition in 2001 and again in 2003. Dan and his wife, Theresa, have two children, Kate and Peter.

## Advent waiting can transform our hearts

By Mary Morrell

*"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."*

— Proverbs 15:13, KJV

Hosting a big party at your home brings with it many unanticipated challenges. We had a few this past week as we prepared for an engagement party with some 50 guests.

The day before the party, as my husband was grilling hamburgers for dinner, he asked, "Remember those chocolate macaroons I bought for the party?"

"Yes," I answered wryly, knowing some strange tale was about to follow.

"Well, they're a little — um — barbecued."

"Barbecued??" This was one I never expected.

"Yeah, but you can still use the top layer. They should be fine."

I guess the expression on my face demanded more explanation, so he went on to say that he had put the macaroons and the carrot cake in the barbecue grill the day before to keep them cold while protecting them from the occasional raccoon that would show up for dinner.

Forgetting his decision, he lit the grill and while waiting for it to get hot, he noticed smoke pouring out from inside.

He ran to open the lid and there sat the cake and cookies, both inside of sadly misshapened and seriously blackened plastic containers.

"Frank, I don't think it would be a wise idea to try and rescue some barbecued macaroons and feed them to 50 guests. Plastic is not meant to be eaten."

I had to laugh at the varied perceptions that make us different.

He figures why waste the whole \$10 by throwing all the cookies away. I think why take a chance for \$10.

Needless to say, there were no maca-

roons or carrot cake at the party.

But in spite of our unique ways of looking at things, the one thing we can usually agree on is the need to keep a sense of humor. Life is filled with enough real tragedy, enough serious challenges and burdens without adding to it unnecessarily by making minutia into mountains.

Still, dealing with day-to-day frustrations, disappointments, and even some crises, requires more than the ability to joke. It requires a steadfastness of heart and trust in God that creates a positive attitude, an attitude of gratitude for the many blessings that remain even beyond the burdens.

Martha Washington once wrote, "I have learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances."

My father taught me this by his own life — raised during the Depression, his dad murdered when he was only seven,

having to quit school at 12 to work and support his mother, denied many things we would take for granted — still his whole life was framed by gratitude and an abiding cheerfulness born of a peaceful heart.

Not everyone is as blessed as he, but everyone is given the opportunity to change.

Advent is a powerful time to reflect on the need.

As Father Edward Hayes wrote in his spiritual classic, *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, "Advent is the perfect time to clear and prepare the Way. Advent is a winter training camp for those who desire peace. By reflection and prayer, by reading and meditation, we can make our hearts a place where a blessing of peace would desire to abide and where the birth of the Prince of Peace might take place."

Mary Morrell, is the associate director of religious education for the Diocese of Metuchen, and author of *ANGELS IN HIGH TOP SNEAKERS*.

# Spirit of Giving

isn't that what it's all about?

By Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle



'T is the season for satisfying all of our cravings and desires — or so it seems. Everywhere we look, we're bombarded with bold advertising and endless promises prodding us to buy the best, most unique gift yet.

It seems that each year, advertising for the holiday season is beginning earlier. We can barely enjoy our Thanksgiving dinner without the subliminal messages of "Buy! Buy! Buy!" ringing in our ears.

Meanwhile, our kids are exposed to the very best advertising techniques when they watch their favorite TV shows. Children know what they want and even about where it can be bought and what Web site it can be ordered through.

At such a "Gimme, gimme, I want, I want" time, how can we get our kids to think of others and be more giving? One way is to help them become more aware of those less fortunate around us.

This is possible from preschool age on up, and there are many opportunities in our own communities. There are soup kitchens to help at or where donations of food or money are welcome. Kids can help decorate holiday cookies to be given to the homeless through a local soup kitchen. There are town organizations in need of gifts or money for the less fortunate.

Many places of worship put together care packages for needy families. By contacting local churches, temples, town halls, or social service agencies we can find out exactly what's needed. Getting the family involved is a great thing. Kids can even put aside part of their allowance, so they can feel they really contributed.

Perhaps you know of a struggling single parent who

*Your family can start your own tradition and visit a local nursing home, hospital, or home for the mentally or physically challenged. Find out who could really use a visit, someone who may not have local relatives or friends. The little bit that we give of ourselves somehow by the grace of God, becomes an even larger gift given back to us.*

would benefit from some unsolicited, anonymous gifts to brighten the holiday season. A lonely senior citizen would cherish a visit from children at this time of year. Children have a magical way of bringing smiles and warmth to people's hearts. Some Christmas cookies, a handmade card, a Christmas carol, and some good company may be just the remedy to bring some much needed joy.

Your family can start your own tradition and visit a local nursing home, hospital, or home for the mentally or physically challenged. Find out who could really use a visit, someone who may not have local relatives or friends. The little bit that we give of ourselves somehow by the grace of God, becomes an even larger gift given back to us.

It's important to keep in mind that the holiday season is not always a happy time for everyone. Some may be grieving the loss of a loved one, while others may be experiencing depression or enduring a difficult situation. A warm shoulder

and some time set aside just for them is a priceless gift. Time is usually a more difficult gift to part with during our hustle and bustling. But, it is a gift that will be appreciated, probably more than we will ever know.

There are endless opportunities to reach out to others at this time of year. Just start with a prayer, and think with your heart, and you can't go wrong.



*Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle, author, mother of five, and a Lay Missionary of Charity, writes from Connecticut. She is the author of the*

*best-selling book, CATHOLIC PRAYER BOOK FOR MOTHERS; and the fall release THE HEART OF MOTHERHOOD: FINDING HOLINESS IN THE CATHOLIC HOME; as well as her newest book, PRAYERFULLY EXPECTING: A NINE-MONTH NOVENA FOR MOTHERS-TO-BE which is scheduled for release in April and can be pre-ordered through Crossroad, Amazon.com, or you can pre-order signed copies through her Web site: [www.donnacooperboyle.com](http://www.donnacooperboyle.com).*

THERE'S A SPECIAL CORNER OF HEAVEN RESERVED FOR

## Mothers

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

"Yes! And if I try to talk on the phone..."

"Questions? Skinned knees? Broken toys?"

"Gammy was right!" Meredith exclaimed.

"Special place. Only mothers allowed,"

I finished for her. "I learned that the day

Andrew put a hot dog in the VCR.

"There is a special place in heaven for mothers."

My wonderful friend, Pat Molina, has demonstrated that rule more explicitly than 1,000 lessons from my mom. If there is a special place in Heaven, at the right hand of God, Pat will have earned it a dozen times over — twice for each grandchild.

The foundation of her large extended family, Pat has cared for many in the three generations with whom she shares her life. When her children started giving her grandchildren, she accepted that role as though she had been primed for it every day of every decade. Never complaining, she changed her own work schedule to care for them while their parents worked; the children spent the night with her when their parents needed a break.

A longtime teacher in St. Andrew's religious education program, Pat also made sure her grandkids attended Mass and participated in Sunday classes.

So many times I have looked into her eyes — they are humble as well as wise — and asked, "In spite of all the surprises life gives us, how do you maintain your peacefulness and serenity?" Pat smiles, shakes her head, tells me she just does what she has to do. "I have to take care of my kids and grandkids," she says, simply, with a quiet half-laugh.

I stand in awe of her.

For the past four weeks, all of Pat's extended family has been with her, in an ironic juxtaposition, sleeping on couches and floors, in a crowded waiting room, caring for this person who has cared for nothing but them. She is fighting for her life in intensive care.

Pat met the mother of all coincidences a month ago, when, as she waited for her grandchildren at school, a huge tree branch — it was more than 20-inches in diameter, I have been told — broke from its own foundation and fell on her.

She suffered fractured vertebra, a broken eye socket, a punctured lung, and remains in intensive care, in a coma-like state, her body fighting its way back to the one thing in life she loves more than all others: her family.

Pat has always reminded me of the Madonna, in her serenity and quiet joy. But the effects of this incredible accident have shown her to me in a sort of saviour role. Two children — a toddler and a newborn baby — were in the back seat of her car. She had just opened the door to pick up the baby when she must have heard the crack of the branch, turned her head upward and caught its full force.

Had she not done that, the branch likely would have crushed the car, and killed both children.

It is difficult for me to stop thinking of my friend Pat,

See HAMER, p. 22

# THE INCARNATION

*Changes us, our lives, our families, our world, forever*



## JESUS' BIRTH WEDS LOVE OF GOD AND LOVE OF HUMANITY

**W**hat can we make of Jesus' birth? There is so much to say about any birth. Here I'd just like to say that Christmas is a reminder that the incarnation is real — and that it poses a challenge to us.

First, Jesus' birth says a lot about God. God is among us, not distant and uninvolved. We're challenged to recognize what kind of God we have.

Second, his birth says a lot about us. I think it affirms humanity's worth — that human nature wasn't simply beneath the Lord.

I like to think the incarnation is all about bringing out the best in humanity. It clears the way to see why it makes sense to be hopeful for our world.

In his encyclical *God Is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI talked about the incarnation. It bears the challenge to us to love and to serve others, he suggested.

With the incarnation, "love of God and love of neighbor are now truly united," the pope said.

And because "love of God and love of neighbor have become one," the pope explained, we can "find Jesus himself" in the least of our brothers and sisters, "and in Jesus we find God."

Mary cradling the infant Jesus is depicted in a 17th-century painting by Carlo Maratta. (CNS photo from Art Resource, Erich Lessing)

David Gibson  
Editor, Faith Alive!

## Accepting God's incarnation **HERE!**

By Sharon K. Perkins

**F**or the first time in three years, I put up our family Christmas tree. Dusty from prolonged storage and disuse, still sealed in the box with the packing tape from Christmas 2003, it lay with trunk disassembled and limbs compressed, waiting for someone to bring its wire branches and synthetic needles to life.

It was entirely out of character for me to neglect the Christmas decorating for two years in a row. It had nothing to do with lack of decorations (we have at least eight storage cartons full) or even lack of time (I'd always made time before). For me, putting up a Christmas tree was always a symbol of hearth and home, stability and hospitality — and I hadn't really felt that way since we moved from Texas to Ohio three years ago. Besides, I reasoned, we go out of town for the holidays anyway; why put up decorations when no one would see them? The final argument — the clincher — was that we only planned on living in Dayton long enough for me to finish graduate school, and it just wasn't worth unpacking something that would only have to be repacked.

But on some deeper level, leaving the

decorations in their boxes was an act of protest, symptomatic of the feeling that I've been "homeless," at least in the sense that no house in Ohio could ever take the place of the home, family, and friends that we left behind. "Home is where the heart is," the saying goes, and my heart was in Texas.

And so the small, artificial tree gathered dust. All because I had no room in my heart for Dayton — and all that it symbolized — although Dayton had plenty of room for me. I felt as rootless as Mary must have felt during her pregnancy and childbirth, first traveling to visit her cousin Elizabeth, then trekking to Bethlehem to give birth in a stable, then to Jerusalem for the presentation in the Temple, then back to Nazareth. Talk about postpartum stress!

Reflecting on Mary's circumstances and her travel itinerary, I wondered how she might have remained composed, peaceful, and unresentful of her situation. Of course, she had a constant — the presence of Jesus in her womb and his Holy Spirit in her heart. And she had Joseph, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna to witness to this presence and encourage her to carry on. Jesus

not only made his home in Mary; she made her home in him, and the geography was secondary.

Conversion sometimes comes in those "aha" moments, and this moment was mine. My home, first of all, is where Jesus is, and the "Dayton Jesus" had made himself real to me in many ways that I had resisted because he wasn't "Texas Jesus." I had been blessed with new friends, new opportunities, and many kindnesses. My family had not only adjusted well to the move, but they were flourishing. My intellect and my soul were being stretched for the better. I was truly not as homeless as I was blinded by my own discontent.

Christmas is the feast of the "incarnation," which is a ten-dollar word used to express the truth that Jesus Christ takes on human flesh — in his earthly body, in our hearts, and in our broken human situation. As the prologue to John's Gospel states, "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." Wherever "us" happens to be, there Jesus dwells, whether in Fort Worth or Dayton or Timbuktu. And whatever place Jesus lives can become our home, too.



(CNS file photo by Bill Wittman)

Even an Ohio home where a family of transplanted Texans celebrate around a Christmas tree that's been dusted off, strung with colored lights, and festooned with shiny ornaments, testifies that Jesus, the Incarnate One, lives here.

**Sharon K. Perkins** and her family are former members of St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth. Sharon was director of the diocese's first Synod.

# God's Christmas embrace reveals his presence

By Dan Luby

Where should we put the tree this time? For the 21 years we've lived in this house, Christmas tree placement has followed an invariable pattern. One year, it stands in the corner by the window, between the piano and the couch. The next, we put it in the corner by the stairs, alongside the orange chair.

The construction last summer of some built-in cabinets and shelves has altered the geography of our living room only slightly, but enough to raise the specter of change. New possibilities emerge, and fevered imaginings and earnest consultations are required.

This afternoon I stand on the stairs, looking down at the living room and conjuring yet-to-be executed options. I recall Christmases past and picture all those trees in memory, for contrast with the new possibilities. One bygone Christmas in particular leaps to mind.

We shuffle slowly toward the Christmas tree on a cold, sunny Christmas morning, a full complement of celebrants — parents, kids, beloved uncle. We are gathered sleepily in pajamas and robes, in comfortable jeans and bulky sweaters, in roomy, fleecy sweatsuits. Our feet are still a little cold despite the wool socks or the moccasins lined with fake fur.

The chilly air is perfumed with the sweet yeasty smell of Christmas stollen and freshly ground coffee. In the kitchen, the muffled growl of the tea kettle harmonizes oddly but comfortingly with the happy gurgling sounds of the coffee maker. Our voices, still furry with sleep, wish each other "Good morning," and "Merry Christmas."

This particular year, we have agreed that each of us will share the gift of something to read that might more closely focus on what it is we are really doing, who it is we are really celebrating.

I am especially amped about reading the passage I've selected from one of my favorite writers, Frederick Buechner. For decades, his spiritual insights and poetic language have challenged me with their freshness and truth, and moved me with their beauty. This was a passage I have loved for years about the unfailing presence of God in the woof and warp of the most ordinary, everyday moments.

Memory has obscured for now who read what, and in what order. I recall vividly though that, when it is my turn to read, I am overwhelmed with emotion and have to stop. I finally hand the book to my brother. My kids pat my shoulder and murmur solicitously. My wife holds my hand, and we are all a little embarrassed at this unexpected outburst of feeling.

My brother continues reading the passage while we all listen intently, glad for the distraction of beautifully wrought prose from a fellow pilgrim. I regain my composure and reassure my family that I have not slipped a cog nor suffered the emotional equivalent of a Charlie horse. There is nothing wrong, I tell them, and make a joke about sleep deprivation and mid-life crises. They smile anxiously, relieved to hear me cracking wise but still uncertain about why I have become so emotional.

Standing on the stairs now years later, I know that what moved me that chilly Christmas morning was not sadness, nor fear, nor anything dark. What brought

Kindergarten students dressed as angels sing in the 2005 Christmas show at Corpus Christi School in Piedmont, California, Dec. 12. (CNS

PHOTO BY GREG TARCZYNSKI)



me to speechless tears was a momentary glimpse of the brilliant and healing light of the Incarnation of God in human life which Christmas celebrates.

For that is the miracle of this holy and charmed season — that God embraces us with such passion, such tenderness and love, that he not only draws near to us, he becomes one of us and remains present in the community which gathers in his name to continue his mission to the world. For a moment on that cold Christmas morning, I saw a flash of his grave and loving gaze in the sleepy and beautiful faces of my family.

In the end, I suspect we'll put the tree over on the window side this year. And wherever it is, whatever else happens on Christmas morning or any of the days to follow, the Lord is indeed Emmanuel, God-with-us, both now and forever.

Christmas joy to all.

Dan Luby is the director of Christian Formation for the Diocese of Fort Worth.

**For that is the miracle of this holy and charmed season — that God embraces us with such passion, such tenderness and love, that he not only draws near to us, he becomes one of us and remains present in the community which gathers in his name to continue his mission to the world.**

## The RIGHT time to celebrate the birth of Christ

By Father Herbert Weber

About two weeks before Christmas, a college student told me how stressed he was with semester exams, a troubled relationship with his girlfriend, and worries about returning to a home where he was at odds with his parents. At the same time, he wanted to get in touch with the spiritual side of Christmas.

The young man concluded, "It's just the wrong time for Christmas to take place." He wanted to observe Christmas when he could be free from other pressures and turmoil.

Perhaps many feel they could celebrate Christmas better at another time — a time unencumbered by all the other challenges of this time of year. Frankly, celebrating at another time of year will not likely happen. More significantly, trying to find a quiet, hassle-free time to celebrate Christmas might also cause us to miss the fuller message of this event.

Christ was born during a time and in a place of uncertainty and tumult. It is precisely in that context that his birth can be understood best. Just as Jesus was born in a nation that was oppressed and into a people who felt helpless, observing the anniversary of his birth still brings hope to those who feel overwhelmed.

Without doubt, it would be nice to ap-

proach Christmas without wars or terrorism, without divided families or people grieving someone's death. Nonetheless, those situations should make the significance of Christ's coming all the more important.

Christmas is not merely a time to recall that Jesus was born more than 2,000 years ago. People today continue to encounter the Lord as they face daily struggles. Often Jesus is found in the midst of pain and difficulty.

I recall being called to the hospital in the afternoon one Dec. 24. With evening Masses looming before me, I could have used the time in other ways. As I walked down a corridor, I ran into a parishioner who greeted me kindly. When I asked if one of her relatives was ill, she said no. As a hospital volunteer she always went in on Christmas Eve to make sure that everyone had a visitor.

As I continued walking down the hall, I suddenly felt blessed being able to be with one patient who needed my presence. Being with a sick person was a good way to get ready for Christmas Mass.

Another time I recall telling my family I would be late for Christmas dinner. Several parishioners and I were going first to the county jail to celebrate Mass with some in-

mates. With Larry playing his guitar and Joe assisting in the singing, the men in the jail started to cry in joy. The Mass was moving; I knew that Jesus was fully present there.

What Christmas allows is an opportunity to see Christ living on this earth, a mystery that continues to unfold throughout the year. The incarnation means that God is joined to humanity and has entered into both the good and bad of human experience.

A woman said that she comes to church each week not to escape the world, but to find a way to bring Christ into the world. In her work in the maternity wing of a hospital, she often sees parents rejoicing at the birth of their long-awaited children. Sadly, she also sees some parents grieving still-born babies; she sees infants who are at great risk. As a nurse, she constantly wants to remind herself that Christ is present. Many times she is able to share that conviction with parents during both the happy and sorrowful times.

Christ has entered the world and continues to share people's lives.

I met a woman in Haiti who runs a house for children with profound physical and mental disabilities. Many of these children have been abandoned. One little boy, David, was brought to her after he was found lying in a pile of trash.

No one knows David's age or even his real name. David was the name given to him at the house. He is physically very limited and usually lies on a little mat. As I held David on my lap, I found I could get a little response from him as I rubbed his stomach. What appeared to be a slight smile on his face was an expression of the kindness felt in that home.

After spending time with the children, our group celebrated Mass in the yard with both the workers and the residents. The children couldn't respond and likely did not know what was happening, but having them there for the Eucharist was a statement of solidarity. The Lord was present in their home sacramentally as well as in the goodness of the love of all those who took care of them.

The mystery of Christmas is truly about the Lord's presence throughout the year and in every part of the world. Through Jesus' birth, hope and joy are brought to each situation.

Even hectic and confusing times are the right time to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Father Herbert Weber is the founding pastor of Blessed John XXIII Parish, Perysburg, Ohio. (Copyright © 2006, Catholic News Service)

# My 2006 Christmas wish for you

By Father Eugene Hemrick

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that "America is a poem in our eyes," but he thought the country had not found a poet worthy of the subject. He became that poet.

It is my fondest Christmas wish that you will find ways to awaken your poetic spirit as never before!

A fine poet is blessed with an extraordinary imagination that peers into life and sees new, wonderful universes not noticed before. Not only are poets visionaries who perceive things anew with their eyes, but, more extraordinarily, who sense them throughout their entire being, starting with the heart.

The National Gallery of Art in Washington has four paintings by Thomas Cole on

the journey of our life. The first depicts a baby calmly floating in a boat in an idyllic setting. Next we see a young man drifting in the same boat fantasizing about life. Next to this painting a middle-aged man is struggling against stormy waves to hold onto that same boat. The final painting depicts an old man surrounded by darkness; he is kneeling in the same boat, praying.

These paintings are remarkable in terms of art and represent an astute commentary on life. Life begins idyllically, but as it advances its idealism and beauty become more difficult to sustain. For many of us, youthful enthusiasm for new and exciting ideas gives way to, "I've heard and seen it all before."

A continuous renewal of fervor is needed

in our lives in order to keep alive our love for another or our desire to pursue a religious calling, our hope to conquer new worlds, build castles, make valuable discoveries, and leave our mark on life.

To be a poet is to be creative. It involves firing up our imagination and recognizing whole new universes in mere details. Those of us blessed with a poetic nature may have advanced in age, but we never lose our youthful vitality.

May you see anew the blue skies, the cheerful whiteness that only snow can create, and the dazzle within the sun! May they reveal to you universes never seen before!

May you find in someone you love and in your calling in life a new and exciting significance never previously imagined!

May youthful ideals recycle themselves, mutate, inspire, and invigorate you!

May you cherish as never before the values upon which your country and our church are built, and may you rediscover their enormous worth and life-giving powers!

May the yearly event of God descending to earth to become the greatest Christmas present of all time elicit from you a great sense of awe.

May the poetic spirit with which God blesses us course through you and renew the ageless gifts of "vision" tucked within your soul!

**Father Eugene Hemrick** is a long-time columnist for Catholic News Service. (Copyright © 2006, Catholic News Service)

# A resounding family memory of Christmas

By Beverly Corzine

On the icy plains of southeastern Colorado, December nights seemed to last forever.

Perched on my knees in a high backed wooden chair, I occupied my favorite strategic spot that allowed me to sample a forbidden cookie while at the same time I could look at my reflection in the darkened window and make a few clever designs in the condensation on the pane. The trick was to escape my mother's sharp eye and the familiar reprimand, "Don't mark on the windows; I just washed them."

For days I had been living under the somber threat that if I didn't mend my ways, Santa Claus would surely pass over our house. In addition, my dad's favorite Christmas sport was to say, "If Old Whiskers starts messing around here, I will grab him by those chin whiskers and send him on his way." In my child's imagination, I was reasonably sure that my dad could not catch Santa; however, the possibility remained. To break up the session of torment, my mother reminded my dad that she really needed more firewood, if we wanted her to finish her baking for the house full of company we would have on Christmas Day.

The smell of apples and cinnamon and the heat of two steaming hot pies that my mother placed on racks in front of me provided a sharp contrast to the blast of Arctic air that tore from one end of the kitchen to the other as my dad, bundled in his red plaid mackinaw, went out to fetch more wood for the gigantic black cook stove that waited in the opposite end of our kitchen.

Crimping the edges of the last pie crust, my mother sent up the first trial balloon about my getting ready for bed. Usually, it would take several announcements before I had to yield to authority. However, going to bed early on Christmas Eve would not require the usual bedtime skirmish.

Nevertheless, there should be enough time for my last warm cookie and for the opportunity to clear the evidence of my artistic endeavors from the cold window pane. With a mouth full of cookie, I turned to erase the evidence from the black window pane. There on the other side of the window shrouded in inky darkness, a man was staring back at me. He looked at me; I



(CNS Photo from DENVER CATHOLIC REGISTER)

looked at him. Time stood still.

Finally, I recognized this stranger. It was Santa! I turned to get my mother's attention. At that exact moment Santa disappeared. Words were spewing out of my mouth so fast that my mother could only say, "Beverly, slow down, slow down. Now tell me what is the matter?" I was shaking with excitement, but finally, I had command of intelligible spoken English.

"Santa is outside! Santa tapped on the window. I saw him, Mommy. He was really there in the dark on the other side of the window. Really! Really!"

By the time I was ready to utter the last "really," I was shaking like a leaf. Bewildered, my mother looked out the window. Seeing nothing but her reflection, she comforted me with the fact that I most assuredly just saw my own reflection. I, of course, was having none of that explanation. I knew that man was Santa without a doubt.

My mother was still trying to calm me down when my dad entered the back door, loaded down with wood for the stove. I knew my dad would believe me. After all he was always on the lookout for "Old Whiskers" at Christmas. Dumping his load in the wood box, my dad said, "What's going on in here? I could hear you out in the woodshed."

As soon as I described the apparition

that appeared outside the window, my dad set in motion one of the most exciting adventures of my young life. Hurriedly, he helped me with my coat. We got the flashlight. We were going to catch Old Whiskers. Seizing upon on the excitement our dog began to bark. We were all ready for the chase. In the midst of this hullabaloo, my mother was trying to be the voice of reason. "John, for heaven's sake, what are you doing? This child has no business running around in the cold like a chicken with its head cut off!"

Three steps and out the door we ran. The barking dog, the running man, and a little girl were racing at breakneck speed in search of Santa Claus. My dad was running so fast that my feet only hit the ground about every other step. The way the dog was barking assured me that she had already spotted the elusive Mr. Claus. Rounding the garage at top speed, my dad tripped, pulling me after him. We landed right in the middle of a burr patch. By this time we were both laughing so hard we could barely catch our breaths. Our faithful little terrier continued to race ahead in the darkest of nights. Stumbling around, my dad was finally able to find the ailing flashlight and bring it back to life.

.....  
*"Santa is outside! Santa tapped on the window. I saw him, Mommy. He was really there in the dark on the other side of the window. Really! Really!"*  
 .....

We defeated hunters limped into the warm kitchen. My mother stood there shaking her head. "Just look at you two! John, have you taken leave of your senses? I will never get all of the stickers off your clothes, much less get them out of her hair!"

My dad could only laugh.

With upturned head, I watched the exchange of these two adults. I spied the suppressed smile on my mother's face. I knew this was not a real argument. There was a secret there I could not quite discern.

After the burr removal process ended, my dad tucked me in bed for the night. I said my prayers. Then as a postscript, I said, "Daddy, you know Santa Claus has a ring just like yours."

Early the next morning I crept with dented flashlight in hand to see if Santa had left any presents for me after our thwarted attempt to catch him. The flashlight's beam captured it all, dolls, books, all of it.

During my growing up years, my mom, dad, and I always reminisced about that glorious adventure. My parents loved telling the story to my children. Now I am the grandmother who entertains grandchildren with tales from long ago.

In May of 2005, my husband and I visited the remains of the home of my childhood on the deserted Colorado plains. An unsuspecting motorist happening upon it would never guess that anything unusual had ever happened here.

**Beverly Corzine** is pastoral assistant at Arlington's Most Blessed Sacrament Parish.

Diocesan

# St. Bartholomew Parish dedicates new Parish Life Center

Story and Photos by Wendy Pandolfo, Correspondent



Above: The new Parish Life Center is illuminated at night.

When Father Richard Beaumont came up with the idea of establishing an endowment on behalf of his parish, St. Bartholomew in Fort Worth, in April 1986, he had no idea what the Lord intended to do with the money, but felt the fund would somehow be used to serve his parishioners in the future.

Fast forward 20 years to Nov. 20, 2006. Fr. Beaumont is now retired, and leadership of the community has passed to Pastoral Administrator Brother Paul McMullen, who, together with the parish development committees, has overseen the planning and construction of a new 22,819-square-foot Parish Life Center. Both men were present for the building dedication ceremony, led by Bishop Kevin Vann.

The evening dedication began in the church with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Vann. At the Mass's conclusion, the bishop led a procession from the church into the new Parish Life Center, where the proud parishioners gathered in the large hall for the blessing of the building.

"After much work and prayer, we gather to bless the center. We pray that the Word of God will echo from its walls," Bishop Vann told those gathered.

Br. Paul, who is a Third Order Franciscan, spoke next, voicing the thoughts of many in the crowd. "Well, here we are, folks," he began. "Thanks to all of you for your dedication and your support. You are the ones who made this happen."

Br. Paul's remarks were followed by a reading from

Scripture and prayers of intercession for the new center and the parishioners of St. Bartholomew. Br. Paul then led Bishop Vann on a tour of the new facility, during which the bishop blessed each room with holy water, ending with a blessing of the large crucifix hanging in the parish hall.

The new center was designed by the architecture firm O'Connor Architecture and Interior Design, which also designed new church buildings for the parishes of Immaculate Heart of Mary and Holy Name, both in Fort Worth. The building contains 12 classrooms, a large youth room, a kitchen, and a parish hall. Construction began by contractor JBM Builders after the groundbreaking Aug. 24, 2005, the feast day of St. Bartholomew.

Br. Paul envisions the classrooms being utilized for children's religious education and adult formation, and the large hall as a gathering place for parish functions such as pancake breakfasts, dinners, and weddings. The entire building is wired for Internet,

and the youth center and parish hall boast projection and built-in sound systems, as well as wireless microphones.

Craig Chandonnet, computer technician and future building maintenance assistant, believes that it was important to bring technology into the new building. "People are sound- and video-oriented in this day and age. You need a way to grab them," he says. Chandonnet hopes to have a computer network system in place soon. In his other role as assistant director of religious education, he plans to bring the kids into the parish hall every couple months for a general assembly to "show them a presentation and get them up for the Lord."

At the ceremony's conclusion, visitors and honored guests enjoyed refreshments and got their first look at their new facility. Many took a moment to visit with architect Raymond O'Connor, who was present for the dedication. When asked about his contribution to the project, O'Connor expressed pleasure at his affili-

Above: The parish community gathers in song, celebrating the blessing of the parish's new Parish Life Center.

Left: Bishop Kevin Vann walks the hallways of the new facility, blessing it with holy water.



Above: St. Bartholomew parishioners stream through the doors of the center to participate in a blessing of the facility.

Left: Brother Paul McMullen, TOR, (left) speaks to the community during the service of blessing. He is joined by Bishop Kevin Vann, Deacon Len Sanchez, and crossbearer Mary Ellen Arredondo.

Right: St. Bartholomew parishioner Paschal Odidika (left) warmly greets Father Raphael Eagle, TOR, at a reception following the building's dedication.



ation with the planning committees. "The people at the parish level who put this together were extremely well organized and a pleasure to work with," he said. "The parish deserves [the building], and it should last for a long time."

"It's such a blessing," Joyce Yokell said, about the building's completion. "It's been a long time in coming. Br. Paul has done a fabulous job at this

parish. This was one of his two goals. The first was the Spanish Mass and the next the [Parish] Life Center."

Augustina and Paschal Odidika brought their two children to the dedication of the new center. "We are so, so proud," Augustina beamed. "God gave a great vision to Fr. Beaumont, who built the endowment fund for whatever came into our hearts."

## Scripture Readings

Word  
to  
Life

December 24, Fourth Sunday of Advent.  
Cycle C. Readings:

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

By Jeff Hensley

I have a friend who burns with the desire to proclaim Jesus, come in the flesh, born of the Virgin, walking among us, teaching and sanctifying, crucified, died, buried, and raised from the dead. He's an imperfect guy like the rest of us, but he loves Jesus and wants everyone else to love him too.

But he gets frustrated. I think he sees the ideas and the scenes in today's readings and wants them to happen now.

He sees the Micah reading that points to the coming Messiah as one who "shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord," and whose "greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth," and he wants it to happen now.

He looks at Luke in which Elizabeth's baby, John the Baptist in the womb, leaps for joy in the presence of Jesus inside Mary, and he leaps himself, aware of his Lord's presence in our world.

His is a holy impatience. He wants the coming kingdom to be the present kingdom. He wants to have the moment happen now when all the kingdoms of the earth bow down to worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

His is a model of holy impatience for the rest of us as we strain toward not only the birth of the Christ Child at this holy season, but toward the fulfillment of his kingdom: swords beat into plowshares; the lion lying down with the lamb; the poor and humble lifted up; and the rich and haughty pulled down.

And I seem to hear a refrain that will carry us forward from the stable in Bethlehem all the way to the throne room of the Lamb:

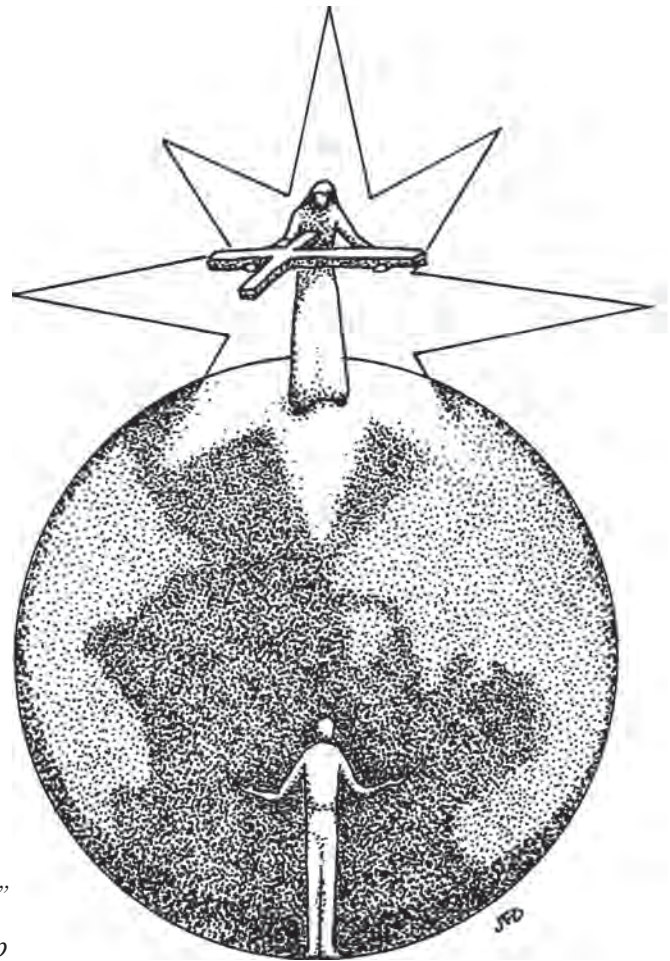
*O come let us adore him.  
O come let us adore him.  
O come let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*"I have come to do your will."*

— Hebrews 10:9b

### QUESTIONS:

Have you contemplated the coming kingdom of our Lord and how it proceeds from the small and humble beginning of the birth of a child? How can you personally hasten its coming?



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## Pope says in Turkish mosque he prayed for God to help all

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said that as he stood facing Mecca in Istanbul's Blue Mosque Nov. 30 he prayed that God would help all believers recognize each other as brothers and sisters.

Using his Dec. 6 weekly general audience to share reflections about his Nov. 28-Dec. 1 visit to Turkey, the pope said, "Divine providence allowed me to make a gesture that initially was not foreseen, but which, in the end, turned out to be very significant."

Describing what happened at the mosque, the pope said, "pausing a few minutes in recollection in that place of prayer, I turned to the one Lord of heaven and earth, merciful father of all humanity."

"May all believers recognize that they are his creatures and give a witness of true brotherhood," he added.

The pope said the trip was focused on "three concentric circles": encouraging Turkey's small Catholic community, strengthening relations with the Orthodox church, and reaching out to the Turkish government and its Muslim majority.



Pope Benedict XVI is accompanied by cardinals as he blesses the faithful at his weekly general audience at the Vatican Dec. 6. From left are Slovak Cardinal Jozef Tomko, Mexican Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iniguez, and Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia. (CNS photo/Daniele Colarieti, Catholic Press Photo)

He asked the estimated 9,000 people gathered in the Vatican's audience hall to "join me in thanking God" for how well the trip went. The trip occurred in the wake of Muslim anger over papal remarks on Islam during a speech in Regensburg, Germany, in September.

Pope Benedict said, "I entrust to God the fruits that I hope will flow from it, both as concerns our relations with our Orthodox

brothers and sisters and for our dialogue with Muslims."

Although the main focus of the trip was to celebrate the feast of St. Andrew and relations with the Orthodox ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, the pope said, the first day's meetings with government officials, including the head of the religious affairs department, were important.

With its constitution affirming

the secular nature of the state, he said, Turkey is an "emblematic state" in handling tensions faced in various parts of the world.

"On the one hand," he said, "there is a need to rediscover the reality of God and the public relevance of religious faith; on the other hand, it must be ensured that the expression of that faith is free, that it is without fundamentalist degenerations and that it is capable of firmly repudiating

every form of violence."

Pope Benedict said that while showing his "esteem for Muslims and for Islamic civilization" he also asked government officials to take steps to ensure that the religious minorities protected by the constitution have the concrete protection they need in order to live their faith fully.

The trip also was an opportunity to show support for Catholic-Muslim dialogue and to urge Muslims and Christians around the world to work together "on behalf of the human person, for life, for peace and justice," he said.

Pope Benedict said his meetings with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and, especially, their presence at each other's liturgies, consolidated their feeling of brotherhood and their commitment "to continue on the path toward the re-establishment of full communion."

"I returned here to the Vatican with my soul filled with gratitude to God and with feelings of sincere affection and esteem for the beloved Turkish nation which made me feel welcomed and understood," he said.



## Scripture Readings



December 31, Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.  
Cycle C. Readings:

- 1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14  
Psalm 128:1-5
- 2) Colossians 3:12-21  
Gospel) Luke 2:41-52

By Beverly Corzine

Last week I knew it was truly Christmas when I heard Luke's beloved description of the nativity of Jesus. "What child is this?" seems to be the continuing question on the lips of each man or woman who meets Jesus and his parents in the second chapter of Luke's Gospel. What child is this, indeed! Looking back through the cross gives us 20/20 vision. Likewise, in our mind's eye we have seen a tiny hand close around Mary's finger. From our vantage point in the 21st century, how could anyone miss the point?

As his life unfolds, we sympathize with Mary and Joseph as they frantically search for their son Jesus. We know he has to be in "his Father's house." Where else would a precocious Jewish boy be who happens to be the Son of God? We see his destiny looming before him and the instrumental part Mary and Joseph will play in helping this life take shape. It was easy for us to

recognize him there in his mother's arms, but the question is, Do we recognize him now?

When we as parents, grandparents, or teachers look into the faces of children, whose destiny do we see written there? Is Jesus there waiting to flower within the world? Do we take the time to wonder what child has been placed in our care? Who is it that regards us through uplifted eyes?

If we would have been teaching in the temple that day, would we have had the good sense to have seen Jesus as more than a gifted 12-year-old? Smart but never cheeky, he could have answered our questions, but would we have allowed him to push us on a controversial or questionable point? Would we have seriously considered his possible destiny or any part we might have played in it?

To be able to look into the eyes of children and consider the question of shepherd and temple scholar alike becomes an act of courage and an act of faith because we must be prepared to see who is looking back at us.

*His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.*

—Luke 2:51-52



JFD

### QUESTIONS:

What child or young person in your life offers you a promise of Jesus' light in the world in the new generation? What crosses do you foresee in her or his life, and how can you support this child as a Christ bearer?

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## Jesus' coming brings — Divine Transformation

By Jeff Hedglen

This year my preparations for the birthday of Jesus took a strange detour. Charlie, Rudolph, and George took me aside and gave me a lesson on the significance of the incarnation.

In my annual ritual to try to tap into the holiday spirit, I turned to one of my favorite pastimes — watching the classic Christmas television shows.

I never tire of seeing the hapless Charlie Brown bring a sad looking tree to the school Christmas Pageant he is charged with directing. His struggle to find the real meaning of Christmas is always inspiring, especially with the great music, magical 1965-era graphics, and of course Linus, center stage with a single

Just like in the Christmas stories on TV, what we see on the surface is often not the whole truth. Deep within each of us lie possibilities unrealized.

spotlight, reading the Christmas story from Luke.

The adventure of the forlorn red-nosed flying reindeer still brings a smile to my face.

His companions in the story are hilarious. Hermey, the elf who wants to give up a career making toys to be a dentist, and Yukon Cornelius, the pick-licking prospector who has yet to

strike it rich, make up the team of people that help Rudolph defeat the Abominable Snowman, rescue an island of misfit toys, and "then one foggy Christmas Eve" get the sleigh pointed the right direction.

And of course, what would Christmas be like without George Bailey and Clarence? While on a bridge contemplating the imagined uselessness of his life and seriously considering jumping, George ends up saving the angel sent to save him. Through a series of flashbacks, George discovers that his is after all "A Wonderful Life."

This year's encounter with the time-honored televised Christmas treats revealed a connection that had previously escaped me. Each of the main characters in these shows has something in common.

Each of these characters depicts a person who does not believe in himself. Charlie Brown, the consummate blockhead, with the best of intentions can never seem to get it right; Rudolph's uniquely red nose results in his being

shunned because he is different; George Bailey is the type of person that if he lived today would be on a steady diet of anti-depressants. At some point in each of the stories there is a turning point that radically shifts this person's perspective. Here is where each of these seemingly secular stories reveals the power of Christmas.

Imagine a world unsure of itself, filled with uniquely gifted individuals, that refuses to celebrate their differences, favoring ridicule instead. And try as they might, those gifted individuals just cannot seem to get it right. Does this sound familiar? Though this scene could easily describe our current society, it was to this world that God sent his Son. This moment was the turning point all of history was building toward.

When the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us, all creation took on new meaning and found limitless potential. Just like in the Christmas stories on TV, what we see on the surface is often not the whole truth. Deep within each

of us lie possibilities unrealized.

St. Paul reveals the fountain of this promise: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation..., he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through his death, to present you holy, without blemish, and irreproachable before God" (Colossians 1:15, 19-20).

The coming of Jesus is the singular event that changes a blockhead into an evangelist, a misfit into a trailblazer, and a doubter into a believer. This Image of the Invisible transports the earthbound sojourner into the arms of the Creator and along the way transforms weak humans into instruments of divinity. Blessed are we to experience such a wonderful life.

Merry Christmas to all and God bless us, every one!

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

# Miles honran Virgen de Guadalupe en procesión en Los Ángeles, Misa



Monseñor Diego Monroy Ponce, rector de la Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de México, izquierda, y el cardenal Roger M. Mahony, de Los Ángeles, celebran una Misa en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en el estadio East Los Angeles el 3 de diciembre. La celebración de este año fue especialmente significativa para la comunidad ya que está celebrando el 475to aniversario de la aparición de la Virgen de Guadalupe a San Juan Diego y el 75° aniversario de la procesión anual de la Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles en su honor. (Foto CNS/Víctor Alemán, Vida Nueva)

LOS ÁNGELES (CNS)—Para honrar a la Virgen de Guadalupe en el 475° aniversario de su aparición a San Juan Diego en Tepeyac, México, casi 30,000 personas en Los Ángeles procesaron el 3 de diciembre una milla desde la iglesia La Soledad hasta un estadio colegial donde una Misa especial fue celebrada.

Con el tema “La Madre de Todos los Inmigrantes”, el evento atrajo a gente de todas las edades y nacionalidades que llevaban banderas de sus países de origen. Algunos vistieron la ropa étnica de su antigua patria para celebrar el día de fiesta de la santa patrona de las Américas.

El alcalde de Los Ángeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, estaba entre los que procesaron por las calles.

La 75° procesión anual en la Arquidiócesis de Los Ángeles estaba programada para coincidir con el mes en que María se le apareció a San Juan Diego y dejó su imagen en su tilma en 1531.

Para la procesión de este año monseñor Diego Monroy Ponce, rector de la Basílica de Santa María de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de México, trajo una imagen de San Juan Diego así como una reproducción digital de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe que fue tocada a la imagen original y bendecida. Las imágenes enmarcadas fueron llevadas por las calles, rodeadas por gente, músicos y grupos de baile en vestuarios.

Recogiendo adoradores a lo largo de la ruta, el grupo entró en fila al estadio del Colegio East Los Angeles, llenando los 20,000 asientos mientras los bailarines y músicos vestidos en trajes brillantes y coloridos procesaban entrando al estadio y ocupaban el centro del campo. Las imágenes de San Juan Diego y Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe también fueron entradas con aplausos y consignas de “¡Viva la Virgen!”.

Unas 50 palomas fueron en-

tonces lanzadas. Éstas volaron juntas alrededor del estadio antes de desaparecer.

La liturgia comenzó con la bendición del cardenal en español e inglés: “Bienvenida, Madre de Dios, a Los Ángeles. Gracias por darnos tu amor de madre mediante Juan Diego. Gracias porque tú estás con todos nosotros y conoces el sufrimiento de tus hijos”.

“O, Madre Santa, a ti confiamos nuestro sufrimiento, ven a nuestra ayuda, escucha nuestros gritos, órale a Jesús por nosotros”, él continuó. “Tu nos miras con amabilidad. Tómanos en tus manos; cura las heridas infligidas en nuestro viaje. Tú eres nuestra madre y en ti confiamos”.

Aunque la mayoría de la Misa fue en español, las oraciones de los fieles fueron hechas en español, tagalo, vietnamita, maya, inglés, un dialecto nativo americano, indonesio, japonés y tagano.

## Nuevo obispo auxiliar, el más joven de EEUU, fue ordenado y pertenece a la diócesis de Detroit

DETROIT (CNS)—El obispo auxiliar Daniel E. Flores de Detroit expresó “alabanzas y gracias a Dios Todopoderoso” en sus primeros comentarios como recién obispo ordenado el 29 de noviembre.

“Todos los dones que he recibido en mi vida, incluyendo el dón de este día, se compendian en el don primordial de Cristo al mundo”, dijo al final de la Misa de ordenación.

El obispo Flores es el 25° obispo hispano activo en el país, el primer obispo hispano en ser ordenado en todas las diócesis de Michigan y, a los 45 años de edad, es el obispo católico más joven de los Estados Unidos.

Después de la ceremonia, la mamá del nuevo obispo, señora Lydia Flores, expresó su orgullo y alegría por su hijo. “Pero, al mismo tiempo, experimento emociones mezcladas, pues sé que cuando me vaya mañana (a su casa en Corpus Christi, Texas), él se va a quedar acá lejos”, dijo.

El cardenal Adam J. Maida de Detroit fue el obispo que presidió en la ceremonia de ordenación.

“Este es un gran momento histórico para nuestra iglesia de

Detroit, y especialmente para la población hispana, en creciente aumento, de Michigan” dijo el cardenal Maida en su homilía en la Misa de ordenación.

Cerca de 900 personas, entre sacerdotes, obispos, diáconos, religiosos y laicos, llenaban la catedral del Santísimo Sacramento de Detroit para la ceremonia. Había muchos hispanos de la comunidad local hispana, como también más de 100 familiares del nuevo obispo y personas que fueron a darle sus parabienes procedentes de la diócesis de Corpus Christi.

El cardenal Maida reconoció los esfuerzos en marcha por parte de clérigos y religiosos dedicados al ministerio en la comunidad hispana de la arquidiócesis de Detroit; pero añadió: “ahora, hoy, tendremos a un obispo que conoce su cultura de primera fuente y que en verdad podrá hablar desde la perspectiva de su propia experiencia que es similar (a la de

nuestros fieles hispanos)”.

El número de católicos hispanos en la arquidiócesis de Detroit se calcula en más de 128,000; cerca del 10 por ciento de la población católica de la arquidiócesis, que cuenta con seis condados. El número se calcula que aumente a más de 150,000 para el año 2010.

Los miembros de la familia Flores son de ascendencia mexicana, pero la familia ha vivido en los Estados Unidos durante varias generaciones.

Lydia Flores dijo que su hijo creció escuchando a su abuela materna, Teresa Dilley, que de Dios goce, y quien vivió con la familia diciendo: “No se les olvide que hay Dios y que de prestado viven”.

El hermano del nuevo obispo, Albert Flores, de 40 años, dijo: “Cuando él era pequeño quería llegar a ser presidente de los Estados Unidos; pero esto es mucho mejor que presidente”.

El Cardenal Adam J. Maida de Detroit ordena a su nuevo auxiliar, el Obispo Daniel E. Flores, el 29 de noviembre en la Catedral del Santísimo Sacramento en Detroit. El Obispo Flores era párroco en la Diócesis de Corpus Christi. (CNS foto/Larry A. Peplin, The Michigan Catholic)



Saciando nuestra hambre de felicidad  
**En el pesebre  
 encontramos a Cristo  
 nuestra luz y esperanza**

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

**C**recidas son las ocasiones en nuestra vida cuando estamos convencidos de que algo, o alguien, nos puede traer la felicidad. Nuestros hijos son expertos en saber que les traerá la felicidad duradera y en la navidad nos convencen en comprarles esa supuesta felicidad. Creo que todos hemos hecho esto en nuestra niñez.

**R**ecuerdo varios juguetes que deseaba intensamente cuando más pequeño. Estaba convencido de que aquellos juguetes me traerían la plena felicidad y sin ellos sería el ser más desgraciado del mundo. Una vez fueron unos carros eléctricos con su propia pista, en otra ocasión fue una bicicleta y en otra, fue una pequeña fábrica de juguete para construir en plástico mis propios carros.

**I**ncréblemente, tal fue mi convencimiento de la felicidad que traerían aquellos juguetes que incluso eché lagrimas por algunos de ellos. Nunca me llegaba todo lo que pedía pero no fallaba, después de recibir alguno que otro de lo tan deseado jugaba con ellos por un tiempo, me cansaba y dejaba de jugar con ellos. Hoy ni me acuerdo donde están o que sucedió con aquellos juguetes.

**S**on muchos los años que pasan y el hambre de felicidad sigue. Lo que cambian son los juguetes y su costo. Hoy mis juguetes favoritos son libros de teología, radios y películas DVD. Otros prefieren ropa, perfumes, dietas y nuevas siluetas, carros o camionetas, la pareja ideal, el viaje al extranjero, una mascota o incluso una familia. Siempre convencidos que al recibir lo tan anhelado tendremos la felicidad que no termina y nuestra vida habrá alcanzado la perfección aquí en la tierra, o algo que se acerca bastante.

**T**anto anhelamos la felicidad que en nuestro mundo de hoy encontramos a muchos que nos la quieren ofrecer, a un precio módico. Los anuncios en televisión o nos quieren convencer que somos menos persona por no tener lo que ellos nos ofrecen para alcanzar la felicidad, o nos quieren convencer que su producto nos puede incrementar la felicidad a niveles nunca antes visto. Al final son muchos los que se quedan con menos dinero y sin más felicidad que antes.

**O**bsequios navideños no nos traerán la felicidad plena. El verdadero anhelo de felicidad, la esperanza sembrada en nuestros corazones por la felicidad eterna, solo se alcanza en Dios y por medio de aquellos donde Dios esta reflejado. El Señor es el mejor regalo de la navidad. Él es el regalo que no podemos comprar y que lo da todo por nosotros. ¿Tienes hambre de felicidad? Mira en el pesebre. ¿Anhelas una felicidad que no se acaba? Convierte tu corazón en humilde pesebre para recibir al niño Dios y aquellos que lo llevan por dentro. ¿Quieres vivir una vida llena de esperanza? Ten fe en el Cristo del amor, la Luz del mundo y el Príncipe de la Paz que vuelve a nacer en esta navidad. ¡Feliz Navidad!



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.

## La Basílica de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de Mexico



Según el fotógrafo, Bill Howard, parece que los Obispos Kevin Vann, de Fort Worth, y Michael Sheridan, de Colorado Springs, son los únicos obispos presentes en la Misa de medianoche del 12 de diciembre en la Basílica de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de Mexico, al inicio de la celebración de la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. La tilma de Juan Diego con la imagen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se ve a la izquierda de la foto. El Obispo Vann, a la derecha del Obispo Sheridan puede verse en el grupo de cuatro sillas a la derecha del altar. Se estima en 5.2 millones el número de peregrinos asistentes a la celebración de este año. Se dice que la aparición de María a San Juan Diego en México en 1531 ha resultado en millones de conversiones al catolicismo. (Fotos cortesía de Bill Howard, editor del COLORADO CATHOLIC HERALD, periódico de la Diócesis de Colorado Springs, Colorado.)



Obispo Vann y Obispo Sheridan en la Basílica de Guadalupe en la Ciudad de Mexico.

## Monseñor Vann revocó las facultades ministeriales del padre Gil Pansza, diciembre 14

*Nota del editor: Monseñor Kevin Vann hizo la siguiente declaración en una conferencia de prensa la tarde de jueves 14 de diciembre en el Centro Católico, sita al lado oeste de Fort Worth. Se pasó después a responder las preguntas de los reporteros de estaciones de radio y televisión en el área y del FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM. El video de la conferencia de prensa puede ser visto en la página electrónica de la diócesis, [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org).*

Es mi triste obligación de anunciar que he removido al Padre Gilbert Pansza, párroco de la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en Wichita Falls, del ministerio activo cumpliendo así con los términos de los Estatutos para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes.

Al continuar el proceso de revisión de expedientes de la diócesis, descubrimos una admisión del Padre Pansza de abuso sexual de un menor que

ocurrió a principios de la década de los 70. El comportamiento al que el Padre Pansza admitió, como he dicho, ocurrió a principios de la década de los 70 antes de que fuera tan siquiera un seminarista. Hemos entregado esta información sobre el incidente a las autoridades legales correspondientes.

Desde su ordenación en el 2001, no hemos recibido acusación alguna de abuso sexual de menores contra el Padre Pansza.

Estamos tomando esta acción por haber encontrado la información en nuestros expedientes. Hemos removido al Padre Pansza del ministerio activo porque es la acción apropiada que debemos tomar para proteger al Pueblo de Dios de cualquier peligro potencial.

Le he pedido al Padre James Hart, en su capacidad como canciller, y al Padre Michael Olson, vicario general y supervisor de la Junta de Revisión de Conducta, a que revisen todos los expedientes

de personal de los sacerdotes.

Como he dicho, este es un momento triste para mí personalmente y en la historia de la Iglesia local. Es angustioso remover a un sacerdote, pero necesitábamos tomar esta acción.

Una vez más me vuelvo a comprometer con la Iglesia de Fort Worth y con todos ustedes, en actuar según los mejores intereses y la seguridad de aquellos más vulnerables entre nosotros, y de estar en acuerdo con los requerimientos de los Estatutos para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes.

Quisiera recordarles una vez más que si alguien ha sido abusado sexualmente o tiene conocimiento de alguien que ha sido abusado por un sacerdote o empleado de la iglesia, favor de llamar a Judy Locke, Coordinadora de Asistencia a Víctimas al (817) 560-3300 o al Padre Michael Olson en el mismo numero.

# Los obispos de Georgia y de las Carolinas apremian al Congreso por la reforma de inmigración

ATLANTA (CNS) — Cinco obispos de tres estados que conforman la provincia de Atlanta de la Iglesia Católica de los EEUU les han escrito a miembros del Congreso pidiéndoles que se enfoquen en una reforma de inmigración completa.

En la carta, fechada el 20 de noviembre, se decía que la inmigración es “una preocupación moral que tiene repercusiones en la dignidad humana y los derechos humanos de cada persona”.

Los obispos decían que se sentían “especialmente afligidos por las recientes tragedias de nuestros hermanos y hermanas que encaran aumento en el número de deportaciones ejecutadas en nuestros estados. El toque de tambor de retórica deshumanizante constantemente amenaza la paz y el bienestar de nuestras comunidades, causando aumento de sufrimiento y miedo en medio de algunos que son los más vulnerables”.

El arzobispo de Atlanta Wilton D. Gregory y los obispos Robert J. Baker de Charleston, S.C., J. Kevin Boland de Savannah, Ga., Michael F. Burbidge de Raleigh, N.C., y Peter J. Jugis de Charlotte, N.C., les pidieron a miembros del Congreso “que vean el rostro de los niños que quedan separados de sus padres. Les pedimos que escuchen el lamento de los trabajadores que a diario se ponen en riesgo de serios accidentes en su trabajo de fábricas y campos de labranza.

“Les pedimos que sientan el miedo en el corazón de los que no están seguros en los vecindarios en donde viven”, dijeron.

Los obispos explicaron que la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos apoya una reforma de inmigración que incluya normas que atiendan a la raíz misma del problema que es causa de la inmigración en “los países de los que salen los inmigrantes”; un camino para la legalización de personas que ya están en el país pero ilegalmente; un programa de trabajadores temporales y la restauración del debido proceso de protección a inmigrantes.

“Apoyamos estas reformas pues día a día somos testigos de las consecuencias humanas de un sistema de inmigración que está gravemente defectuoso”, dijeron.

Los periódicos del sur de los EEUU recientemente han seguido de cerca los problemas actuales en la población de Stillmore, Ga. Una redada de inmigración en una planta procesadora de pollo ubicada allí, el verano pasado, dejó sentir su eco en toda la región.

Representantes de la Planta de Pollo Crider en Stillmore han estado transportando personas con antecedentes penales de un programa de entretenimiento en Macon, Ga., y hombres de una misión de rescate en Augusta, Ga., para llenar las vacantes en la planta, informó la agencia de

noticias “The Associated Press” (o “AP” por sus siglas en inglés), unos cuantos días después de que la carta de los obispos se dio a conocer.

Después de que funcionarios federales de inmigración empezaron a visitar la planta Crider, en mayo, para revisar documentos de autorización para trabajar, muchos empleados fueron despedidos por carecer de permiso de trabajo y otros simplemente se fueron. Cuando 120 personas fueron arrestadas en la planta, el pasado agosto, por no tener los documentos apropiados, cientos de personas abandonaron la comunidad, dijo AP, y la planta se quedó sin suficiente número de trabajadores para operar normalmente, lo que causó que otros negocios locales también sufrieran.

Los obispos criticaron la aplicación estricta de las leyes de inmigración, sin otras medidas que se usen para encarar el panorama más amplio de la inmigración, como sin base en la realidad.

“Es profundamente injusto colocar la responsabilidad de actos de terrorismo, perpetrados por algunos criminales, a las puertas de los inmigrantes que trabajan fuertemente para servirnos, mientras que buscan una forma básica de vida para ellos mismos y su familia respectiva. Es también igualmente injusto usar a los recién venidos como víctimas propiciatorias de los problemas económicos y políticos de nuestra nación”.

## El papa envía su apoyo a víctimas filipinas de tifón, trabajadores de rescate

QUEZON CITY, Filipinas (CNS) — Mientras los oficiales gubernamentales intentan evaluar y atender el daño del tifón Durian, el papa Benedicto XVI ha enviado un mensaje de estímulo a las víctimas y a trabajadores de rescate en las Filipinas.

“Su Santidad el papa Benedicto XVI le asegura a todos los afectados su cercanía en la oración”, dijo un mensaje del secretario de Estado del Vaticano, el cardenal Tarcisio Bertone, el 4 de diciembre.

“Su Santidad ora igualmente por los trabajadores de rescate y por todos los involucrados en proveer ayuda práctica a las víctimas de este desastre, animándoles a perseverar en sus esfuerzos de llevar socorro y apoyo”, decía el mensaje.

Más de 1.09 millones de personas en 13 provincias fueron afectadas por el tifón que azotó al país el 30 de noviembre, informó el Consejo Nacional Filipino de Coordinación en Desastres.

Decenas de miles de casas fueron destruidas, 425 personas fueron enumeradas muertas, 507 heridas y 599 no encontradas. Casi 23,000 personas han bus-

cado refugio en 129 centros de evacuación.

La presidenta filipina Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ha declarado un estado de calamidad nacional y ordenó la emisión de dinero para los esfuerzos de socorro y rehabilitación en las áreas azotadas por Durian y los tifones que lo precedieron.

En la provincia de Albay, en el sureste de Manila, Durian desató deslizos de terreno en Mount Mayon, volcán que ha estado inactivo recientemente. Se teme que unas 1,000 personas están atrapadas bajo piedras y lodo que sepultó casas y campos alrededor de Mount Mayon.

Informes a la Diócesis de Legazpi confirmaron 111 muertes en Daraga solamente, pero padre Rolando Panesa, administrador financiero de la diócesis, espera que la cifra aumente.

El 4 de diciembre él dijo a UCA News, agencia asiática de noticias eclesísticas con base en Tailandia: “No podemos ir allí ni siquiera con nuestros vehículos de tracción en las cuatro ruedas” debido al fango y los escombros que bloquean las carreteras y los puentes.

## Clérigos, laicos buscan acción en calentamiento global, cambio de clima

WASHINGTON (CNS) — En todo Estados Unidos el clero y los laicos preocupados por el calentamiento global y los cambios ecológicos están buscando nuevos enfoques para retardar, detener o revertir los cambios.

El arzobispo Harry J. Flynn, de St. Paul-Minneapolis, fue uno de tres líderes religiosos de Minnesota que se reunieron el 20 de noviembre con el senador Norm Coleman, republicano de Minnesota, pidiéndole a Coleman que liderara esfuerzos para mitigar la amenaza del calentamiento global.

“El calentamiento global es un asunto religioso”, dice una carta del 20 de noviembre a Coleman firmada por el arzobispo Flynn y otros 29 líderes religiosos de Minnesota. “Necesitamos políticas de energía que garanticen que las emisiones globales que calientan el globo se reducirán, que promuevan la energía renovable y la eficacia de la energía y

que aumenten los estándares de economizar el combustible”.

“No creo que la gente en nuestra comunidad se da cuenta del catastrófico efecto del calentamiento global”, dijo el arzobispo Flynn. “Este es un problema para todos”.

Otra figura visible de las Ciudades Gemelas, el pronosticador del clima Paul Douglas, de WCCO-TV, dijo que él cree que hay “una imperativa moral” para que todos los individuos se informen mejor sobre el calentamiento global y hagan su parte para mantener la salud del planeta.

Douglas, católico, dijo que aunque los residentes de Minnesota podrían gozar de algunos de los resultados del calentamiento global — inviernos más cortos, otoños más largos, primaveras más tempranas y no tantas noches bajo cero — el lado negativo incluye más sequía, más tormentas eléctricas

severas y presión en los recursos de agua.

¿“Podemos adaptarnos a tiempo? El optimista ingenuo en mí piensa que sí, pero no hay duda de que nuestra calidad de vida va a estar bajo creciente tensión en los tiempos de nuestra vida, ciertamente en este siglo para nuestros hijos y para nuestros nietos”, dijo Douglas a The Catholic Spirit, periódico de la Arquidiócesis de St. Paul-Minneapolis.

En noviembre la provincia de Oregon de los jesuitas publicó un plan de 17 páginas definiendo el desarrollo sostenible, que tiene la intención de dirigir a los jesuitas mientras ellos avanzan la justicia ecológica.

El plan “simplemente ensancha nuestra visión poniendo enfoque en los problemas críticos del ambiente”, dijo el padre jesuita Bill Watson, funcionario provincial. El plan requiere el uso de recursos renovables, del reciclaje y de la restauración de

la naturaleza. Los edificios en las instituciones jesuitas deben satisfacer altos niveles de sostenimiento, dijo él.

El plan también pide una economía que considere los costos de producción humanos y ambientales. Por ejemplo, el precio de tratar la enfermedad causada por pesticidas y fertilizantes deben ser calculados en el precio de una cosecha.

El teólogo Russ Butkus y el biólogo ambiental Steve Colmes, de la Universidad de Portland en Oregon, operada por católicos, dirigieron talleres en noviembre en las parroquias de la Arquidiócesis de Portland sobre el cambio de clima y el bien común.

Butkus y Kolmes plantean la idea de una teología católica de justicia climática. En los Evangelios Jesús habla del reino de Dios como el reestablecimiento de la creación, no sólo una realineación del orden humano.

“Es la restauración y la renovación de la creación — humana y no humana”, dijo Butkus. “Cuando hablamos del reino de Dios tendemos a verlo como siendo sobre los humanos. Pero la Biblia lo ve como mucho más cósmico”.

En la diócesis de Venice, Florida, Mike Holsinger está convencido de que las iglesias en su estado tienen un rol significativo que ejercer en el esfuerzo educativo que tomará para sostener la vida en el planeta Tierra. Él es el único laico, junto con seis sacerdotes, en un equipo de trabajo de diseño de iglesias para el Comité de Justicia Ambiental diocesano.

“Los nuevos edificios eclesísticos pueden ser diseñados para usar la energía más eficientemente y las parroquias y las escuelas pueden estar comprometidas con usar equipo (que use la energía más eficientemente)”, dijo Holsinger.

# Bowen makes leap from agent to producer for 'Nativity' movie

FROM PAGE 1

he was spending a week in preparation for the Vatican screening.

He said that when Italians asked him where he was from, he had to stop himself to answer "Los Angeles," rather than his native Texas, since he has lived on the West Coast for the past 15 years. He spent most of that time as an agent before getting into the movie production business with "The Nativity Story."

"But if you really ask me where I'm from, I'll still answer St. Mary's Church in Mexia, Texas, where I had my first Communion and was baptized," Bowen told CNS.

From his time spent as a producer, Bowen acknowledged that "you never see a movie get made and released in a calendar year," as "The Nativity Story" was. "Maybe a quickie low-budget film, but this kind of thing is an almost-impossibility," particularly given the movie's budget, which Bowen put at the mid-\$30 million mark.

"When we told New Line (the studio) what we wanted to do, they got in line very, very quickly," he said.

Bowen said he's a fan of the religious epic genre. "I thought 'The Passion of the Christ' was a



SCENE FROM 'THE NATIVITY STORY' — Keisha Castle-Hughes and Oscar Isaac star in a scene from the movie "The Nativity Story." The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is A-I — general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG — parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children. (CNS photo/New Line)

a staff critic for the U.S. bishops' Office for Film & Broadcasting, classified it A-I — general patronage. "The film's hopeful message should resonate beyond Christian audiences to a world still groaning for peace and good will," he said.

Bowen decided to make the leap from agent to producer when screenwriter Mike Rich mentioned his idea to write a screenplay about the Nativity.

"When Mike Rich decided he wanted to write a movie that doesn't have to do with baseball ('The Rookie') or hockey pucks ('D3: The Mighty Ducks') but instead was about the birth of Christ, I was going to move from being on the sidelines to 'I want to do this.' It's the kind of movie I wanted to make," Bowen said.

For a producer waiting for a film to be released, it's a different kind of anxiety than it is for an agent. "For the most part, you're hedged," or have less risk, as an agent, since an agent handles many actors and new films or television shows come fairly frequently, Bowen said. For a producer, though, "this is a very nerve-wracking process. I've tried very hard to not get consumed by it."

terrific film," he told CNS, noting that Jesuit Father William Fulco was a consultant to both that film and "The Nativity Story." Bowen praised Fr. Fulco as "the most prominent scholar in Aramaic in the country — and, being in Los Angeles, he's accessible." Fr. Fulco teaches at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

"The Ten Commandments" was also on Bowen's short list of favorite religious movies.

Bowen, now a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Los

Angeles, defended the decision not to cast a lot of high-profile stars. "The stars of this movie are Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus," he said. "We wanted to pick the right actor for the part and didn't want to see it being bogged down." Simply put, he continued, "Tom Cruise playing Joseph, it would detract from the story."

He said he did not know what impact the real-life pregnancy of 16-year-old Keisha Castle-Hughes, who plays Mary in "The

Nativity Story," would have on the film's fortunes. She is one of the movie's few recognizable stars.

"Time will tell," Bowen said. "She wasn't able to be part of our press junkets. When you're 16 and pregnant, you really don't want to do that kind of thing."

In the new film, the tale is not told in a strictly chronological fashion. "People know the story," Bowen said. "We wanted to mix it up a bit, make them think."

In his review, David DiCerto,

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## Diocesan

# Author's friendship with Fred Rogers came at a crucial time in his life

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God can arrange such mutually trusting relationships — for sure! For sure!!”

From that letter until his death, Fred Rogers continued to reassure his friend by closing each correspondence with the acronym IPOY (I'm Proud of You).

When people find out about Madigan's friendship with the man they've watched on public television since 1968, they always ask if the soft-spoken, gentle resident of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" was as thoughtful and caring in person as he was on camera. The creative genius who made youngsters

feel safe and secure during trips to the Neighborhood of Make Believe was genuine, the reporter assures them. Television only hinted at the depth of his spirituality.

"When you got to know him and saw how he lived — only then can you get the full measure of his greatness," Madigan explains. "From the time he woke up until the time he went to bed, he was kind, compassionate, and had a nonjudgmental nature 100 percent of the time."

He places Fred Rogers on the same iconic plane as Lincoln, Ghandi, Mother Teresa, and Pope John Paul II.

"There are people who come

along every so often in a civilization to remind us what we're capable of as human beings," the reporter says, adding simply, "he was remarkable."

A voracious reader of spiritual literature, Fred Rogers loved to study the writings of great theological and spiritual thinkers — something Madigan also did. Raised in a devoutly religious Catholic family in Crookston, Minnesota, the author grew up pondering questions about God and the meaning of life.

"I've always been a spiritual seeker, and, I think, that's another thing Fred recognized in me because he was definitely one

himself," says the former altar boy, who admired the work of Catholic theologian and author Thomas Merton. "We were kindred spirits in that way."

It was Fred Rogers who introduced Madigan to the writings of his close, personal friend, the great Catholic spiritual writer Henri Nouwen. Instead of idle chitchat about sports or pop culture, the long-distance relationship thrived on conversations inspired by themes raised in Nouwen's books — family, love, suffering, human brokenness, and the mystery of death.

"Fred had this ability to be present to people no matter who they were. He was completely empty of himself and focused on what the other person was about," Madigan explains.

Great religious traditions teach that when you empty yourself, the void is filled with the spirit, the transcendent, the God.

"And that's where he lived. That's where his wisdom, compassion, and greatness came from," the writer continues. "No one was immune to it. Whether you were a cynical journalist or the guy on the street, Fred transformed people by spending five minutes with them."

Those quiet, deeply personal talks and letters left their mark on Madigan, who publicly mourned his friend in an essay published on the front page of the *Star-Telegram*. His only regret about the friendship is never having the opportunity to say good-bye. The last gift to

his mentor was a pamphlet on Benedictine spirituality, entitled "Always We Begin Again" by John McQuiston II.

"It was comforting to think that, as Fred's fatal illness progressed, he might have been comforted at least a little by the simple beauty and humility of McQuiston's words," Madigan writes at the end of his book.

The gifted storyteller also finds solace in sharing Fred Rogers' message with others. His heartfelt memoir is developing an audience one reader at a time.

"Whether it's one person or a thousand people, if someone wants to hear my story about Mr. Rogers, I'm here to tell it. You never know who it will help or whose life it will affect," the author says modestly.

As for his own life, the husband and father says he's happy and content. The crippling depression that almost destroyed his marriage is gone, and he now enjoys a new appreciation and understanding of his father. Madigan credits caring people, medication, prayer, and his friendship with Fred Rogers for the change.

"Fred always said, 'That which is most personal is most universal,' meaning those things we most want to hide are the things we have in common with other people," he explained. "Friendship's transformative power comes from being vulnerable with people you trust. When we end our isolation the way I did with him, healing happens."

## Hamer...

From page 11

of her generosity of time and care, her peace and simple goodness. She was not trying to be a hero or a model of Jesus or his mother. She is simpler than that. Her primary goal was to take care of her children.

During the Christmas season, we admire and emulate Mary, who accepted the will of God in all things, and who, even though she did not understand

it, answered God with "yes." Although I don't hope to attain the level of grace my friend Pat has shown, I pray that through the joys, pains, and motions of parenthood — of holiday parenthood too — I can remember why I am doing them, and accept them joyfully.

My mom said there is a special place in heaven for all mothers. This is especially true for those who live in the reflection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus.



Kathy Cribari Hamer, a member of St. Andrew's, 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. Kathy is the advisor to the staff of the yearbook at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

## Christmas 2006

# Because of You

We know Joy, Lord  
In a child's eyes,  
a teen's laugh,  
a mother's smile.  
In Christmas,  
Because of You.

We know Peace, Lord  
In a world of war,  
In battles of minds,  
In struggles of spirit,  
In Christmas,  
Because of You.

Joy, Hope, Peace, Love  
The gift of a God,  
The birth of his Son,  
A promise of life,  
In Christmas,  
Because of You.

We know Hope, Lord  
In times of despair,  
times of loss,  
times of fear,  
In Christmas,  
Because of You.

We know Love, Lord  
Despite our differences,  
Despite our intolerance,  
Despite our pride,  
In Christmas,  
Because of You.

Come Lord Jesus, Come.  
  
Larry G. Miller  
Parishioner, Our Lady  
Queen of Peace Parish  
Wichita Falls

Each year Larry Miller writes a Christmas poem, often sharing it with the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC. From time to time, we publish the poem, sharing it with our readers. Merry Christmas!

## The FLOCK

By Jean Denton

Copyright © 2006, Jean Denton



## Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



# Calendar

## RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Rachel's Vineyard of Fort Worth is holding a weekend retreat Jan. 5-7 for those seeking healing after an abortion. This retreat helps those who struggle with grief, guilt, and pain after an abortion to find healing and hope. The retreats are open to all who feel the pain of post-abortion trauma. Come and experience the mercy, forgiveness, and healing love of God on a Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreat. For more information or to register, call the confidential help line at (817) 923-4757, e-mail to [racheltx.org](mailto:racheltx.org), or visit the Rachel's Vineyard Web site at [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org).

## RESPECT LIFE MASS

All are invited to attend the annual Respect Life Mass Jan 19, marking the 34th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. The Mass will be celebrated at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact the diocesan Family Life Office at (817) 560-3300.

## LIFE YOUTH RALLY 2007

A Life Revival Youth Rally 2007 will be held Jan. 12-13 at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Dr., North Richland Hills. The doors will open Friday at 6 p.m. Guest speakers will include Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, including Father Bernard Murphy, CFR, and Carol Everett, former abortion clinic owner. There will be no admission charge; however, donations will be accepted. Saturday, the event will be held from noon to 9:30 p.m. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann at 6 p.m. Live music with The Remnant Band, Daniel diSilva of the Crispin Band, the Joe Languell Band, and the teen "Landmark Band," will follow the Mass. Food, frapuccino drinks, T-shirts, CDs, and other items will be available for purchase. Other guest speakers will include Daniel diSilva, Dr. Piikington, and Father Kyle Walterscheid. For more information, contact Suzette Chaires, by e-mail to [schaires@sjtanrh.com](mailto:schaires@sjtanrh.com), by phone at (817) 284-4811 ext. 209, or Sue Laux by e-mail to [laux4life@yahoo.com](mailto:laux4life@yahoo.com).

## RETRouvaille WEEKEND

Retrouvaille is a special program for married couples struggling in their relationships. The next weekend program, sponsored by the Family Life Office of Diocese of Fort Worth, will be held Jan. 19-21. For information and registration, call (800) 470-2230 or visit the Web site at [www.retrouvaille.org](http://www.retrouvaille.org). All conversations will be kept confidential.

## BEGINNING EXPERIENCE

The Beginning Experience is a ministry for those who have lost a spouse due to death, divorce, or separation. The weekend retreat provides an environment and tools to help participants put closure on the past, and to create a new beginning in the present. The next BE weekend will be held Jan. 19-21 at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge Street, Fort Worth. For more information, call metro (972) 601-4091 or e-mail to the Dallas/Fort Worth BE team at [dfwbe@hotmail.com](mailto:dfwbe@hotmail.com).

## GRIEF SUPPORT

Starting a New Life is a ministry group that offers grief support for separated, divorced, and widowed individuals. The confidential support group was created to help persons work through the stages of grief and pain that accompany the loss of a spouse through death or divorce. The next session will be held Jan. 22 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Helen Engle at (817) 261-9706 or by e-mail to [hengle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hengle@sbcglobal.net), or Kevin Gamble at (817) 626-9382. Information is also available online at [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org).

## ST. AUGUSTINE'S GROUP

St. Augustine's Men's Purity Group, a ministry for men who struggle with sexual impurity issues on the Internet and other sources, meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m. The meetings are held in Room 213 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, located at 2016 Willis Lane, Keller. For additional information, visit the Web site at [www.sampg.org](http://www.sampg.org), or e-mail to Mark at [seasmenspurity@yahoo.com](mailto:seasmenspurity@yahoo.com).

## To Report Misconduct

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

- Call **Judy Locke, victim assistance coordinator**, (817) 560-2452 ext. 201 or e-mail her at [jl Locke@fwdioc.org](mailto:jl Locke@fwdioc.org)
- Or call the **Sexual Abuse Hotline** (817) 560-2452 ext. 900
- Or call **The Catholic Center** at (817) 560-2452 ext. 107 and ask for the vicar general, Father Michael Olson.

## To Report Abuse

Call the **Texas Department of Family Protective Services (Child Protective Services)**  
1 (800) 252-5400

## DEAF MINISTRY SERVICES

The deaf community will gather at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 861 Wildwood Lane, Grapevine, for a signed and interpreted Christmas Eve Mass at 8 p.m. Father Ken Robinson will celebrate the Mass in sign and voice, and the sign choir, as well as deaf leaders, will participate in this Christmas Eve liturgy. Family and friends are welcome to join in this special celebration. Reserved pews for the community will be in the front right side of the church, just in front of the baptismal font. Early arrival is preferred. There will not be an interpreted Mass at St. John the Apostle, All Saints, or St. Francis of Assisi churches the morning of Dec. 24. Instead, the 5:30 p.m. Saturday evening Mass at St. Francis of Assisi will be interpreted. Contact the Deaf Ministry Office at (817) 284-3019 for more information.

## NEWMAN INSTITUTE

This spring, the Cardinal Newman Institute will offer the second of its six-course sequence leading to a certificate in theological studies, which is issued jointly with the College of St. Thomas More. This 10-week class, "Western Theological Tradition I" will be taught by Paul Menge Saturday mornings in the conference room at St. Mary the Virgin Church in Arlington, from 9:45 a.m. until noon, beginning Jan. 13. The course will investigate the growth and development of Catholic doctrine, beginning from the apostolic period and through the great ecumenical Councils, up to the Middle Ages. No previous studies are required as this course is ideal for those wishing to begin exploring a deeper faith level. For more information or to pre-register, call (817) 277-4859.

## WORLD MARRIAGE DAY

World Marriage Day is celebrated nationally on the second Sunday in February. This year it falls on Feb. 11. Now is the time to gather a committee to plan this day of celebration, encourages Deacon Dick Stojak, diocesan director of Family Life. Information packets containing ideas for planning a World Marriage Day program are available through the diocesan Family Life Office. For a copy of the materials, call (817) 560-2452 ext. 256. Materials are also available online at [wmd.wmme.org](http://wmd.wmme.org).

## Catholic Pilgrimages From DFW

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## THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

St. Maria Goretti Adult Faith Formation will present a five-week seminar on Pope John Paul II's powerful "Theology of the Body". The seminar will be held five consecutive Fridays beginning Jan. 19 through Feb. 16 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the cafeteria at St. Maria Goretti Church, 1200 S. Davis Drive in Arlington. The seminar will kick off on Friday, Jan. 19 with a dynamic talk on the "Introduction to the 'Theology of the Body'" by TOBET (Theology of the Body Evangelization Team) from the Diocese of Dallas. The four remaining Fridays will be a four-part DVD series by renowned speaker Christopher West with questions and discussion to follow each presentation. Pizza and drinks will be served each evening at 6:30 p.m. with the program beginning at 7 p.m. Cost will be \$5 per person for the study guides and \$5 per person each week for pizza and drinks. Childcare will be provided. Registration is required to attend this event. For more information or to register to attend, contact Lucas Pollice at (817) 274-0643 ext. 226 or by e-mail to [lpollice@smgparish.org](mailto:lpollice@smgparish.org). Registration deadline is Jan. 17.

## GOSPEL PRESENTATION

"Making Sense of the Gospels in the 21st Century" will be presented by Dr. Mark Goodwin Jan. 11 and 18 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Good Shepherd Parish. Dr. Goodwin has taught biblical studies and theology at the University of Dallas since 1993. His interests include the Jewish dimensions of Christian tradition; Catholic-Jewish interreligious dialogue; Paulin literature; and the Gospels. The course fee is \$5. Childcare is available with reservations made by Jan. 1. Registration may be made online at [www.gssc.net](http://www.gssc.net) or by calling the parish office at (817) 421-1387.

## 'HOLY HAPPY HOUR'

St. Maria Goretti Church continues "H3: Holy Happy Hour," an opportunity to learn and discuss contemporary issues with the truths of Catholicism in a casual, social setting held one Tuesday a month at J. Gilligan's, 400 E. Abram St. in Arlington. The next "H3" will be held Jan. 16. The guest speaker, Fr. Stephen Sanchez, OCD, will present "But There is No Room in my Blackberry for Prayer." Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the speaker will begin at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Lucas Pollice at (817) 274 0643 or by e-mail to [lpollice@smgparish.org](mailto:lpollice@smgparish.org).

## CATECHIST PRESENTATION

Dr. Sandra Kennedy will present "What is a Catechist?" at Good Shepherd Parish, 1000 Tinker Rd., Colleyville, Feb. 1 from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Dr. Kennedy has a masters of religious education degree from Loyola and a doctorate in religious education from Columbia. All catechists, DREs, and others interested are invited to this free presentation. For more information, contact Mary or Ginny at (817) 421-1387.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE

The annual New Year's Eve Dance, sponsored by the Singles Ministry, will be held Dec. 31 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 4500 Columbus Trail, Fort Worth, off of Hulen. The cost is \$15 per person. For more information, contact Vince Chairez at (817) 896-5726.

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## MINISTRY FORMATION DAY

All are invited to gather for an enrichment day that includes (English and Spanish) workshop sessions, exhibits, networking opportunities, and a keynote speaker. The next Ministry Formation Day, sponsored by the diocesan offices of Children's Catechesis, Media Library, Adult Formation, Hispanic Pastoral Services, Young Adult Ministry, Youth Ministry, Worship, Catholic Schools, Peace and Justice, Marriage and Family Life, Light of Christ Institute, Marriage Tribunal, Pastoral Planning, Stewardship and Development, and Finance, will be held Jan. 6 at Nolan Catholic High School, 4501 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For more information, contact Kevin Prevou at [kprevou@fwdioc.org](mailto:kprevou@fwdioc.org) or (817) 560-2452 ext. 261; or Paul Combest at [pcombest@fwdioc.org](mailto:pcombest@fwdioc.org) or (817) 560-2452 ext. 267. There will be another Ministry Formation Day held March 3 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 108 NW 4th Ave., Mineral Wells. For more information on this program, contact Joe Rodriguez at [jrodriguez@fwdioc.org](mailto:jrodriguez@fwdioc.org) or (817) 560-2452 ext. 115; or Andrés Aranda at [aaranda@fwdioc.org](mailto:aaranda@fwdioc.org) or (817) 560-2452 ext. 258.

## CZECH DINNER

The Czech Community of Sacred Heart Church in Seymour will sponsor a Czech dinner with Bohemian sausage, sauerkraut, and kolaches at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Arlington. The Czech choir and musicians from Seymour will celebrate with friends in the Metroplex Jan. 28 at a special 12:30 p.m. Sunday Polka Mass, followed by the dinner from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. For more information, call Sacred Heart Parish at (940) 889-5252.

## LITURGICAL CONFERENCE

The 45th annual Southwest Liturgical Conference Study Week will be held Jan. 17-20 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at the Cox Business Services Convention Center. To request a brochure or for more information, contact the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123 or call (405) 721-5651. Details may be found online at [www.swlc.org](http://www.swlc.org).

# Classified Section

## HR DIRECTOR

The Diocese of Fort Worth is seeking a director of Human Resources. This position has responsibility for policy development and implementation for the parishes and schools of the diocese. Qualified applicants will be practicing Catholics and have a minimum of three years experience in human resource administration with specific training in human relations, conflict management, compensation and federal and Texas law. MA or equivalent is required along with an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church and principles of just treatment. For a required application, contact Steve Landon at 800 W. Loop 820 South, Fort Worth. 76108, (817) 560-3300 or e-mail to [slandon@fwdioc.org](mailto:slandon@fwdioc.org). Applications will be accepted until Jan.10.

## ASSISTED LIVING ATTENDANTS

Catholic assisted living facility in South Arlington seeks professional, pro-life, experienced attendants to join our team providing care for elderly women. Position requires a compassionate and dedicated person eager to serve and to grow in knowledge of geriatric health issues. Good salary and flexible hours for the right person. For more information, contact Carol/Linda at (817) 548-7211.

## EVANGELIZATION

Evangelization, full or part tme. No experience necessary. Training provided. Great pay. For more information, e-mail to [kevin@ourcatholicfaith.com](mailto:kevin@ourcatholicfaith.com), call Kevin at (808) 754-7300, or visit the Web site at [www.lighthousecatholicmedia.com](http://www.lighthousecatholicmedia.com)

## DINNER AND CONCERT

All are cordially invited to dinner and a Christmas concert Dec. 22 at St. John the Apostle Church, 7341 Glenview Drive, North Richland Hills, sponsored by the parish's combined choirs, the Knights of Columbus, and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas. The combined choirs, accompanied by members of the Northeast Orchestra, will present "The Voices of Christmas" by Joseph M. Martin. The concert is free and will begin at 8 p.m. Reservations are not necessary. The Knights of Columbus will also serve dinner from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the gym. The cost of the dinner is \$6.50 for adults and \$3.50 for children. The Catholic Daughters will also host a bake sale during the dinner hour. For more information, call the parish office at (817) 284-4811.

## COME HOME MINISTRY

The Come Home ministry at Good Shepherd Parish, 1000 Tinker Rd., Colleyville, extends a warm invitation and welcome back to inactive, disconnected, or alienated Catholics. This ministry guided by a core team of volunteers, offers a safe, welcoming environment for conversation about returning to active participation in the life of the Catholic church. The next sessions will be held Tuesdays, Jan. 9, 16, 23, and 30, and Feb. 6. For more information, call Karen DeFilippis at (817) 421-1387 or Diane Kruse at (817) 488-7092.

## YOUNG SERRAN BANQUET

All are cordially invited to the Young Serra Community of Dallas 2007 award presentation and banquet to be held Jan. 27 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. The awards banquet will be held at All Saints Church in the parish hall, 5231 Meadowcreek Drive, Dallas. The cost is \$30 per person (\$40 after RSVP date). DJ Brian Kidd will provide the entertainment. Semi-formal attire is requested. Members and guests are welcome to bring their own bottle of wine; water and iced tea will be provided. For more information, contact Lauren Hampson at (972) 238-0601 or e-mail to [L\\_hampson16@yahoo.com](mailto:L_hampson16@yahoo.com). Reservations are requested by Jan. 13.

## ACCOMPANIST

An accompanist experienced at three-manual pipe organ is needed for four weekend Masses at Holy Family Church in Fort Worth. Responsibilities include rehearsals with two choirs weekly, Holy Day Masses, availability for parish funerals, weddings, and major parish celebrations throughout the year preferred. Applicant must be familiar with post-Vatican II Catholic liturgy. Send résumés to Holy Family Church; Attn: Diane Kain, 6150 Pershing Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107 or call (817) 737-6768 ext. 104, to apply.

## FAITH AND FORMATION

Vibrant, family-centered parish is seeking a coordinator of Children's Faith Formation. Applicant must be fluent in English and Spanish, have a degree in theology, ministry, or related field. Parish is seeking an experienced and energetic Catholic lay minister who can recruit and manage volunteers, train catechists, be very organized and detail-oriented. This 35-hour per week position begins immediately. Interested applicants may send résumé to: Search Committee, 2330 Cheyenne St., Irving, TX 75062.

## HOME CAREGIVERS

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## Good Newsmakers

Tim Madigan's relationship with Fred Rogers shows the importance of having

# Friends in the Neighborhood

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen  
Correspondent

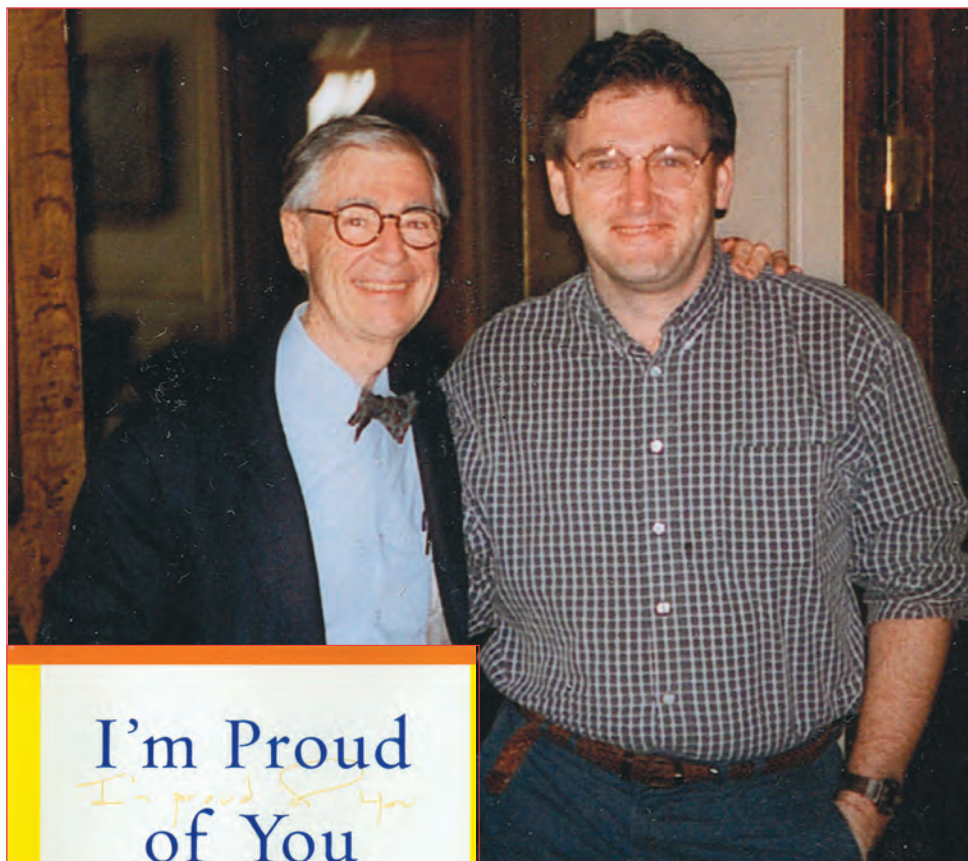
**W**hen *I'm Proud of You*, the story of a journalist's unlikely friendship with children's television icon Fred Rogers, first hit bookstores in August, editors expected a best-seller. The well-written memoir had all the earmarks of success in the publishing world. Not only did the book offer insight into the life of a well-known celebrity, it told a compelling tale of personal crisis, spiritual growth, and transformation.

Despite wonderful reviews, copies of *I'm Proud of You* didn't fly off the shelves in Harry Potter fashion. Something better happened.

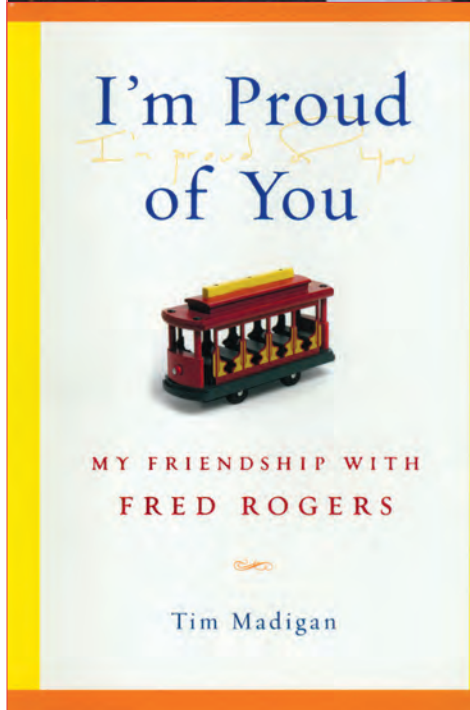
"I started getting mail and hearing from people who said the book was changing their lives," explains local author, Tim Madigan. "That is what is so amazingly gratifying to me. Fame, notoriety, and money are not the most important things."

Telling the world about the human greatness of Fred Rogers and the transformative power of friendship is the overriding purpose of the book, says the award-winning feature writer for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. A routine assignment for the newspaper set the stage for Madigan's introduction to the creator of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" in 1995.

While writing an article on television violence and its effect on youngsters, the enterprising reporter sought out interviews with two legends in children's programming — Captain Kangaroo and Mister Rogers. An hour-long telephone conversation with Fred Rogers led to a longer profile piece for the newspaper and a trip to Pittsburgh to watch a taping of the TV show. By the end of that autumn weekend, Madigan would attend



Tim Madigan poses with PBS's Fred Rogers, the creator and star of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood." The PBS-TV program still airs 300 episodes of the program which was produced between 1968 and 2001.



The cover of Tim Madigan's book *I'm Proud of You*, subtitled *My Friendship with Fred Rogers*. Checking the Amazon.com reviews of the book reveals a rating of five stars.

Sunday services with his host and forge a lasting friendship that would help the emotionally frail reporter deal with depression, insecurity, a failing marriage, and the loss of a brother to cancer.

Fred Rogers made the first overture toward friendship by leaving a message on Madigan's answering machine. After that, the pair kept in touch through e-mails, phone calls, gifts, and occasional visits. The contact would last until Mr. Rogers' unexpected death from stomach cancer in February 2003.

Years later the writer still wonders

about the force that drew two divergent souls together.

"It happened at the precise moment in my life when it would have the biggest impact," says Madigan, looking back on the genesis of the relationship. "The mid-'90s were a difficult, dangerous time for me. I never contemplated suicide, but I understand people who do."

Tim Madigan signs copies of his book at the Barnes & Noble book store in downtown Fort Worth on Sundance Square.

Tormented by dark moods, referred to as "the furies" in his book, the troubled baby boomer found comfort in a personality that exuded kindness, compassion, and acceptance.

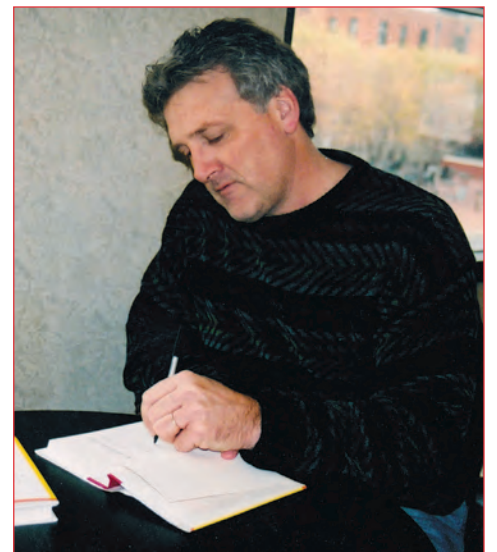
"I trusted him with my innermost feelings and experiences," Madigan says of their early correspondence. "I think my vulnerability was something he greatly appreciated. He wanted to know the 'essential invisibles' of other people. That was the central theme of his life."

The term "essential invisibles" is part of a favorite quotation Fred Rogers kept on his office wall. Culled from Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince* it reads, "That which is most essential is invisible to the eye." The strained relationship Madigan had with his father was one of the "essential invisibles" shared with Rogers.

"So here comes this guy who seems to be a pretty good sort, and he writes him a letter saying, 'Dear Fred, I can never get my dad to be proud of me. Would you be proud of me?'" the author says, revealing the incident that inspired the memoir's title.

Rogers' response to that child-like query set Madigan on the path to true healing. In a letter to his insecure, dispirited friend, the ordained Presbyterian minister turned television celebrity wrote: "Yes — a resounding Yes. I will be proud of you. I am proud of you. I have been proud of you since we first met. Nothing you could tell me would change my yes for you.... Your place in this life is unique — absolutely unique. I feel blessed to be one of your friends. Only

SEE AUTHOR'S, P. 22



## Inside... This issue of the NTC

Attorney, city council member, and active All Saints parishioner Sal Espino takes the reins of Cassata High School. He wants to tell the Cassata good news story throughout the community. **3**

The incarnation, Jesus becoming one of us, changed human life forever. It's what Christmas is all about. Our writers tell about ways that event still affects our lives today. **12-14**

The story of St. Bartholomew's new Parish Life Center begins 20 years ago in 1986 when then pastor Fr. Richard Beaumont started setting aside parish money for "the future." **15**

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