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Christmas Approaches Rejoice!

Mary holds the Child Jesus in “Virgin of the Lilies” by French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9. (CNS photo/Jerry L. Thompson, Art Resource)

Our Shepherd Speaks

The peace and joy of the Incarnation of Christ be with you

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“For the Son of God became man so that man could become like God.”

These magnificent words of St. Athanasius from his great work *On the Incarnation* so powerfully sum up the meaning of Christmas and the celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Son of the eternal Father, becomes like us in all things but sin so that the glory of man as created in the image and likeness of God could once again be fully revealed. The Incarnation of Christ, the tiny baby born in a stable in Bethlehem, truly and dramatically changes the course of human history, for God was now with man, and never again will humanity be separated from God.

The Incarnation of Christ at Christmas reveals two things. First, it reveals the great love and mercy of the Father who sends his only Son to fully reveal Himself and to accomplish his loving plan of salvation announced immediately following the first sin of Adam and Eve. The Incarnation reveals a love that is greater than sin, a love that seeks and finds those who are lost. The Incarnation also reveals the great dignity of each and every human person; that God Himself would deign to become like us in order to fully restore our great dignity as sons and daughters of God. In fact, as Vatican II teaches us, Jesus, through the Incarnation, unites himself with each and every person and offers the gift of salvation:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come (Romans 5:14), Christ the Lord. Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling. He who is “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, in a certain way united



Bishop Kevin Vann

himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.

— *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, 22)*

It is also important to remember that we don't just celebrate the Incarnation only on Christmas Day, but that the Church celebrates the Incarnation of Christ throughout the Christmas Season which extends from Christmas Day through the solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 9. This liturgical season offers many other feasts and celebrations that even more fully reveal the mystery of the Incarnation.

One of the great feasts that falls in the Christmas Season is the feast of Mary, Mother of God that is celebrated on Jan. 1. This feast speaks directly to the truth and reality of the Incarnation, that the one person, Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine without confusion or division. In other words, since Jesus is really and truly God, the second Person of the Trinity made flesh, then Mary as the Mother of Jesus is truly the Mother of God. In fact, this title of Mary as Mother of God was defined at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. in response to the Nestorian heresy which separated Jesus' humanity and divinity and taught that Jesus was a man in whom God dwelt, but that he was not fully God. The Council of Ephesus defined that Jesus' divine and human natures are fully united in the one person Jesus Christ and that therefore Mary

is truly the *Theotokos*, or “God bearer.” This feast is always a reminder to us that all that we believe about Mary has everything to do with Christ and that Mary is always pointing us to and leading us into a deeper union with her Son.

Another great feast during the Christmas season is the feast of the Epiphany which has been traditionally celebrated on Jan. 6 or 12 days after Christmas, but recently has been transferred to the second Sunday after Christmas. The feast of the Epiphany is one of the most ancient Christian feasts, and the word Epiphany from the Greek means “to reveal” because the feast is centered on God being revealed to man in Christ. The Epiphany was first celebrated in the East and originally celebrated four “epiphanies” or revealing events in the life of Christ: the Baptism of Jesus, the first miracle of Christ at the Wedding Feast of Cana, the Nativity of Christ, and the visit of the Magi. All of these events in some way reveal Christ's divinity, that he is truly the Son of God. It is important to note that the Epiphany was the original celebration of Christmas or the birth of Christ. Eventually in the West, the celebration of the Nativity was separated to Christmas on Dec. 25, but the feast of the Epiphany remained as the celebration of the other three events as the end of the Christmas Season. As time continued on, the other feasts were gradually separated, and today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord the Sunday after the Epiphany, and the Wedding Feast of Cana is celebrated the next Sunday.

The Epiphany for us today is the celebration of the visit of the Magi from the East who, following the star of Bethlehem, beheld the Christ-child and his glory. The Epiphany is when Christ is revealed to the world as the Messiah, the Son of God. In many parts of the world, such as Europe, the Epiphany is considered to be at least as important as Christmas and is sometimes called “Little Christmas,” and in many cultures, following the example of the Magi offering their gifts to Christ, is when the exchange of “Christmas” gifts takes place.

The celebration of the Incarnation of Christ at Christmas is also a reminder that Christ came to us as an infant, and that at the Annunciation he was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, through the Incarnation, redeemed human nature from the moment of conception through death. As we move from Christmas to the New Year, it is important to remember that on Jan. 22 we recall the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that

legalized abortion in the United States. This anniversary, as sad and tragic as it is, serves for us as a reminder that we are all called, by virtue of our Baptism, to promote, witness, and defend the culture of life. One of the great events that I am able to participate in each year is traveling to Washington, D.C., with a great number of youth and others from the diocese for the March for Life. The march is a great opportunity to witness to the culture of life and to call for the end of legalized abortion. I am especially grateful for the Youth for Life of the diocesan Catholics Respect Life Office for organizing a large group of youth and young adults to attend the march. Each year I am truly moved by the overwhelming support for life and the witness of so many Catholics, especially young people, from around the country, who come in a spirit of *communio* and fill the Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington and pray for the end of abortion and other crimes against human life. I will also be celebrating our annual Respect Life Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral Friday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. I strongly encourage that people from all across our diocese gather in a spirit of communion as a local Church to pray for the end of abortion and other attacks against innocent human life and ask for the grace of Christ to witness to and bring about a true culture of life in all of the areas of our society and culture in which we have influence. May we answer the urgent appeal of Pope John Paul II in his great encyclical *The Gospel of Life* to “in the name of God: respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life.”

I would like to wish each and every one of you and your families a very blessed Christmas, and I pray that the peace and joy of the Incarnation of Christ will be with you as we celebrate the Christmas Season.

+Kevin W. Vann

+Bishop Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Diocese of Fort Worth



CONTENTS

January/Christmas 2010/2011

Features

- 7** *The new Roman Missal will be introduced next Advent*
By Michele Baker
- 10** *Fostering Christian unity without giving up Catholic identity*
By David Mills & Denise Bossert
- 18** *John Gill is Meals on Wheels' volunteer of the year — at 95*
By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
- 22** *Here's the final group of priests reflecting on their priesthood*
By Jenara Kocks Burgess

Departments

- 4-5** **Briefly**
- 10-11** **Voices**
- 12** **Catechesis**
- 13** **Vocations**
- 14** **Features**
- 20-21** **Word to Life**
- 26-28** **Spanish**

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Can we say Merry Christmas yet?

It's nearly Christmas Eve. And so, we've devoted a lot of the content of this issue to the birth of Jesus and the audacious reality of the Incarnation. The very idea that God would become man, would share our human nature with us, becoming fully God and fully human, represents such a loving act that we cannot fully comprehend it. Our concepts of love, no matter how well developed, cannot, without God's example, imagine such a degree of self-giving. Each time at Mass when the bread and wine are lifted to become the Body and Blood of our Lord, we are amazed. Without the humbling act of birth in a stable, life as a man, death in our place, we would not share the possibility of taking on God's nature, ultimately joining Him in heaven.

We hope the season of Christmas renews some of that sense of awe and wonder as we place ourselves at the side of the manger.

You won't want to miss John Gill's humility and attitude of service portrayed so well by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen, as she captures a bit of John's story. National

volunteer of the year for Meals on Wheels. John, a parishioner of St. John the Apostle Parish in North Richland Hills, coordinates the Meals on Wheels distribution center there (page 18).

Michele Baker does a really fine job of telling us some of the details about the introduction of the new Roman Missal that will be in use beginning next Advent. The hope is that in hewing more to the original language of the liturgy, we will all grow in our faith and be better able to share our faith with others (page 7).

And Bishop Vann will be sharing with our Jewish friends at Congregation Aha-vath Shalom on *Nostra Aetate* January 15 at 1 p.m. *Nostra Aetate* is the Vatican II document that revolutionized Catholicism's relationship with the Jewish faith and other religions. Catholics are invited to the inter-faith event. You can read Associate Editor Tony Gutierrez's informative article on that on page 8.

Jeff Hensley
Editor

A Nativity scene is pictured at the Vatican Museums. This scene was made by craftsmen of Guanajuato, Mexico, and is one of several creches at the Vatican. The state of Guanajuato is one the first areas of Spanish colonial settlement in Mexico, dating from around 1520. The area is known for its craftsmanship and its rich silver and other mineral deposits.

(CNS photo/Paul Haring)



Lack of religious freedom harms security, pope says in peace message

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Infringements on the freedom of religion threaten peace and security worldwide as well as stifle authentic human growth and development, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Religious freedom is an authentic weapon of peace," which fosters the human qualities and potentials that "can change the world and make it better," the pope said in his message for World Peace Day, Jan. 1, 2011.

Pope Benedict's message, which was delivered to world leaders by Vatican ambassadors, was released at the Vatican Dec. 16. The message was translated into Arabic as well as several European languages, including Russian.

The message, titled "Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace," made special mention of the "theater of violence and strife" in Iraq and the deadly attack on a Syrian Catholic church in Baghdad Oct. 31.

The pope said it is in the context of widespread violence, persecution, intolerance, and discrimination against people of faith that he decided to dedicate the peace day message to the fundamental importance of religious freedom as the basis for the well-being and growth of individuals and whole societies.

"At present, Christians are the religious group which suffers most from persecution on account of its faith," citing specifically the Christian communities in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and "especially in the Holy Land," said the pope.

During a presentation of the message to the press, Msgr. Anthony Frontiero, an official at the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said that of all the people "who are discriminated against, hurt, killed, or persecuted for religious reasons, 75 percent worldwide are Christian." The statistic came from a spokesperson from The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life during a conference hosted by the European Parliament in November.

"A conservative estimate of the number of Christians killed for their faith each year is somewhere around 150,000," Msgr. Frontiero said quoting an article published Dec. 4 by the online news site of the *Toronto Star* daily newspaper.

"Virtually every human rights group and Western government agency that monitors the plight of Christians worldwide arrives at more or less the same conclusion: Between 200 million and 230 million of them face daily threats of murder, beating, imprisonment and torture, and a further 350 to 400 million encounter discrimination in areas such as jobs and housing," the monsignor quoted from the news article.

In his message, the pope said the fact that Christians must live in fear because of their faith "is unacceptable,

since it represents an insult to God and to human dignity."

"Furthermore, it is a threat to security and peace, and an obstacle to the achievement of authentic and integral human development," he said.

The pope also warned against "more sophisticated forms of hostility to religion" which, in Western countries, is often expressed by a denial of its Christian roots and the rejection of religious symbols, "which reflect the identity and the culture of the majority of citizens."

Trappist monks in Iowa close chapter on farming as means of income

PEOSTA, Iowa (CNS) — Farmers from miles around gathered at the New Melleray Abbey farm south of Dubuque Nov. 20 for a historic auction that marked the end of farming as a means of support for the Trappist community.

On the cold sunny morning, potential buyers climbed in the cab of the tractors and examined the well-maintained equipment that worked the 2,000 acres of cropland owned by the monastery.

Abbot Brendan Freeman, who spoke to the crowd before the auction, said it was a "bittersweet day for us, as all through our history we have been farmers," summarizing the 160-year tradition that was coming to an end. Factors in the decision included the costs involved in farming, low prices paid for crops, and the fact the abbey has fewer members and those who do live there are getting older.

The first monks came to Dubuque from Ireland at the invitation of Bishop Mathias Loras and established New Melleray Abbey in 1849. They supported themselves through the sale of farm animals and crops raised on their acreage, which includes 600 acres of prairie given to them by Bishop Loras and 600 acres they bought for \$1.25 an acre.

Abbot Freeman told how the early monks sold hogs to William "Hog" Ryan in nearby Galena, Ill., who sold pork to the Union Army during the Civil War, and of the most recent efforts in organic farming and raising organic Angus beef. But eventually the economy took its toll. "Prices went way down," the abbot continued, "and we don't have the monks to do the fieldwork anymore."

Syrian patriarch urges Iraqi government to ensure safety of citizens

BEIRUT (CNS) — Syrian Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III Younan called on the Iraqi government to ensure the safety of all Iraqi citizens, especially Christians, "who are defenseless, honest, and peaceful people."

In his homily at a Dec. 10 memorial Mass in Baghdad that

Briefly

State, National, Church



(CNS photos/PAUL HARING)

With the induction of Cardinals Raymond Burke, left, and Donald Wuerl into the College of Cardinals, the United States has 18 cardinals, 13 of whom are under the age of 80. Only Italy has more cardinals. With 10 new cardinals, Italy has a total of 48 members of the college, 25 of whom are under 80.

Pope creates new cardinals, telling them authority means service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI created 24 new cardinals, including two from the United States, and called them to be strong in spreading and defending the faith and promoting peace and tranquility within the church.

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington and Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, prefect of the Vatican's supreme court, joined other new cardinals from 13 countries Nov. 20 in formally professing their Catholic faith and fidelity to the pope.

Pope Benedict concelebrated Mass Nov. 21 with the new cardinals and gave each of them a cardinal's ring, telling them it was a sign "of your nuptial pact with the church."

Rather than precious gems, the gold rings feature a crucifix, which, "for the same reason your clothes allude to blood, is a symbol of life and love" as demonstrated by Christ's ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of all, the pope said.

During the consistory Nov. 20, the pope assigned the new cardinals

a "titular church" in Rome, making them members of the Rome diocesan clergy, which is what the church's first cardinals were. Cardinal Burke's titular church is St. Agatha of the Goths; Cardinal Wuerl's is St. Peter in Chains, the church famous for hosting Michelangelo's statue of Moses.

At the end of the service, the College of Cardinals numbered a record 203 members, with 121 cardinals under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope. With the induction of Cardinals Wuerl and Burke into the College of Cardinals, the United States has 18 cardinals, 13 of whom are under the age of 80.

Only Italy has more cardinals. With 10 new cardinals, Italy has a total of 48 members of the college, 25 of whom are under 80.

Pope Benedict told the new cardinals they must recognize that becoming "unique and precious" collaborators in the papal mission to serve the church is not an honor they can take credit for, but is a vocation to which they are called.

venerated the "46 new martyrs" of the Syrian Catholic Church, the patriarch said the presence of government officials at the liturgy "helped to inspire some trust and feelings of some protection" for the faithful, despite a prevailing mood of being anxious for the future "since the cover-up of the terror targeting Iraqi Christians is still going on after such a period of time."

The patriarch, who flew from Beirut for the Mass, reminded those present of the pleas of all Christians in Iraq and abroad, "that it is the responsibility of the Iraqi government to carry out proper and thorough investigations to uncover the terrorist groups who did plan and finance the carnage, of whatever religious or political allegiance they may be, and to

bring them publicly to justice.

"We need deeds and not just ... promises, that our Christian faithful feel really safe in their churches, houses, and places of work. They also need that the government ensure equality in the work places, since the Christians fear vengeance and harassment from many fundamentalist and self-proclaimed leaders in parts of the city as well in the civil and administrative areas," he said.

Fifty-eight people died in the attack on the Syrian Catholic Church in Baghdad Oct. 31 after military officials tried to end a terrorist siege of the church.

In an e-mail to Catholic News Service, the patriarch said the December memorial Mass was "a time of grace, sorrow, and hope."

He said he experienced "profound consolation to witness the faith of thousands of Iraqi Christians who challenged threats and overcame fear in order to prove their commitment and love for the ultimate sacrifice of their brothers and sisters, including their two young priests ... who gave themselves courageously as first martyrs to be savagely slaughtered during Sunday Mass."

The Mass, the patriarch told CNS, was attended by many prominent Shiite Muslim leaders and government representatives, four ambassadors to Iraq, as well as church officials, including Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, apostolic nuncio to Iraq and Jordan.

Patriarch Younan said he reminded U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James Jeffrey of what Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, as outgoing president of the U.S. bishops' conference, recently wrote to President Barack Obama.

In a Nov. 9 letter, the cardinal urged the U.S. government to "redouble its efforts to assist Iraqis" in providing safety for its citizens, especially religious minorities.

Vatican-based foundation to promote study of pope's theology

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With the pope's agreement and funding, the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation has been established to promote theological studies on his writings and to reward promising scholars.

Msgr. Giuseppe Antonio Scotti, president of the foundation, said it was established with just over \$3.1 million from the pope. The money represents part of the royalties from the publication of his books; the rest of his royalty income goes to charity, Msgr. Scotti told reporters Nov. 26.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, retired papal vicar of Rome and president of the new foundation's scientific committee, said he hoped that someday the "Ratzinger Prizes" in sacred Scripture, patristics, and fundamental theology "would be

considered as something analogous to a Nobel Prize for theology."

The prizes and the conferences the foundation hopes to host should focus, like the pope's work, "on helping the truth, meaning, and beauty of Christianity in relation to today's culture and society emerge," Cardinal Ruini said.

The activities of the Vatican-based foundation will be coordinated with those of a Germany-based foundation honoring the pope. The Joseph Ratzinger-Papst Benedikt XVI Stiftung was established in 2007 by a group of his former students.

Cardinal Ruini and other members of the scientific committee will draw up the specific requirements for submissions for the Ratzinger Prizes and will choose the winners, he said. The other members of the committee include two former secretaries of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, and Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. Archbishop Luis Ladaria, current secretary of the doctrinal congregation, and Archbishop Jean-Louis Brugues, secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, also are committee members.

Pope says nuclear weapons remain threat to humanity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said nuclear weapons remain a threat to humanity, and he urged steps to curb their proliferation.

Addressing Japan's new ambassador to the Vatican Nov. 27, the pope recalled that this year marks the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said the "horror" of the bombings becomes more poignant every year.

"This tragedy strongly reminds us how necessary it is to persevere in the efforts toward nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and toward disarmament," he said.

"Nuclear weapons remain a source of great worry. Their possession and the risk of their eventual use generate tension and mistrust in numerous regions of the world," he said.

He said the experience in Japan should remind the world of the need to find political solutions to international problems, and of the need to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. That's something the international community should promote by patiently establishing economic and political sanctions against the use of force, he said.

The pope also suggested that nations reallocate a part of their normal military spending toward projects of economic and social development, education, and health care.

"That would undoubtedly contribute to stability inside countries and between peoples," he said.

Briefly

Locally Significant Events



(Photo by Kathy Cribari Hamer)

When the St. Matthew Parish organized Our Lady of Guadalupe procession made its way over the streets of Arlington Dec. 5, there were many portrayals of the Virgin of Guadalupe. These two, one live and one two-dimensional were among the brightest. **See story at foot of page**

Bishop Vann to celebrate annual Respect Life Mass, Jan. 21; all invited to take part in Dallas Rosary, Mass, and ecumenical march, Jan. 22

The Diocese of Fort Worth will commemorate the 38th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the infamous Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion on demand on Jan. 22, 1973, leading to the death of more than 50 million unborn children, with several memorial events.

Bishop Kevin Vann will celebrate the annual Respect Life Mass at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 21, at St. Patrick Cathedral. For more information about the Mass, contact Chanacee Ruth-Killgore, diocesan director of the Catholics Respect Life Office, at (817) 560-2452, ext. 257, or by e-mail at cruth-killgore@fwdioc.org.

Saturday, Jan. 22, the Fort Worth and Dallas dioceses are co-sponsoring several events in Dallas, where the landmark case was first filed in 1970.

Activities will begin with the 2011 Roe Memorial Rosary at the Routh Street abortion center, 4321 N. Central Expy. in Dallas at 7:45 a.m.

At 10 a.m., Bishop Vann and Bishop Kevin Farrell of the Diocese of Dallas will concelebrate the bilingual Roe Memorial Mass at the Cathedral

Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe with diocesan clergy.

After the Mass, at noon, participants will join pro-life supporters of other faiths for the Ecumenical Dallas March for Life Cathedral Plaza to the Earle Cabell Federal Courthouse, where *Roe v. Wade* was originally filed. The march will include a rally with prayers for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, and for legal protection to be restored to the unborn.

"What started in Dallas must end in Dallas," say event organizers in a flyer.

The Dallas March for Life had more than 6,000 participants in 2010, and organizers hope to have more than 10,000 participants this year to join in praying for an end to abortion in the North Texas region and in the country, and to publicly witness for a Culture of Life. For more information about the march, contact the Catholic Pro-Life Committee of the Diocese of Dallas at (972) 267-LIFE (5433), or visit the committee's website at www.prolifedallas.org.

Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, celebrating 125 years serving in the U.S, have a long history of service in Diocese of Fort Worth

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (CSFN) serving in Texas celebrated the anniversary of their 125 years of service to children and families in the U.S. — and their history of service in the Southwestern US — with a special Mass celebrated by Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell Dec. 11 at Holy Family of Nazareth Church, in Irving.

The CSFNs' U.S. celebration continues for a year, culminating in the grand closing Mass and reception July 4, 2011, in Chicago, where the headquarters of the order in the United States is located.

According to information provided by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, the sisters have had a presence in the Diocese of Fort Worth since at least 1931, when they arrived in Mineral Wells to staff Nazareth Hospital until 1968, with the sisters withdrawing in 1971.

In 1937, the Christ the King

Hospital in Vernon was donated to the CSFNs. That hospital closed in 1965.

In 1935, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth's Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls was dedicated and blessed. Bethania merged with Wichita General Hospital in 1998, becoming part of United Regional Health Care, and in 2006, the sisters closed the convent.

From 1963 to 1979, the sisters taught at St. Andrew Inter-Parochial School in Fort Worth. The school was and is on the grounds of St. Andrew Parish in Southwest Fort Worth, but was at that time the parish school for both St. Andrew and St. Bartholomew parishes in Fort Worth. The convent was connected to the St. Andrew School building.

In 2003, a community of sisters began family ministry at St. Rita Parish in East Fort Worth, where a community still resides.

Schools Superintendent Miller and Cassata Principal Martin speak at NCEA leadership conference

Cassata High School, the diocese's private, fully-accredited outreach school was honored recently as Nancy Martin, principal of Cassata High School, and Don Miller, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Fort Worth, were invited to present "The Mission-Driven Story of Cassata High School" at the National Catholic Educational Association's (NCEA) Annual Leadership Conference on the campus of Loyola University, Chicago. According to a press release from Cassata, the two were among

a handful of speakers selected from Catholic schools across the nation to present on the topic "Leading Mission-Driven Schools". For the past five years, the Loyola University Chicago Center for Catholic School Effectiveness and the NCEA have co-sponsored a national instructional leadership conference they describe as "designed to 'push the envelope' regarding best practices in leading excellent Catholic schools." Miller and Martin were chosen, the press release goes on to say, because

of Cassata's success with transforming struggling youth into high school graduates. Cassata has been providing young people with another chance at success since 1975. Many of Cassata's students face significant barriers to obtaining an education — for the 2009-2010 school year, 34 percent of graduates were the first in their family to earn a high school diploma; 30 percent of students are teen parents; and several are over the age of 21. Most of the students have had difficulty with

traditional education, and many are not attending school when they enroll at Cassata. Cassata has a demonstrated legacy of success at transforming struggling youth into high school graduates, the release continues. Of the 67 graduates from the 2009-2010 school year, 65 are enrolled in a two- or four-year colleges, trade schools, or enlisted in the military. For further information contact Susan Flood, president of Cassata High School, at (817) 926-1745.

Bishop Vann blesses and rededicates St. Andrew Parish hall, as its phase two is completed

By Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

In the presence of many people who had witnessed the planning and construction of the original St. Andrew's Parish hall, a decade-and-a-half ago, Bishop Kevin Vann blessed and rededicated phase two, completing what was, according to the pastor, the parish's dream.

"It was over 15 years ago that this building was first put up," Father Tom Stabile, TOR, said in his remarks at the dedication. "The first floor was left empty, the elevator shaft back there without an elevator in it, and the upstairs just a shell.

"But it was even long before that, that the idea of a parish hall was this parish's life and dream, and lots of different plans were put together, for different proposals.

"Finally this building happened," the pastor told the happy crowd who had gathered to celebrate the long-awaited completion, "two full floors and lots of use!"

The current hall, attached to the north side of the church building, was originally built in place of what was the parish rectory. After its first phase, the facility housed a large gathering place, full kitchen, four nursery facilities, and three meeting rooms.

The newly doubled hall has an additional full second floor, with



a gathering room and four more generous meeting areas.

"It took a long time to decide what the completed project would be," according to Carol Peninger, business and facilities manager. The first estimate, which was more than two million dollars, was modified, after discussion with the finance council. Eventually, through the course of the construction, more contributions came in, and the building project expanded, and was completed without acquiring any debt.

"Everyone can feel like they

contributed," Peninger said, "because so much of the money came from the general offertory collections."

During the rededication, the Bishop prayed, sprinkled the rooms, and asked God's blessing on "all that will happen in this place.

"We take this time to give thanks to God," the bishop said, "who made it possible."

A reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, reminded the gathering that the hall was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as

the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord . . ."

"The people think the building is a welcoming, warm place," Peninger said. "They are really happy, and lining up to use it."

Bishop Vann called the rededication weekend "providential," because it was the weekend of Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent. "Advent is always a season of hope," he said, "so we give thanks for what has been, and we're hopeful for what will be."

St. Matthew Parish Our Lady of Guadalupe procession includes 500, treks three miles through Arlington from starting point at Vietnamese Martyrs Church

By Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

Sixty-four horses, two ponies, a donkey, and 500 people processed from Arlington's Vietnamese Martyrs Church to St. Matthew Parish, Dec. 5. It was about a three-mile walk, temperatures were in the 40s, and all went forward toward the same goal: to praise their mother, the Mother of God,

Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Also known by the titles Mother of the Americas and Patroness of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe brings out intense devotion from those who follow her not only as the Blessed Mother, who appeared to Juan Diego, a peasant in Mexico, but as their own mother.

"Police officers were shocked by

the size of this year's group," according to Alma Vazquez, St. Matthew's Parish secretary, who oversaw logistical elements of the Dec. 5 procession, "One of the officers said, 'It looks like you put two years together.'"

St. Matthew Parish has sponsored a pilgrimage for Our Lady of Guadalupe yearly during the past decade, and even in the early 1980s, Vazquez said, the parish hosted a simple gathering for a small Mass.

"Since then it has become massive," she said, with many participants coming from families who have been walking with the parish since the beginning, some of them learning to provide native dance, with the matachines.

Matachines, in their beaded Indian attire, with drums accompanying them, lead the procession, said Marina Gonzalez, who chaired the event this year, as she has for the previous four. They are part of the Guadalupanas, an organization within the parish, who play a big part in the overall celebration.

Their float, with a large contingent of people wearing red costumes, stands out at the beginning of the huge parade that winds through neighborhoods, crossing busy intersections protected by the Arlington police.

St. Matthew Parish is faithful to the Guadalupe celebration because of the active Hispanic influence in the parish. According to Vazquez about 85 percent of the parish's 7,000 families are Hispanic.

When the parade ended up St. Matthew's, parishioners provided delicacies, including tamales, menudo, hot chocolate, and sweet breads. The native dance and music continue, children play, and families socialize.

But it is faith and devotion that sustains the event, Vazquez said, noting that two years ago, in pouring rain, people still walked the procession. She quoted Father Hector Medina, St. Matthew pastor: "He said it is in the faith of these people. They have a loyalty to Our Lady, and are grateful for what she has provided."

State

Archbishop Garcia-Siller installed as sixth archbishop of San Antonio

By Jordan McMorrough
Editor, *Today's Catholic*
Newspaper for the
Archdiocese of San Antonio
Catholic News Service

Urging Catholics to unite against the “ignorance, fear, and insecurity” that “feed racism and hatred toward the stranger,” Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller was installed Nov. 23 as the sixth archbishop of San Antonio.

His 76-year-old father, Gustavo Garcia Suarez, and 75-year-old mother, Maria Cristina Siller de Garcia, along with all of his siblings and their immediate families, attended the solemn Mass of installation and reception at St. Mark the Evangelist Church in San Antonio.

Born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, the 54-year-old archbishop is the eldest of 15 children.

An auxiliary bishop of Chicago since 2003, Archbishop Garcia-Siller succeeded Archbishop Jose H. Gómez, who was named coadjutor archbishop of Los Angeles in April. He is one of 26 active Hispanic bishops in the United States.

In his homily, Archbishop Garcia-Siller said the Christian message is countercultural and “can be profoundly unsettling and even threatening to some.”

“We live in a deeply divided nation and region where the notion of brotherly love may seem quaint and naive,” he said. “At times the problems of the world — and in our very homes and families — may seem so enormous that we are tempted simply to withdraw into ourselves. ... Or we may defiantly stake out our own position without seeking common ground with others.”

A member of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit religious order, Archbishop Garcia-Siller called on San Antonio Catholics “to be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led missionaries of the Gospel in the world.”

Among the 1,500 people at the installation Mass were Archbishop Gomez; Cardinals Francis E. George of Chicago and Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston Houston; Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the papal nuncio to Mexico; and retired Archbishop Patrick F. Flores, who headed the San Antonio Archdiocese from 1979 to 2004.

Speaking at the start of the liturgy was Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantu, who served



(CNS photos/Kin Man Hui, San Antonio Express)

ABOVE: Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, center, receives a hug from Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George during Archbishop Garcia-Siller's installation as head of the San Antonio Archdiocese Nov. 23 at St. Mark the Evangelist Church. Archbishop Garcia-Siller had served as an auxiliary bishop of Chicago from 2003 until his appointment.

RIGHT: Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller smiles at the Mass for his installation as archbishop of San Antonio at St. Mark the Evangelist Church on Nov. 23. As archbishop of San Antonio, he also serves as the Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of San Antonio, which includes the Diocese of Fort Worth as a suffragan diocese, along with the Dallas, Amarillo, El Paso, Laredo, Lubbock, and San Angelo Dioceses.

as interim administrator of the archdiocese after Archbishop Gomez's departure in May. He will continue as auxiliary bishop.

Among the visitors concelebrating was Archbishop Garcia-Siller's brother, Father Eugene Garcia-Siller, a priest in San Luis Potosi. Sister Myryam Garcia-Siller, his sister, and Alejandro Siller, a cousin who is on the faculty at the Mexican American Catholic College, participated in the Liturgy of the Word. His mother and father presented the bread and wine at the offertory.

The evening before his installation, Archbishop Garcia-Siller took part in a special prayer vigil at Main Plaza in front of San Fernando Cathedral. The event, which also included his welcome to San Antonio by civic and interfaith leaders, was held in the plaza to allow more people to participate in

the celebration.

Before the prayer service officially began, the archbishop was welcomed to the city by members of the civic and interfaith community, including Protestant ministers, rabbis and an imam.

He also officially took possession of San Fernando Cathedral. Using a small mallet, Archbishop Garcia-Siller knocked on the cathedral door and said, “May the doors of San Fernando Cathedral, the mother church of San Antonio, be open wide for I come as a servant in the name of the Lord to dispense God's love and mercy.”

In remarks at the event, the archbishop sounded similar themes to those in his homily.

“There is so much mindless hatred and violence in our society,” he said. “There is



so much wanton killing and violation of human rights. In a divided world and nation, the challenge is to find what unites us, to identify common ground, to discover creative ways of consulting and collaborating with one another, working for the common good of all our people.

“There is a great need today for people willing to work tirelessly for justice and peace,” Archbishop Garcia-Siller said. “You can count on me to pursue these goals with you.”

Diocese

Diocese prepares to implement new English translation of Roman Missal by Advent 2011

By Michele Baker
Correspondent

Catholics understand the season of Advent as the four Sundays preceding Christmas. Yet this year, as the faithful prepare for the joyful Feast of the Nativity, another advent is taking place for English-speaking Catholics around the world: embracing a new translation of the Roman Missal.

The Roman Missal contains the texts and prayers used in the celebration of the Mass. The forthcoming *Roman Missal, Third Edition* will go into effect Nov. 27, 2011, the first Sunday of Advent. The new translation, the first since the initial Vatican II transition to the vernacular, contains a number of changes to the prayers and responses in the Mass.

"The new translation is closer to the Latin, more poetic, and closer to the quotes of the Church fathers," said Deacon Don Warner, director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Fort Worth. "It's a richer text."

Bishop Kevin Vann has assembled a committee of lay and ordained people to educate and prepare the Diocese of Fort Worth for the change. Regional workshops for priests, liturgists, and lay ministers are being scheduled, online information is being made available, and organizers are in the process of creating workshops that can be held in parishes where resources are difficult to acquire due to financial considerations or excessive travel times to where presentations are scheduled. Furthermore, the Diocesan Day of *Communio* in March will focus on the new missal.

"We're hoping to promote really great adult catechesis," said Lucas Pollice, diocesan Director of Catechesis. "This is a blessing because it gives us an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the liturgy."

"This first step in all of this is looking at the Mass," said Dcn. Warner. "In the workshops we will re-examine how and why it is the source and summit of our faith."

"Secondarily, we will look at the actual text changes," he continued. "Look at the richness of the texts; explore how it makes certain doctrinal concepts clearer; delve into

Sources of information on the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* include:

- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website www.usccb.org/romanmissal
- The National Association of Pastoral Musicians website www.npm.org (which has previews of Mass settings and listings for training workshops for church musicians)
- online courses through www.mycatholicfaithdelivered.com/fortworth (which offers courses for people within our diocese for reasonable fees)

"This is the first time all the English-speaking countries in the world will use the same language. This is important because English is used as a standard for translation for those languages that cannot be translated directly from the Latin."

— Deacon Don Warner
Diocesan Director of Worship

the biblical roots of what we say and do in the Mass."

Ten years of extensive research, writing, and submission to the Vatican by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) went into the creation of the new missal. The highly consultative process united the efforts of numerous national conferences of bishops, resulting in the first ever uniform English translation.

"This is the first time all the English-speaking countries in the world will use the same language," said Dcn. Warner. "This is important because English is used as a standard for translation for those languages that cannot be translated directly from the Latin."

"Most people don't realize that

the text we're using now was never intended to be definitive. After Vatican II, it was understood that the translation would be revisited after a period of time," Dcn. Warner explained. He pointed out that the original translations were more literally "vernacular", that is the everyday language of people from a particular region or country as opposed to the more formal literary language used in official documents or forms of address. "The new text uses elevated language, worthy of addressing God," he said.

"Those of us who are old enough to remember the change to the vernacular at the time of Vatican II recall that there was very little preparation," said Dcn. Warner. "This time we have an opportunity to get it right."

Changes Coming

Some changes in wording at Mass that will come with the new Roman Missal in English at Advent 2011

PART OF MASS	PRESENT WORDING	NEW WORDING
People's response at the Greeting, Preface Dialogue, Sign of Peace and Concluding Rites	And also with you.	And with your spirit.
Penitential Act (form A)	... I have sinned through my own fault...	... I have greatly sinned... through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault...
Gloria	Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. ...	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. ...
Nicene Creed	We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made. ...	I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. ...
Sanctus	Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. ...	Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts. ...
Mystery of Faith (Memorial Acclamation, form A)	Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.	We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Source: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Bishop Vann invited to discuss *Nostra Aetate*, Vatican II document detailing Church's relations with non-Christian religions, at Fort Worth synagogue Jan. 15

By Tony Gutiérrez
Associate Editor

Nostra Aetate, the Second Vatican Council's document on the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions, opened the door for significantly improved Catholic-Jewish relations. Continuing in fostering positive relations between Catholics and Jews at a local level, Bishop Kevin Vann, in his first formal visit to speak at a synagogue as bishop, will visit Congregation Ahavath Shalom at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, to discuss this important document.

Bishop Vann was invited to speak at Ahavath Shalom, located at 4050 S. Hulen St. in Fort Worth, by the congregation's Rabbi Gary Perras. The event, a part of Ahavath Shalom's "brotherhood" interfaith outreach program, is open to the public. A question and answer session will follow the bishop's presentation.

"When I became a rabbi, I felt [*Nostra Aetate*] was so significant, that I like to mark it. The best way is to invite a prominent member of the Catholic community to share some thoughts on it in the Jewish synagogue and hopefully it will foster relations in the future," said Rabbi Perras.

"To me, Vatican II was a major turning point, not only in the history of the Church, but the history of religion," he noted.

The document, which was

approved at Vatican II on Oct. 28, 1965, is significant for recognizing that there are truths that can be found in non-Christian religions that "offer a ray of that truth which enlightens all men." At the same time, it states that it is still the Church's duty to proclaim the fullness of the truth found in Jesus Christ.

"Any dialogue has to be based on the truth. True dialogue can't happen unless the Church stands firmly on what she believes about herself and what Christ has revealed to be true," said Lucas Pollice, diocesan director of Catechesis. "However, dialogue helps to discern truths that we share in common with other faiths, and it's from these common truths that we come to a better understanding of each other."

Nostra Aetate was also significant for Catholic-Jewish relations in particular because it definitively stated that while members of the Jewish leadership and those who followed their lead pressed for Christ's death, the document makes clear that "neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion," which was a "huge step" for Catholic-Jewish relations, Pollice said.

Rabbi Perras said that one of his goals is for members of his congregation to understand that



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

Pope Benedict XVI shakes hands with Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni, the chief rabbi of Rome, during his visit to Rome's main synagogue Jan. 17. During his visit the pope strongly reaffirmed the Church's commitment to dialogue with the Jews and its modern teachings against anti-Semitism.

"the Catholic world has come light years in terms of moving forward in battling anti-Semitism." He pointed out, as an example, that when the Vatican recognized Israel, she did so at great risk, because it could have put the lives of Catholics in countries hostile toward Israel at risk.

Expanding on *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican also issued a set of guidelines regarding relations with the Jews in 1974, which stressed the need for improved dialogue, recognizing the shared aspects of Catholic and Jewish liturgy, greater understanding and appreciation between the two faiths, and joint

social action.

"For the Jewish faith, more than with any other non-Christian religion," said Pollice, "it's important to have dialogue because we share a common heritage." Pollice also noted that certain prayers of the Mass, such as the offering of the bread and wine during the preparation of the gifts are taken from the Jewish Passover prayers, among other liturgical ties.

The Liturgy of the Word, Pollice said, developed out of the Jewish order of worship in synagogues. "Early Christians would break bread in the celebration of the Eucharist, but

"For the Jewish faith, more than with any other non-Christian religion, it's important to have dialogue because we share a common heritage."

— Lucas Pollice,
Diocesan Director
of Catechesis

developed the Liturgy of the Word that preceded the Eucharist out of the prayers and readings of the synagogue that was a part of their Jewish roots," he said.

Rabbi Perras said that he hopes the bishop's visit will help foster Catholic-Jewish relations in the area toward reaching common goals, such as working together on common social concerns and developing a respect for all people.

"The most important of which is developing a mutual respect through knowledge," Rabbi Perras said.

Fort Worth to host 2011 Texas Mission Conference, 'Youth in Mission'

Fort Worth will host the annual Texas Mission Conference, sponsored by the Texas Mission Council, Friday through Sunday Feb. 25-27, 2011. The theme for this year's conference is "Youth in Mission."

The Texas Mission Council chose the theme for its 2011 conference in response to the Catholic Church's teaching that all Christians are called to mission by their baptism. That call is played out among the thousands of youth who go on mission trips each year under the auspices of dioceses, parishes, high schools, and colleges. The conference will be held at Hotel Trinity, located at 2000 Beach St. in Fort Worth.

The conference will consist of workshops geared to adults who work with youth and who lead youth on mission experiences. Topics include "Dynamics of

Youth"; "Reality of Youth Today"; "Music that speaks to Youth"; and "Experiences of Youth in Mission". The keynote speaker will be Father Matt Rouso, director of the Maryknoll Education Center in New Orleans, who has led numerous youth on mission trips within the United States and Latin America.

Among the workshop presenters is Father Bob Thames, a priest from the Diocese of Fort Worth who has spent the last 40 years serving in missions in Mexico and Bolivia. He is currently serving in Cabezas, Bolivia, where he started Nuestra Señora del Carmen School. He will present on "Reflections from Afar: A Bolivian Reality."


Fort Worth Bishop Kevin Vann, the Texas Catholic Conference's liaison with the Texas Mission Council, will celebrate the closing Mass on Sunday. Father

Tom Craig, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Arlington, will give the homily.

Texas is the only state to have a statewide mission council. The council exists to create mission awareness and support through the collaborative efforts of diocesan mission directors, representatives of mission organizations serving in Texas, and individuals and groups interested in mission.

Collaborative efforts of the council include promoting a general climate of world mission awareness and sponsoring opportunities for education in mission theology or through immersion experiences.

For registration forms and a copy of the conference schedule, visit www.texasmissioncouncil.org. For more information, call (713) 529-1912, or e-mail mklhouston@maryknoll.org, or call (713) 652-8231, or e-mail hochoa@archgh.org.

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VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Pondering eternity, hungering for unity

By Denise Bossert

St. Therese once said, “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth.” That’s an intriguing thought. I wonder how I will spend my eternity. If I remain faithful until that last breath, what *will* I be doing with *my* heaven? I think we can look into our deepest hearts and get a glimpse into what will be the focus of our prayers when we pass through the veil and, purified, stand before the throne of God.

There are many possibilities.

In the month of January, we turn our attention to a number of things as Catholics. We remember the lives of the unborn, and we promise to intercede for them. We pray as one, but there are some who are so committed to this battle for life that I am sure they will be spending their eternity interceding for the most innocent and helpless among us.

We also pray for conversion and unity. We are reminded of the Holy Father’s Missionary Intention for the month of January 2011: *That Christians may achieve full unity, bearing witness of the universal fatherhood of God to the entire human race.* There are some who are so committed to this work that they will be spending their eternity interceding for evangelization and ecumenism.

And in this first month of 2011, we also remember the Holy Father’s General Intention: *That the riches of creation be preserved, valued and made available to all, as precious gifts from God to mankind.* And, while we pray as one for this intention, there are many who are so committed to this unique form of stewardship that they will be spending their eternity praying for God to raise up more faithful administrators of God’s creation.

These are the prayer intentions this January. But the entire year is full of intentions. Prayers for social justice, for the preservation of the family, for healing of the sick, for peace, for freedom from persecution, for more vocations to the priesthood and religious life, for Christian educators, and for the poor, the imprisoned, and the forgotten.

But what about me? What will I be praying for if I should be found faithful and one day stand before the Throne of God? For each of us, the answer is found deep within us. We know what God has written on our hearts. And we know that there is an ache deep within that causes the Holy Spirit to groan and speak to us when we are on our

If our Lord, in his goodness and mercy, gives me access to the throne of God, I will have this prayer on my lips: that East and West will again hold hands at the altar of Our Lord. No division. No two lungs. Not even sister Churches. Completely one.

knees and through us when we get up from our knees and go into the world. That call is so demanding that it won’t end with our last breath – it *can’t* end with our last breath. There is a special prayer intention that simply must follow us into the eternal realm. We know it. And we know it deep within our souls.

Every once in awhile, I read something, and there’s this kind of eternal epiphany for me. In that moment, I know that my heart’s desire points to one special intention.

Complete and full unity in the Body of Christ.

If our Lord, in his goodness and mercy, gives me access to the throne of God, I will have this prayer on my lips: that East and West will again hold hands at the altar of Our Lord. No division. No two lungs. Not even sister Churches. Completely one. I’ll also be praying for our separated brethren, that an abundance of grace will lead them to the fullness of the faith.

If, by God’s goodness and mercy, these great events should occur before my death, then I will borrow a line from Simeon, saying, Master, you may let your servant go in peace. For I have seen with my own eyes the manifestation of your high priestly prayer. You, oh Lord, have made us one – with a oneness that mirrors the oneness You share with God the Father.

Until that day, I’ll keep on praying. Lord, hear my prayer.

Denise Bossert has been writing about her conversion to Catholicism for several years. She writes from her home in New Melle, Missouri. Catholicbygrace.blogspot.com

Asserting without hurting: unity and Catholicism's uniqueness

By David Mills

He knew the article would upset “the One-True-Church types,” said one respondent to an online essay that had rebuked a monk for saying that a person can’t be holy outside the Church. The writer of the essay, an Orthodox theologian, had produced in evidence for his rebuke a saintly Protestant woman he had known as a child.

A few people had written in to defend the monk and others had responded by attacking the monk and his defenders. “Everyone knows God is greater than our categories,” wrote one. “I think the claim that it is the Church as such, and that the Bishop of Rome is the binding center of the true Church, is indefensible as a historical proposition,” wrote another. A couple of others were really nasty about it.

Many people seem to think that the Catholic Church claims all good things for herself. You can see why they’d be upset when we talk about the Church as “the Church.” They seem to think the claim that “This is the Church Christ founded” means “You people who are outside it are worms,” or at least “We’re better than you,” as if we were the cool kids on the seventh grade playground making fun of the other kids.

Admittedly, we may sound like that sometimes, being sinners, but that is not what the Church teaches. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, “many elements of sanctification and of truth’ are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church. . . . Christ’s Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation.” (The quote at the beginning is from the Second Vatican Council’s *Lumen Gentium*.)

Their members were, through no fault of their own, born into communities separated from the Church and brought to love Christ in them. These people, the Council’s *Unitatis Redintegratio* teaches, the Church “accepts . . . with respect and affection as brothers.”

They are, you might say, the cool kids too. Even so, we must add one more insight. God does give his gifts very widely, but that generosity does not change the fact that he gave us the gift of the Church and invites everyone in. In fact, he expects everyone to come in. It is the best place to be, even if some other places are surprisingly nice and full of great people.

The passage from the *Catechism* I just quoted continues by saying that “the power” the other Churches and ecclesial communities have “derives from the fullness of grace and

To deny the Church’s teaching on the Church just because we see so many holy people outside the Church is like arguing that people can live together instead of being married because some couples living together care for each other well.

truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church.” Indeed, “all these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to ‘Catholic unity.’”

In other words, the genuine goodness evident in Protestantism should lead even the Protestants themselves to the Catholic Church. They are brothers, but brothers who are now a little estranged from the family and unable to enjoy all its blessings. The Church admires them for their love of our Lord, but she wants them home.

To deny the Church’s teaching on the Church just because we see so many holy people outside the Church is like arguing that people can live together instead of being married because some couples living together care for each other well.

Obviously, imitation marriages can express some of the good things real marriages produce. The live-in boyfriend can nurse his live-in girlfriend when she’s down with the flu, and the girlfriend support the boyfriend when he loses his job. They can work together at the soup kitchen and pool their money to give to charity. They may well treat each other more lovingly than a lot of marriages we can think of.

But still, the couple living together, no matter how lovingly, are not married. Their relation is not the ideal relation, the real marriage, in which certain fruits can only be found. The two people are not, for one thing, bound together in the public, permanent, committed way of marriage. They have left themselves an out.

I think there are two lessons here. First, God’s grace always overflows. And second, God’s generosity should not be taken as a reason for denying God’s commands, because what he commands is the best thing for us.

David Mills is deputy editor of FIRST THINGS (www.firstthings.com) and author of DISCOVERING MARY. The article to which he refers is David Hart’s “The Abbot and Aunt Susie” (www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2010/12/the-abbot-and-aunt-susie).

VOICES of the CHURCH

opinions, stories, wisdom, and personal voice

Don't let the Christmas lights blind you to the simplicity of the babe in the manger

By Kathy Cribari Hamer

In preparation for the holiday season, I set aside a day to clean the house. But my mind wandered and instead I cleaned the dollhouse.

It was easier. I could do the whole thing while sitting on a stepladder. Going around to sweep the front porch required just a twist of the table. And any necessary repairs could be accomplished without that disturbing \$85 per hour service charge you get from full-sized repair people.

Dollhouse repair people — me — don't charge even a penny per hour. You don't have to wait for them to arrive, and most of the repairs require just a toothpick and tacky glue.

Tacky glue is the only tacky thing you find in an elegant, Colonial dollhouse. Ours has stately shutters and a wraparound front porch. It has a nicely outfitted library (there are no eBooks in iMini Land), the finest plastic silver service, and a full-sized concert grand that plays Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty Waltz".

Actually the piano plays just the first eight measures of "Sleeping Beauty Waltz", because apparently dollhouse sheet music has what miniature musicians might call an infinite repeat sign. Wound up, our dollhouse grand will play incomplete Tchaikovsky until the end of time.

And it does this with only two of its three legs. The front right leg was lost, dollhouse decades ago, so now the treble side of the keyboard rests on spools of thread. They are against the wall. It is not that noticeable.

Cleaning a dollhouse instead of a house is like cleaning a toolbox instead of a garage. It's less demanding. The required time to complete is shorter. And you can really see the results.

For example, in a real house it takes hours and toxic chemicals to shine the inside of an oven no one sees anyway. With a dollhouse, you can tell the difference between clean and dirty because cleaning the toy oven simply requires that you pick up the plastic ham and plastic turkey off the floor or out of the little bathtub, and insert them right back behind the oven door that has recently been glued to its hinges. When you've finished that, the kitchen looks like Martha Stewart has been there.

The dollhouse I took four hours to clean and repair is important to me because I made it myself. It belongs to my daughter Julie, and has entertained all my children and now grandchildren. To me they are more important than any Colonial home, big or little.

A few weeks ago I watched, while

Jesus' first home was a stable. It was so humble that its construction did not lend itself to either demolition or reconstruction. It was as dim as my front porch garland was over-lit, and as subdued as our homes are ostentatious. Its occupants lived with the animals, and their dinner never included "trimmings."



another important building disappeared from view. The west grandstand of Texas Christian University's Amon G. Carter Stadium was imploded while students, alumni, staff, and friends watched. This drama took place in 30 seconds.

The TCU landmark, which was visible from all over the city and the air, was removed to make room for progress — an updated stadium. It was a vivid sign of a marvelous future, yet for me it illustrated a classic example of the term bittersweet.

I had not anticipated the sense of loss that struck me as I watched, from a balcony across the street, when the northern-most side of the stadium began its accordion-like topple. It was dominos of the saddest sort, and the image that will stay with me longest was the slowly vanishing "TCU", a giant logo, constructed in the top-level seats. That symbol had met me for nearly two decades every day when I arrived on campus. In seconds, I was still on campus, but the letters — and the stands — were gone.

Unanticipated tears greeted my face, and incredulously I lowered my camera and focused directly on what was a crossroad in history. The end of an era.

Each fall, after cleaning the house — and this year the dollhouse — I approach the task of dressing our home for Christmas. Yearly, that job becomes more difficult, because the decorations increase, as does the talent required to install them.

This year I reached the limits of my skill set when, for the first time, I arranged the lights on our tree and front porch. As a rookie, I placed an apparently superfluous number of lights on our garland. When lit, the really beautiful red-bowed accessory progressively blew out fuses one string after another until all were exhausted. Both the lights and myself.

The un-lighting of my home took less

time than the implosion at TCU.

This year when I cleaned my daughter's dollhouse I remembered how much I love the child I built it for. And then, when I watched the demise of a revered structure on campus, my mind re-ran a succession of game nights, halftime shows, heartbreaking losses and thrilling wins. All of those represented my own children and students, whose roles in the building were etched, now, just in my mind, but no longer in that place. I inwardly grieved for the long-gone past the stadium represented.

Jesus' first home was a stable. It was so humble that its construction did not lend itself to either demolition or reconstruction. It was as dim as my front porch garland was over-lit, and as subdued as our homes are ostentatious. Its occupants lived with the animals, and their dinner never included "trimmings."

Sometimes we overstep the bounds of reason when we remember the season of Jesus' birth. We do this not because of the outward trappings themselves, but because of the history, tradition, events, memories, and mostly people, that they represent.

This season is not about tinsel and trinkets. It is not about buildings decorated, built — or rebuilt.

It is about remembering what happened in that place — the stable — and carrying it with us always, no matter where we live, whether the stable still exists or not.

And it is about the love Jesus gave us. A gift.

We should duplicate it with the love and generosity we give to others.

Kathy Cribari Hamer is an award winning family life columnist for the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC and a number of other Catholic diocesan newspapers.

Why it's hard for Catholics to pick a party —permanently

By Jeff Hensley
Editor, North Texas Catholic

For many years, certain of my Catholic friends and I have joked, half seriously, about forming our own political party. We've said what is needed is a "Christian Democratic" party, borrowing a term from the Europeans unrelated to either of the two major political parties here in the U.S.

The reason being, of course, that for Catholics attempting to form their consciences according to Church teaching, no political party comes up with balanced party platforms that line up perfectly with Catholic Social Teaching.

Even when we follow the bishops' direction as expressed in their "Faithful Citizenship" materials and prioritize the issues, placing the life issues, especially abortion, at the top of the value pyramid, we end up being sorely disappointed when those who run for office with pro-life values, often run afoul of Catholic teaching on immigration or programs of assistance for the poor, the hungry, and the unemployed.

It's an ongoing dilemma.

I did hear a news report of a group with somewhat similar goals being formed by some of our elected officials in the House of Representatives. They're trying to get support for the idea that House and Senate members who seek to work across party lines rather than being obstructionist, should be supported for re-election rather than having it count against them.

They're stealing a little bit of my thunder here. I've been threatening to come up with T-shirts and bumperstickers with slogans like "Enthusiastic Moderate" "Social Justice for the Unborn, the Immigrant, and the Unemployed" and "I'm Radically Moderate and I vote".

It's hard to develop enthusiasm for respectful moderation and considerate reasonableness, but in today's social climate, we need to have an upsurge of committed activists who will not be afraid to stand up for their beliefs — moderately.

Vocations

Responding to God's call

Peace on Earth



Mary, Joseph, and a choir of angels adore the infant Jesus in the painting "Nativity" by Philippe de Champaigne. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9.

One of the few times in the world when most people seem to be more angelic than corruptible human beings is in the singing of Christmas carols together. "Silent night, Holy night," yes, we know by heart our favorite hymns of Christmas joy and peace.

This joy and peace is not just for the children's sake. It is not just a bunch of hoopla that comes and goes every year; it is the true joy and peace that has come for everyone as it was when first ushered in through the angelic voice of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). This is way bigger than Santa Claus. We are talking the Savior of all mankind, yet too often our children are all too well versed in commercialized gimmicks of Santa Claus and not nearly so knowledgeable about the only true meaning of Christmas, Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, the birthday of our Savior who has come to redeem us in his sacrificial love.

I understand that for many people in our communities, this must also be a very difficult time. Many people are experiencing the "holiday blues," oftentimes brought on by sad memories of a loved one passing away during this time of year, by being separated from family members, especially for those serving in the military, or by not having work. For those who are struggling emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally, or financially, during this time of year, I invite and encourage you to experience God's love for all of us, and to find hope, joy, and

Father Kyle Walterscheid, director of the Office of Vocations, following his ordination in May 2002 at Sacred Heart Church in Muenster. Even then he appeared to be inviting people to ask if they were called to a vocation.



By Father Kyle Walterscheid,
Director of Vocations

peace in the coming birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And I encourage everyone to reach out to your neighbors of all walks of life and be Christ's messengers on earth in spreading that joy and love.

As I see it, Christmas is about the reception of the Prince of Peace in our hearts, a perfect time to draw more souls to the conversion and belief that Jesus is the Christ who has come as the Son of God to bring an end to all violence, as He has come to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). So, what are we willing to do to fully cooperate with Jesus in bringing peace and joy into our world? Are we eager to stand for peace and justice in the many human rights violations throughout the world? Are we eager to be more spiritual than political? Are we eager to advance Christian unity under the banner of truth and peace? Are we eager to defend family values, live them, and share them? Are we eager to visit and assist the sick, the elderly, and the imprisoned on a frequent basis? Are we eager to defend all human life from the womb to the tomb? Are we eager to encourage families to pray together and thus stay together? Are we eager to share our faith in Jesus Christ to others? Are we eager about helping our children, teenagers, and young single adults to see the benefits they can offer to Church and society by taking the vocational approach to forming a family, remaining single, or entering religious life,

in accord with the will of God for their lives?

I ask these questions for the specific reason that we are in a major crisis in all of the above areas and that at times it is as if Jesus, our Prince of Peace and Lord of Lords, had never come into this world. Still, when the joy and peace of Christ reigns in our hearts, we are compelled and eager to respond. As Jesus reigns in more hearts, there will be more young men and women considering the religious life, there will be a renewal of evangelization and conversions to Jesus, there will be considerably less divorce and happier marriages, there will be an end to abortion and sexual activity outside of marriage in the Christian community, the sick and the elderly will be treasured and visited, while the imprisoned will be seen as redeemable. There will be an equal respect to all human life, and people will see themselves as spiritual beings with a purpose and responsibility that extends beyond this world and into the next.

We are certainly making small strides in each of these areas above, but let us make larger strides by interiorizing the lyrics of our favorite Christmas hymns that capture the splendor of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. May our hearts be burning within us, "O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!" Merry Christmas!!!

National Vocation Awareness Week to be celebrated January 9-15

WASHINGTON — The Catholic Church in the United States will celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week, January 9-15.

The week begins on the Church's celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which falls on January 9 in 2011. The feast marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

Vocations week celebrates vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, or consecrated life in particular. During these days families and the parish community are urged to nurture the faith of their children to prepare them to respond to whatever God's call is for them.

"National Vocation Awareness Week

gives parishes across the country a chance to promote vocations through prayer and education," said Archbishop Robert Carlson of St. Louis, chairman of the Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). "It is our responsibility to encourage young people to be generous as they discern the possibility of a call to service in the Church. Parents, families, and parish communities must be involved in this work, since vocations recruitment is everyone's responsibility. All need to foster a culture of vocations."

Father Shawn McKnight, executive director of the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy,

Consecrated Life, and Vocations (CCLV), noted the many voices that can communicate God's call.

"Just as Jesus needed to hear with his human ears the voice of the Father, so our young people need to hear words of encouragement from parents, other family members, friends, and the parish. God's call comes through the Church in this way."

To support efforts during Vocations week, a special prayer card and suggested prayers of the faithful and bulletin-ready quotes, are available from the USCCB vocations website: ForYourVocation.org or ForTuVocacion.org.

"One reason some young people do

not consider a call to the priesthood or consecrated life is the fact that they were never asked," said Sister Mary Joanna Ruhland, RSM, associate director of CCLV. "There are many ways to help young people see the beauty and joy of these vocations. Catechists are in a key position to do so. Materials to assist them can also be found on the USCCB website."

The observance of National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) began in 1976 when the National Conference of Catholic Bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year as the beginning of NVAW. In 1997, this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Catechesis

The Liturgy of the Eucharist, Christ's true Presence

By Lucas Pollice

Let us continue our journey through the Mass in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After being nourished by Christ through the Scriptures, the Liturgy of the Eucharist makes Christ present in the Eucharist which is offered to the Father for the forgiveness of sins. We participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice by offering ourselves with Jesus to the Father so that we may more perfectly know and accomplish his will on earth by building up the Kingdom of God through our daily lives. We are then intimately united with Christ by receiving Him and thus, receive our own mission. We are sent forth into the world to love and serve the Lord and each other.

THE OFFERTORY/With the Bread and Wine, we offer ourselves to God

The gifts of bread and wine are offered by the community to be used in the eucharistic sacrifice. The gifts are prepared by the priest and then offered to the Father by him on behalf of the community. We also offer ourselves with the gifts of bread and wine as a spiritual sacrifice to the Father.

The Prayer over the Gifts: The priest prays a special prayer over the gifts asking the Lord to bless them and the community. (Stand)

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER OF SACRIFICE/God transforms the Bread and Wine

This is the most solemn part of the Mass in which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ and offered to the Father in sacrifice.

The Preface: This is the final preparation before the Eucharist is made present and offered in sacrifice. The community is asked to lift up their hearts in thanksgiving to the Father through the Son in the Spirit for the gift of his salvation. This is when we offer ourselves as a spiritual sacrifice to the Father with Jesus. (Stand)

The Holy, Holy, Holy: A prayer that is usually sung which announces the coming of Jesus our God and King. This acclamation is taken from two scriptural texts:

Isaiah has a vision of the throne of God in heaven surrounded by angels singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. All earth is filled with his glory" (*Isaiah 6:3-4*). At the Mass, heaven is mystically brought down to earth. In the Eucharist, heaven and earth touch in the Person of Jesus. We are being brought into the throne room of God!

When Jesus entered Jerusalem before his death, the people welcomed him as their King. They threw palm branches before him and said: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord and Hosanna in the Highest!" (*Matthew 21:9*) We are about to welcome Christ our King Who is about to be in our midst. We acknowledge Him as our King and look forward to the day when his Kingdom will be completed. We are his subjects and we come to accomplish his will.

The Consecration: The priest then first calls down the power of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to change them into the Body and Blood of Christ by holding out his hands over the gifts. (*Epeiclesis*) Then he says the words of Jesus, "This is my Body" and "This is the cup of my Blood" which makes the Eucharist present. The priest holds up both the Sacred Host and the Cup for all to adore. (Kneel)

The Canon of the Mass: The priest then prays the prayers of sacrifice, offering Jesus to the Father for the reparation of sins, in order to strengthen the mission and unity of the Church, for the holiness and salvation of the community present, and for those who have died. The Canon ends with the climax of the whole Mass, when the priest holds up the Body and Blood of Jesus as sacrifice for the glory and honor of God, offering all things to the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. (Kneel)

The Final Doxology: This is the climax of the whole Mass. Jesus has been made present in the Eucharist and is being offered in sacrifice to the Father. Here we offer all of ourselves, our joys, sufferings, struggles, all that we are and have to the Father through, with, and in Christ. It is a prayer of total surrender at the foot of the cross! Here we give all of ourselves to Christ.

The Our Father: We all join as one in praying the perfect prayer that Jesus taught us. The Our Father is followed by a prayer asking God to free us from all anxiety and evil. (Stand)

The Sign of Peace: We then give those around us a sign of peace and unity in Christ before receiving Jesus in the Eucharist. We are not to approach the altar of sacrifice if we have an unforgiving heart. We pray that in the Our Father, and we act that out in the sign of peace. (Stand)

THE COMMUNION RITE/We receive Jesus, by Whom we are transformed

This is the part of the Mass in which we finally have union with Christ by receiving Him in the Eucharist. We have already given ourselves to Him; now this union becomes a complete reality, physically and spiritually. We literally become one flesh with Christ. Through receiving the Eucharist, we embrace the cross of Christ in the same way Jesus did, offering ourselves to the Father, ready to do his will.

The Lamb of God: This is the final prayer of preparation before receiving Jesus. Three times we ask Him to take away the sins of the world, and once to grant us peace. We then behold Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died on the cross for our sins, and we adore Him. We are not worthy to receive Him, no one is. But we throw ourselves upon his mercy and ask Him to heal us. (Kneel)

The Reception of Communion: The community goes forth to receive Jesus. Now we finally have union with Him! We should spend the next few minutes with Him in prayer. We speak, but we must also remember to listen! (Kneel, Receive, Kneel)

The Prayer after Communion: The priest prays that the Eucharist will produce abundant fruit in us and help us to continue Christ's work. (Stand)

The Final Blessing: The priest bestows upon the community a special blessing and then dismisses the community. "The Mass is ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!" The Mass is only the beginning, the source and summit of the Christian life. We must then go and live it! (Stand)

The Recessional: A song is sung and the priest and ministers exit the church. (Stand)

PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST

The celebration of the Eucharist is the most sacred and important event in the Catholic Church. One must be consciously and spiritually prepared to receive Jesus in this holy sacrament. We have already mentioned Paul's warning to the Corinthians to approach the altar with discernment and seriousness. The Church requires every Catholic to prepare themselves carefully to accept the gift of the Eucharist. In order to receive the sacrament worthily, one must:

Be in the State of Grace

As we discussed earlier, one who has willingly separated themselves from God and his Church cannot participate

in the intimacy of the sacrament of Holy Communion. If one is conscious of committing a mortal sin, they must first receive the sacrament of penance before receiving Communion. State of grace means being in union and friendship with God, which is lost when one chooses to separate oneself through grave sin. One who is conscious of venial sins may receive the Eucharist without sacramental absolution, and their venial sins are forgiven through the grace of the sacrament.

Believe that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist

In order to receive the Eucharist, one must believe and understand what they are participating in. One must have faith that what they are receiving is Jesus. Faith does not mean total understanding! That is why it is faith: One must go beyond what our mere senses would tell us. We must accept that the God who created the universe chose to unite Himself to us in such a humble form as a tiny wafer of bread, the work of human hands. We must believe that it is truly Christ's Body and Blood which we receive in the Eucharist.

Fast for one hour before receiving Communion

The Church asks Catholics to fast for one hour from all food and drink, except water and medicine, before receiving Communion. This is a discipline that helps us to prepare ourselves both physically and spiritually for the reception of the Eucharist. It is a way of reminding ourselves of the extraordinary event in which we are about to participate. We set aside this time as a special preparation for our hearts and minds through this act of humble obedience. The eucharistic fast is not meant to be a burden or difficult (as a matter of fact, a generation ago it was to be observed from midnight the night before you received, today the Church has lessened this obligation), but rather a practical and important way to prepare ourselves to have communion with our Savior.



Lucas Pollice is director of Catechesis and Adult Faith Formation and RCIA for the diocese. Lucas holds a degree in theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has a master's degree in theological studies from the Institute for Pastoral Theology of Ave Maria University. He is an adjunct professor of theology with the Cardinal Newman Institute in Fort Worth.

Features

We're eager to text, but this Word was Incarnate.

By Jeff Hedglen

I am just getting back into running after too many years of too much inactivity. On a recent day of training I was running on the campus of Texas Christian University. The air was crisp, the sky was blue, and the campus was strangely quiet for the middle of the morning on a school day. Then, as I was walking through the center of campus finishing my workout, doors flew open, and students streamed out in every direction. All of a sudden I was surrounded by people paying no attention to me.

This was not primarily because I am old enough to be their father, nor because I was obviously in work-out mode: sweaty, gasping for air, and fighting back the pain. No, their lack of attention on me was directly a result of their unabashed focus on the screens of their cellular devices.

It was truly a sight to behold, hundreds of people sharing the same sidewalks yet focused elsewhere. They were staring in to their phones scanning the mobile networks trying to discover what had transpired in their universe in the last 55 minutes. In a very real way, though they were only feet if not inches away from human contact, they were looking for connection.

Since I was nearly invisible to the passing co-eds, I ventured a gaze or two into the faces of those who passed me. Some were smiling and laughing at what they encountered on their phones, others were stone faced and all business. Still others were intensely focused, with thumbs flying in rapid reply to the messages that had greeted them.

It occurred to me that swirling in and around each of us on that mostly unnoticed beautiful morning were the air waves that were carrying all these messages. They were unseen but very active. As I pondered this I became overwhelmed at the immense amount of data that was floating about. Hundreds if not thousands of messages that I

could not see, nor receive, were flying past at lightning speed.

As I headed off campus I could not shake the image of all those students yearning for connection, reaching out to make contact. It occurred to me that there was a time when God was in a similar situation. He wanted to reach out and connect to help humanity know He is really here.

His answer to this dilemma was not a text message, rather it was a self-message. We call this revelation the Incarnation. In a very real way the sending of Jesus is not unlike a bunch of 20-somethings tapping away at tiny keyboards; both are persons reaching out to connect to another.

We read in John's Gospel that "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14), this in effect was God pushing SEND on the first text message. The receiving part of the message is up to us.

The story of the Garden of Eden is a story of a plan gone awry. God made us to share an intimate relationship. That

It was truly a sight to behold, hundreds of people sharing the same sidewalks yet focused elsewhere.

relationship was wounded by disobedience. The road back to intimacy began with an Incarnate Word sent to all of us. In the end the love of God was not to be stopped by human weakness. In fact it is our weakness that brought forth the grandest display of God's strength, a tiny babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

Cell phones, Facebook, e-mail and the multitude of other electronic social connections are great inventions of the modern world. But the words of God are most clearly found in the pages of the Scriptures, in the rustle of leaves, in the smile of a friend, in the hug from a dad, and in the recesses of our heart. As Christmas approaches, pocket the cell phone for a while, and be open to a message from another Provider.

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.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

A firefighter places a wreath on a statue of Mary high atop a column at the Spanish Steps in Rome Dec. 8. Since 1857, firefighters have honored Mary by placing a wreath on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

The Vatican's Christmas tree is erected in St. Peter's Square Dec. 3. The tree is from the northern Italian province of Bolzano, is more than 100 feet tall, and grew for 94 years.

Cross-Words

By Mark Simeroth

Across & Down:

- Bethlehem was his city
- Make reparation
- John had one in the
- Bring upon oneself
- John's tractor?

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



The FLOCK by Jean Denton





Mary, Joseph and a choir of angels adore the infant Jesus in the painting "Nativity" by Philippe de Champaigne. (CNS photo/Philipp Bernard, Reunion des Musees Nationaux/Art Resource)

Glorious in Majesty

Humbly Born in a Stable

The prophet Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah. With passionate eloquence he attacked the merchants, judges, corrupt priests, and prophets who exploited the poor. His prophecies begin with threats of punishment for sins and end on a note of hope and restoration through a Messiah.

Concerning this Messiah, some 700 years before the birth of Christ, Micah says:

"But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, / too small to be among the clans of Judah, / From you shall come forth for me / one who is to be ruler in Israel; / Whose origin is from of old, / from ancient times" (5:1).

This ruler who is to be born in Bethlehem is an eternal being!

Though small in size, the village of Bethlehem was huge in significance: It was the home of Ruth and Boaz. On the road to Bethlehem is where Jacob's beloved Rachel died and was buried. And, most notably, David, the greatest king that Israel had ever known, was born there before his descendant Jesus — the King of Kings whose reign will last forever!

CAROLE NORRIS GREENE
ASSOCIATE EDITOR, FAITH ALIVE!
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Motherhood and Mary

BY MARY JO PEDERSEN
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

For many, Mary, the mother of Jesus, seemed to be inaccessible to many women: without sin, perfect in every way, saying "yes" to God's will. How could most mothers relate to that image?

Honor Mary, yes. Pray through her powerful intercession, certainly. Look up to her with admiration, of course.

But imitate her in the daily hectic pace of mothering? Is it possible?

Reflections on Mary in the Christmas season can help us to understand how Mary's response to parenthood and the will of God was both extraordinary and ordinary.

Mary had the privilege of bringing Christ into the world, and every parent who births or adopts a child also has the privilege of birthing a new "image" of Christ in their children as they clean up, cook, carpool, and instruct their kids.

Though there is no historical record of Mary's mothering, the Scriptures give us profound insights into how she was able to parent in line with God's will.

Luke tells us that at two critical par-



"[The magi] do more than point to the majesty of Jesus," explains Joseph Kelly. "They symbolize ... the acceptance of Christ's message in countries that never acknowledged the power of the Roman Empire..." (CNS photo/Crosiers)

enting moments, Mary "kept all these things ... in her heart." One time was when the shepherds announced that Jesus would be the Messiah, and another time was when Jesus wandered away from his family at age 12 and was found teaching in

the Jerusalem temple (2:19, 51).

Any mother can relate to Mary's maternal struggle to figure out a child's behavior, and most would not take such experiences so calmly.

In a very ordinary, human way, Mary's wise response of keeping these life events made the Incarnation possible.

Perhaps this is where Mary's birthing of Jesus into the world and our minor role can meet.

In the midst of busy days, we can learn to ponder and be still when we face improbable or disturbing circumstances instead of reacting with anxiety or anger or defensiveness.

Parenting for Mary and for us is part of the faith journey. In pondering all these things, i.e., reflecting deeply, Mary created openness to the Holy Spirit in her heart. Instead of immediately reacting, she teaches us to ponder the anxieties and challenges of daily life.

No parent will find this posture of pondering easy. Most of us want to quickly control the situation surrounding our lives and our children, and it is wise for us to do that to some extent for their safety.

At the same time, however, taking time to be still and reflect openly with God about our children, our future, and daily worries is a pre-requisite to doing what Mary did so well: allowing God to be birthed into our lives.

Mary was both a mother and a disciple of Jesus. We too are both parents and disciples. Today, as in first-century Palestine, God's will is mysteriously unfolding in our lives. Jesus reveals himself to us gradually, in very ordinary and sometimes disturbing circumstances: the diagnosis of an illness, a job loss, or the unexpected news of trouble in the family.

Nothing that happens to us is outside of the love of God, and we always have the opportunity of allowing divine wisdom to guide and comfort us.

Mary's example shows us that. Maybe that is why we call her the Queen of Peace, and perhaps keeping things in our heart and pondering them is a way to bring peace into our lives and into the world.

Pedersen, a veteran coordinator of marriage and family spirituality programs, lives in Omaha, Nebraska.

Remembering Jesus' majesty; recalling his humble birth

BY FATHER DALE LAUNDERVILLE, OSB
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

At Christmas, we sing carols, watch holiday pageants, light candles, and exchange gifts. This is only a sampling of the activities we reenact each year in order to bring to life the story of the birth of Jesus as it has been told through the generations.

The expectation that God would return and deliver his people in a dramatic way had lived on in the generations between the Jewish people's return from exile in the late-500s B.C. and the time of Christ.

Those in exile around 540 B.C. were not hopeful about their situation. The prophet who speaks in *Isaiah 40-55* tries to stir their imaginations and expand their hearts so that they might see that the Lord was about to come and lead them back to Zion.

What is startling about the messenger whose feet are on the mountains is that he brings a message of shalom: peace in the fullest sense, a promise of wholeness in which conflict, disease, and illness are to be overcome.

This message of salvation is one that makes the exiles, the people of Jerusalem, and even the very stones of Jerusalem break forth in song (*Isaiah 52:9*). The reversal of the fortunes of Jerusalem will become a spectacle for all the nations to see. Those who returned from exile realized that the full effects of this restoration would not be realized in their lifetime. It



"No longer is the message that God wants to speak to us communicated by a messenger," writes Benedictine Father Dale Launderville. "Rather word that God speaks to us has 'become flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14)" (CNS photo/Rick Musacchio, Tennessee Register)

was a promise for the future.

The message of the prophets was repeated from generation to generation. This message helped to keep the Jewish people attentive to the God who had been blessing and sustaining them.

But the Letter to the Hebrews states that "in these last days, (God) spoke to us by a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe" (1:2).

No longer is the message that God

wants to speak to us communicated by a messenger. Rather, the "Word" that God speaks to us "became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (*John 1:14*).

The Word that has become flesh exceeds our human dimensions. This Word is far too much for our feeble human language to communicate; this Word is of a completely different order of being than that of humans.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*John 1:1*). Yet this eternal Word that had no beginning unites with human flesh so that we might come to share in God's life.

The shalom announced in the prophecy of Isaiah goes far beyond a utopian scene of earthly wholeness; the shalom communicated by the Word made flesh offers to humans the possibility of becoming sharers in the divine life as children of God!

Just as the exiles in 500 B.C. were hesitant to embrace the prophetic message of a restored Zion, so also the people of Jesus' time were slow to accept his message about the nearness of God's kingdom. So the prologue to John's Gospel states: "He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him" (1:10).

Within the Jewish tradition, God was transcendent. He communicated with his people through mediators. The time-honored Torah and the oracles of the prophets were revered and studied at length in order to be attentive to God.

But the claim that God himself would

become human was a radical statement that was paradoxical to the extreme for a Jewish audience. Even the disciples of Jesus who came to know and love him had great difficulty understanding the full reality of Jesus' authority and charisma. When he appeared to be defeated by earthly powers, they fled.

"God coming among us to become one like us so that we might become like God" is a statement made by Irenaeus (second century) and by Athanasius (fourth century). This proclamation about the salvation given to us through Christ's Incarnation was celebrated within the early Christian communities from generation to generation. They debated and fought to come to the right understanding of this mystery of the Word made flesh.

For Christians, the coming of Christ as one like us is the defining moment of human history. For human life, it changes the whole game. Now we are invited to share in the life of God as God's children.

This gift is the newness that brings an unspeakable joy to those who believe. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (*John 1:14*), is the source of all new beginnings.

The humble beginnings of Jesus Christ as a vulnerable infant show us how important it is for us to recognize that our life is a gift.

Benedictine Father Launderville is a Scripture scholar at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

See Christmas through the eyes of a child

BY JEFF HEDGLEN
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

There is nothing like the look on a child's face when they are awash in the glow of the lights on a Christmas tree, or their curious excitement as they gaze upon a Nativity scene, or the meteoric drop in fortitude as the all-night wait for Santa becomes an arm cradling trip to bed where visions of sugar plums await.

The innocent approach children have to this time of year serves as a reminder and a challenge for the rest of us to not get caught up in the to-do lists, stress, and frazzle that can cause our experience of this most important holiday to move from awe and wonder to a bah and humbug.

Even though it is the sparkling lights, magical moments, and impending gifts that mainly motivate the youngest celebrants of Jesus' birth, within their experience lies the true heart of Christmas. The Scriptures reveal a similar set of circumstances: a sparkling light in the sky,

the magical experience of angels heard on high, and the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; all in service of the birth of the Son of God.

If you are leaning to the humbug side of things this year, there is a way out, and it is already planted within your heart. It is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: fear of the Lord, also called awe and wonder in the presence of the Lord. This is an oft misunderstood gift and one that comes in handy this time of year. It is a profound respect for God's glory and a selfless love for God. It protects us from sin through a dread of offending God.

The "fear" this gift speaks of is the kind of fear we have of fire, in that we respect its power and do not mess with it. If you've ever stared into a fire marveling at the dance of the flame, you can begin to grasp the wonder and awe we are to have at the presence of God.

We are in awe that the God who created all that is, who is almighty and all knowing, chose to reveal Himself com-

pletely and intimately to humanity in the gift of his Son. For as John's Gospel so precisely states it: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" (*John 1:1, 14*).

The awe deepens as we ponder the reality that this Word made Flesh, Jesus, comes to the world as we did, a baby, swaddled, loved, and adored. The wonder comes into play as we consider the humble scene described in Luke. around the manger, a setting filled with angels, shepherds, animals, and kings, all awash in the glow of a shining star announcing the birth of the Savior.

St. Francis' inspiration to reenact this scene helps us all picture what it might have been like for Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. But the clay figures are just an outward sign of the eternal reality that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might

not perish but might have eternal life" (*John 3:16*).

Santa Claus and reindeer, Christmas trees and carols, ribbons and bows, can upstage the humble Christmas Crèche, but they can never outshine the Light of Christ that burns with the love of the Father. The humble manger scene itself may not have the sparkle of the Kennedy Center tree or the magic of snowfall on a cold winter's night, or the anticipatory feeling as wrapping paper is torn open, but all of these images combined are no match for the awe and wonder inspired by the coming of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is already done Christmas shopping. Waiting for each of us is a renewed sense of awe and wonder for the most wonderful gift of all, Jesus.

Jeff Hedglen is Youth and Young Adult minister for St. Bartholomew Parish and a regular columnist in the NTC. He and his wife Monika are members of St. Bartholomew's.

Christmas bells: Hear them ring!

BY STEPHEN STEINBEISER
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Whether it's the voice of someone we love, a baby crying in church, or a particularly disturbing ringtone, sounds can certainly command our attention.

Throughout every time and culture, bells have played just such a role, soaring in the air with spiritual announcements, aural reminders of God's presence and gift of time. In ancient days, liturgical bells rang out the truth and beauty of God's existence. Worn on the rabbi's vestments or used to adorn horse harnesses, bells were meant to raise consciousness of God as creator.

In *Exodus 28:33-35* and *39:25-26* and in *Zechariah 14:20*, bells are mentioned. Some were engraved with "Holy to the Lord," so that each time they rang they gave glory to God. Bells still call monks and nuns to prayer, as they have since early Christian times, and parishes still use harmonious pealing to call the faithful to prayer.

Whether real or recorded, bells can insistently remind us that Mass is about to start, joyfully announce a newly wedded couple, or solemnly toll as the body of a loved one is on its way to a final resting place.

Bells break through our linear notion



Bells command our attention as they soar "in the air with spiritual announcements — aural reminders of God's presence and gift of time," writes Steven Steinbeiser. (CNS illustration/Emily Thompson)

of time ("chronos") to inspire a realization of God-given time ("kairos"). Like angels breaking through the clouds to announce to shepherds, "glory to God in the highest" (*Luke 2:14*), bells break through our cloudy confusion and burgeoning schedules to announce: Remember who made you and why you were born. Secular culture enjoys and employs bell imagery.

Can we imagine a Christmas holiday without "Jingle Bells" or "Silver Bells"? Or ever forget the heartfelt conclusion of the Christmas classic "It's a Wonderful Life" as the youngest daughter of George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart) remarks:

"Teacher says every time a bell rings an angel gets their wings."

The beloved Ukrainian carol "Ring Christmas Bells" originally had secular lyrics and good wishes for the New Year, but eventually it was adapted to the ancient Ukrainian peasant tale of bells ringing out all over the world the night that Jesus was born.

Perhaps the most compelling faith story of Christmas bells was written by the great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow when the Civil War was raging in 1863 and tragedies had struck his personal life:

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong,
"And mocks the song
"Of peace on earth good will to men!"*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
"The Wrong shall fail,
"The Right prevail,
"With peace on earth, good will to men."*

Longfellow literally came through fire and sword only to proclaim his undying faith in the promise of Christ's birth. The greatest suffering in the world can never extinguish the peace and promise that was born on that first Christmas night.

Steinbeiser is director of liturgy with the Spiritan Campus Ministry at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh.

Let the Prince of Peace be born — in our hearts

BY SHARON K. PERKINS
NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC

The Christmas of pop culture has its heroes — Santa Claus, Frosty the Snowman, and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer — as well as its villains (the Grinch and Mr. Scrooge come to mind). The stories of these characters serve to illustrate that the Christmas season can bring out both the best and the worst in people — or maybe it just throws into sharper relief what is hidden there in the heart, ready to pounce on unsuspecting bystanders.

I've been musing on this point for several weeks now, because I've been confronted by the reality of pre-Christmas strife everywhere I turn. Three different persons in my immediate circle of family and friends are going through nasty divorces, accompanied by all the bitter wrangling over property and custody. Petty jealousies erupt over who is buying a bigger or better gift for whom. Unrealistic and selfish expectations give rise to guilt-trips over which set of parents gets the longer

Christmas visitation and which parents get short-changed. One only has to turn on the radio psychologist "Dr. Laura" to hear one caller after another complain about this or that relative's offensive, insensitive behavior at Christmastime. How is it possible that the angelic hosts of Christmas proclaim good news of "peace on earth," when Christ's peace is so elusive at home?

Although more accurate translations of the Bible would quote *Luke 2:14* as "Peace on earth to those on whom God's favor rests," I also like the older versions which read, "Peace on earth to men of good will." For God's favor — his gift of true and lasting peace — is made manifest through the very flawed and human vehicle of our good will, the will to work for the good of the other person, even when he's offensive or insensitive or she is downright vindictive. It's the will to lay one's ego, one's righteous indignation, one's hurt feelings aside, just as Christ, in the "form of God," laid aside his divinity, "took the form of a slave, coming in human likeness," and "humbled himself" (*Philippians 2:7-8*).

It's not a short-lived, romantic notion that can be discarded as quickly as the bedraggled evergreen put out on the curb on December 26. No — the peace of Christmas takes work, most especially in my own family! But, thanks be to God, it's not my work alone.

I'm thinking that when it comes right down to it, the peace promised by Christ's coming to birth isn't some magical phenomenon, like a sprinkling of angelic fairy dust over a sleeping and passive planet. It's doesn't have the careless, almost banal quality of smiley faces and "have a nice day" slogans. It's not a short-lived, romantic notion that can be discarded as quickly

as the bedraggled evergreen put out on the curb on December 26. No — the peace of Christmas takes work, most especially in my own family! But, thanks be to God, it's not my work alone.

When I'm tempted to be "grinchy" this Christmas season because someone in my family didn't measure up to my expectations, or when I'm tired and crabby from the holiday travel, or when someone doesn't "ooh" and "ahh" over the gift I shopped for so carefully, or any one of those things that cause me temporarily to forget what the feast of Christmas is really all about — I'll ask for that peace, the peace that the world cannot give. And the Prince of Peace, who wills my good so much that he chose to share my human condition, will gladly come to be born again in my heart.

Sharon Perkins and her family, former members of St. Rita Parish in Fort Worth, live in Austin, where Sharon is a director of religious education. Sharon coordinated the first Synod in the Diocese of Fort Worth.



John Gill (left), coordinator for the Meals on Wheels distribution center at St. John the Apostle Church in North Richland Hills, gives emergency meals to a volunteer driver to deliver to clients. These canned meals are provided in the winter in case bad weather prevents normal Meals on Wheels delivery.



John holds the award he earned earlier this year, when the national Meals on Wheels organization named him the 2010 American Volunteer.



John sorts food into bags with Donnaka Knowles (center), another Meals on Wheels coordinator, and another driver, who came to pick up food to deliver to clients.

"High-five John" Gill, the 95-year-old St. John parishioner, Meals on Wheels coordinator, and winner of the national organization's 2010 volunteer award, proves that the ability to serve is

Ageless

Story and Photos by Joan Kurkowski-Gillen / Correspondent

You wouldn't think life could hold too many more surprises for someone 95 years old. But 2010 proved to be a year of unexpected celebration for John Gill.

The first joyful moment came in May when more than 160 friends and family gathered inside a room in St. John the Apostle's Family Life Center in North Richland Hills to celebrate the longtime parishioner's 95th birthday. Weeks of secret planning culminated with the unsuspecting guest of honor walking into a room decorated with banners and balloons.

"I cried my heart out," Gill said, remembering the handmade placemats and cards made by school children. "They planned this for four months, and I had no idea it was going on."

The next surprise came a few months later. A 16-year veteran of Meals on Wheels of Tarrant County, Gill received the Jody Tepedino Nicholo Award from the Meals on Wheels Association of America in October. The national award is given annually to a volunteer who gives outstanding service to America's homebound and forgotten seniors.

Meals on Wheels, which provides human contact and hot, nutritious food



"High-Five John" Gill, as he is affectionately known in the community, high-fives volunteer Vickie Dewees. Dewees, also a St. John parishioner, said she wasn't surprised when John won the award.

to the elderly who often live alone, boasts the largest army of unpaid workers in the country with more than 1.2 million volunteers. Approximately 5,000 of those supporters help deliver meals in Tarrant County.

Gill bowed his head of striking white hair and wiped away tears when representatives of the local Meals on Wheels program told him he was the organization's 2010 American Volunteer.

"It's just nice to hear you do good work," said the humble award winner who received the most votes for the award honoring the organization's top volunteer based on online voting on a group of short video clips highlighting each nominee's accomplishments.

At an age when he could easily be on the receiving end of assistance, Gill says working as the coordinator at the Meals on Wheels distribution center at St. John the Apostle Church gives his life purpose.

There was a time when despair and

loneliness filled most of John's days. In 1991, after 52 years of marriage, Gill's wife, Josephine, passed away. The couple had enjoyed escaping the hot Texas summers by living in their Michigan cabin from April to October.

"When the geese were leaving, that's when we left Michigan," joked Gill, recalling the happy months they spent together in the woods each year. "After Jo died, I went back up there, but it didn't look the same. So I decided to sell."

With his partner gone and routine disrupted, the former J.L. Hudson department store employee didn't know what to do with his time. A fellow parishioner suggested he join the Knights of Columbus and get involved in volunteer work. He took the advice and began ushering at Mass and counting the money placed in collection baskets.

"When (former pastor) Monsignor (Charles) King allowed Meals on Wheels to distribute food from the church, he put me

in charge," Gill explains.

At first he drove the prepared meals to client homes, but when that task became too cumbersome, the dedicated volunteer changed jobs and began organizing the daily Meals on Wheels shipment of salads, drinks, and hot food. At least twice a week, Gill travels to the St. John's Formation Center to package meals and place them in coolers for delivery to the homebound. Each arriving driver is greeted at the doorway with a cheerful "hello" from the spry distribution coordinator.

Vickie Dewess, a Meals on Wheels driver, wasn't surprised when the elderly gentleman who readies her deliveries every Friday was tapped for national recognition.

"I had everyone I know vote for him!" enthuses the St. John parishioner. "At his age he should be receiving these meals. Instead, he makes sure other people have something to eat. I just hope when I'm as old as he is, I can still get out of bed."

Gill attributes his health and longevity to good genes and prayer. Both of his parents lived into their 80s, and his brother Sam, was 92 when he passed away. A surviving sister is 89. The father of two sons, Gill also has three grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren.

"I pray every day for the way God has taken care of me and my family," says the Catholic convert. "And I always ask for peace in the world."

Co-workers say it's Gill's caring nature, gentle spirit, and enthusiasm that inspires others to serve. Known as "High Five John" by everyone in the community, the upbeat volunteer is considered Meals on Wheels' top recruiter. After hearing him talk about his devotion to ministry, it's easy to see why.

"I just enjoy the work and I let it show," beams Gill as he sets aside a warm tray of grilled catfish that will become someone's lunch or dinner. I tell people how inspiring it is to help others. When they see someone my age doing it, it lets them think they should give it a try."



A view of a statue of Santo Hermano Pedro, after whom the hospital was named, in front of the hospital chapel.



Bishop Vann and Peter Flynn observe the newly built hospital chapel at Hospital Santo Hermano Pedro Betancourth after the dedication ceremony.



Bishop Kevin Vann speaks to hundreds of faithful at Cathedral Inmaculada Concepcion on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The bishop concelebrated the Mass with Bishop Muldoon.

Bishop Vann leads small delegation to visit sister diocese in Juticalpa, Honduras

Story and Photos by
Juan Guajardo
Correspondent

Editor's note: This visit happened just before the NORTH TEXAS CATHOLIC went to press. A more detailed account will appear in the next issue.

Over the course of a few days in December, a small delegation of parishioners from our diocese and diocesan representatives led by Bishop Kevin Vann traveled through dense forests, over rocky paths, through creeks, and up mountains throughout the Diocese of Juticalpa. Their motive: to visit the parishes and people we've partnered with in Honduras and to observe the projects that have resulted from the relationship between the two dioceses.

The sister diocese commitment between Fort Worth and Juticalpa began

in 1999, shortly after Hurricane Mitch ravaged Honduras, according to Peter Flynn, diocesan director of Finance and Administrative Services. Since then the relationship has grown and expanded to include parish-to-parish relationships between eight Fort Worth and six Juticalpa parishes.

The delegation included Bishop Vann, Flynn, Deacon Len Sanchez, diocesan chancellor, Lon Kyle, Good Shepherd parishioner, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parishioners Alan Napleton and Kirstin Kloesel. They were accompanied throughout the trip by Bishop Mauro Muldoon, OFM, of the Diocese of Juticalpa, and Alberto Valledares, executive director of Hospital Santo Hermano Pedro Betancourth — the Catholic hospital jumpstarted with a \$1.5 million donation by the Diocese of Fort Worth and being cooperatively built with the help of the Diocese of Juticalpa and the Honduran government.

In the next issue of the *North Texas Catholic* (to be in the mail Jan. 22) a more detailed account of the trip, the projects jointly pursued, and the ways in which the people of the two dioceses have been affected by this relationship will appear. Around the same time, video and pictures from the mission visit will be posted on the online version of the *North Texas Catholic*: fwdioc.org/ntc.

Highlights of the trip with a special emphasis on the Hospital Santo Hermano Pedro Betancourth, will show how contributions from not only Fort Worth, but other partners around the country including the Franciscan Sisters at Springfield, Illinois, have outfitted this modern medical facility, bringing high-quality, low-cost medical care to the approximately 150,000 people living in the Catacamas area, a population that was until the opening of the hospital, one of the largest areas in the hemisphere not served by a regional hospital.



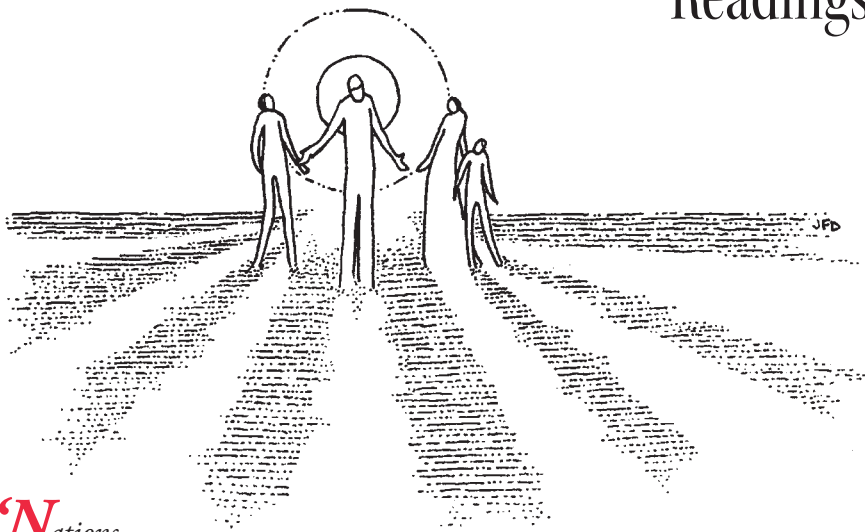
Deacon Len Sanchez jokes with a group of acolytes before a Mass at Virgen de Candelaria Parish in Salama. Bishop Vann installed Father Joaquin Euceda as the pastor there during the special Mass. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller has formed a sister parish relationship with Candelaria.



Bishop Mauro Muldoon, OFM, of Juticalpa, Peter Flynn, Bishop Vann, and Alberto Valledares, executive director of Hospital Santo Hermano Pedro Betancourth, look at the altar and crucifix in the newly opened hospital chapel.

Word = Life

Readings Reflections



“Nations shall walk by your light.”

— Isaiah 60:3

January 2, Epiphany of the Lord.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
- 2) Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Gospel) Matthew 2:1-12

By Sharon K. Perkins

I was recently at the funeral of a dear family friend who had lived a long life, rich with family, friends and a deeply rooted faith. The gathering included the deceased’s children, grandchildren, and friends from more than 50 years’ acquaintance, and, as funerals are wont to do, it provided a bittersweet occasion for much storytelling and outpouring of emotion.

From the stories told and retold from the wake service all the way through the burial, there emerged a recurrent theme that was not unexpected and yet still surprisingly powerful when spoken aloud: that this gentleman and his wife had profoundly and lavishly devoted their lives to others in ways that extended far beyond their immediate family circle.

Although the couple of modest means had experienced their measure of life’s difficulties, their family home was a beacon of love and integrity that drew others to its welcoming light. Their surviving children understood their parents’ generosity, rejoiced in it, and carried the legacy forward into their own families.

In today’s readings, it is apparent that Jerusalem, the ancient city of God, is intended to be the same kind of beacon of hope to the world. The great gift of Christ’s birth is not an entitlement for Israel only, to be hoarded or withheld by the elite; nor is it an earthly power to be feared, suppressed, and extinguished, as Herod attempted to do. Rather, as St. Paul describes it, the grace of the Incarnation is to be poured out for the benefit of all peoples, and we who have witnessed it are but the privileged stewards and proclaimers of that gift.

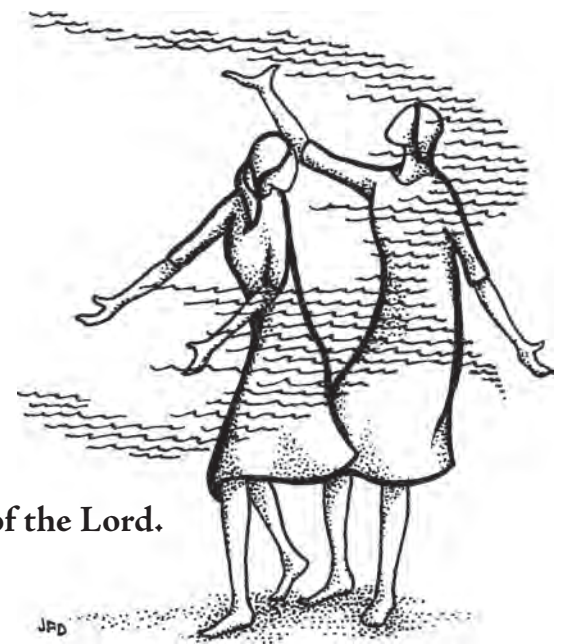
The friend we buried last week could have reserved his time and talents for his children only; they could have resented his liberality to those outside the family. But all who knew him were made richer, and the father’s beacon was made even brighter because his God-given gifts were both acknowledged and shared.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been tempted to hoard or withhold your blessings out of selfishness or fear? How can the meaning of Christ’s birth for all peoples encourage you to live more generously?

“I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations.”

— Isaiah 42:6c



January 9, Baptism of the Lord.

Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1-4, 9-10
- 2) Acts 10:34-38
Gospel) Matthew 3:13-17

By Jeff Hensley

The readings for this weekend are all about power, gentleness, and peace.

Seemingly contradictory images flow through the Scriptures. Isaiah’s image in Chapter 42 is of the suffering servant on whom God has put his spirit to “bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the streets.” Yet the Scriptures say of him, he will establish “justice on the earth.”

The responsorial psalm, *Psalm 29*, presents images of the glory and power of God, contrasting with the repeated phrase of the response: “The Lord will bless his people with peace.”

The baptism of Jesus in *Matthew 3* speaks of him coming out of the water and “the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him,” as a voice from the heavens says, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

My wife works with some extraordinary people teaching English as a Second Language to high school students. Two of her fellow teachers, in particular, have endured some personal and family hardships that would have flattened lesser folk. One is white, the other is black.

One currently takes care of her brother’s children while he and his wife recover from an auto accident. This is in addition to her daily occupation, providing tender care while teaching refugees from war-torn countries around the world, ranging from Rwanda to Burma.

The other teacher recently had a breakthrough with a troubled student who had been involved in gangs and could not summon a belief in her own intelligence and capabilities — until this teacher invested a good deal of one-on-one attention and instruction in her.

These women share, in common with my wife, a deep and abiding faith in the One who came up from the water that day, full of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is faith in him, and a portion of that same Spirit that they share, that allows them, day in and day out, to do as the Acts Scripture says of Jesus, that he was going “about doing good,” for God is with them. In their actions, we witness power and gentleness, God’s power clothed in human weakness.

QUESTIONS:

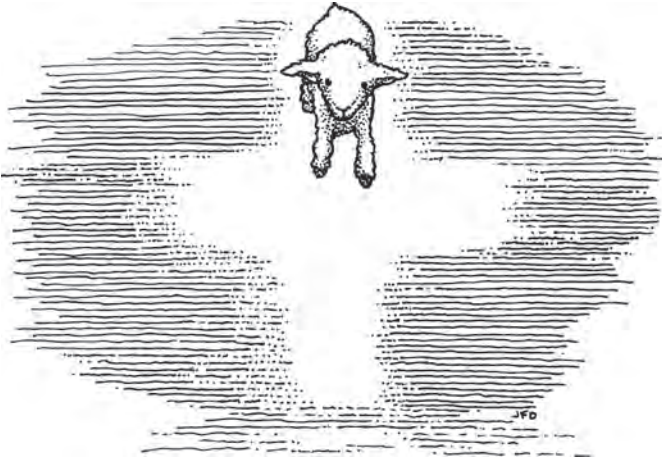
Do you know people who seem to be living out the promise of their baptism and faith in extraordinary ways? What can you do to serve the needs of others in a way that challenges you to draw on the strength that comes from God?

Word = Life

Readings Reflections

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'

— John 1:29



January 16, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Psalm 40:2-4, 7-10
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:1-3
Gospel) John 1:29-34

By Jean Denton

I smiled at the photo Christmas card. Pictured on the front was a smiling little girl seated in a beautiful flower garden. Yet another pair of doting grandparents was showing us that the child of their child was the center of their universe. I soon found out she literally was. They had taken on parental responsibility for her.

Grandparents raising grandchildren isn't a unique situation, and my friends' story is not uncommon. The grandfather is in his mid-70s, the grandmother in her mid-60s. He continues to work as a college professor. She retired recently. The little girl, who is 7, brings enormous joy into their household — along with enormous energy and not a few needs.

The girl's parents are separated. Her father has a mental disability that makes it impossible to adequately care for a growing child. Her mother has more severe problems. The grandparents have spent four years and several hundred thousand dollars to gain legal joint custody of their grandchild.

She lives with them and spends a couple of weekends each month with her mother. The grandparents care for her well with great love, including paying for and overseeing special schooling she needs. Their plans for a quiet, slow-paced retirement have evaporated. They are living the demanding child-rearing life more conducive to 30-year-olds.

They'd have it no other way.

This week's Gospel is about Jesus' saving grace entering into a sinful world. John the Baptist recognizes his divine power as revealed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism.

None of us has the power to bring salvation. But through our baptism we are joined to Christ in the Holy Spirit and receive his life-giving compassion and strength.

For a couple with inadequate life skills and social problems to have a baby is not an ideal situation. But too often it happens in this world. Christ's spirit enters when someone brings an act of sacrificial love — as this child's grandparents did — into troubled circumstances. Then it truly does take away some small part of the sin of the world.

QUESTIONS:

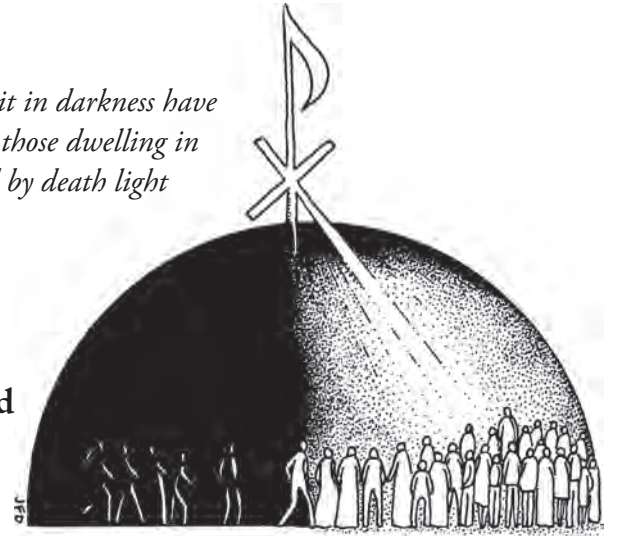
When have you witnessed someone's Christ-like action diminishing the sin of the world? Into what present situations can you bring Jesus' spirit and light?

The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen."

— Matthew 4:16

January 23. Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Cycle A. Readings:

- 1) Isaiah 8:23 to 9:3
Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14
- 2) 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17
Gospel) Matthew 4:12-23



By Jeff Hedglen

There's been only one time in my life when I was in total darkness. It was so dark that I put my hand one inch in front of my face and could not see it, not even a shadow or an outline, nothing. I knew my hand was in front of my eyes because I could feel my breath hit the skin and because my brain had sent signals to my hand to raise it to this position. But these were the only indications. It was an eerie experience to have my eyes wide open and see absolutely nothing.

This occurred in a cavern beneath the earth's surface in Central Texas. The tour guide had instructed each of us to find a place to sit down, and we were strongly urged not to move around. Then he turned the lights out. Pitch dark. Wow.

The guide let us sit in the darkness for a minute or so and then began to tell the story of creation from Genesis. When he got to the "let there be light" part of the story, a tiny sliver of light, like a white laser beam, pierced the darkness and landed on a rock formation.

This miniscule amount of light washed away the immense darkness. The power of light over darkness had never been so palpable to me.

This week's readings speak of another people in darkness who see a great light. Matthew's Gospel quotes Isaiah chapter 8: "The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen." Matthew says that Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy, that he is the Light that dispels the darkness.

The darkness that Jesus dispels is sin and death. His piercing light reveals our sin, just as that tiny beam allowed me to see my hand again. But his light does more than reveal. It heals, forgives, and continues to shine upon us, leading us into everlasting light.

QUESTIONS:

Have you ever experienced total darkness? What was it like? How is sin like darkness? How is forgiveness and reconciliation like light?

Diocese

The Gift of Priesthood



Very Rev. Stephen Berg

Ministry: Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

Ordained: May 15, 1999

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. I think mainly in the growth of my friendships. I have experienced so many new connections with people by being a part of their lives.

Q. What part does the celebration of the Eucharist play in your fulfillment as a priest?

A. It is the wellspring from which all my spiritual energy flows.



Father Carmen Mele, OP

Ministry: Director of Hispanic Adult Catechesis at the Catholic Center of Fort Worth

Ordained: May 21, 1980

Q. How can God's people better support their priests?

A. They support their priests well when they are honest and open and caring about priests. I'm really edified when I receive an invitation to someone's house for dinner, even if I can't go. I am called to be a spiritual leader of the people of God when they share their vocation as family members with me.



Father Edmundo Rodriguez, SJ

Ministry: Retreat Director, Montserrat Retreat House

Ordained: June 7, 1966

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. Priesthood is about building bridges. It's about tearing down the walls that separate us from God, the fears, the doubts, the anger, and the disappointments, which we humans sometimes allow to withdraw us from the Source of Life and wholeness. It's also about drawing those who are hostile to each other to Jesus our Risen Lord so that they may find friendship with each other through Him. A priest is a pontifex, a builder of bridges, one who reaches out to those alienated from God and from one another. He is also one who does his best to maintain those bridges which have already been built through the sacraments and especially through the Eucharist. The task is soul-sized, but it is an exciting and rewarding ministry.



Father Richard Villa, SM

Ministry: President of Nolan Catholic High School, Fort Worth

Ordained: August 23, 2008

Q. How can God's people better support their priests?

A. It is important for God's people to pray for their priests. If we believe prayer is effective in our lives, which we do believe as Catholics, our prayers are important to priests so they can better serve God and the community. And nourishing prayer in their family lives also encourages vocations to the priesthood. Another way people can support their priests is by sharing their lives with their pastors and priests. In sharing their lives, they actually share God's presence in their lives with the priests. That is another way of nourishing God's presence in their priests. It's very important for people to share their lives with their priests.



Father George Thennattil, TOR

Parish: Diocesan Hospital Chaplain for downtown Fort Worth hospitals

Ordained: May 15, 1976

Q. What do you most desire to convey to the people you serve?

A. I try to give words of comfort and hope to the patients in the hospitals as I administer to them the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. I remind them that the Lord is close to the people who are sick and suffering. I encourage them to allow the Lord to reach out and touch them physically, emotionally, and spiritually.



Father Joe Tetlow, SJ

Ministry: Director of Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House

Ordained: June 15, 1960

Q. What part of your priestly duties do you find the most rewarding?

A. They are all rewarding. The sacramental ministries, especially the Eucharist, is a profound grace, and it's great fun to preach.



Monsignor Joseph A. Schumacher, PA

Ministry: Retired Vicar General

Ordained: May 25, 1957

Q. How do you find Christ in others?

A. Mostly I would say through instruction in RCIA, in preparation of the sacraments, and in the sacrament of reconciliation. I also found Christ while teaching moral ethics for 10 years at the University of North Texas and during the three years I taught comparative religions or religions of the world with Sister Kay Kolb, SSND. I used to celebrate Mass once a week at the Denton State School for the mentally challenged, and that was also one of the ways I felt I saw Christ and in my prayer life both privately and with my interaction with my brother priests.



Father Francis X. Fernandez, OFM Cap.

Ministry: Director of the diocesan Cursillo Center

Ordained: May 15, 1958

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. I've been a priest for 53 years. I've always considered this a gift from the Lord. A gift that is a call to serve. First of all, to live out my relationship with the Lord in a personal and deep way and to share this life with everybody around me — the people in Ireland where I was ordained, to the Philippines where I was to minister for 13 years, and to here in Texas where I was called to serve the bilingual community since 1971. I'm enjoying every minute of my life of ministry with the Lord and sharing my life with people wherever.

Father Pio Maria Hoffmann, CFR (Not Pictured)

Ministry: Local Servant (superior) Sacred Heart of Jesus Friary, Fort Worth

Q. How do you find Christ's presence in your parishioners?

A. I just know He's there. The Lord makes it very clear that whatever we do for others, He is there. We should be treating each person with the dignity that the Lord wants us to.

Father Cal Giesen, OFM (Not Pictured)

Ministry: St. Maximilian Kolbe Friary

Ordained: December 19, 1947

Q. How do you find Christ's presence in the people you serve?

A. I find Christ's presence in the people I serve through my gift of faith in God and the gift of faith to that individual. I believe Christ is present in him or her and in me. That's really how I try to size up every human being — baby or adult, man or woman — no matter the color or creed — it makes no difference.

Father Luke Robertson, TOR (Not Pictured)

Ministry: Lead case manager, Street Outreach Services Team (SOS), Catholic Charities

Ordained: May 29, 1999

Q. How do you find Christ's presence in those you serve?

A. How can I count the ways! I think people are extraordinarily generous, kind, and giving. It always humbles and amazes me how they live out Christ in their lives. I see that all the time in the people I come across.

Editor's Note:

This is the last installment in an ongoing series featuring priests from the different deaneries in the diocese sharing about aspects of their ministry. Interviews were compiled by Jenara Kocks Burgess

Diocese



Monsignor Michael F. Olson

Ministry: Rector of Holy Trinity Seminary, Irving

Ordained: June 3, 1994

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. I have experienced the gift of priesthood through the people with whom I have served at my assignments since my ordination on June 3, 1994. I have been blessed to serve as a parochial vicar, a pastor of a parish with a school, a chancery official, and as a seminary formator. God has blessed me with a diversity of experiences in priestly ministry that have helped me to grow closer to Christ and to realize how much I need to depend on Christ to grow in holiness. As the rector of Holy Trinity Seminary I am blessed to be instrumental in fostering the means and environment through which other younger men continue to receive the gift of the ministry of priesthood from God.



Father Raphael Eagle, TOR

Ministries: Cook Children's, Federal Men's Prison, St. Bartholomew in Fort Worth

Ordained: June 3, 1967

Q. What do you believe you are accomplishing through your priestly ministry?

A. The ministry to the sick has always been a ministry of evangelization. I meet people in the delicate part of their lives — when their children are sick or terminal. I give them the message that Jesus lives, Jesus loves, and Jesus acts. I accentuate that Jesus is present in the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sometimes, it's a time to call people back to the Church if they have been away — all of this is in the context of the anxiety that they are feeling. The future is uncertain with illness. There is a great movement of evangelization at the hospital.

Father James P. O'Toole (Not Pictured)

Parish: Retired/Ministry: Christian Foundation for Children and Aging

Ordained: May 16, 1964

Q. What do you believe you are accomplishing through your priestly ministry?

A. At this very moment right now, I'm working for the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. It's a Catholic sponsorship program. Every weekend, I go out to different parishes, and I find sponsors for children and the aging in India, Africa, the Philippines, and Central and South America. So far, I've been able to find 32,000 sponsors. I find that it's very satisfying to work for the poor. The sponsorships provide education, medication, and food to the poorest of the poor. I sponsor 13 kids myself. I have visited many of them, and I see what a difference it makes. A couple of them are in college and are on their way to becoming engineers. It gives meaning to my ministry.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance...

1 Thessalonians 1:2



Father Kyle Walterschied

Ministry: Vocations Director; Sacramental Minister to parishes in Strawn, Ranger, Eastland, and Cisco

Ordained: May 25, 2002

Q. What do you most desire to convey to your parishioners or others you serve?

A. Our heart and our whole being is made specifically for God. Only Jesus, the Son of God who came to save us, can fill our hearts to overflowing love, peace, and happiness. Only through Christ will we discover our true purpose in life and find communion with each other. The Church as the bride of Christ is the primary means or channel by which we receive the grace and mercy (the sacraments) necessary to know and complete the mission for which God created us.



Diocese of Fort Worth 2010-2011 Seminarians

Father Lambert Leykam, OFM (Not Pictured)

Ministry: Former chaplain of St. Francis Village in Crowley, and currently working in ministry with youth at Little Portion Hermitage and Retreat House in Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Ordained: June 29, 1956

Q. How have you experienced the gift of priesthood?

A. Very happily. A big thing I appreciate is I had a young man that I used to take to the YMCA, and today he is a priest. Helping others become Franciscan priests and brothers and working with the poor are ways I've experienced the gift of priesthood. In my first 15 years, I worked in Monroe, Louisiana, at a boys and girls grade school and high school and with juvenile delinquents at the Louisiana Training Institute. Then I worked at the San José Mission for 10 years in San Antonio. I was also chaplain of the St. Francis Village in Crowley for 11 years. I've been a priest for 54 years and a Franciscan for 63.



Father Francis Gillespie, SJ

Ministry: Retreat Director at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House

Ordained: June 3, 1972

Q. What do you most want to see happen in the lives of those you serve?

A. Similarly, that they put into practice Jesus' Gospel values including their own pursuit of holiness and their concern for peace and justice values for their neighbors.



Father Charles Calabrese

Ministry: TCU Catholic Campus Minister

Ordained: May 16, 1972

Q. How does your interaction with God's people make your priesthood more rewarding?

A. My identity as a priest has been formed and shaped by my relationships with people. Reflecting on my ministerial experiences with people has caused me to rethink my own faith, to find better ways to articulate the faith, to grow in ever-new appreciations of how God is present in human life, to increasingly trust in God, and to become more "real" in the way I relate to and minister to people. Their faith and their life experiences have enriched my faith and my life experiences.



Father José Fetzer, SJ

Ministry: Retreat Director at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House

Ordained: June 14, 2008

A. What do you most desire to convey to your parishioners or others you serve?

A. I see my role as a Jesuit priest as facilitating the encounter between God and the human person. At times this process involves explaining my experience of God; and at other moments, this means walking in silence, witnessing and sharing people's suffering. My different experiences of God have been illumined by the Spiritual Exercises. To give the Spiritual Exercises is to relate one's experience of God with others. Although they require a great amount of preparation, directing the Spiritual Exercises is ultimately sharing who one is and what one has with others. It is sharing one's experience as a loved sinner with others.



Father George Curtsinger (Not Pictured)

Ministry: Chaplain, The Chapel of Christ the Teacher - The College of St. Thomas More, Fort Worth

Ordained: Oct. 11, 1952 — **Incardinated:** Dec. 22, 1959

Q. How do you nourish your relationship with God?

A. With prayer.

Q. How do you find Christ in others?

A. I make an effort to do so.

Father Jerome A. Ward (Not Pictured)

Retired
Ordained: September 9, 1967

Q. What are you most grateful for as a priest?

A. I am most grateful for the different kinds of ministries I've been able to do since my ordination. I've really, really been blessed by being able to work in so many different ministries. I started out as a young priest in the prison ministry in Texas, and then I was in civilian parishes for four years. I served 21 years as an Air Force chaplain and after that journey was over, I went back to the prison ministry for five years. For seven years, I was a hospital chaplain, and I drove 1,000 miles a week to serve as the interim pastor of three country parishes in South Carolina. Now, I'm retired, but I help out wherever needed in the diocese, and I usually get to celebrate Mass in Scotland, Texas on Christmas Eve. It's a real joy because I met those people when I was a young teenager at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, and we've been able to keep in touch. There has been a neat variety of ministries in which I have been able to serve, and I am most grateful for that opportunity.

Father Jonathan Wallis,

North American College in Rome

Ordained: July 7, 2007

Q. What are you most grateful for as a priest?

A. I'm most grateful for just being a priest. It is something that I feel that I was called to do, and it is something from which, personally, I have received many blessings.

Catholics gather at St. Patrick Cathedral Dec. 12 before dawn so they can

Serenade Our Lady

By Kathy Cribari Hamer
Correspondent

It was nearing dawn in Downtown Fort Worth when an ensemble of seven mariachis began their serenade to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they were not performing for an audience, nor even providing a simple prelude to the approaching 5:30 a.m. Mass.

Instead, the reverent musicians in their *charro* suits were embodying a cultural and spiritual tradition unique to Mexico. The serenade they sang, directly facing the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, was not just music, but an expression of love to the Mother of God.

Their first song, at 5 a.m., was *Las Mañanitas*, according to Sister Laura Lara, JDA, who coordinated the Dec. 12 diocesan celebration of the Guadalupe feast, at St. Patrick Cathedral in collaboration with Joe Govea and last year's established committee volunteers. Sister Laura is also coordinator of Hispanic volunteers at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Keller.

Las Mañanitas is a broad title for a kind of song, usually sung for birthdays, anniversaries, and serenades. "It is a very happy song," Sr. Laura said. "The message is simple. 'We're here to greet you with all of our best. We bring you flowers, and we would like you to have music from heaven.' In Mexico it is a tradition to sing *Las Mañanitas* even earlier than we did — at 12 a.m."

The music mariachis provide is "one of our best forms of expression," Sr. Laura said, "to someone special and very dear, who

means a lot to us.

"At first, it was used to give a serenade by someone courting his beloved!" The mariachi music later became a custom to give a serenade to mothers, especially on Mothers' Day, and on their birthdays, Sister Laura said.

"And this explains why we also do this special serenade to Our Lady of Guadalupe, our Mother. We express all of our feelings with love and passion, through the music, giving her our best through this serenade."

The 2010 pre-dawn gathering and liturgy at the cathedral represented the third year the diocese provided this particular Mexican



The mariachi band, *Águilas de México*, directed by Pepe Sigala, serenades a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe with *LAS MAÑANITAS*.



Miguel Hernández, wearing a tilma representing St. Juan Diego, opens up his tilma, re-enacting the story when the saint opened his tilma in front of the bishop of Mexico and revealed an image of Our Lady.

tradition. Previous years had seen the faithful process to an early evening diocesan Mass at the convention center. Those processions have become individual parish traditions now, but all the different Our Lady of Guadalupe events seem to be connected by a single word: celebration.

At St. Patrick, the Mass, which was concelebrated by Bishop Kevin Vann, Father Juan Diego, CFR, and Father Leo Fisher, CFR, included a procession of matachines, who provided sacred dance for the procession and at the offertory for the presentation of gifts. The rhythm of the dancers' beaded costumes, coupled with rattles and drums, brought a sense of the Mexican people's

intense reverence for Our Lady of the Americas.

"In Mexico, there's a popular saying," Sr. Laura said, "we are 100 percent Catholic and 110 percent Guadalupanos."

In his homily, Bishop Vann called to mind the coincidence that Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast took place on the third Sunday of Advent. "It is the Lord's day," he said, "Yet, does not Mary lead us to her Son? Did she not say to Juan Diego, that she was the Mother of the Son of God? Therefore it is a special blessing to celebrate her day in the Lord's day."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Serenade Our Lady

"In these beautiful words of Isaiah ... do they not tell many years in advance, the story of the beautiful music that Juan Diego heard, when he was walking in Tepeyac that morning? Do not the flowers of which the prophet speaks, speak to us as well, of the roses in December in Tepeyac?"

— **Bishop Kevin Vann**
Homily for Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass, which fell on the third Sunday of Advent

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

He cited the responsorial psalm for the third Sunday of Advent, saying, "We hear a similar theme, in fact, in these beautiful words of Isaiah, and do they not tell many years in advance, the story of the beautiful music that Juan Diego heard, when he was walking in Tepeyac that morning? Do not the flowers of which the prophet speaks, speak to us as well, of the roses in December in Tepeyac?"

Bishop Vann, with his own special devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, delighted the assembly when he proclaimed, in Spanish, "I am not Mexican by birth nor blood, but I know I am 100 percent Guadalupano!"

After the Dec. 12 Mass, the community

gathered for hot chocolate, traditional Mexican *pan dulce*, and more dancing, by the *Ballet Folklórico*. Parishioners and volunteers had donated the refreshments, and as they were served, the faithful stood in the chilly morning air, joining one more time in happy worship.

The huge portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe was carried from the sanctuary and set up for display outside, in the parking lot, where dancers performed directly for her.

The cultural reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sr. Laura said, remembering her own history, "is so important in Mexico.

"I am Mexican, but I am here, and to have all this celebration makes me feel very close to Our Lady. I am happy that it helps other Hispanic people, who are away from Mexico, feel the way I do."



ABOVE: Bishop Kevin Vann celebrates the Mass with Fr. Leo Fisher, CFR, (left) concelebrating, and Deacon Len Sanchez assisting.



RIGHT: Gifts brought up to the altar included flowers, produce, and traditional Mexican foods and clothing.



Members of Ballet Folklórico de Fort Worth, directed by Carmen Garcia, perform following the Mass.



A member of the group, Matachines, Danza de Guadalupe, directed by Yajaira Lopez, dances at the Mass.



Following the Dec. 12 Mass, the community gathered for hot chocolate and traditional Mexican *pan dulce*, or sweet bread.

Marian apparitions outside of Green Bay first in U.S. to receive approval from diocesan bishop

CHAMPION, Wisconsin (CNS) — Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay has approved the Marian apparitions seen by Adele Brise in 1859, making the apparitions of Mary that occurred some 18 miles northeast of Green Bay the first in the United States to receive approval of a diocesan bishop.

Bishop Ricken made the announcement in Champion during Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. More than 250 invited guests filled the shrine chapel to hear Bishop Ricken read the official decree on the authenticity of the apparitions. He also issued a second decree, formally approving the shrine as a diocesan shrine.

As he declared, "I do hereby approve these apparitions as worthy of belief," the congregation burst into applause, with many in attendance moved to tears.

"This is now an official declaration and an explicit recognition of what has been going on in the development and expression of people's faith in our Lord Jesus," Bishop Ricken said in his homily. "Mary always leads us to Jesus. We hold Mary in such high regard because she is the mother of our savior Jesus Christ. So she is probably the greatest evangelist and catechist who ever lived. ... She has been sent out all these years since Christ's death and resurrection to proclaim this good news."

Bishop Ricken said the proclamation was a desire of many people. "So many of you have asked for this in one way or another," he said. "I regard this also as a simple declaration in that it already states what has been going on here so quietly for so many years."

"In many ways it is also a thank-you gift to Adele Brise, that Belgian immigrant who came here to this country. ... We owe a great deal to her witness because she was simple, she was uneducated in our terms today. She was a humble soul, but she was obedient."

Bishop Ricken added that the message Brise answered in teaching children the faith is the same message people are called to today.

"We need this message today as much as they needed it 150 years ago; the message to proclaim the Gospel, each one of us, in our families and in our workplace. We need to have that same zeal for souls that Adele Brise had," he said.

Catholics must provide children "adequate catechetical formation" so they understand the Gospel and "are able to defend and explain the teachings of the church," he added.

The bishop's decree comes nearly two years after he opened a formal investigation into the apparitions. On Jan. 9, 2009, he appointed three theologians to study the case.

Brise was 28 when Mary appeared to her three times in

October 1859. She told Brise to "gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation. Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the cross, and how to approach the sacraments."

Brise devoted the rest of her life to teaching children. She began a community of secular Franciscans and built a school next to the shrine. Brise's father built a small chapel near the spot of the apparitions.

The current chapel was dedicated in 1942 under the title of Our Lady of Good Help. Today, the shrine, which sits on six acres of farmland, receives thousands of visitors each year.

Nuestro Pastor Habla

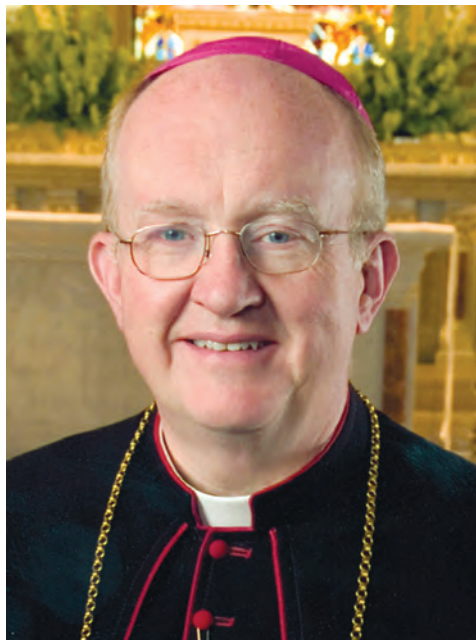
Que la paz y la alegría de la Encarnación de Cristo esté con vosotros

Queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo

“El hijo de Dios se hizo hombre para que el hombre pueda llegar a ser como Dios”. Estas magníficas palabras de San Atanasio, de su gran obra *La Encarnación*, resume poderosamente el significado de la Navidad y la celebración de la Encarnación de Jesucristo. Jesús, el Hijo del Padre Eterno, se hace uno de nosotros en todo, menos en el pecado, para que la gloria del hombre—creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios—una vez más pueda ser revelada plenamente. La Encarnación de Cristo, el pequeño bebé nacido en un establo de Belén, verdadera y dramáticamente cambia el curso de la historia humana, pues Dios está ahora con el hombre, y nunca más se separará la humanidad de Dios.

La Encarnación de Cristo en la Navidad nos revela dos cosas. En primer lugar, revela el gran amor y misericordia del Padre que envía a su único Hijo para revelarse plenamente a sí mismo y realizar su amoroso plan de salvación, anunciado inmediatamente después del primer pecado de Adán y Eva. La Encarnación revela un amor que es más grande que el pecado, un amor que busca y encuentra a quienes se pierden. La Encarnación también revela la gran dignidad de cada persona humana, que Dios mismo se dignara a ser como nosotros con el fin de restaurar plenamente nuestra gran dignidad como hijos e hijas de Dios. De hecho, como nos enseña el *Concilio vaticano II*, Jesús, a través de la Encarnación, se une a cada persona y ofrece el don de la salvación:

En realidad, el misterio del hombre sólo se esclarece en el misterio del Verbo encarnado. Porque Adán, el primer hombre, era figura del quien había de venir (Romanos 5:14), es decir, Cristo nuestro Señor. Cristo, el nuevo Adán, en la misma revelación del misterio del Padre y de su amor, manifiesta plenamente el hombre al propio hombre y le descubre la sublimidad de su vocación. El quien "es imagen de Dios invisible" (Colossians 1,15) es también el hombre perfecto, que ha devuelto a la descendencia de Adán la semejanza divina, deformada por el primer pecado. En él, la naturaleza humana asumida, no absorbe, ha sido elevada también en nosotros a dignidad sin igual. El Hijo de Dios con su encarnación se ha unido, en cierto modo, con todo hombre. Trabajó con manos de hombre, pensó con inteligencia de hombre, obró con voluntad de hombre, amó con corazón de hombre. Nacido de la Virgen María, se hizo verdaderamente uno de los nuestros,



Monseñor Kevin Vann

semejantes en todo a nosotros, excepto en el pecado.

—*Constitución Dogmática Sobre la Iglesia en el Mundo Moderno, Gaudium et Spes, 22*

También es importante recordar que no sólo celebramos la Encarnación en el día de la Navidad, sino también que la Iglesia celebra la Encarnación de Cristo a lo largo de la temporada Navideña que se extiende desde el día de Navidad a través de la Solemnidad del bautismo del Señor el 9 de enero. Esta temporada litúrgica ofrece muchas otras fiestas y celebraciones que aún más plenamente revelan el misterio de la Encarnación.

Una de las grandes solemnidades que cae en la temporada navideña es la de María, madre de Dios, que se celebra el 1 de enero. Esta fiesta nos habla directamente sobre la verdad y realidad de la Encarnación, que una persona, Jesucristo, es plenamente humana y plenamente divina, sin confusión o división. En otras palabras, ya que Jesús es real y verdaderamente Dios, la segunda persona de la Trinidad hecha carne, entonces María, como la madre de Jesús, es verdaderamente la madre de Dios. De hecho, este título de María como madre de Dios se definió en el *Concilio de Éfeso* en 431 A. D., en respuesta a la herejía nestoriana que separaba la humanidad y la divinidad de Jesús y erróneamente enseñaba que Jesús era un hombre en quien Dios vivía, pero que no era completamente Dios. El *Concilio de Éfeso* definió que Jesús poseía dos naturalezas, la divina y la humana, y que ambas están unidas plenamente en la singular persona de Jesucristo. Por lo tanto, María es verdaderamente la *Theotokos*, o “Portadora de Dios”. Esta solemnidad nos recuerda que todo lo que creemos sobre María tiene que ver con Cristo, y que María siempre nos lleva

hacia una unión más profunda con su Hijo.

Otra gran solemnidad durante la temporada Navideña es la Epifanía, también conocida como la *Celebración de los Tres Reyes Magos*, que ha sido tradicionalmente celebrada el 6 de enero, o sea, 12 días después de Navidad. Recientemente se ha transferido esta celebración al Segundo Domingo después de la Navidad. La Epifanía es una de las más antiguas celebraciones cristianas. La palabra *epifanía* nos llega del griego y significa “revelar”, y lo que celebramos es que Dios se revela al hombre en Cristo. La Epifanía, en primer lugar, se celebró en el Oriente, donde originalmente se celebraban cuatro epifanías o eventos reveladores en la vida de Cristo: el bautismo de Jesús, el primer milagro de Cristo en las *Bodas de Cana*, el nacimiento de Cristo y la visita de los Santos Reyes Magos. Todos estos acontecimientos de alguna manera revelan la divinidad de Cristo, que es realmente el Hijo de Dios. Es importante señalar que la Epifanía fue la original celebración de la Navidad, o el nacimiento de Cristo. Eventualmente, en el Occidente, la celebración de la natividad se separó de la Navidad el 25 de diciembre, pero la fiesta de la Epifanía permaneció como la celebración de los otros tres eventos, para señalar el final de la temporada de Navidad. Al pasar el tiempo, las otras fiestas gradualmente fueron separadas y, a continuación, hoy celebramos el bautismo del Señor el domingo después de la Epifanía y las *Bodas de Cana* se celebran el domingo siguiente.

La Epifanía para nosotros hoy en día es la celebración de la visita de los Santos Reyes Magos que vinieron desde el Oriente, siguiendo la estrella de Belén, para adorar al niño Jesús presente ante ellos en toda su gloria. La Epifanía es cuando Cristo es revelado al mundo como el Mesías, el Hijo de Dios. En muchas partes del mundo, como en Europa, la Epifanía se considera por lo menos tan importante como la Navidad y a veces es llamada “la pequeña Navidad”, y en muchas culturas, siguiendo el ejemplo de los Reyes Magos ofreciendo sus regalos a Cristo, se lleva a cabo el intercambio de regalos navideños.

La celebración de la Encarnación de Cristo en la Navidad también es un recordatorio de Cristo llegando a nosotros como bebé, y que, en la Anunciación del Ángel a María, se concibió a Jesús en el vientre de su Madre por obra del Espíritu Santo. Jesús, a través de la Encarnación, redimió la naturaleza humana desde el momento de la concepción hasta la muerte. Mientras avanzamos desde la Navidad hacia el Año Nuevo, es importante recordar que el 22 de enero conmemoramos el aniversario de la decisión de la Corte Suprema conocida como *Roe v. Wade*, que legalizó el aborto en

los Estados Unidos. Este aniversario, triste y trágico como es, se convierte para nosotros en un recordatorio que estamos todos llamados — en virtud de nuestro bautismo — para promover, ser testigos y defender la cultura de la vida. Uno de los grandes acontecimientos en que participo cada año es mi viaje a Washington, con un gran número de jóvenes y otros de la diócesis, para *La Marcha por la Vida*. La marcha es una gran oportunidad en asistir a la cultura de la vida y pedir el fin de la legalización del aborto. Estoy especialmente agradecido por el grupo *Juventud por la vida* de la *Oficina diocesana de católicos por el respeto por la vida*, por organizar un gran grupo de jóvenes y adultos para asistir a la marcha. Cada año realmente estoy conmovido por el abrumador apoyo por la vida y el testimonio de muchos católicos, especialmente los jóvenes de todo el país, que vienen en un espíritu de *communio*, llenan el santuario de la *Basílica de la Inmaculada Concepción* en Washington, y oran por el fin del aborto y otros delitos contra la vida humana. Yo también celebraré nuestra misa anual de *Respeto por la vida* en la *Catedral de San Patricio* el viernes, 21 de enero a las 7 p.m. Firmemente animo a las personas de toda nuestra diócesis reunirse en un espíritu de comunión, como iglesia local, para orar por el fin del aborto y otros ataques contra la inocente vida humana, y pedir por la gracia de Cristo para ser testigos y para lograr una verdadera cultura de la vida, en todos los ámbitos de nuestra sociedad, y en la cultura en la cual tenemos influencia. Podamos responder al llamado urgente del Papa Juan Pablo II en su gran encíclica, el *Evangelio de la Vida*, a “en el nombre de Dios: respetar, proteger, amar y servir la vida, cada vida humana”.

Me gustaría desear a todos, a cada uno de ustedes y sus familias, una Navidad llena de bendiciones. Oro para que la paz y la alegría de la Encarnación de Cristo esté con ustedes mientras celebramos la época Navideña.

Kevin W. Vann

+ Obispo Kevin W. Vann, JCD, DD
Diócesis de Fort Worth



La Virgen de Guadalupe es honrada en la Catedral de San Patricio, en medio de música de mariachis, bailes de matachines, y danzas folklóricas



Reportaje y fotografías por Kathy Cribari Hamer

Estaba llegando el amanecer en el centro de Fort Worth cuando un conjunto de siete mariachis comenzó su serenata a la santísima virgen María, pero no tocaba para una audiencia, ni tampoco proveía un simple preludeo a la misa de las 5:30 a.m. que se acercaba. En vez, los músicos devotos, en sus trajes de charro, personificaban una tradición cultural y espiritual, única de México. La serenata que cantaban—directamente frente a la estatua de Nuestra Señora de la Guadalupe—no solamente era música, sino también era una expresión de amor a la madre de Dios.

Su primera canción, a las 5 a.m., fue *Las mañanitas*, de acuerdo a la hermana Laura Lara, quien coordinó la celebración diocesana de la fiesta de la Guadalupe, el 12 de diciembre, en la *Catedral de San Patricio*. La hermana Laura también es la coordinadora de voluntarios Hispánicos en la parroquia de Keller, *St. Elizabeth Ann Seton*.

Las Mañanitas es un título general para un tipo de canción, casi siempre cantada para los cumpleaños, los aniversarios, y las serenatas. “Es una canción muy alegre”, dijo la hermana Laura, “y bien larga. Su mensaje es simple. ‘Estamos aquí para felicitarte con lo mejor que tenemos. Te traemos flores, y queremos que tengas la música del cielo.’ En México, es tradición cantar *Las mañanitas* aún más temprano que lo hicimos nosotros—a las 12 a. m.”

La música de los mariachis es “una de nuestras mejores formas de expresión”, comentó la hermana Laura, “para alguien especial, muy querido, que significa mucho para nosotros.”

“Al principio, los jóvenes la usaban para cantarle una serenata a su enamorada! La música mariachi luego se convirtió en costumbre para dar serenatas a las madres, especialmente en el día de las Madres, y en su cumpleaños, explicó la hermana Laura.

“Y esto entonces explica por qué también hacemos esta serenata especial para Nuestra Señora de la Guadalupe, nuestra Madre. Expresamos nuestros sentimientos con amor y pasión, a través de la música, y de paso dándole, con la serenata, lo mejor que tenemos”.

La reunión antes del amanecer y la liturgia en la catedral representa el tercer año que la diócesis ha honrado esta tradición mexicana. Años anteriores habían visto a una procesión de fieles, yendo a una misa diocesana durante el atardecer, en el centro de convenciones. Esas procesiones se han convertido en tradiciones de parroquias individuales hoy día, aunque todos los diferentes eventos de Nuestra Señora de la Guadalupe parecen estar conectados por una sola palabra: celebración.

La Misa en St. Patrick, concelebrada por el obispo Kevin Vann, el padre Juan Diego, CFR, y el padre Leo Fisher, CFR, incluyó una procesión de matachines, quienes realizaron bailes sagrados para la procesión y durante el ofertorio, con la presentación de regalos. El ritmo de los disfraces perlados de los bailarines, junto con sus cascabeles y tambores, transmitió el sentido de la intensa reverencia de la población mexicana para con Nuestra Señora de las Américas.

“En México”, dijo la hermana Laura, “decimos que somos 100 por ciento católicos pero 110 por ciento guadalupanos”.

En su homilía, el obispo Vann hizo recordar la coincidencia que la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de la Guadalupe tomó lugar en el tercer domingo de Adviento. “Es el día del Señor”, comentó. “Sin embargo, ¿no nos lleva María a su Hijo? ¿No le dijo a Juan Diego que era la madre del Hijo de Dios? Por eso es una bendición celebrar su día en el día del Señor”.

Citó el salmo responsorial para el tercer domingo de Adviento, diciendo, “Escuchamos un tema similar, de hecho, en las bellas palabras de Isaías, y no nos dice—con muchos años de antemano—el cuento de la bella música que oyó Juan Diego, cuando caminaba a Tepeyac esa mañana? ¿No nos recuerdan a las flores de las cuales habla el profeta, las rosas de diciembre en Tepeyac?”

El obispo Vann, con su propia devoción especial a Nuestra Señora de la Guadalupe, maravilló a los feligreses cuando proclamó, en español, “No soy mexicano ni por nacimiento ni por sangre, ¡pero sé que soy 100 por ciento guadalupano!”

Después de la Misa del 12 de diciembre, la comunidad se reunió para tomar chocolate caliente, el pan dulce mexicano tradicional, y disfrutar de más bailes, esta vez por el Ballet Folclórico. Los feligreses y voluntarios habían donado aperitivos y, mientras se servían, estuvieron a la intemperie, a pesar del frío, reuniéndose una vez más para una adoración feliz.

La pintura gigante de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe fue cargada desde el santuario y puesta afuera en exposición, en el estacionamiento, donde los bailarines danzaban directamente para ella.

“La reverencia cultural para con la santísima virgen María”, dijo la hermana Laura, recordándose de su propia historia, “es muy importante en México”.

“Soy mexicana, pero aquí estoy, y viendo toda esta celebración me hace sentir muy cerca de nuestra Señora. Estoy contenta de que pueda ayudar a otras personas hispanas, quienes están lejos de México, sentirse como yo”.

Arriba a la izquierda: Los mariachis le dan una serenata a la Virgen de Guadalupe, parados frente a la estatua a la entrada de la catedral.

Arriba: El Obispo Vann celebra la Misa de celebración de la fiesta, concelebrada por el padre Leo Fisher, CFR.



Dos matachines y un joven vestido de San Juan Diego reza la oración del Señor con la asamblea.



Bailarines del Ballet Folclórico continúan la celebración luego de la Misa, al frente de la Catedral, donde los feligreses fueron convidados con chocolate caliente, café, y pan dulce.



Otro grupo femenino juvenil del Ballet Folclórico danza al amanecer en Fort Worth.

Noticias

de la Iglesia

Arzobispo García Siller instalado como sexto arzobispo de San Antonio

Por Jordan McMorrough
Redactor, *Today's Catholic*
Periódico del
Arquidiócesis de San Antonio
Catholic News Service

Pidiendo a los católicos unirse contra “la ignorancia, el temor y la inseguridad” que “alimentan el racismo y el odio hacia el forastero”, el arzobispo Gustavo García Siller fue instalado el 23 de noviembre como el sexto arzobispo de San Antonio.

Su padre de 76 años de edad, Gustavo García Suárez, y su madre de 75 años, María Cristina Siller de García, junto con todos sus hermanos y las familias inmediatas de ellos, asistieron a la Misa solemne de instalación y recepción en la iglesia de *St. Mark the Evangelist* en San Antonio.

Nacido en San Luis Potosí, México, el arzobispo de 54 años es el mayor de 15 hijos.

Obispo auxiliar de Chicago desde el 2003, el arzobispo García Siller es sucesor del arzobispo Jose H. Gómez, quien en abril fue



Arriba: El arzobispo abraza al cardenal Francis George, arzobispo de Chicago, bajo quien el arzobispo García Siller se desempeña como Obispo auxiliar.

A la derecha: El apenas ordenado arzobispo García Siller sonríe mientras se prepara a recibir la aprobación de 1,500 personas congregadas para la ceremonia de instalación.

Como arzobispo de San Antonio, él es el Arzobispo metropolitano para la diócesis de Fort Worth, así como para las diócesis de Dallas, Amarillo, Lubbock, San Angelo, El Paso, y Laredo.

nombrado arzobispo coadjutor de Los Ángeles. Es uno de 26 obispos hispanos activos en los Estados Unidos.

En su homilía, el arzobispo García Siller dijo que el mensaje cristiano es contracultural y “puede ser profundamente inquietante y hasta amenazador para algunos”.

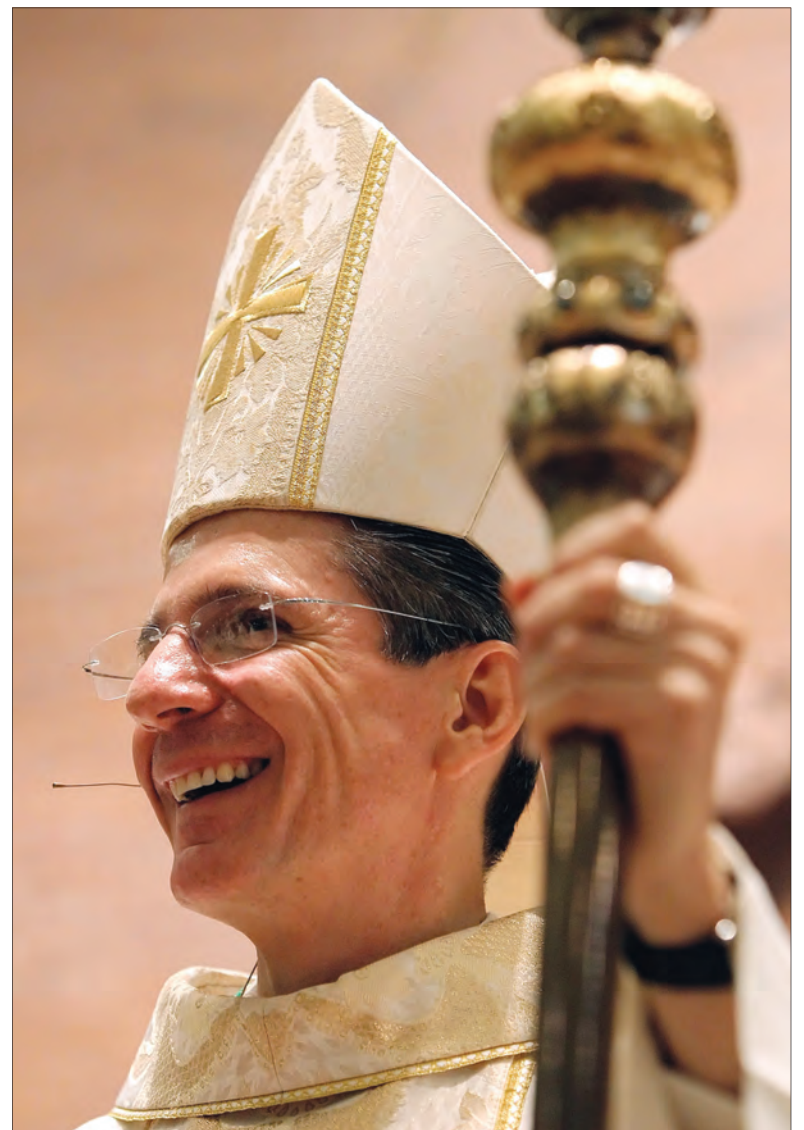
“Vivimos en una nación y región profundamente divididas, donde la noción del amor entre hermanos podría parecer curiosa e ingenua” dijo. “A veces los problemas del mundo, y en nuestros mismos hogares y familias, podrían parecer tan enormes que nos tientan a simplemente retirarnos internamente.

... O podríamos demarcar

desafiantemente nuestra propia postura, sin buscar terreno común con los demás”.

Miembro de la orden religiosa *Misioneros del Espíritu Santo*, el arzobispo García Siller hizo un llamado a los católicos de San Antonio “a estar llenos del Espíritu y a ser misioneros en el mundo, liderados por el Espíritu”.

Entre las 1,500 personas presentes en la Misa de instalación estaban el arzobispo Gómez; los cardenales Francis E. George de Chicago y Daniel N. DiNardo de Galveston-Houston; el arzobispo Christophe Pierre, nuncio papal ante México; y el arzobispo jubilado Patrick F. Flores, quien dirigió la Arquidiócesis de San



(CNS photo/Kin Man Hui, San Antonio Express)

Antonio de 1979 al 2004.

Entre los visitantes concelebrando estaban el hermano del arzobispo García Siller, el padre Eugene García Siller, sacerdote en San Luis Potosí. La hermana Myryam García Siller, su hermana, y Alejandro Siller, un primo que está en la facultad del *Colegio*

Católico Mexicano-Americano, participaron en la Liturgia de la Palabra.

La noche anterior a su instalación el arzobispo García Siller participó en una vigilia especial de oración en la plaza principal frente a la *Catedral San Fernando*.

Empezando una vida nueva comenzará el 24 de enero, en la iglesia *Todos los Santos*

Empezando una vida nueva es un grupo de apoyo para personas que están pasando por el dolor de una separación, un divorcio, o la muerte de su cónyuge. El grupo se reúne una vez por semana por diez semanas, y su propósito es de

compartir destrezas de superación que otras personas han aprendido, encontrar nuevos amigos/as que caminarán con usted hacia el futuro, perdonar, adquirir aceptación y más. *Empezando una vida nueva* comenzará el lunes,

24 de enero, de las 7 p.m. a las 9 p.m. en el nuevo salón parroquial de la iglesia *Todos los Santos*, 214 NW 20th St., Fort Worth. Si desea inscribirse o desea más información, hablar con Carmen Zacarías al (682) 472-8517.

Mecanismos para reportar la conducta sexual inapropiada

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

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

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

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

Mecanismo para reportar abuso

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

Catholic Charities opens 'Percy's House' for children in foster care

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent

A warm bed, home-cooked meals, and creature comforts like picking up the morning newspaper are some of the everyday pleasures Col. Robert "Percy" Purcell missed as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. After the enemy shot down the fighter pilot's F-109 in July 1965, he spent seven and a half years inside the infamous Hanoi Hilton where he was imprisoned and tortured with other American soldiers.

So when the Yuill family of Fort Worth dedicated the International Foster Care House they built for Catholic Charities in honor of the late Vietnam veteran, the gesture seemed entirely appropriate. Building a shelter for young, orphaned refugees who have survived the perils of war is something the deceased POW could appreciate, says his longtime friend Lt. Col. John Yuill.

"It's giving war-torn orphans the opportunity to live the American Dream, and that would make Percy proud," Yuill explains. "The house will go a long way in providing children stability."

Located in Southwest Fort Worth, the four-bedroom foster care house will accommodate six children from age seven to 17 as well as two foster parents. Furnished with a donated piano and individual

desks located in a study area, the dwelling also features a large living room and spacious backyard.

Kristy Brown, Catholic Charities director of development, said children placed in the home are either children whose parents the United Nations has been unable to locate and they have been killed or have been presumed to have been killed, or, she said, they've been separated from their parents for different reasons. The agency has an agreement with the State Department to help resettle minors from war-torn countries who no longer have a parent or guardian. Catholic Charities is currently responsible for 27 children living in the Tarrant County area under these circumstances.

The International Foster Care House is the first of its kind in the diocese and may become a model for future projects.

"It's non-traditional in respect to foster care," Brown admits. "But it allows us to keep sibling groups together."

A member of the Yuill family, who does not want to be identified, approached Catholic Charities about donating a custom-built home 18 months ago.

"When presented with this gift, we wanted to utilize it in the best way possible," she added. "Providing foster care for young refugees will



The Purcell and Yuill families gather at Percy's House.

fill a need."

Longtime supporters of Catholic Charities, John Yuill, and his wife, Rose, have always been impressed by the agency's vision and accomplishments. When he served as campaign coordinator for United Way of Tarrant County after retiring from the military in 1979, Yuill met fundraising goals by taking potential donors on a tour of the Panther Boys' Club and Catholic Charities. Both organizations were examples of the work achieved with United Way dollars.

"They were no frills operations housed in a spartan building but with tons of activity," he remembers.

When a family member announced plans to build a home for a worthy cause, the former United Way booster suggested Catholic Charities. Naming the

house for Col. Purcell was an idea that came while the 3,000-square-foot house was under construction. Yuill and Purcell were long-time friends who shared common interests. Both were Catholic, enjoyed playing doubles tennis every Tuesday, and experienced life as POWs during the Vietnam War. The two met at Carswell Air Force Base after the war ended.

Yuill became a "short-time" POW after his B-52 was shot down over Hanoi on Dec. 22, 1972. A peace treaty between the U.S. and North Vietnam guaranteed his release three months later.

"There is no way to compare myself to those 'real' POWs who were prisoners for many years," he said in a brief biography written for the Homecoming II Project. "But I am honored to be associated with

these men, and I cannot say enough about their courage, faith, and leadership."

Col. Purcell demonstrated some of that faith and leadership when one of Yuill's children was having trouble in high school.

"Percy had a couple of 'come to Jesus' meetings with him," the father of seven remembers, "and it made an impact."

Yuill wasn't surprised when that same youngster, now grown, suggested naming the new foster care home in honor of the family friend. Dedicated to the military hero on Sept. 22, Catholic Charities' new foster care house has a cornerstone that reads, "Bob 'Percy' Purcell, POW N. Vietnam 71/2 years. He was one of a kind." A metal sign over the door welcomes visitors with the words, "Percy's House."

The development director for Catholic Charities says the house exemplifies the agency's mission statement. Materials used to build the home, as well as the furnishings placed inside the rooms, were donated by different companies and individuals. Catholic Charities did not spend one cent on the project.

"Our mission statement says we serve those in need and call others of good will to do the same," Brown explains. "So the completion of this home was truly a mission moment for us."

Real St. Nicholas still leaving imprint on Orthodox and Catholic Alaska

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (CNS) — St. Nicholas, from whom the character of Santa Claus comes, looms large in Alaska where multiple Catholic and Orthodox churches bear the third-century saint's name.

His generosity and kindness to children is legendary, and veneration of the saint spans 1,700 years.

"St. Nicholas is next to the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist in devotion and veneration," said Father James Barrand, pastor of St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in Anchorage.

Like the Russian Orthodox, most Byzantine Catholic Churches contain icons of St. Nicholas.

Known in the West as the patron of children, St. Nicholas is seen in the East primarily as the patron of sailors, based on accounts of his calming the seas during his return from a pilgrimage in the Holy Land and his appearance to storm-tossed sailors off the coast of Lycia.

These miracles were related across the world, especially by missionaries to Russia. St. Nicholas is the patron of Russia and many cities and towns throughout the world.

Deacon Charles Rohrbacher, an iconographer at the Catholic



Cathedral of the Nativity in downtown Juneau, said there are many icons and images of St. Nicholas on fishing boats and other sailing vessels in Alaska and elsewhere.

According to Father Michael Oleksa, an Orthodox priest who is rector of St. Alexis Church and chancellor of the Orthodox Diocese of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska, more churches in the Orthodox tradition are named for St. Nicholas than for any other saint.

In Alaska, such churches can be found in Nikolski, Chignik, Tatitlik,

Iliamna, and Nondalton. The oldest of these is St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Juneau, established in 1894.

According to its pastor, Father Simeon Johnson, the church received its name from native Tlingit elders. The son of a community leader went to San Francisco where he was to be baptized. While he was gone, several people had dreams of a bearded, balding, white-haired man.

When the young man returned, he brought an image of St. Nicholas. After the elders recognized it as the one from the dreams, the church received its name and more than 700 Tlingit people were baptized there.

St. Nicholas Catholic Church in North Pole, Alaska, received its name with help from the Catholic Church Extension Society, which helped build the church. The town which bears the name of the traditional home of Santa Claus attracts tourists, and many photograph the church and its statue of Santa kneeling and praying at the feet of the infant Jesus.

St. Nicholas of Myra was born to wealthy parents in the Greek colony of Patara in A.D. 270. His parents died while he was a child, leaving him a considerable fortune

that he later used to support the needy, sick, and suffering of Myra, part of modern-day Turkey. There, he was appointed bishop while still a young man.

He suffered persecution and imprisonment under the Roman Emperor Diocletian and is said to have attended the Council of Nicea in 325. St. Nicholas died in Myra in 346. In 1087, in advance of Muslim invaders, sailors spirited away the saint's remains to Bari, Italy, where they are today. For this reason, he is also known as Nicholas of Bari.

The historical facts of the life of St. Nicholas are both scanty and disputed, but the many legends and folk tales associated with him are numerous. The most widely known story has the good saint dropping bags of gold through an open window to an impoverished father of three daughters to pay for their dowries, thus preventing their being sold into a life of prostitution.

Variations have the money dropping into shoes or stockings drying near the fireplace, resulting in the characterization of Santa Claus as the quintessential gift-giver.

Stories of the saint's aid to children and the close proximity of

his feast day (Dec. 6) to Christmas links the man to the tradition of gift-giving. In many countries, Dec. 6 is traditionally one of exchanging presents. This custom was brought to the United States by Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam who painted the saint as a Nordic magician — Sinter Klaas.

In the present day, Orthodox churches honor the feast of St. Nicholas with various celebrations, including traditional songs and a visit from St. Nicholas to the children.

In Catholic circles, John Michalski, cantor and longtime parishioner at St. Nicholas of Myra in Anchorage, dressed as the sainted bishop on the evening of Dec. 11 and received children and their gifts to honor the generosity of their patron. The gifts were then given to Clare House shelter for homeless mothers and children.

As Dcn. Rohrbacher said, the celebration of the life of St. Nicholas, whether on his feast day or in relation to Christmas, is "a real call to be advocates for those who are vulnerable." He is a saint both the East and West share, "a saint from an undivided Church whose feast comes early in Advent."

Johnson...

FROM PAGE 32

Schools banquet are familiar with his work. For the past 10 years, Big Bad Wolf has crafted the film tribute to local schools that is shown during the dinner.

Johnson's assistance in disseminating the message and mission of Catholic education is invaluable in today's high-tech marketplace, according to Superintendent of Catholic Schools Don Miller.

"Not only is he generous in producing the videos, but he's become an active advocate for Catholic schools through his creative energy, his passion for Catholic education, and his support of our efforts," Miller said.

A graduate of Little Rock's Our Lady of Holy Souls Elementary School and Catholic High School for Boys, Johnson credits his value-based education for the personal and professional success he's achieved. He gave his children, Alex and Brian, the same opportunity by sending them to St. Rita and Nolan Catholic High School.

"Catholic schools offer a well-rounded education and exposure to the arts, but the primary advantage is how they develop the soul," Johnson explains. "Through religion class and regular Mass participation, Catholic schools ingrain ethics and benevolence into each child."

Classroom discussions on compassion and charity are something the cradle Catholic has never forgotten. Johnson still remembers his first experience with homelessness during a seventh grade field trip.

"The nuns packed us into a bus, and we went to an area of town on the south side of Little Rock Airport where people without adequate housing would set up cardboard homes," he recalls.

Students later collected coats and clothing for a shelter located near the makeshift, cardboard city.

"To this day I have an image in my mind of that day and how lucky my schoolmates and I were to live in nice, warm houses," he adds.

Other lessons on kindness hit closer to home. Johnson grew up in a broken family. His parents divorced in 1963 when he was six and his sister was a newborn.

"Divorce wasn't a common occurrence back then, especially in a Catholic household," he admits, "so entering

"I had such great support from my teachers and the staff," Johnson reflects. "I didn't realize it at the time, but they really were an extended family to me as I was growing up."



ABOVE: Chuck Johnson edits videos at his desk.

RIGHT: Johnson relaxes on the golf course with his old teacher from Arkansas, Michael Moran, whom he still keeps in contact with.

(PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHUCK JOHNSON)



Holy Souls Catholic School was great therapy for me."

His mother was given a huge tuition break and would later become the school's secretary. The nuns also helped the struggling family by giving the youngsters leftover cheese and butter at the end of the school year.

"I had such great support from my teachers and the staff," Johnson reflects. "I didn't realize it at the time, but they really were an extended family to me as I was growing up."

Catholic educators also encouraged his creative abilities. Sixth grade teacher Paula Jegley recognized the different talents of each student and would persuade them to enter competitions.

"She noticed writing was one of my strengths," says Johnson, who remembers submitting a slogan for a city-wide beautification contest.

The 11-year-old was treated to an awards banquet and got his picture in the paper when his entry, "Clean Up Today for a More Beautiful Tomorrow," received an honorable mention.

Another teacher gave her seventh and eighth grade students guitar lessons.

"Sr. Maureen was really 'hip' and introduced us to the guitar," says Johnson, who would use his newfound skill with the instrument to perform during the school's contemporary

folk Masses. "I still play the guitar and love it. One of the connections I have to the Church is through music as liturgy."

In a similar way, the innovative use of technology can reach today's young people. The "under 30" crowd has grown up with the Internet, computers, smart phones, texting, iPods, and 500 channels of TV programming.

"They are accustomed to instant and continuous access to information. So to communicate with the younger generation, the Church will need to keep up with the times," argues Johnson, who graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in radio/TV/film. "Video is one the most effective ways to do that."

The visual medium can entertain or persuade and is available to anyone with an Internet connection.

"Videos give the same message every time," Johnson says, pointing out the benefit of repeatability. "In a diocese as widespread as Fort Worth, it's important to deliver the same accurate information everywhere."

The founder of Big Bad Wolf Creative Group says using his audio/visual skills to promote the ministry of Catholic schools is a way of giving back. Ensuring a faith-based education for other youngsters is a deeply-felt, personal obligation.

"It's important to give back to my Church through talent, treasure, and time," he says. "I think the nuns, priests, and lay teachers I had did a pretty good job ingrain that in me!"

Pope says Catholic newspapers have 'irreplaceable' role

By John Thavis

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI said the Catholic press has an irreplaceable role in forming Christian consciences and reflecting the church's viewpoint on contemporary issues.

Despite the crisis in print media today, the Catholic newspaper still has a vital role to play in diocesan communications, the pope said. He made the remarks Nov. 26 to members of the Italian Federation of Catholic Weeklies, which represents 188 Catholic newspapers.

The pope said that while secular

media often reflect a skeptical and relativistic attitude toward truth, the Church knows that people need the full truth brought by Christ.

"The mission of the church consists in creating the conditions so that this meeting with Christ can be realized. Cooperating in this task, the communications media are called to serve the truth with courage, to help public opinion see and read reality from an evangelical viewpoint," he said.

A primary task of the Catholic newspaper, he said, is to "give voice to a point of view that reflects Catholic thinking on all ethical and

social questions."

The pope said the printed newspaper, because of its simplicity and widespread distribution, remains an effective way of spreading news about local diocesan events and developments, including charity initiatives.

As "newspapers of the people," he said, Catholic papers can also favor real dialogue between different social sectors and debate among people of different opinions.

"By doing this, Catholic newspapers not only fulfill the important task of providing information, but also perform an

irreplaceable formative function" in the education of "critical and Christian consciences," he said.

The pope said Catholic journalists should give witness to

their faith in their work. Their success as Catholic communicators will depend above all on their personal relationship with Christ, he said.

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Events Calendar

Around the Diocese and region

January Dates

6

DIVORCE CARE AND DIVORCE CARE FOR KIDS (DC4K)

Each Thursday through March 31, 6:30-8:30
St. Paul Church, 5508 Black Oak Ln., River Oaks. For information, contact Stephanie Ayala at (817) 239-1297 or sayala3@sbcglobal.net, or Dr. Dianne Garcia at (817) 201-3656 or dgdocofdc@yahoo.com.

GRIEF SHARE AND GRIEF SHARE FOR KIDS (GS4K)

Each Thursday through March 31, 6:30-8:30
St. Paul Church, 5508 Black Oak Ln., River Oaks. For information, contact Deacon Ron Aziere at (817) 738-9925 or ron@stpaulfw.org, or call the parish office at (817) 738-9925.

10

MEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

Second Monday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Single men ages 16-50; St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

11

WOMEN'S MONTHLY DISCERNMENT

Second Tuesday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Single women ages 16-50; St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Kyle Walterscheid at (817) 560-3300 ext. 110.

15

BISHOP VANN TO SPEAK AT AHAVATH SHALOM, JEWISH SYNA-GOGUE

1 p.m.
Ahavath Shalom Synagogue, 4050 S. Hulen St., Fort Worth. All are invited. More information is available on page 7 of this issue of the *North Texas Catholic*.

25TH ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MASS

7 p.m.
St. Patarick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. Bishop Kevin Vann will be the celebrant and Bishop Martin D. Holley, auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C. will be the homilist. For information, call (817) 560-3300, ext. 254

15-16

THE INCARNATE WORD AND BLESSED SACRAMENT SISTERS COME AND SEE WEEKEND

Discernment weekend for women ages 18 through 50. Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria, Texas. For information, call (361) 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com or iwbsvoc2@yahoo.com.

21

ANNUAL RESPECT LIFE MASS

7 p.m.
St. Patrick Cathedral, 1206 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Chanacee Ruth Killgore at (817) 560-2452, ext. 257.

21-23

RETRouvaille WEEKEND

Ministry offering tools to rediscover a loving marriage relationship. For information, call (817) 560-3300 or visit the retrouvaille website at www.retrouvaille.org. All inquiries are kept confidential.

RACHEL'S VINEYARD WEEKEND RETREAT

This is a confidential retreat. For information, call (817) 923-4757.

22

BILINGUAL ROE MEMORIAL MASS AND MARCH

12 p.m.
Concelebrated by Bishop Kevin Farrel, diocese of Dallas, and Bishop Kevin Vann, diocese of Fort Worth, Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, 2215 Rose Ave., Dallas. For information, contact Chanacee Ruth Killgore at (817) 560-2452, ext. 257.

24TH ANNUAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BANQUET

Social hour 6 p.m.; Dinner 7 p.m.
Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom, 1201 Houston St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Tessa Ross at (817) 560-3300, ext. 280 or visit the diocesan website at www.fwdioc.org.

HIKE FOR LIFE

Registration: 1:30 - 2 p.m.; Beginning Ceremony: 2 - 2:30 p.m.; Kickoff: 2:30 p.m. St. Stephen Church, 1802 Bethel Rd., Weatherford. For information or to register, go to www.hikeforlifetexas.com.

23

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

12 p.m.
Classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning. A Couple to Couple League course will begin at Holy Trinity Mission, 800 High Crest Dr., Azle. To register and for more information, contact Kevin and Michelle Vina at (940) 433-5664. Visit www.ccldfw.org for more class dates and information

27

FORT WORTH DIOCESAN MINISTRY TO PERSONS WITH SAME SEX ATTRACTION

7 p.m.
Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, contact Father Warren Murphy at (817) 919-1122 or Dorene Rose at (817) 329-7370.

28

FAMILY MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR UNBORN BABIES

Naming Ceremony 6:30 p.m. - Mass 7 p.m.
St. Andrew Church, 3717 Stadium Dr., Fort Worth. For information, contact Alice Curran at (817) 927-5383 or acurran@standrewcc.org.

28-30

BEGINNING EXPERIENCE WEEKEND

Catholic Renewal Center, 4503 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, call (972) 601-4091 or e-mail the DFW Beginning Experience Team at dfwbe@hotmail.com. Additional information on the program may be found on www.beginningexperiencedfw.org or www.beginningexperience.org.

February Dates

3

HABAKKUK AND BEL AND THE DRAGON - 4-WEEK SERIES

Old Testament Study program - Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24
7 - 8:30 p.m.
St. Andrew School Library, 3304 Dryden Rd., Fort Worth. For information, call the Pastoral Center at (817) 927-5383.

4

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

7 p.m.
Classes in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning. A Couple to Couple League course will begin at St. Peter the Apostle Church, 1201 S. Cherry Lane, White Settlement. To register and for more information, contact Bill and Mary Kouba at (817) 370-9193. Visit www.ccldfw.org for more class dates and information

5

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH PRAYER WORKSHOP

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
St. Joseph Church, 600 S. Jupiter Rd., Richardson. For information, visit www.cellofpeace.com or call (972) 722-6029. Registration deadline, Jan. 29.

6

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

1 p.m.
A Couple to Couple League course will begin at Sacred Heart High School in the library, 614 Endres St., Muenster. To register and for more information, contact Scott and Vickie Green at (940) 759-4475. Visit www.ccldfw.org for more class dates and information

11-13

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Weekend Retreat, Catholic Renewal Center, 4305 Bridge St., Fort Worth. For information, visit the website at www.northtexasmarriageencouer.org, or call Kathy and Terry Telger at (817) 294-2749.

12

PURE REALITY YOUTH RALLY

2:30 - 9 p.m.
Metro Center, 1501 W. Pioneer Parkway, Arlington. For information, contact Sue Laux at (817) 939-8595

24-27

TEXAS MISSION CONFERENCE - FOCUS ON YOUTH IN MISSION

Hotel Trinity, 2000 Beach St., Fort Worth. For information contact Alfonso Mirabal at (214) 821-4501 or Fr. Gerry Kelly at (713) 529-1912. To register online visit www.texasmissioncouncil.org

25

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT - MUSIC, MEDITATION, PRAYER

7 p.m.
St. Vincent de Paul Church, 5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Arlington. For information, call (817) 478-8206.

Official Assignments

The following assignments have been made by Bishop Kevin Vann:

Rev. Msgr. Michael Olson, rector of Holy Trinity Seminary, Irving, has been assigned as Episcopal Vicar for Moral Theology/Bioethical concerns, in accord with all rights and provisions of the Canons 476-481, and those of the Pastoral Handbook of the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective November 17, 2010.

Rev. Joy Joseph, TOR, has been assigned as Promoter of Justice, in accord with all the rights and provisions of Canons 1430-1437.

Rev. Emmanuel Lewis, has been assigned as assisting priest in residence at Holy Cross Parish, The Colony, in accord with all rights and provisions of the Canons 545-552, and those of the Pastoral Handbook of the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective Jan. 1, 2011.

Rev. Albert Francis Kanjiranthumkal, HGN, upon presentation of his religious superior, has been as priest in residence at Sacred Heart Parish, Wichita Falls, and pastoral assistance of Sacred Heart Parish, Seymour; St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Megargel; St. Joseph Parish, Rhineland; and Santa Rosa Parish, Knox City, effective, Jan. 1, 2011.

Rev. Pablo Jaramaillo, OFM Cap., upon presentation of his religious superior has been assigned as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Fort Worth, in accord with all rights and provisions of the Canons 545-552 and those of the Pastoral Handbook of the Diocese of Fort Worth, effective Nov. 15, 2010.

Good Newsmaker

The Catholic Schools Office will present the Diocesan Leadership Award to Chuck Johnson, co-owner of the Big Bad Wolf Creative Group, for his work

Behind the Scenes

in support of the diocese and Catholic schools at its annual banquet Jan. 22

*By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Correspondent*

Chuck Johnson credits the 12 years spent in Catholic schools for shaping his character, but it was an outing to a children's TV show that inspired his career.

The Little Rock, Arkansas, native was just seven years old when his parents took him to a taping of Bozo the clown at KATV-TV. While the other youngsters watched the slapstick antics of the popular, orange-haired character, Johnson was mesmerized by what was going on behind the scenes.

"I was more interested in the studio technicians who were working the lights and cameras," says the self-described geek who grew up liking science, electronics, and computers.

His grandparents claimed his penchant for math and science was due to the family bloodline. Albert Einstein is a distant cousin of his maternal grandfather.

On January 22, Johnson can add another interesting footnote to the family history when he receives the Diocesan Leadership Award from Bishop Kevin Vann at the Catholic Schools Banquet. The video production specialist, who parlayed his knack for tinkering and technology into jobs at radio and television stations, is being

honored for his extensive working relationship with the Diocese of Fort Worth and Catholic Schools Office. Co-owner of the Big Bad Wolf Creative Group, Johnson and his wife, Deborah, produced video programming for the historic 2001 Synod, Safe Environment sessions, All Schools Mass, deacon ordinations, the diocese's 40th Anniversary celebration as well as the ordination of Bishop Vann as the third bishop of Fort Worth. Attendees at the annual Catholic

SEE JOHNSON, P. 30



Photo courtesy of Chuck Johnson

Chuck Johnson, co-owner of Big Bad Wolf Creative Group, has produced video programming for the diocese and diocesan schools for the last 10 years. He will be honored with the Diocesan Leadership Award at the 24th annual Celebration of Catholic Schools banquet Saturday, Jan. 22.

24th Annual Celebration of Catholic Schools

The Catholic Schools Office has announced that everyone is invited "to join Bishop Vann and Catholic school parents, friends, educators, benefactors, and alumni to celebrate the contributions of Catholic Schools and their tradition of faith-formation, service, and academic excellence," for the 24th annual Celebration of Catholic Schools, set for Saturday, Jan. 22 in the Fort Worth Convention Center Ballroom. The Schools Office has announced that "outstanding individuals from throughout the diocese will be honored for their contributions to the school communities; student artwork will be on display; and student musicians and a children's choir will provide entertainment." Featured speaker for the annual celebration will be Karen Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association. John Rhadigan, Fox Sports anchor, and a parent of children in Catholic schools, will serve as master of ceremonies. The event begins with a social hour at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$80 per person. Reservations may be made by calling Tessy Ross in the Catholic Schools Office at (817) 560-3300 or by e-mailing her at tross@fwdioc.org, or by visiting the website: www.fwdioc.org.