

CATHOLIC SPIRIT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

Youth convention draws largest crowd ever

By **JENNIFER KODYSZ**
CORRESPONDENT

For months the excitement was mounting; a Twitter feed on the Austin Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference (DCYC) web page kept participants informed, urged them to pray and get excit-

ed about the event that brought about 2,200 people to the Waco Convention Center Jan. 20-22. They came from more than 80 parishes throughout the diocese. This year's conference drew about 400 more participants than DCYC in 2011.

The theme "Unafraid," was based on Hebrews 13:6, "Thus

we may say with confidence: 'the Lord is my helper [and] I will not be afraid, what can anyone else do to me?'" It was also based on the message "Be not afraid," from Blessed Pope John Paul II, and used an image of the crucifix as its logo.

The excitement was evident each time the conference doors

opened for the sessions; participants eagerly awaited Mass, prayer services, skits, entertainment and keynote speakers Ennie Hickman and Jackie François.

In his keynote session on Friday evening, Hickman offered a challenge for the weekend. For the first part of his challenge, he encouraged participants to "be intentionally quiet," so they could hear God speaking to them. The second part of his challenge was to "give God space," to work in their lives; the final part of his challenge was to "respond," to God.

François used her musical talents to incorporate secular and worship music into her keynote sessions where she discussed love, faith and what it means to be Catholic in our society.

"We should never leave Mass the same ... every time we leave Mass we should be transformed by the body and blood of Christ," she said.

Saturday began with daily Mass celebrated by Father Michael O'Connor, pastor of St. John Vianney Parish in Round Rock. The day included multiple rounds of workshops in the morning and afternoon. Participants were able to choose from workshops topics about saints, Scripture, social justice,

youth ministry, music ministry and much more. Workshops included female and male only sessions, sessions for adults only and workshops offered in Spanish. On Saturday evening, teens who are seniors in high school had the opportunity to eat dinner with Bishop Joe Vásquez.

Participants were also offered an opportunity to go to the sacrament of reconciliation at various times throughout the weekend and experience Eucharistic adoration Saturday evening, which was led by Father Charlie Garza, associate pastor of Santa Cruz Parish in Buda.

Father Garza used the conference theme of "Unafraid," to talk about fears and asking God to help us overcome our fears.

"When we offer our fears to God, they become transformed," he said.

Sunday morning concluded with Mass celebrated by Bishop Vásquez. He encouraged the participants to take their experiences and what they learned over the course of the weekend, and go out and share it with others.

He also spoke about prayer and told participants to "be unafraid to pray ... Jesus on the cross is our hope," he said.

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TEENS perform the hand motions to a song at the Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference, which was held Jan. 20-22 at the Waco Convention Center. More than 80 parishes sent teens and their adult sponsors to the event. (Photo by Jennifer Kodysz)

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A TOUCH OF STAINED GLASS

Windows in adoration chapel bring deeper meaning to space.

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MEET OUR SEMINARIANS

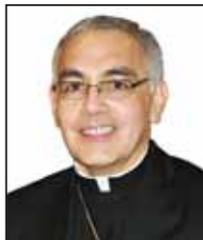
Supplement introduces the men studying for the priesthood.

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Love, no matter the type, involves sacrifice and commitment.

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CATHOLIC BOSS

Waco Catholic featured on national television show.

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THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT

As the official newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, the CATHOLIC SPIRIT is dedicated to providing information, education and formation for the Catholic community of Central Texas. This mission calls for the newspaper:

- to provide readers with an understanding of our Catholic faith and traditions;
- to be a primary source of information on Catholic issues relevant to the community;
- to be a unifying element for faith communities, both rural and urban, throughout Central Texas;
- to show respect for and appreciation of all cultural groups and traditions;
- to emphasize topics affirming the Catholic community and life, while acknowledging the humanity of the community and examining, with courage, topics that challenge and encourage growth in the faith;
- to carry a commitment to social justice that will support the renewal of the church in Central Texas.

HOW TO SUBMIT INFORMATION

Deadline for submission of articles or information for the CATHOLIC SPIRIT is the 10th of the month for publication in the following month's edition.

Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 10.

You can submit material in any of the following ways:

- E-mail to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org.
- Mail to CATHOLIC SPIRIT, 6225 Hwy. 290 E., Austin, TX 78723.

For additional information, call (512) 949-2443 or e-mail us at catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org. CATHOLIC SPIRIT has unrestricted editing rights.

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Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words. Name and full address of the writer must be provided, though name will be withheld from publication on request. We reserve the right to edit or withhold all letters. Please e-mail to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org or mail to Editor, Catholic Spirit, 6225 Hwy. 290 E., Austin, TX 78723.

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STAFF

Publisher: Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez, Bishop of Austin

Editor: Shelley Metcalf; (512) 949-2400, shelley-metcalf@austindiocese.org

Assistant Editor: Christian R. González; (512) 949-2400, christian-gonzalez@austindiocese.org

Advertising: Shelley Metcalf; (512) 949-2400, shelley-metcalf@austindiocese.org

Spanish translation: Beatriz Ferrer Welsh

Columnists: Barbara Budde, Mary Lou Gibson and Melinda Rodriguez

Correspondents: Jennifer Kodysz, Cristina Lopez, Amy Moraczewski, Enedelia Obregón, Michele Chan Santos, Mary P. Walker and Donna Poston Williams

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From the cry room

I know I can hear, but do I listen?

BY SHELLEY METCALF
CATHOLIC SPIRIT STAFF

I chuckled to myself as I listened to the first reading on Jan. 15 where God is calling Samuel as he is sleeping in the temple. Poor Samuel is confused and thinks it's Eli calling him time after time but finally Eli, the wise man that he is, realizes what is going on.

"Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect," 1 Sm 3: 3b-10, 19.

I have to admit this type of thing happens at my house all the time, but it's not God who is calling, or then again, maybe it is! My 4-year-old daughter has a habit of calling for me all the time. When we are together, only a minute or two can pass before I hear "Momma?" in that sweet little voice and if I don't answer, I hear "Momma?" times four or five or a thousand.

This little habit of hers can be annoying, especially since most of the time she is not hurt or sick and she does not need me, she is just making sure I am within earshot. Sometimes that little voice saying "Momma?" invades my dreams, kind of like God calling Samuel as he slept. The voice startles me awake and I hurry to her room only to find her sleeping peacefully.

I love this story of Samuel, and the key point of the story for me is learning the voice of God. At first, Samuel did not know God was the one who was calling him, and Eli had to help Samuel recognize God's voice. I feel like Samuel quite often because I don't recognize God's voice much of the time.

When I hear my daughter's little voice in

the middle of the night, my eyes pop open, my heart starts pounding and my feet hit the floor running. My response to God's voice is rarely as significant. Although there are times when I hear God calling to me and act immediately, typically I feel him calling me but I refuse to recognize it is God. In fact, he usually has to repeat himself over and over again before I recognize him and listen to what he is telling me.

I think there are two lessons for me in all of this. One is that God is forgiving, patient and persistent. He is going to keep calling me until I recognize it is him and listen with an open heart.

And the other is that when my daughter calls "Momma?", I should not answer with my typical exasperated "What?" Perhaps, my response should be something like, "Speak, child, your mother is listening." Or maybe I just need to give her lots of hugs and kisses and tell her how much I love her, which is probably why she calls to me anyway.



SHELLEY METCALF lives in Cedar Park with her husband and two children. They are parishioners of St. Margaret Mary Parish.

Sister Palacios died at age of 90 in Brenham

Poor Clare Sister Mary Joseph Palacios died Jan. 22 at the age of 90. She was born in Oregon and prior to becoming a religious sister, she was married and had three children. She joined the Monastery of St. Clare in Corpus Christi in 1979 and moved to the Brenham monastery in 1984.

For more than 25 years, Sister Palacios held the roles of cook, bread maker, ceramic painter, artist and storyteller at the Brenham monastery.

She is survived by her three children, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

The Mass of Christian burial was celebrated Jan. 24 by Father David Ivy, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Brenham.

Father Niehaus died from cancer Jan. 19

Schoenstatt Father Jonathan Niehaus died of lung cancer in Koblenz, Germany, on Jan. 19. Father Niehaus was born June 5, 1960, the oldest of six children of Veronica and Melvin Niehaus. He graduated from Ivanhoe High School in 1978 and from Southwest State University in 1982.

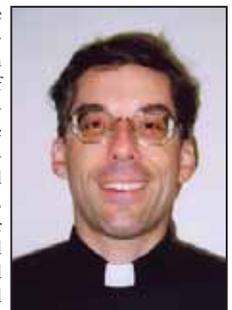
He joined the community of Schoenstatt Fathers and lived at their house of studies in Muenster, Germany, while attending classes at the Wilhelm University of Muenster. After finishing his studies there, he served one year as deacon at St. Mary Parish Elm Grove, Wisc. Bishop Raymond Lucker ordained him to the priesthood on June 4, 1994 in Sleepy Eye, Minn.

Beginning in 1996, Father Niehaus devoted his time to the formation of Schoenstatt youth and he wrote several books on Schoenstatt spirituality.

He came to Austin in 2005 to join the community of Schoenstatt Fathers and soon thereafter Bishop Gregory Aymond appointed him director of the H.L. Grant Catholic Student Center at Texas State University in San Marcos.

In 2009, the Schoenstatt community called him to join the team of educators in Germany, from there he travelled to India, Africa and South America. Last September doctors discovered Father Niehaus had lung cancer that had metastasized to other parts of the body.

A memorial Mass was held Jan. 23 at the H.L. Grant Catholic Student Center in San Marcos. A memorial fund in honor of Father Niehaus has been established at the center. All donations will be used to support the missionary efforts of Saint Paul's Outreach operating at the center. For more information, visit www.txstatecatholic.org or call (512) 392-5925.



FATHER Jonathan Niehaus

Retreat seeks to keep teens, young adults active in faith

By ENEDELIA J. OBREGÓN
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

There's a great debate as to why Catholics leave the church as young adults. While the hard numbers are in dispute, anecdotal evidence has people like Gracia Ávila worried. For several years, she and others at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin have searched for ways to stop young Catholics from falling away from the church.

"I noticed once they were confirmed or graduated we lost a lot of teens," said Ávila, who with her husband, has volunteered in youth activities since their now-grown children were teenagers. "A lot of things seem to get in the way. I wanted to find something that helps young adults transition from high school to college."

Meanwhile, Joseph Pearson, a fellow parishioner, had approached Msgr. Mike Sis, then pastor at St. Thomas More, about bringing Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) to the Austin Diocese. TEC is a recognized movement of the Roman Catholic Church that offers teenagers and young adults an experience in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus through a three-day retreat. The program is specifically designed for teenagers at least 17 years old and in their second-semester as juniors in high school through age 24. Pearson attended TEC in 1978 at age 17.

Msgr. Sis left St. Thomas More to serve as the diocesan Vicar General in 2010, and Pear-

son worked with Msgr. Elmer Holtman to request permission for TEC to come to the diocese.

Their request was granted, and Alison Koederitz Tate, the diocesan director of Youth, Young Adults and Campus Ministry, is excited about the new opportunity for teens.

"TEC is a national program with a long tradition in the United States, and the Diocese of Austin is happy to be a new part of that movement," she said.

Bishop Joe Vásquez appointed Msgr. Holtman as spiritual director for TEC in February 2011.

Pearson invited the Ávilas, Msgr. Holtman and five others to attend a TEC weekend in January 2011 in New Orleans and others attended a summer retreat in Kansas. That core group of adults, young adults and teenagers will share their experiences at the first three-day TEC retreat March 16-18 at Eagle's Wings Retreat Center near Burnet.

The young people are eager to share their faith and the excitement of the experience, which they say is unlike any retreat they have ever attended.

Lauren Afflerbaugh, 20, a sophomore at Texas Christian University, drove to Kansas with her father to attend a TEC weekend last summer.

"Everyone is there voluntarily — it's not like a Confirmation retreat where you have to go," she said. "It's more mature and more reflective."

Melinda Szavo, a freshman at St. Edward's University and

parishioner at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park, compared it to the difference between high school and college.

"In high school, you're there because you have to," she said. "In college, you are paying because you want to be there."

Jimmy Colfer, 18 and a senior at Westwood High School in Austin, said he has attended numerous retreats and thought this would be another fun experience with an opportunity to participate in fun activities and meet new people.

"It was different," he said. "We spent a lot of time listening to others."

Ávila said the in-depth faith sharing at TEC is firmly grounded in Catholic teaching and makes one "proud to be Catholic." This includes not only teens sharing, but adults and people in religious life.

Colfer said teens "have to be courageous" to attend TEC.

"You have to go and just say 'yes' like when Jesus called his disciples," Colfer said. "They dropped everything to follow him. That's what you have to do: Just follow and trust."

The group also enjoyed the intergenerational aspect of the weekend, since there were adult of various ages helping. One of those was Leland Butler, 67, a parishioner at St. Thomas More, who wonders how his life would have been different if he'd been able to attend TEC as a youngster.

"I had to pay my 'tuition' in life," he said.

Marty Afflerbaugh said that as he and his daughter drove home from Kansas, it hit him after the TEC gathering that "we were all one body in Christ."

"I'd never been in a retreat where I didn't know somebody," he said. "We didn't know anybody in Kansas. They were so welcoming."

Pearson said that is possible because of the different ages and backgrounds of those attending a diocesan-wide event.

"By the time teens are juniors or seniors they've met nearly everybody" in parish teen programs, he said. "By this age they are ready to meet people outside their immediate scope. It's an opportunity to meet the larger church."

Having a diocesan-wide program also allows small parishes with fewer resources the opportunity for their teenagers and young adults to participate.

Megan Copeland, a parishioner at St. John Vianney Parish in Round Rock, attended TEC hoping to encourage teenagers from her parish to attend. She liked the aspect of teenagers witnessing to other teens and hopes that will also appeal to the youth in her parish.

"They were being awakened and giving the gift to someone else," she said. "It's the most rewarding thing to do. Sharing their love of Christ with others the same age is more effective ..."

The core team is praying that teenagers and young adults will get fired up about

their faith after TEC and become full and active members of their faith instead of drifting away.

Catholics have reason to worry about losing young people. A survey of the 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion cited that one of every 10 people in the U.S. is a former Catholic. Of the 31 percent of people who say they were raised Catholic, about 24 percent identify themselves as Catholic adults.

The reasons for this are as complex and varied as the individuals.

For Allison Reeves, 21, who grew up Catholic, the change came when she moved away for a couple of years and she "lost touch" with her faith.

The Texas State University student and parishioner at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park is now on the TEC core team.

"The assistant youth minister asked me to go," she said of the reason for attending the TEC retreat. "I was agnostic at that point. I think God was using (him). Otherwise I'd still be agnostic."

At TEC, Reeves realized she "missed being Catholic."

"After TEC everything fell into place," she said. "I'm different now. I'm different than I was six months ago."

To register for the retreat in March go to <http://tec-ctx.org/TEC/Home.html> and click "applications."

More than 2,200 attend youth conference in Waco

DCYC

Continued from Page 1

Angie Harmon, program coordinator for the diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry, considered DCYC 2012 a success.

"DCYC was an amazing event; we had great speakers, a wonderful committee and generous sponsors, Harmon said.

Local band Soundwave served as the house band for the weekend. The band provided their original song "Come on," to be used as the theme song for the weekend. This is the third consecutive year that Soundwave has served as the house band for DCYC.

"This is what we love to do, we love to lead people into the Spirit of God through music; we love to worship with the youth and we love to empower them to worship with us," said Jeremy Rodriguez, lead vocalist.

Eleven teens from parishes across the diocese also served in the unique leadership position of youth animators for the weekend. More than 40 teens applied to serve in this way; those who were chosen acted in skits, led hand motions for the theme song, introduced the keynote speakers and got the crowd excited for upcoming sessions. The teens also shared faith together, as they lifted each other up in prayer in their personal lives as well as at the conference.

"They were aware of the fact they were one of many applicants; they were honored and humbled and that showed at every retreat and rehearsal weekend and during DCYC," said Marlene Lopez, Youth Animator coordinator.

Yvonne Hernandez, a teen from St. Anthony Marie de Claret Parish in Kyle, enjoyed her experience at DCYC.

"I've had a really amazing

time. It's something that you have to come and do and see for yourself. It's an awesome experience and it makes you

feel like a totally new person," she said.

Tiara Kirk, also a teen from St. Anthony Parish, agreed.

"You have to experience it for yourself ... you're going to change afterwards if you let the Spirit move you," she said.



BISHOP JOE VÁSQUEZ celebrated Mass with the more than 2,200 present at the Diocesan Catholic Youth Conference Jan. 20-22 in Waco. (Photo courtesy the DiCarlos, www.sundayschildsnapshots.com)

Windows add prayerful dimension to chapel

By ENEDELIA J. OBREGÓN
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

The centuries-old tradition of stained glass windows has received a new, yet traditional, look at Emmaus, Church of the Resurrection Parish in Lakeway.

Last September the parish installed three stained glass windows depicting a landscape in the adoration chapel.

Father Samuel Hose, pastor of Emmaus Parish, said the response to the new windows in the chapel has been overwhelming.

“Last year after we opened the chapel, we had presentations and sign-ups for perpetual adoration and we had overwhelming response,” he said. “The environment is part of the reason.”

Father Hose said when he arrived at Emmaus in June 2007, discussions began on expanding the facilities, including adding an adoration chapel. The building committee chose Heimsath Architects of Austin to oversee the expansion. The architectural firm has worked with churches for many years.

As plans progressed, Father Hose said the idea arose for having stained glass windows in



THE ADORATION CHAPEL at Emmaus Parish in Lakeway features three stained glass windows. The chapel is designed to invite people to prayer, said parish leaders. (Photo by Eneledia J. Obregón)

the chapel. However, that was an added cost.

“We always intended to have stained glass,” he said, but to do that a few years later. However, a couple in the parish, who wish to remain anonymous, offered \$40,000 for the windows if the parish would match the other

\$40,000. The matching money was quickly raised and architect Ben Heimsath got to work on plans for the windows.

The windows were made at Dick Bour Artglass in Fayetteville.

Heimsath, a parishioner at the University Catholic Center at the University of Texas, got his inspiration from the former Ursuline Academy in San Antonio, built in 1851 and includes a Gothic-Revival style chapel. The academy is now the Southwest School of Art.

Father Hose got his inspiration from a Chagall stained-glass window at the Art Institute of Chicago. Working with Father Hose, the donors and Joan Brown, who is in charge of the perpetual adoration schedule, Heimsath rendered their ideas into a design.

The windows, which face roughly north to southeast, wrap around three of the walls in the hexagonal shaped chapel, bringing the eye to the focal point, which is the crucifix and the stone altar with the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament. The wood on the wall behind the altar is a gothic-shaped arch motif to reflect the images of the gothic arches from the church.

As one walks in, the small window to the left of the altar may seem like an afterthought, but it continues the sky scene from the three large panels and contains more blues. The window also holds the sanctuary flame and shares a wall with the new Parish Life Center, and can be seen by those walking through

the PLC area.

“We wanted to connect it with the rest of the space,” Heimsath said. “We wanted a reminder that this isn’t just a social hall. What happens (in the PLC) is a continuation of what is happening in the adoration chapel. We wanted to remind people that day-to-day activities are an element of prayer and all levels of activity here are a celebration of our faith.”

A giant cypress tree — a traditional symbol of eternal life — dominates one panel. Its vine-covered branches with bunches of grapes stretch into the other two panels. The giant tree in brown also helps diffuse the intense morning sun.

A seed is depicted at the bottom of each panel. As the eye moves toward the top at the apex of each window, one can see a cross. It is a reminder that the seed that became Jesus through the Incarnation died on the cross.

Heimsath said the panels are traditional in some ways but modern in others.

“This is an adoration chapel,” he said. “So the focus needs to be on the Blessed Sacrament. The tree is a way to sew together the three designs.”

Heimsath said having figures in the glass windows would distract from the Blessed Sacrament. Because of the nuance of shapes and color on faces, the faces on figures would have to be painted in. That would also require more frequent restoration.

“I suggested pictures, but not figures, which can be distracting,” he said. “The action in the windows was to point the way to

the monstrance.”

The windows are dominated by bold colors such as cobalt blue, greens and reds, Heimsath said. Because the parish has Perpetual Adoration, there are people inside praying at all hours of the day and night. They did not want the windows to be a black void at night.

The colors on the windows change from bold in the morning to softer, diffused tones in the late afternoon light. The light will also change with the seasons. As the sunlight refracts on the colored glass, the colors are reflected on the walls in the chapel and across the crucifix and monstrance.

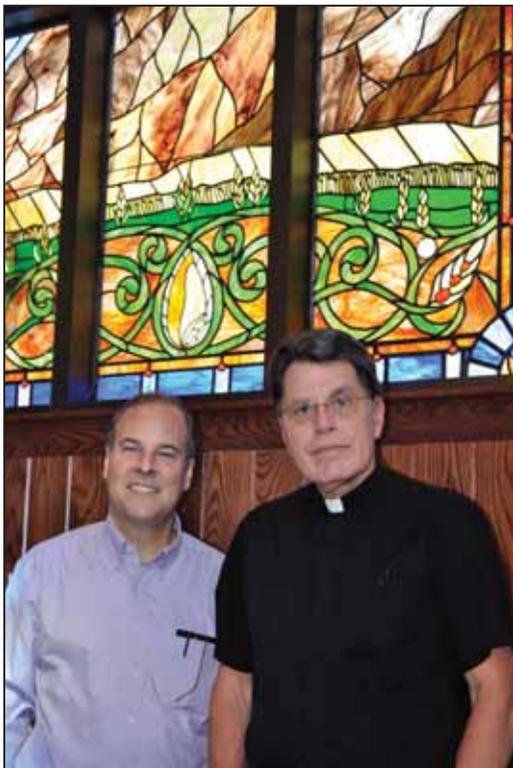
“The windows change the light and make the space livable,” he said. “We have such strong, intense sun that we had to manage it. That’s why we have the tree.”

Father Hose said the adoration chapel makes it convenient for retreats such as Christ Renews His Parish and ACTS, which have adoration as central to the experience.

“We have it right here,” he said. “If we can have people grow in their faith then those people become more involved in liturgy and are more willing to serve others.”

Father Hose said creating an atmosphere that invites people to prayer pays for itself in countless ways. Something as traditional as a stained glass window with the symbols embedded give people a special environment for prayer.

“It’s some place between heaven and earth,” he said.



BEN HEIMSATH (left), an architect, and Father Samuel Hose, pastor of Emmaus Parish in Lakeway, stand in the adoration chapel at Emmaus. Heimsath’s firm designed the chapel including the stained glass windows. (Photo by Eneledia J. Obregón)

Workshop helps explain annulment process

The Austin Diocese will host an Annulment Writing Workshop Feb. 10 from 7 to 9 p.m. and Feb. 11 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. The workshop will give participants a step-by-step explanation of annulment procedures, including how to tell one's story and how to find witnesses to back up one's story. The sessions incorporate prayer breaks throughout with an emphasis on healing the pain that often surfaces during the annulment process. The cost of the workshop is \$30. For more information or to register, contact Pat Thompson at (512) 970-7063.

Silver Ring Thing focuses on abstinence

The Diocese of Austin and The John Paul II Life Center are hosting "The Silver Ring Thing – Catholic Edition" Feb. 17 at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin. The Silver Ring Thing promotes abstinence until marriage based on a Christ-focused relationship. The program has been presented more than 870 times in eight countries and has shared Christ's forgiveness with more than 500,000 teens, 200,000 of whom have committed to strive for chastity. The Silver Ring Thing presents two concurrent programs: one for teens and one for parents. For more information, e-mail silverringthing@austindiocese.org.

Pastoral care for dying is topic of workshop

The diocesan Commission on Aging and the Chaplain Services Department of Seton Hospital will present a free workshop on Pastoral Care for the Sick and Dying Feb. 18 from 8:30 a.m. to noon in McFadden Auditorium at Seton Medical Center in Austin. The workshop will cover the church's prayers and rituals for the sick and dying and church teaching on end of life and other pastoral care issues. Register by calling Yvonne Saldaña at (512) 949-2486 or e-mailing yvonne-saldana@austindiocese.org no later than Feb. 14.

Engaged couples invited to marriage prep

"Together in God's Love," a marriage preparation class, will begin Feb. 21 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. Subsequent classes will be held Feb. 28, March 6 and 13. The program will be offered in retreat format March 30-April 1 at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Couples preparing for marriage are encouraged to register as soon as possible, as these classes fill quickly. The classes include talks on faith, communication, sexuality and stewardship in the context of Catholic marriage. For registration information, contact your parish or the diocesan Catholic Family Life and Family Counseling Office at (512) 949-2495 or rick-bologna@austindiocese.org.

Struggling couples invited to retreat

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. For confidential information about or to register for the February English program beginning with a weekend on Feb. 24-26, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

Cedarbrake offers Lenten retreats

"Old and New Testament Dreams: What do they tell us?" will be presented Feb. 18 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. This day of reflection will reflect on ways God speaks to us today. The cost is \$30.

An Ash Wednesday day of reflection will be held Feb. 22 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake. The day will include Mass and the distribution of ashes. The cost is \$30, which includes lunch.

"Discerning God's Will In Our Lives," a Lenten retreat, will be held March 23-25 at Cedarbrake. The Apostles of the Interior Life Sisters will help participants discern God's will in their lives during this retreat. The cost is \$155 for shared rooms or \$185 for a private room.

A day of reflection on Holy Week will be held March 28 at Cedarbrake. Holy Cross Father Bill Wack will help participants enter more fully into the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. The cost is \$30, which includes lunch.

For more information on any of these events, contact Cedarbrake at (254) 780-2436 or cedarbrake@austindiocese.org.

Workshop focuses on women in Third World

The Theresians of Austin and the Austin Council of Catholic Women will host an event entitled "Women for Women: Awareness in Action" March 8 from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin. The program will feature presentations highlighting aspects of Catholic Relief Services work for women and children around the world, HIV/Aids and health issues and economic development through fair trade. Fair trade merchants will have goods for sale. To pre-register e-mail Gerri Misko at gerri.misko@prutxrealty.com or call Eunice Washa at (512) 258-5243.

Tickets on sale for Pro-Life Benefit Gala

The Pro-Life Benefit Gala will be held April 14 at the Renaissance Austin Hotel and will feature Bishop Joe Vásquez and George Weigel. Weigel is a renowned theologian and author of the best-selling biography of Blessed John Paul II, "Witness to Hope." Sponsorships are also available. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.centraltexasprolife.org or call (512) 949-2486.

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Bulk of Tribunal's work focuses on marriage

Editor's note: Over the next few months, the Catholic Spirit will feature a series of articles about the diocesan Office of Canonical and Tribunal Services, which handles a variety of tasks dealing with the laws of the church.

BY HARVEY BOLlich AND MICHELE CHAN SANTOS
CORRESPONDENTS

The diocesan Office of Canonical and Tribunal Services at the Pastoral Center in Austin exists to help the bishop carry out the laws of the church, which is known as canon law. Some of the primary duties of the Tribunal, as the office is commonly known, are to help those who are preparing to be married or who are seeking an annulment of a previous marriage.

On television at this very moment, there are a number of reality shows about couples in the process of getting married. Their focus is on the gown, the party, the food and church decorations, but not on the religious meaning of the ceremony or the purpose of marriage itself. For the Catholic Church, marriage is a sacrament and it is not to be taken lightly.

The sacrament of marriage

Deacon John Pickwell, who has worked with engaged and married couples for more than eight years, reminds couples that through their marital vocation, they undertake a heavy but not impossible burden.

"St. Paul emphasized that matrimonial love reminds us of the love which Christ has for his bride, the church," he said. "For those baptized in Christ, marriage is a sacrament — a mystery and a sign — that communicates God's grace."

In today's society, about half of all marriages, including those of Catholics, end in divorce, and most divorced couples later remarry. Therefore, the knowledge and the counsel of the Tribunal are in high demand. The Austin Tribunal Office handles about 250 cases per year, according to Deborah Patin, the office's case manager and office manager.

Deacon Pickwell, who works in the Tribunal as an assessor or judge's assistant, said when it comes to marriages, the Tribunal's work is governed by the church's canon 1055.

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by

its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized."

Based on canon law, the church has a fully developed legal system. In the Austin Diocese, Father Christopher Ferrer is the judicial vicar and Father Jozef Musiol is the adjutant judicial vicar and tribunal judge. The appeals court for the Austin Diocese is located in San Antonio; and the Roman Rota, the church's "Supreme Court" is in Rome.

Robert Pine, a case manager and defender of the bond for the Tribunal, said 75 percent of the cases handled by the local Tribunal are related to annulments. For example, if someone were married and then divorced, and later sought to remarry within the Catholic Church, they would need an annulment of their first marriage. A declaration of nullity states that, according to church law, a given marriage was not valid (and therefore not binding) at the time the couple spoke their marriage vows. Annulments are also sought by people who have divorced and remarried and want their current marriage validated by the Catholic Church. There are several different types of nullities (annulments); all of them are handled by the Tribunal.

Father Robert Kincl said the work of the diocesan Tribunal is one of the great works of justice and mercy by the church.

"A person should never fear approaching the Tribunal if he or she thinks a declaration of nullity is warranted. We are here to help with that process," he said.

Deborah Patin, the Tribunal's office manager and case manager, said working with people seeking annulments is a ministry of healing.

"It's a healing process for couples who have divorced, which provides a new beginning," she said.

When someone petitions for an annulment, they are represented by an advocate who is generally a priest or deacon from their parish. The Tribunal holds workshops to train the advocates in parishes on how best to assist parishioners in filing the proper forms and documents, said Deacon Ray Sanders, an assessor in the Tribunal, who organizes the advocate workshops.

The Tribunal also offers

workshops to help people in writing their petitions for annulments. Pat Thompson organizes these workshops and said they can be a spiritual and healing experience for people seeking an annulment.

Other concerns

The Office of Canonical and Tribunal Services is also highly involved in the process of couples marrying within the Catholic Church. For example, if a couple in the Diocese of Austin is preparing to be married, but their wedding will take place in another diocese (for example, the couple lives in Austin but is getting married in New Mexico) their forms will go through the Tribunal Office. Janie Cuellar takes care of this process for the Austin Diocese. The couple's packet — containing their information and documentation that they completed a marriage preparation course — will be approved by the Austin judicial vicar and then sent to the other diocese where the marriage will take place. And if a Catholic is marrying a non-Catholic in a Catholic ceremony here, the

judicial vicar also needs to give his approval.

History of marriage

The Catholic Church has a long history regarding the institution of marriage. In the first two centuries of the church, the typical Catholic wedding was held in the house of the bride's family. The local bishop or priest was invited to pronounce the church's blessing over the couple, a role otherwise performed by the bride's father. Beginning in the next century, the wedding was transferred to the local church where more people could participate in the Eucharist in a public manner. The church became increasingly involved in rules for marriage because of the lack of uniform practices in the lands of the newly legalized Christian religion.

St. Leo the Great and St. Augustine clarified that marriage is between a man and a woman for the spiritual and material welfare of the couple and their children, and the couple's commitment is marked by fidelity and permanence.

By the sixth century, the

church assumed greater jurisdiction over marriage and other aspects of society for the sake of public good and order and the concept of indissolubility became formally added to marital doctrine.

In reaction to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent in the 16th century defined Matrimony as one of the seven sacraments, condemned polygamy and taught that certain marriages could be dissolved only by church authority.

The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s raised the mutual welfare of the spouses on par with the good of the children as the main purpose of marriage. Marriage is both unitive (a bond of love) and procreative (open to children). Recently, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have strongly upheld the divine dignity of faithful, permanent and fruitful marriage unions.

For more information, go to the Tribunal's website go to www.austindiocese.org, click on the "Ministries" tab and then on the link to Canonical and Tribunal Services or call the office at (512) 949-2477.

More information about Canon Law

What's in the Code of Canon Law?

The Code consists of 1752 canons, divided into seven "books" (General Norms, the People of God, The Teaching Office of the Church, The Sanctifying Office of the Church, Temporal Goods, Sanctions, and Processes). The reason why we have so few laws for the Church (as opposed to, for example, the civil or criminal codes in the United States) is due to the fact that canon law is based upon Roman law, and not English common law. As such, it lays down basic principles that are then applied to individual cases by those who have the responsibility of governing the church.

The reason for law in the church

Sometimes people wonder why the church, inspired by the Spirit, needs a system of law. There is no opposition between those two things. As Pope John Paul II wrote when he issued the Code of Canon Law, "The Code [of Canon Law] is in no way intended as a substitute for faith, grace, charisms, and especially charity in the life of the church and of the faithful. On the contrary, its purpose is rather to create such an order in the ecclesial society that, while assigning the primacy to love, grace, and charisms, it at the same time renders their organic development easier in the life of both the ecclesial society and the individual persons who belong to it." Thus, the laws of the church are meant to make it easier for us to use the gifts of the Spirit in a more organized and unified manner.

The three functions of law

In general, the laws of the church do three things: they specify rights, set forth duties, and provide for the vindication of rights. In specifying rights, the Code states who has a right to do something; for example, who has a right to receive the sacraments, who has a right to be consulted in church matters, who has a right to expect compensation for their work in the church. At the same time, church law specifies who has a duty to do certain things. It details, for example, the responsibilities of bishops and pastors, so that people can know what they can expect from the pastoral leaders of the church. Finally, the Code of Canon Law provides means by which people can vindicate their rights. Thus, if they do not feel their pastors are performing their duties correctly, or if they feel they have been injured by an action of another, or if they want to clarify their rights with regard to a previous marriage, people can approach the church in order to vindicate their rights.

The purpose of law

This is all in keeping with the purpose of law, which is to allow people to use their gifts in the service of the good of the whole church. This ensures that no one has to live out the gospel calling apart from all of those who have been baptized. All that we do is done in the context of the community of believers. The Code of Canon Law assures that we have unity in our service to one another, and that those who believe their rights have not been respected are able to gain a fair hearing.

— Father Pat Legges
Reprinted with permission from the Archdiocese of Chicago

Study group for women begins Feb. 15

ENDOW, a Catholic study group for women, will meet on Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 15 through April 18 at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin. Facilitated by DeeAnn Smith, the study is entitled "Redemptoris Mater" (Mother of Our Redeemer) and examines the role of Mary in the church and helps deepen devotion to the Blessed Mother. The cost of the course is \$80, which includes the study guide. There is no homework and scholarships are available. For more information, contact DeeAnn Smith at (512) 899-0456 or visit www.EndowOnline.com.

Lenten conference focuses on healing

"A Lenten Journey of Healing," the seventh annual Lenten women's conference sponsored by the San José Council of Catholic Women, will be held Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at San José Parish in Austin. The conference will offer a time for reflection, prayer and sharing on the many aspects of healing during the Lenten season. The keynote speaker will be Father Charlie Garza. The registration fee is \$25, which includes lunch and materials (not guaranteed for registrations after Feb. 15). For information and to register, contact Rosie Castillo at rcastillo@sanjosechurch.org or at (512) 444-7587 or Lydia Ruiz at ruiz_lydia49@yahoo.com or call (512) 523-8327.

Peter Kreeft visits Austin on March 3

St. John Neumann Parish in Austin will present a retreat featuring writer and philosopher Peter Kreeft March 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme of the day is "Whom Do We Meet in the Eucharist?" In his 40 years as an academic, Kreeft has written "Angels (and Demons): What Do We Really Know About Them?," "How to Win the Culture War," "Because God is Real: Sixteen Questions, One Answer," and "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Heaven ... But Never Dreamed of Asking." He has been a professor of philosophy at Boston College since 1965 and also teaches at King's College in New York. The cost is \$30 in advance (visit www.sjnaustin.org to register) or \$40 at the door.



Peter Kreeft

Kreeft will also present on the topic of "Catholics and Muslims" during a sponsorship dinner the evening of March 3 as well as at the weekly "Between the Masses" series on Sunday morning. For more information regarding these presentations, contact Nancy Biehler at nbiehler@sjnaustin.org.



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Departs June 22, 2012

from **\$1398***

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**Kings Canyon - Sequoia - Yosemite - Arches - Canyonlands
 Bryce Canyon - Zion - Capitol Reef - Grand Canyon**

Take time for reflection of God's remarkable creation!

Take a relaxing trip on your luxurious coach as you travel with other Catholics through the changing desert landscapes of Nevada to the farmlands of central California. Witness the giant Redwood trees in **Kings Canyon** and **Sequoia National Parks**, then be amazed at the rock formations and waterfalls in **Yosemite National Park**. You'll also visit majestic Lake Tahoe with 72 miles of pristine shoreline and stop in historic Virginia City, Reno, Winnemucca and Elko, Nevada. In Utah tour the world's largest man-made excavation – the Kennecott Copper Mine; 2, 2/3 miles wide plus the Great Salt Lake! Next tour the unique rocks shaped by wind, water, sun and frost at **Arches National Park**; and **Canyonlands**, with enchanting vistas carved by the Colorado and Green Rivers. Next your Catholic group will visit **Capitol Reef and Bryce Canyon National Parks** and drive through the Dixie National Forest. On Monday, July 2, you'll arrive at the grandest of all National Parks, **The Grand Canyon**, for both a day and night. Enjoy the sunset that evening and sunrise the following morning! Spend the fourth of July in exciting Las Vegas with an included day excursion to **Zion National Park**. That evening enjoy all the hoopla and excitement Las Vegas is famous for on Independence Day including free fireworks shows. Your Chaplain is Father Frank Wittouck, SCJ, from Houston, Texas. He retired as an Army Chaplain in 2010 yet currently ministers in the Cypress Assistance Ministries. His recent YMT pilgrimage was to the Holy Land.



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Brenham priest stays busy despite retirement

By **AMY MORACZEWSKI**
CORRESPONDENT

Nine years into retirement, Msgr. Benedict Zientek is enjoying his days back in Central Texas. After serving in the Diocese of San Angelo for more than 40 years, Msgr. Zientek returned to his roots in Brenham, where he was ordained a priest in 1958.

He now resides on the farm in Brenham where he and his six siblings were raised picking cotton, milking cows, and raking hay. He lives on 20 of the original 150 acres of farmland that his family has called home since 1939. To Msgr. Zientek, home is a farm but he clarifies that, "Houston and Dallas people would call it a ranch."

When not called to duty elsewhere, Msgr. Zientek is only minutes from his home parish of St. Mary's in Brenham, where he attended grade school. The small German town, best known as the home of Blue Bell Creameries, has been a substantial producer of Catholic priests as well. Since 1917, 11 priests have been raised in the parish, beginning with Msgr. Zientek's uncle. The next generation of the family provided Msgr. Benedict Zientek and his brother

Msgr. Boleslaus Zientek, along with four of their cousins.

His younger brother actually served in the Diocese of Austin for 30 years before Austin County was reassigned to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, where he is now retired. Despite the traditional notion of retirement, both brothers remain active in surrounding parishes. Msgr. Benedict Zientek likes to joke that he is "tired and retired."

The 79-year-old priest refers to his new work as "week-end supply." But given that the first two and a half months of 2012 were booked at various parishes before Thanksgiving, it appears he has yet to slow down. "Whenever somebody calls, I'll go help," Msgr. Zientek said. However, as the requests continue to pour in, Msgr. Zientek says he is learning to spell, "N-O."

While his time at home is limited, Msgr. Zientek remains happy to travel and serve throughout the state. In early December, he traveled to the small town of Ellinger to celebrate their annual Polka Mass, a role he inherited from his cousin when he passed away. The Polka Mass was first celebrated in 1973 by Father Frank Perkovich in Minnesota but quickly spread across the U.S., and only

10 years after the inception, Pope John Paul II invited Father Perkovich to celebrate the Polka Mass at St. Peter's Basilica.

Although the constant travel can be exhausting, Msgr. Zientek said that any gesture of appreciation makes it all worthwhile. "When people come and say 'thank you,' that means more than anything else," Msgr. Zientek said.

This gratitude is often felt most in times of suffering. Msgr. Zientek emphasizes the importance of listening to people, especially when they have lost a loved one.

"At the time of death, people really express their emotions. For me this is always an important moment because that's when people need someone to listen," Msgr. Zientek said.

One of the most touching moments of his career occurred just recently after a funeral when he received a pecan pie, along with a pound of pecans, from the widow and son. Msgr. Zientek was astonished when the gift arrived priority mail and during a pecan shortage no less! No gesture goes unnoticed by him.

Another memorable moment came while attending the 50th anniversary celebration of the Diocese of San Angelo in November. As the only priest present both now and in 1961 when the diocese was founded, Msgr. Zientek was honored to be seated next to Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, a privilege he had looked forward to for 53 years, he said.

The anniversary celebration spawned recollection of the early days, back when he arrived in San Angelo to continue what the Franciscans had started. At the time, all of the parishes in the city and surrounding towns were staffed by Franciscans, and while Msgr. Zientek was not initially affiliated with the order, he was later invited to join the Third Order of St. Francis,



MSGR. BENEDICT ZIENTEK served the San Angelo Diocese for more than four decades. He retired to his hometown of Brenham nine years ago. (Photo by Amy Moraczewski)

which is open to both ordained and lay people.

As the new kid on the block, Msgr. Zientek learned a great deal from his Franciscan friends, including the game of poker. He recalls another priest upstaging the bishop during his first evening at the poker table. After being asked, "Don't you know you're not supposed to beat the bishop?" the priest replied, "I put in as many chips as you did, Bishop, and I had the better hand." In that moment, Msgr. Zientek found a new pastime, new friends and a new perspective on authority.

The Franciscan influence remains evident in West Texas, where many parishes include mission churches located up to 30 miles away. Msgr. Benedict Zientek earned his first job as pastor at St. Joseph in Rotan because of his ability to celebrate Mass in Spanish. With the parish, he also gained the mission of Aspermont where he trav-

elled each Sunday to celebrate Mass in a parishioner's home. Since there was no church, and this was prior to the days of face-to-face reconciliation, he would hear confessions seated in a closet of the home.

While in Rotan, Msgr. Zientek received the nickname "Padre Otras Cosas" after announcing, in his limited Spanish, the upcoming meal of "tamales, menudo, enchiladas, y otras cosas" and a parishioner was disappointed to discover he could not get a plate of otras cosas ("other things") for dinner. The nickname stuck for one lady who recently recognized the pastor from her childhood when he said Mass at St. Vincent Palotti Parish in Abilene.

"Holy cow, they haven't forgotten me!" said Msgr. Zientek.

From his hat to his suspenders to his years of faithful service as a priest, Msgr. Zientek is indeed a man who will never be forgotten.

Quick Profile on Msgr. Benedict Zientek

Hometown: Brenham

Parents: John & Frances

Siblings: two sisters and four brothers

Favorite Food: Roast Beef

Favorite Music: Polka

Favorite Book: "Quiet Moments with Benedict Groeschel"

Favorite Sport: Football and Baseball

Favorite Sports Teams: Texas A&M Aggies, Texas Rangers, Houston Texans

Favorite Vacation Destination: Lebh Shomea Silent Retreat Center near Sarita

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Affordable housing crisis calls us to action

By **DONNA POSTON WILLIAMS**
CORRESPONDENT

"We love our nativity sets which tout the fact that Jesus was born in a barn and slept in a feeding trough surrounded by farm animals – homeless," Kevin Berry reflected. "But how do we react when we see someone sleeping under a bridge or on a park bench in our hometown?"

Barry, a parishioner at St. Theresa Parish in Austin and advocate for the homeless, recently spoke at a forum sponsored by his parish's Ministry of Peace and Social Justice. Declaring an "affordable housing crisis here in Austin," Berry explained, "the result is that we have a greater number of homeless. It's becoming increasingly expensive to live in this city and the poverty rate continues to soar. This is a sad reality for many people. We have large families crowded into small deteriorating apartments in crime-ridden neighborhoods. Or even worse, some are living out of their cars or on the streets."

Citing the Catholic Social Teachings, "a central and essential element of our faith," Berry said Catholics are charged to "look out for the poorest and most vulnerable in our society," and ensure their "basic necessities of life: food and shelter."

He described his own volunteer work with Austin Habitat for Humanity and invited others to get involved.

Founded on the principle that "a home is at the heart of every family and every community," Austin Habitat provides a home ownership program for low-

income families. Simple, quality houses are built by volunteers and then sold to qualifying individuals who are currently residing in substandard, overcrowded or cost-burdensome housing.

"You need to be employed and earning between 25 percent and 50 percent of the median family income," Berry explained. "For a family of four, that's between \$18,325 and \$36,650 a year."

Houses are built by Habitat volunteers and cost about \$60,000, with a zero-interest mortgage over a period of 15 to 35 years. Families must put in at least 400 hours of service toward building their home and others as well as attend educational classes on finances and home ownership. Once in the home, families get help with home maintenance and have access to other support services.

"Austin Habitat for Humanity is celebrating its 25th anniversary, and during that time they have raised about \$25 million to build and repair more than 300 homes locally," Berry said. "With the help of more than 75,000 volunteers, who have rolled up their sleeves and picked up a paint brush or hammer, we have changed countless lives. Having a home means so much more than having a roof over your head," Berry said. "It means dignity and self-worth."

Berry pointed out that there are some families in Austin who won't qualify for a Habitat home, "because they fail the background checks or they may have lost their job and just don't have the income to pay the mortgage."

Another local nonprof-

it, Foundation Communities, catches those who fall through the cracks.

Since 1990, Foundation Communities has been providing affordable, attractive apartments and duplexes for families and individuals who have run out of options. They own and manage 16 different residential complexes, offering housing to more than 2,700 families, and crucial support services for a wide range of low income Austinites - from the steadily employed to the chronically homeless.

Usually referred by a case-worker or a shelter, Foundation Communities allows for a variety of difficult circumstances. One, two and three bedroom apart-

ments are available for employed families and rent is based on income. Some of their complexes have only efficiencies, furnished and designated for single adults facing homelessness. Rents start as low as \$50 a month. Allowances are made for individuals who have no income at all.

There is no time limit for how long you can live in most of the 16 properties. Many residents stay for years, while others move out and buy their own home.

Foundation Communities' mission is to create housing where individuals and families can gain their independence and succeed. The free support services they provide include one-on-one financial coaching,

income tax preparation, after school care, adult literacy classes, nutrition and fitness classes.

Both Foundation Communities and Austin Habitat for Humanity rely heavily on the generosity of volunteers.

"We have a wonderful opportunity to participate in real solutions for the homeless," Berry said. "It couldn't be more clear... as Catholics we are called to action."

The U.S. bishops have revamped their Poverty USA website (www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/povertyusa/) and launched a new presence on Facebook (www.facebook.com/povertyusa).



CATHOLIC PARISHES from throughout the Austin area are helping build a home at 6305 Sandshof through the Austin chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Construction on the home will continue for the next several weeks, so volunteers and donations are needed. To donate, visit <https://secure.commonground.convio.com/AustinHabitat/catholicbuild/>. To volunteer, visit www.austinhabitat.org/volunteer/index.php. (Photo courtesy Marcel Sendejo)

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The 'little purple boxes' are blue this year

This Lenten Project, as in previous years, will again primarily support Lay Missionaries from our Diocese who are working in other countries.

Faith is the lifelong companion that makes it possible to perceive, ever anew, the marvels that God works for us.

Pope Benedict XVI
Apostolic Letter, 11 Oct, 2011

ASHES TO EASTER LENTEN BOXES will be distributed to parishes this month. In years past, the boxes have been purple, but this year they are blue. During Lent, families are asked to contribute coins to the boxes and to pray for the missionaries for whom the money is collected. Last year, more than \$100,000 was collected and distributed to various missionary groups who have ties to the Austin Diocese. Father Tom Frank, pastor of San José Parish in Austin, handles the distribution of the boxes and the diocesan Mission Council reviews the applications from missionaries seeking grants from the collection. For more information on the Ashes to Easter Lenten project, call Father Frank at (512) 444-7587.

Black Catholics' survey finds strong ties to church

By **PATRICIA ZAPOR**
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

African-American Catholics are much more engaged in their church on a variety of levels than are white Catholics, concludes the first National Black Catholic Survey.

Whether in a majority black church, a mixed or mostly white parish, the survey found African-American Catholics feel satisfied and fulfilled in their parishes, explained retired Bishop John H. Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Fla., who is president of the National Black Catholic Congress.

By "engaged," Bishop Ricard explained, the authors of the report mean African-Americans are involved in their parishes well beyond simply attending Mass somewhat regularly. That includes having strong networks of friends and family in their churches, participating in multiple parish activities and saying their spiritual, emotional and social needs are met there.

Bishop Ricard, who is rector of the Washington seminary of his religious order, the Josephites, said the results of the survey surprised and pleased him and the leaders of the National Black Catholic Congress who commissioned it, along with the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Church Life and the office of the school's president.

"This is a bright spot for the church," said Bishop Ricard at St. Joseph's Seminary. Whatever their parish situation, a majority of African-American participants in the attitudinal survey conducted by Knowledge Networks, "feel affirmed and have decided they are going to stay Catholic," he said. "It's a very optimistic message."

Among the conclusions of the survey were that black Catholics feel more committed to their parishes emotionally, spiritually and socially than do white Catholics. In those respects, as in many other aspects of the survey, black Catholics were shown to be much more like black Protestants in their approach to church than they are like white Catholics.

"Compared with other religious and racial groups, African-American Catholics behave and look like African-American Protestants," said the executive summary written by study authors Darren W. Davis, a professor of political science and associate vice president for research at Notre Dame, and Donald B. Pope-Davis, pro-

fessor of psychology and vice president and associate provost Notre Dame.

Still, "African-American Protestants are clearly more highly involved by every measure of engagement," they continued. Therefore, they said, the pattern "is taken as suggestive of a cultural effect, as opposed to a Catholic effect, whereby the historical and cultural norms of the African-American community weigh just as heavily on African-American Catholics as on African-American Protestants."

The survey was conducted this summer in phone calls to 3,215 people, including 2,104

81 percent of white Protestants said the same.

The difference was sharper when the question asked about parishes meeting social needs, with 62 percent of black Catholics, 76 percent of black Protestants and 63 percent of white Protestants saying "well" or "very well," while just 41 percent of white Catholics said so.

Bishop Ricard said the finding that black Catholics are almost as at-ease in mixed or mostly white parishes as they are in majority black parishes shows that efforts have been successful in helping African-Americans to feel a part of the Catholic Church and make it their own.

another way, 48 percent of black Catholics said being with others in church is an important reason to go, compared with 26 percent of white Catholics, 58 percent of black Protestants and 52 percent of white Protestants.

The survey did find various aspects of church life where African-Americans consider improvement is needed. Among them that although most African-Americans do not consider the church racist — 77 percent said they don't consider it racist — nearly a third have felt uncomfortable being the only black in a church and a quarter have encountered people avoiding them or refusing to shake hands.

age gap, but African-American young adults are also religiously engaged. Whatever disengagement exists among African-Americans, it cannot be attributed to a generation gap. White Catholic young adults, by contrast, have an extremely low level of religious commitment."

It also found that black Catholics were much more likely than their white counterparts to say religion is important in their lives. They also are more likely to say they would turn to their pastor or another church leader for help in times of crisis such as a death in the family, marriage or alcohol problems.

Johnnie Dorsey, the director of the Office of Black Catholics for the Austin Diocese, said the results of this survey will be helpful in the diocese and throughout the U.S. as the church seeks to evangelize and to develop a more fruitful relationship with black Catholics.

"This survey will further enable the Office of Black Catholics to promote insight and knowledge of black Catholics and will assist with evangelization and enculturation efforts in Central Texas and throughout our nation," Dorsey said.

He also said the data from the study will be used by the National Black Catholic Congress as it prepares to develop its five-year plan for pastoral priorities at the NBCC National Convention in Indianapolis July 19-21. Approximately a thousand participants are expected to attend the national convention.

For more information regarding the diocesan Office of Black Catholics, contact Johnnie Dorsey at (512) 949-2449 or johnnie-dorsey@austindiocese.org.

Majorities of African-Americans said the church should put more effort into emphasizing black saints; promoting black vocations and black bishops; supporting issues such as affirmative action and problems in Africa and promoting racial integration.

African-Americans, proportionally representing Catholics and Protestants according to their ratio in the U.S. population. Seventy-six percent of those surveyed said their parish is not predominantly African-American. No margin of error was given.

In one set of comparisons, asking "how well does your parish meet your needs," black Catholics, and both black and white Protestants were more likely than their white Catholic counterparts to agree. For instance, when the question asked about spiritual needs, 78 percent of black Catholics and 86 percent of black Protestants said "well" or "very well," while 67 percent of white Catholics and

That model could hold lessons for dioceses and churches that are struggling to help immigrants from Latin America and Asia feel like they belong, he said.

Like African-Americans, Latino and Asian immigrants have a strong cultural sense of community, Bishop Ricard said. "There is less emphasis on the individual and more on the communitarian aspects of a church."

For instance, black Catholics in the survey were much more likely to say it's important that their friends attend their church. Just about 7 percent of white Catholics agreed with that statement. But 27 percent of black Catholics said so. Phrased

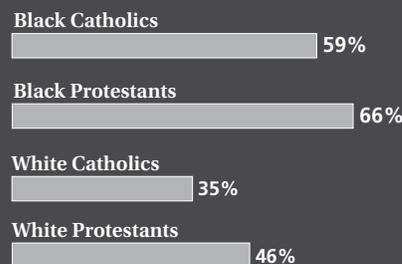
Majorities of African-Americans said the church should put more effort into emphasizing black saints; promoting black vocations and black bishops; supporting issues such as affirmative action and problems in Africa and promoting racial integration.

But there was also hopeful news when it comes to young adults being involved, the survey found.

"African-American young adults, both Catholic and Protestant, are more religiously engaged and consider religion to be more important than whites of the same age," the authors wrote. "Older individuals are more religiously engaged than younger adults, and there is an

Most Engaged

Religious engagement among blacks is markedly greater than among whites. Those who say they are 'engaged' or 'strongly or engaged' in their church or parish:



Source: 2011 National Black Catholic Survey



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Pope stresses value of anointing of the sick

By FRANCIS X. ROCCA
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Anointing of the sick is not a minor sacrament, said Pope Benedict XVI, but one that “deserves greater consideration today” because of its spiritual benefits to both minister and recipient.

The pope’s words appeared in a message for the 2012 World Day of the Sick, released by the Vatican Jan. 3. The day itself is celebrated annually Feb. 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Pope Benedict noted that the sacrament, formerly known as extreme unction, may be administered in “various human situations connected with illness, and not only when a person is at the end of his or her life.”

Anointing with olive oil recalls the “double mystery of the Mount of Olives,” the pope said, as both the location of the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus confronted his passion, and the place where he ascended into heaven. Oil thus acts

“as God’s medicine ... offering strength and consolation, yet at the same time (pointing) beyond the moment of the illness toward the definitive healing, the resurrection.”

Pope Benedict said that anointing of the sick is one of the church’s two “sacraments of healing,” together with the “medicine of confession,” penance.

When a sick person confesses sins to a priest, “a time of suffering, in which one could be tempted to abandon oneself to discouragement and hopelessness, can thus be transformed into a time of grace,” the pope said.

Both penance and the sacrament of the sick “have their natural completion in eucharistic Communion,” Pope Benedict said. “Received at a time of illness,” Communion associates the “person who partakes of the body and blood of Christ to the offering that he made of himself to the Father for the salvation of all.”

Accordingly, the pope said,



A PRIEST BLESSES Jean Wakeman with the anointing of the sick during a Feb. 11 Mass celebrating World Day of the Sick at St. Mary’s Hospital in Streator, Ill. The day, instituted by Pope John Paul II in 1992 and celebrated annually on the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, affirms the church’s duty to remember and serve the sick and the suffering. (CNS photo by Nellie Williams, Catholic Post)

parishes should ensure that the elderly and the sick enjoy the “possibility of frequently receiving Holy Communion.”

The text of the pope’s message in English is posted online at http://press.catholic.va/news_services/bulletin/

news/28620.php?index=28620&lang=it#TRADUZIONEN%20IN%20LINGUA%20INGLESE.

Immigration reform is urgent, say advocates

By MARIE MISCHEL
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

The repressive immigration law passed last year by the Georgia General Assembly, which “The New York Times” called “one of the nation’s toughest,” was what brought Frank Mulcahy, executive director of the Georgia Catholic Conference, to Utah in mid-January.

He was one of 230 immigration advocates from 43 states gathered in Salt Lake City for three days of panels, workshops and networking. The Jan. 11-13 conference, “Immigration: A 50-State Issue,” was sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

“We want to see it changed,” Mulcahy said. In addition to causing the loss of millions of dollars in agricultural crops that have gone unharvested for lack of workers, the law “created a climate of fear,” he said. “Some parishes where we had heavy Hispanic attendance, we saw big drop-offs.”

Paul Long, president and CEO of the Michigan Catholic Conference, also attended the immigration conference to learn what has been done

in other states “and how best we can tackle the issue should adverse immigration legislation be proposed and pushed in the Michigan Legislature,” he told the “Intermountain Catholic,” Salt Lake City’s diocesan newspaper.

Issues addressed in the panels and workshops included an overview of state immigration enforcement laws and covered topics such as how to communicate the Catholic bishops’ message on immigration through the media.

The most contentious panel was that with John Sandweg, special counselor to Janet Napolitano, secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Sandweg discussed DHS policies, how those policies are enforced and some changes that DHS has made to that enforcement.

“We inherited a broken set of immigration laws,” Sandweg said at the beginning of his presentation. “I know that might sound cliché, but we all believe that.”

Although the system may be broken, DHS is nonetheless charged with enforcing the law; some discretion is allowed on how the law might be enforced, but there is no discretion on whether it is enforced, Sandweg said.

Over the past couple of

years, DHS has changed its priorities from large-scale raids on workplaces to arresting undocumented people who are convicted criminals, those who have repeatedly violated immigration laws, those who are recently arrived and those who are fugitives from immigration courts, Sandweg said.

He acknowledged that DHS made mistakes with the way it introduced the ‘secure communities’ initiative, which allows the FBI to send to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) fingerprints that it has received from state agencies. ICE can then check the fingerprints against a national immigration database.

Sandweg defended secure communities as nothing more than an identification tool, but numerous immigration advocates have decried the potential for abuse of the system, including the possibility of racial profiling. As a result of the complaints that were received about the initiative, DHS formed a task force comprised of members of various law enforcement agencies, attorneys, labor union officials, academics, social service agency personnel and others.

The task force’s recommendations, which were sub-

mitted in September, are being reviewed, Sandweg said.

DHS policy is to focus on undocumented people who have committed felonies, Sandweg said, and each year more of those who are deported fall into this category. “We are making a difference; it is changing,” he said, but added that Congress must enact reform for other changes that Catholic advocates would like to see.

Sandweg fielded numerous questions and complaints about his department’s policies and actions. Kevin Appleby, director of migration policy and public affairs for the USCCB, said that was expected.

“DHS is the agency of the federal government that is responsible for a lot of these enforcement actions that are impacting families and communities, and they need to be held accountable to the greatest extent possible as to how they go about that,” Appleby said. “I think they got the message pretty clearly from all the participants that there is a lot of discord in the communities -- a lot of injustices going on that need to be corrected.”

The Utah Compact — an agreement signed by political, civic, business, religious, legal and law enforcement leaders

that laid broad guidelines for how the immigration debate should be handled in Utah — was brought up several times as a model that could be used by other states.

The compact’s principles are that there must be a federal solution to the immigration system; that law enforcement should concentrate its efforts on felons, not immigrants whose only crime is being undocumented; that families shouldn’t be separated by the immigration system; that many businesses depend on immigrants; and that the U.S. is an inclusive, welcoming society.

“Here in Utah we used the compact as a firewall against harsh immigration enforcement proposals,” said Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City in his keynote address at the conference’s opening dinner.

Bishop Wester, who was chairman of the bishops’ Committee on Migration from 2008-2010 and is now on the board of Catholic Relief Services, added that the Utah Legislature passed three immigration laws, only one of which was enforcement oriented.

“Similar compacts can be useful tools for advocacy but also are consistent with Catholic public policy based upon Catholic teaching,” he said.

Pope names 22 new cardinals, 2 from the US

By FRANCIS X. ROCCA
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Pope Benedict XVI named 22 new cardinals, including two from the U.S., and announced a consistory for their formal induction into the College of Cardinals on Feb. 18.

Among those named were Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York; Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, pro-grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem who still is administering the Archdiocese of Baltimore; and Archbishop Thomas C. Collins of Toronto.

The pope announced the nominations to the faithful in St. Peter's Square at noon Jan. 6, before praying the Angelus.

Cardinal-designate O'Brien, who was in St. Peter's Square when his name was announced, said his priestly life has been "a surprise at every step. I thought being appointed archbishop of Baltimore would be the last surprise, but I was wrong."

He told Catholic News Service that the ministries he had been appointed to, and now his elevation to cardinal, were not things he could "anticipate, navigate or engineer. It's just a matter of being open and in the right place at the right time and good things happen."

In separate statements, the North American cardinals were quick to stress the collective rather than the personal nature of the honor.

"This is not about Timothy Dolan," the New York cardinal-designate said. "This is an honor from the Holy Father to the Archdiocese of New York. ... It's as if Pope Benedict is putting the red hat on top of the Empire State Building, or the Statue of Liberty, or on home plate at Yankee Stadium."

Cardinal-designate O'Brien said his nomination reflected the "zealous faith" of Catholics in Baltimore, and Cardinal-designate Collins attributed his elevation to the pope's "esteem for the role of Canada and of the Archdiocese of Toronto in the universal church."

The latest additions will bring the U.S. and Canada's share of the College of Cardinals to 22. The U.S., which is home to about 5.5 percent of the world's Catholics, will provide almost 10 percent of the 125 cardinals under the age of 80, who are the only cardinals eligible to vote in a conclave for a future pope.

By contrast, only one of those named, Cardinal-designate Joao Braz de Aviz, comes from the country with the most Catholics, Brazil. When the cardinals are inducted in February, only seven of the 22 cardinal electors from Latin America will have been appointed by Pope Benedict.

With his latest appointments, Pope Benedict will have named more than 50 percent of the current cardinal electors, with the rest having been named by Blessed John Paul II.

The pope's latest nominations included 16 Europeans, continuing a trend in his cardinal appointments since his election in 2005.

Seven of the new appointments are Italians, which will bring that nation's total of cardinal electors to 30, more than any other country.

None of the new cardinals are from Africa, the region where the church is experiencing its fastest growth, or Oceania.

Ten of the new cardinals are officials of the Roman Curia, whose offices by tradition often entail membership in the college. Pope Benedict, when he was known as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, spent more than 23 years in the curia as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, though he had been elevated to cardinal in his previous role as archbishop of Munich-Freising, Germany.

Four of the new cardinals are already over the age of 80 and, therefore, ineligible to vote in a conclave. The pope uses such nominations to honor churchmen for their scholarship or other service to the church. Among the new so-called honorary cardinals is Cardinal-designate Karl Becker, a Jesuit and former theology professor at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University.

The Jesuits remain the religious order with the highest representation in the college, with eight cardinals, followed by the Salesians with six, including the

Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. There are seven Franciscan cardinals, divided between the Order of

Friars Minor and the Capuchins, with the latter represented by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston.

New cardinals, their role and age

- Indian Archbishop George Alencherry of Ernakulam-Angamaly, major archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, 66.
- German Jesuit Father Karl Josef Becker, retired professor of dogmatic theology, 83.
- Italian Archbishop Giuseppe Bertello, president of the commission governing Vatican City State, 69.
- Italian Archbishop Giuseppe Betori of Florence, 64.
- Brazilian Archbishop Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 64.
- Italian Archbishop Domenico Calcagno, president of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, who turns 69 Feb. 3.
- Spanish Archbishop Santos Abril Castello, archpriest of Basilica of St. Mary Major, 76.
- Italian Archbishop Francesco Coccopalmerio, president of the Pontifical Council for Interpreting Legislative Texts, 73.
- Canadian Archbishop Thomas C. Collins of Toronto, who will be 65 Jan. 16.
- U.S. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, who will turn 62 Feb. 6.
- Czech Archbishop Dominik Duka of Prague, 68.
- Dutch Archbishop Willem J. Eijk of Utrecht, 58.
- Italian Archbishop Fernando Filoni, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 65.
- Maltese Augustinian Father Prosper Grech, biblical scholar, 86.
- Chinese Bishop John Tong Hon of Hong Kong, 72.
- Portuguese Archbishop Manuel Monteiro de Castro, major penitentiary of the Apostolic Penitentiary, 73.
- Romanian Archbishop Lucian Muresan of Fagaras and Alba Iulia, major archbishop of the Romanian Catholic Church, 80.
- U.S. Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, 72.
- German Archbishop Rainer Maria Woelki of Berlin, 55.
- Belgian Father Julien Ries, expert on history of religions, 91.
- Italian Archbishop Antonio Maria Veglio, president Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers, who turns 74 Feb. 3.
- Italian Archbishop Giuseppe Versaldi, president of Prefecture of the Economic Affairs of the Holy See, 68.

Pope creates new US ordinariate for ex-Anglicans

By NANCY FRAZIER O'BRIEN
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Pope Benedict XVI has established a U.S. ordinariate for former Anglicans who wish to become Catholics and named a married former Episcopal bishop to head it.

The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter — functionally equivalent to a diocese, but national in scope — will be based at a parish in Houston. It will be led by Father Jeffrey N. Steenson, the former Episcopal bishop of the Rio Grande who was ordained a Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M., in February 2009.

The establishment of the ordinariate and the naming of its first leader were announced by the Vatican Jan. 1.

More than 100 former Anglican priests have applied to

become Catholic priests in the ordinariate and 1,400 individuals from 22 communities have expressed interest in joining. In fall 2011, the members of St. Luke's in Bladensburg, Md., and St. Peter of the Rock Community in Fort Worth, Texas, were received into the Catholic Church with the intent of joining the ordinariate.

It is the second such jurisdiction established under the provisions of Pope Benedict's 2009 apostolic constitution "Anglicanorum coetibus." The first was the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, created for England and Wales in January 2011; others are under consideration in Canada and Australia.

The parishes and communities accepted into the ordinariate will be fully Catholic but retain elements of their Anglican heritage and traditions, particularly in the lit-

urgy.

Father Steenson and his wife, Debra, have three grown children — a daughter and two sons, and a grandson.

Because he is married, the 59-year-old Father Steenson will not be ordained a bishop and will not be able to ordain priests. He will, however, otherwise function as a bishop and will be a voting member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

After working briefly in a New Mexico parish following his ordination, Father Steenson has been teaching theology at the University of St. Thomas Center for Faith and Culture and at St. Mary's Seminary, both in Houston, since August 2009. He also is an assisting priest at St. Cyril of Alexandria Parish in Houston.

Educated at Harvard Divinity School and at Oxford, he is an expert in patristics, the study

of the early church fathers. Born in Camp Rucker, Ala., he was raised on a farm in Hillsboro, N.D., that has been in his family since the 1880s.

In a 2009 interview with Catholic News Service, Father Steenson said he had been "attracted to Catholicism all of my life."

"It's not negative things that turned me to the Catholic Church," he said. "I just felt God saying, 'It's time.'"

The new ordinariate has been in the works since September 2010, when the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith asked Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington to be its delegate for the implementation of "Anglicanorum coetibus" in the U.S.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, in whose archdiocese the ordinariate's headquarters will be



FATHER Jeffrey N. Steenson

located, called Father Steenson "not only an outstanding patristic scholar, but a priest with a strong pastoral sense and an abiding respect for all people."

"He will surely be an effective, kind and joyful leader who will love and guide God's people with the attitude of Christ," he added.

Pope warns of threat to religious freedom in US

By FRANCIS X. ROCCA AND SARAH DELANEY
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Pope Benedict XVI warned visiting U.S. bishops that “radical secularism” threatens the core values of American culture, and he called on the church in America, including politicians and other laypeople, to render “public moral witness” on crucial social issues.

The pope spoke Jan. 19 to a group of U.S. bishops who were in Rome for their periodic “ad limina” visits, which included meetings with the pope and Vatican officials, covering a wide range of pastoral matters.

Opening with a dire assessment of the state of American society, the pope told the bishops that “powerful new cultural currents” have worn away the country’s traditional moral consensus, which was originally based on religious faith as well as ethical principles derived from natural law.

Whether they claim the authority of science or democracy, the pope said, militant secularists seek to stifle the church’s proclamation of these “unchanging moral truths.” Such a movement

inevitably leads to the prevalence of “reductionist and totalitarian readings of the human person and the nature of society.”

The pope drew an opposition between current “notions of freedom detached from moral truth” and Catholicism’s “rational perspective” on morality, founded on the conviction that the “cosmos is possessed of an inner logic accessible to human reasoning.” Using the “language” of natural law, he said, the church should promote social justice by “proposing rational arguments in public square.”

Coming at the start of an election year, Pope Benedict’s words were clearly relevant to American politics, a connection he made explicit by mentioning threats to “that most cherished of American freedoms, the freedom of religion.”

The pope said that many of the visiting bishops had told him of “concerted efforts” against the “right of conscientious objection ... to cooperation in intrinsically evil practices” — an apparent reference to proposals by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, opposed by the U.S. bishops, that all private health insurance plans cover surgical sterilization

procedures and artificial birth control.

In response to such threats, Pope Benedict said, the church requires an “engaged, articulate and well-formed Catholic laity” with the courage and critical skills to articulate the “Christian vision of man and society.” He said that the education of Catholic laypeople is essential to the “new evangelization,” an initiative that he has made a priority of his pontificate.

Touching on one of most controversial areas of church-state relations in recent years, the pope spoke of Catholic politicians’ “personal responsibility to offer public witness to their faith, especially with regard to the great moral issues of our time,” which he identified as “respect for God’s gift of life, the protection of human dignity and the promotion of authentic human rights.”

The pope was not specific about the bishops’ relationship with such politicians, merely encouraging the bishops to “maintain contacts” with them and “help them understand” their duty to promote Catholic values.

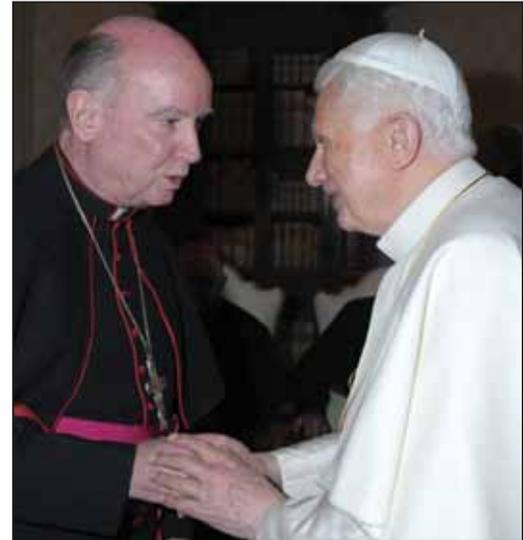
While acknowledging the “genuine difficulties” facing the church in the U.S., the pope concluded on a hopeful note,

pointing to a growing appreciation for “Judeo-Christian” civic values, and a “new generation of Catholics,” who he said will play a “decisive role in renewing the church’s presence and witness in American society.”

Before the speech, Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, archbishop

of Washington, greeted the pope with brief remarks that recalled his 2008 visit to the U.S.

The pope addressed bishops from the District of Columbia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services, and the Virgin Islands.



POPE BENEDICT XVI meets Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Wilmington, Del., during a Jan. 19 meeting with U.S. bishops on their “ad limina” visits to the Vatican. (CNS photo by L’Osservatore Romano)

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Recommendations issued for celebrating Year of Faith

By CAROL GLATZ
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

In an effort to help Catholics have a better and correct understanding of their faith and become authentic witnesses to Christ, the Vatican issued a list of pastoral recommendations for celebrating the upcoming Year of Faith.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released a "note" Jan. 7 outlining the aims of the special year and ways bishops, dioceses, parishes and communities can promote "the truth of the faith," the congregation said.

It also announced that within the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, a secretariat would be set up to suggest and coordinate different initiatives. The new department will be responsible for launching a special website for sharing useful information on the Year of Faith.

Pope Benedict XVI wanted the Year of Faith, which runs from Oct. 11, 2012, to Nov. 24, 2013, to help the church focus its attention on "Jesus Christ and the beauty of having faith in him," it said.

"The church is well aware of

the problems facing the faith" and recognizes that without a revitalization of faith rooted in a personal encounter with Jesus, "then all other reforms will remain ineffective," it said citing the pope's Dec. 22 address to the Roman Curia.

The year is meant to "contribute to a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus and to the rediscovery of faith, so that the members of the church will be credible and joy-filled witnesses to the risen Lord, capable of

Oct. 11, coincides with the anniversaries of the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 and the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1992, it would be an auspicious occasion to make the work of the council and the catechism "more widely and deeply known," it said.

The congregation said the pope "has worked decisively for a correct understanding of the council, rejecting as erroneous the so-called 'hermeneutics of

ing it "in a new way, in order to respond to the questions of our times," it said. The note offers pastoral recommendations aimed at aiding "both the encounter with Christ through authentic witnesses to faith, and the ever-greater understanding of its contents," it said.

Among the initiatives will be various ecumenical events at the Vatican aimed at restoring unity among all Christians, including "a solemn ecumenical celebration in which all of the

conform to church teaching; promoting Catholic principles and the significance of Vatican II in the mass media; hosting events that bring artists, academics and others together to renew dialogue between faith and reason; offering penitential celebrations; and putting a focus on liturgy, especially the Eucharist, it said.

It also called for Vatican II documents, the catechism and its Compendium to be republished in more affordable editions and to distribute the texts digitally and via other "modern technologies."

The congregation said it wanted to promote the recommendations because the office's "specific functions include not only safeguarding sound doctrine and correcting errors but also, and foremost, promoting the truth of the faith."

The congregation's note, drafted on the orders of Pope Benedict, was written in consultation with other Vatican offices and with the help of the Year of Faith preparatory committee. The committee, which operates under the auspices of the doctrinal congregation, includes U.S. Cardinals William J. Levada, congregation prefect and Francis E. George of Chicago.

Some recommendations ... include ensuring there be better quality catechetical materials that conform to church teaching; promoting Catholic principles and the significance of Vatican II in the mass media; hosting events that bring artists, academics and others together to renew dialogue between faith and reason; offering penitential celebrations; and putting a focus on liturgy, especially the Eucharist.

leading those many people who are seeking it to the door of faith," the note said.

Critical to renewing one's faith and being a credible witness is having a firm and correct understanding of church teaching, it said.

Because the year's start,

discontinuity and rupture' and promoting what he himself has termed the 'hermeneutic of reform,' of renewal in continuity" with the church and tradition.

The catechism "is an integral part of that 'renewal in continuity'" by embracing the old and traditional while express-

baptized will reaffirm their faith in Christ," it said. There will be special Masses at the Vatican to mark the opening and closing of the Year of Faith, it added.

Some recommendations for bishops, dioceses and parishes include ensuring there be better quality catechetical materials that

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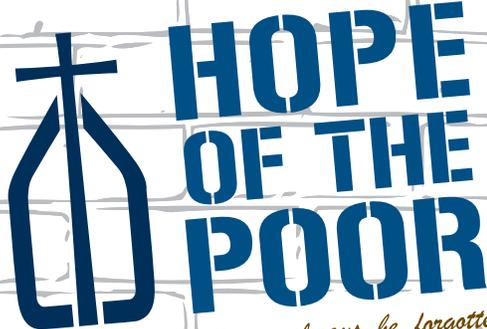
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CHRIST LEADS THE WAY BE NOT AFRAID!

Meet our Seminarians

Special Supplement

Diocese of Austin

February 2012

Please pray for our seminarians and priests

BY FATHER BRIAN McMASTER
VOCATION DIRECTOR

We are pleased to feature our 41 diocesan seminarians in this special insert of the Catholic Spirit. These men have generously said 'yes' to follow Christ in a potential vocation to the priesthood. They represent different ages, come from different parts of our diocese, and each of them has a unique vocation story as to how Jesus Christ called them personally to explore the calling to priesthood. While in seminary, they continue to discern God's call while receiving formation that helps them grow spiritually, personally, intellectually and pastorally. Our men are located at one of four seminaries: Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington, La., St. Mary's Seminary in Houston, and the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Italy. Please keep our seminarians in your prayers that each day their hearts may be more conformed to the heart of Jesus.

Prayer Calendar

This insert includes a suggested prayer calendar that guides us to pray for specific seminarians and priests each day of the month. A sample prayer is also provided. I encourage everyone to pray daily for vocations to the priesthood and for our priests who lead us in our spiritual journey. In our diocese, we are blessed with a large number of seminarians,

but more are needed as the number of Catholics continues to grow.

With the image of Blessed John Paul II carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a Eucharistic procession, we are reminded that Christ leads the way in every vocation and that we can be encouraged by Blessed John Paul II's frequent words "Be not afraid!"

New Vocation Website

The Vocation Office for the Diocese of Austin is happy to unveil its new website, www.austinvocations.com. The site was developed to help men and women gather information to help them discern God's will. It is also designed to assist parishes, vocation committees, youth ministers, educators and even those who simply want to pray for vocations. In its pages there is information about the priesthood and consecrated life in the Diocese of Austin, tools for prayer and discernment, helpful links and pages that introduce viewers to our seminarians in priestly formation.

Upcoming events

Single, Catholic men between the ages of 16 and 45 interested in learning more about discernment, the priesthood and seminary life are invited to attend Project Andrew, which will be held Feb. 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The day will include prayer, testimonials by priests and seminarians as well as Mass and lunch with Bishop Joe Vásquez.

Single, Catholic women between the ages of 16 and 45 are invited to Project Miriam, which will be held Feb. 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. The day includes testimonials and prayer with religious sisters serving in the diocese, as well as Mass and lunch with Bishop Joe Vásquez.

We also host discernment dinners for young men interested in learning more about seminary life and the priesthood. High school-aged men will meet March 7, April 4, May 7 and June 6 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the St. William Parish Rectory in Round Rock. For more information, contact Father Jonathan Raia at (512) 255-4473 or frjonathan@saintwilliams.org. College-aged men and older will meet Feb. 8, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13 and July 11 at the Borromeo House in Austin. For more information, contact Father Brian McMaster at (512) 949-2430.

Everyone is invited to attend the following Masses: the Transitional Diaconate Ordination on May 19 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park and the Priestly Ordination June 9 at 10:30 a.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock.

For more information about these events and vocations in general, visit www.austinvocations.com, e-mail vocations@austindiocese.org or call (512) 949-2430.

Father Brian McMaster is the Vocation Director for the Austin Diocese. He was ordained June 16, 2001, and was named director of vocations in 2009 after serving in several parishes.



LAST YEAR, Bishop Joe Vásquez ordained four men to the transitional diaconate. On June 9 with the help of God, Uchechukwu Andeh (far left), Kurtis Wiedenfeld, Ryan Higdon and David Trahan II will be ordained priests at St. William Parish in Round Rock. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)

LAST JUNE, Bishop Joe Vásquez ordained Father Paul Hudson (left) and Father Ron Feather to the priesthood at St. Mary Cathedral Parish in Austin. (Photo by Shelley Metcalf)





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St. Albert the Great,
Austin



Ben Cramer
Holy Trinity Seminary
I Pre-Theology
St. Mary, College Station



Greg Gerhart
Pontifical North American
College
I Theology
St. Thomas Aquinas,
College Station



Augustine Ariwaodo
St. Anthony, Kyle
Pastoral Year
Diocese of Austin



Barry Cuba
St. Mary's Seminary
III Theology
St. Catherine, Austin



Jeff Haecker
St. Mary's Seminary
I Theology
St. Thomas More, Austin



Payden Blevins
St. Mary's Seminary
I Theology
St. Louis, Austin



Henry Cuellar Jr.
St. Joseph Seminary
III College
Santa Barbara, Austin



Will Heath
Holy Trinity Seminary
II College
St. Theresa, Austin



Jason Bonifazi
St. Mary's Seminary
III Theology
St. Mary, Mexia



Joseph Daheim
Holy Trinity Seminary
IV College
St. Luke, Temple



Deacon Ryan Higdon
St. Mary's Seminary
IV Theology
St. Thomas More, Austin



Alberto Carbajal
St. Mary's Seminary
II Theology
St. Julia, Austin



Sean DeWitt
Pontifical North American
College
I Theology
St. Martin, Dripping
Springs



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St. Mary, College Station



Patrick Carlin
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I College
St. Albert the Great,
Austin



Craig DeYoung
St. William, Round Rock
Pastoral Year
St. Helen, Georgetown



Steve Kim
St. Mary's Seminary
I Pre-Theology
St. Andrew Kim, Austin



Alex Caudillo
St. Mary's Seminary
III Theology
St. Francis, Waco



Dung Dinh
St. Mary's Seminary
I Pre-Theology
Holy Vietnamese Mar-
tyrs, Austin



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St. Mary's Seminary
II Theology
Church of the Visitation,
Westphalia



Brandon Marcos Fuentes

St. Mary's Seminary
II Theology
St. Mary's Cathedral,
Austin



Paul Michael Piega

St. Joseph Seminary
I Pre-Theology
St. Mary, College Station



Deacon David Trahan

St. Mary's Seminary
IV Theology
St. William, Round Rock



Jesse Martinez

Holy Trinity Seminary
IV College
St. Mary's, Caldwell



Sang Quan

St. Mary's Seminary
II Theology
Holy Vietnamese Mar-
tyrs, Austin



Sebastian Twesigomwe

St. Joseph Seminary
IV College
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Darrell Miller

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Hai Nguyen

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Cove



Brian Phillips

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IV College
St. Joseph, Bryan



Kevin Simmons

Holy Trinity Seminary
III College
St. Joseph, Bryan

Prayer calendar for seminarians and priests

1 Deacon Uche Andeh	2 Augustine Ariwaodo Payden Blevins	3 Jason Bonifazi Alberto Carbajal	4 Patrick Carlin Alex Caudillo	5 Ben Cramer Barry Cuba	6 Henry Cuellar, Jr. Joseph Daheim	7 Sean DeWitt
8 Craig DeYoung Dung Dinh	9 Greg Gerhart Jeff Haecker	10 Will Heath Deacon Ryan Higdon	11 Doug Jeffers	12 Steve Kim Darrell Kostha	13 Brandon Marcos-Fuentes Jesse Martinez	14 Darrell Miller Hai Nguyen
15 Tim Nolt Thomas Pettit	16 Brian Phillips Paul Michael Piega	17 Sang Quan Amado Ramos	18 Tom Reitmeyer Francisco Rodriguez	19 Jose Rodriguez Kevin Simmons	20 Deacon David Trahan Sebastian Twesigomwe	21 Garret Twining Robert Vitela
22 James Wenetschlaeger Kurtis Wiedenfeld	23 Pope Benedict XVI	24 Bishop Joe Vásquez	25 diocesan priests	26 religious order priests	27 missionary priests	28 vocation directors
29 priests entrusted with the formation of seminarians	30 priests who are ill	31 priests who have died	<p><i>We invite everyone to pray for vocations. The following prayer helps us pray for each of our seminarians as well as our priests.</i></p>			

Jesus, I thank you for leading me along the path of my personal call to holiness. I pray for all priests and seminarians today especially _____. Form their hearts to seek you above all things. Fill them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Supply them with steadfast charity, heroic generosity, and confidence in you. I ask you Jesus, to speak to the hearts of young men and encourage them to follow you in the priesthood. May they hear your voice: "Be not afraid!" In your name I pray. Amen.

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

St. John Vianney, patron of priests, pray for us.

Blessed John Paul II, pray for us.

Vocations contact information

For more information about vocations in the Austin Diocese, contact the Vocations Office at (512) 949-2430 or vocations@austindiocese.org.

Mailing addresses

The seminarians studying for the Austin Diocese enjoy getting mail from the people they hope to serve. They often receive birthday cards, inspirational notes and Christmas cards. The address for the seminaries where they are studying are listed below.

Holy Trinity Seminary
P.O. Box 140309
Irving, TX 75014

St. Mary's Seminary
9845 Memorial Dr.
Houston, TX 77024

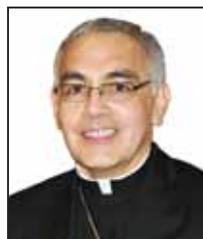
St. Joseph Seminary
75376 River Rd.
Saint Benedict, LA 70457

Pontifical North American
College
00120 Vatican City State
EUROPE



Rev. Brian McMaster

Diocese of Austin, Vocation Director
(512) 949-2430
fr-brian-mcmaster@austindiocese.org
www.austinvocations.com
Also available on Facebook



Bishop Joe S. Vásquez

Bishop of Austin
(512) 949-2400
bishop@austindiocese.org
www.austindiocese.org

Vocations

Seminarian has a message for youth of Central Texas

By HENRY CUELLAR JR.
SEMINARIAN

Peace be with you and greetings from St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, La. My name is Henry Cuellar Jr.; I am a seminarian from our diocese. I would like to extend an invitation to all youth to the Abbey Youth Fest, a youth rally coordinated by my seminary.

On March 10, St. Joseph Abbey Seminary College will host its 12th annual Abbey Youth Fest, which is a full day of contemporary Catholic music, inspiring keynote speakers and the celebration of the Mass by Archbishop Greg Aymond. As the sun sets, we unite with the Benedictines in vespers or evening prayer, and we end the night with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by candlelight. Throughout the festival, there is the opportunity for personal prayer in an outdoor chapel, the sacrament of reconciliation with visiting priests, a tour of St. Joseph Abbey, and exposure to several religious orders and various ministries that set up information booths to share their charisms with the thousands of Catholic youth in attendance.

My first Abbey Youth Fest experience was in March 2009. It was amazing to see more than 2,000 teens come

together to offer their praise and worship to the Creator of all things visible and invisible. The most amazing sight was when the sun fell into the horizon and the night sky was illuminated by the moon and countless stars, the teens fell to their knees with candles in their hands to adore our Lord, Jesus Christ. That was an unforgettable experience that we just don't get in the city. It was also great to see teens from all around the south come together and worship our Lord through song and praise.

The theme for Abbey Youth Fest 2012 is, "Restless," which is taken from St. Augustine's, Confessions: "My heart is restless until it rests in you, O Lord." The event will feature Mark Hart, vice president of Life Teen and youth speaker. Also, Catholic musicians L'Angelus and Ayleron will provide a rocking good time! The event will provide reflections upon and an experience of the beauty of God.

I especially encourage youth ministers to get a group together and make the trip to South Louisiana! I hope that many youth from the Austin Diocese will be able to join me, 80 other seminarians, the Benedictine monks of St. Joseph Abbey, several priests and religious from all over the country, and thousands of Catholic youth in worshipping our Lord and searching for

the vocation to which he calls us.

While the first Benedictine monastery dates to around 530 AD, Saint Joseph Abbey was founded in 1889 on more than 1,200 acres of land in Southern Louisiana. The monks used the land to raise cattle and grow their own food. Now, the wooded areas are used for peaceful walks on the trails and some of the fields are used to host events like

Abbey Youth Fest. In its 11 year history the Abbey Youth Fest has hosted more than 25,000 teens.

You are in my prayers; may our hearts, like St. Augustine's, find eternal rest in the heart of God.

For more information and pictures from previous festivals, visit www.AbbeyYouthFest.com and find us on Facebook.



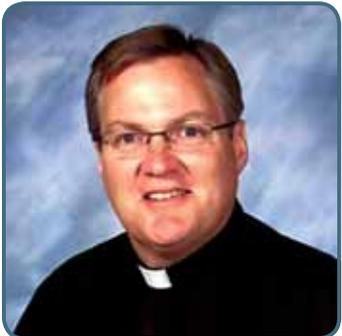
ARCHBISHOP GREG AYMOND of New Orleans will celebrate Mass during the 12th annual Abbey Youth Fest, which will be held March 10 at St. Joseph Abbey Seminary College in St. Benedict, La. (Photo courtesy Abbey Youth Fest)



OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CEMETERY AND PRAYER GARDENS

Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery serves Catholics from around our Diocese. Read what Rev. Dean E. Wilhelm from St. William Parish in Round Rock has to say about his experience.

☞ As Pastor of St. William Parish, I have counseled many families who have lost loved ones. This has given me the unique opportunity to become united with them in Christ, just as we become one with Jesus as we receive the Eucharist. We believe in the resurrection of the body and life in Christ everlasting. In that capacity, Our Lady of the Rosary Cemetery provides a unique, peaceful and reflective atmosphere for celebrating the life of a loved one. The consecrated grounds remind us that our loved ones are never far from us and will always be with us in the Body of Christ. As a priest, I am comforted to know that my fellow religious brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as myself, will be resting on blessed ground until we are once again reunited at the end of days. ☞



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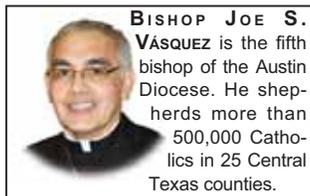
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Bishop's Interview

True love involves sacrifice and commitment



BISHOP JOE S. VÁSQUEZ is the fifth bishop of the Austin Diocese. He shepherds more than 500,000 Catholics in 25 Central Texas counties.

Editor: Bishop, February is known (to Hallmark at least) as the month of love. There are four different types of love. Please explain them for us.

Bishop Vásquez: Yes, there are four types of love we take from the Greeks, who had different types of love and commitment and affection. For them it was very important to distinguish them, so they have given us these four different forms of love.

One is "eros." Eros is about attraction toward another person; it is the attraction between a man and woman that leads to romance. Eros is neither planned nor willed. It can become passionate and consuming,

and it can be negative if not guided appropriately.

Then there is "storge," which is parental love or the love between father, mother and child and the child's love for the parents. This is a very strong love because it comes naturally. This bond is strong because parents spend so much time caring for and nurturing their children before they grow up and become independent adults. This bond lasts forever; a father and a mother continue to care for their child, and children continue to care for their parents. This love is about protection. Storge is very sacrificial and selfless as parents often give up a great deal to raise their children.

Then we have "philia," which is what we call friendship. Philia describes a special relationship between persons. True friendship focuses on how one person benefits the other. It answers the question, "What can I do that will enhance who my friend is?" Philia matures and develops into intimacy in the sense of knowing the

other as well as we know ourselves. This love is about desiring the best for someone and not about what we get out of the relationship.

Finally, we have the "agape" love, which is the highest form of love. This love is true charity, but not simply in the sense of giving money or assisting someone. Agape means giving of oneself completely, totally to the other and seeking the good of the other while not expecting anything in return. This form of love has its origins in God. From Scripture we know God is One, the Creator, as is expressed in the Old Testament. Our God is personal and he is interested in his creation, specifically in man because we are made in his image and likeness. God is so in love with creation and man that eventually he becomes flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. This love is completely selfless and sacrificial.

I think there is some sacrifice that is involved in all types of love. Even in the eros, there has to be a dying of self in order to reach out to the one we are attracted to. In the storge, there is definitely a dying to self involved as parents sacrifice so much for the good of their children. And the philia love, where one is willing to sacrifice for another individual because they care about them and are grateful for the friendship that has developed. Agape love is the supreme love and it is what Jesus speaks about in the 15th chapter of the John's Gospel: "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." This is what Jesus does as he willingly dies on the cross for us. This is the highest understanding of love.

Editor: When people think of romantic readings from the Bible in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians comes to mind, "Love is patient, love is kind." What kind of love is Paul really talking about here?

Bishop Vásquez: That is a very popular reading and it is used at many weddings. Paul is speaking about the highest form of love, agape love. Paul goes on to say that love is more than a feeling or a sentiment. True love will eventually bring a person to putting himself second and his beloved first. So this love is a giving of one's self to the other, which is based on divine love. Therefore, love is patient, love is kind, love is not arrogant, love doesn't put on airs, it doesn't delight in that which is hurtful. It doesn't delight in seeing another person suffer.

This is the love that Christ shows us and Christ becomes the true example of love for all of us. His love for God motivated Paul to extend this love to those in the communities he served. He took a vow of celibacy

and gave himself completely to God and to serving his people.

Editor: What is the significance of the agape love in our faith tradition, especially with Lent beginning soon?

Bishop Vásquez: For us, as Catholics and as Christians, as we prepare for Lent, we must think about the areas of our lives where we are not loving as we should. To put it another way, areas where we are not living out our baptismal calling. Through our baptism, we are called to live and to love as Christ did.

During Lent, the church gives us three actions that help us purify ourselves: fasting, praying and giving alms. Through these three actions we realize we are not the most important person and we are able to focus on God. Those things that take us away from putting God first and others ahead of ourselves are things of which we need to let go.

God can help us change through the power of his love. The agape love means giving completely of one's self and that is a life-long challenge! This love means helping the poor, or making more time for your children, or spending more time with your spouse. It may mean visiting the person down the street or reaching out in hospital ministry or in prison ministry. This love involves reaching out to others.

The ultimate sign of love for us as Catholics is Christ willingly dying on the cross. This sign reminds us of the perfect way to love. The season of Lent is about perfecting our love for others by focusing on God's love for all of us.

Editor: Christ commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves, which is brotherly love. How can we better fulfill that command?

Bishop Vásquez: I think to love thy neighbor as thyself means to see yourself in your neighbor. You see your neighbor and you realize you are just like them and that God loves them as much as he loves you. We all have struggles and challenges, and we all have gifts and blessings. We all have dignity that has been given to us by God and we are all reflections of the presence of God. Age doesn't matter, education doesn't matter, wealth doesn't matter, position or status doesn't matter. All of us are required to respect one another. This is what brotherly love is all about.

Editor: So what is your prayer for all of us as we strive to love God, our neighbors, our families and our spouses more fully?

Bishop Vásquez: I pray that God who is love may give us the capacity to love as Christ did. And in loving others, may we commit ourselves to doing what is best for them, seeking nothing in return.

Lenten Sacrifice



ABSTINENCE

No meat can be taken by those 14 and older on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays.



FASTING

A limit of one full meatless meal by those 18-59 on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.



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Voluntary acts of self-denial are recommended on weekdays during Lent.



PRAYER AND CHARITY

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Catholic Schools

The enduring gift of Catholic education

By **NED VANDERS, Ed.D.**
SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Catholic Schools Diocese of Austin (CSDA) recently celebrated National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 29 to Feb. 4. During the months of February and March, the application and registration process for the 2012-2013 school year moves into "high gear."

As a parent or legal guardian, one of the most important decisions in your life and in the lives of your children is that of choosing the education that will most benefit them. You ask yourself many questions: Where will they learn the most? How do I help them prepare to live in the world around them? Who will be their friends? Will they fit in?

Having attended Catholic schools

and colleges and with 42 years of experience as a teacher and administrator in Catholic schools, I believe that a Catholic education is the best answer to every parent's questions. A Catholic education is the enduring gift that parents give to their child now as a student and in the future as an adult.

As members of the CSDA system, our 23 schools are part of a large organization dedicated to educating our children to be fruitful, moral members of our society. We join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in their mission "to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel is proclaimed, a community in which Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of our God is cultivated" ("Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium").

CSDA provides the highest of academic preparation, coupled with the broad enrichment opportunities that nurture our children's minds, bodies and souls.

CSDA offers excellent Catholic school opportunities for every child's education! Find out more about our exciting schools and their commitment to the highest academic, moral and spiritual standards at www.csdatx.org. I invite visitors to look through the website to further discover all that our Catholic schools have to offer. The website has profiles of each school in the diocese, information about open house events, and information on the registration process. Application deadlines for the fall are due very soon.

Our 17 Catholic elementary schools offer an excellent education, with an emphasis on academics and moral training, which will last our

children a lifetime. The academic foundation set by the Catholic elementary schools is strengthened in our six Catholic high schools for acceptance into college and life-long learning.

I encourage those who already send their children to Catholic school to invite their friends to investigate our Catholic schools for their children's education. Research has shown time and again that the most effective publicity for Catholic schools is by word of mouth. So those who love Catholic schools should spread the word!

With teamwork, we can build support for our Catholic schools and provide even more students with the enduring gift of a Catholic education.

DR. NED VANDERS is diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools. He may be contacted at (512) 949-2497 or ned-vanders@austindiocese.org.

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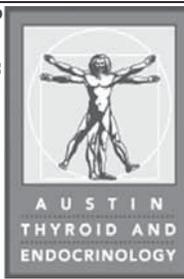
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Saints for our times

'Miraculous' oil still flows from tomb of St. Walburga

By **MARY LOU GIBSON**
COLUMNIST

St. Walburga spent all of her adult life in convents, first as a nun, then as an abbess. However, it wasn't her role as abbess or the missionary work she did in Germany that made her one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. Rather it was her death in 779 and what happened afterwards that still draws pilgrims to her shrine in Eichstätt, Germany. When she died, she was the abbess at the double monastery at Heidenheim founded by her brother, Winnibald. About a hundred years later, 870-879, her body was moved and interred next to her brother in Holy Cross Church at Eichstätt.

Soon something strange and wonderful began to happen. Editor Paul Burns writes in "Butler's Lives of the Saints" that an aromatic fluid with healing qualities began to flow from a fissure in the rock where her tomb and that of her brother stands. For the next 10 centuries, this substance (also called an oil) was collected by Benedictine nuns, bottled and given to the faithful. It was consumed and used as an ointment.

The oil flow begins every year between Oct. 12 (the date her remains

were moved) and stops on Feb. 25 (the anniversary of her death). Rosemary Guiley writes in "The Encyclopedia of Saints" that St. Walburga's oil is credited with miraculous powers and still flows from her tomb. A fine collection of phials for the distribution of her oils dating from the 16th to the 20th centuries is housed at Eichstätt.

So not only is St. Walburga noted for her miraculous oil, but she has also become a part of German folklore. This started with her canonization on May 1, 870, by Pope Adrian II. Her feast in Roman Martyrology is observed on May 1. This is also the date for a pagan feast known as Walpurgisnacht, the beginning of summer and the revels of witches. So the observance of her feast day merged with the traditions of pagan revelries. Moreover, a German variant of her name is Walpurgis and the composer Wagner's "Walpurgisnacht" music describes the witches' Sabbath.

But long before St. Walburga came to Germany, she was a student and later a Benedictine nun at Wimborne Abbey near her birthplace of Devonshire, England. Sarah Gallick writes in "The Big Book of Women Saints" that she was an Anglo-Saxon

noble woman born in 710 in Devonshire, England to a West Saxon chieftain. She entered Wimborne Abbey at the young age of 11. According to Burns, such schools offered virtually the only education available to women at that time. After more than 20 years, she joined her brothers, Willibald and Winnibald, who were missionaries in Germany helping St. Boniface convert the people of that country.

Winnibald established a double monastery at Heidenheim. When he died, Willibald named her superior over both the nuns and monks. This double monastery was the only known example of its kind in Germany, and Walburga was its superior until her death in 779. According to Burns, being an abbess of a double monastery reflected the culture of the times when women of high social rank often became nuns. She set an ecclesiastical precedent in this position and became something of a Woman of Power, according to Sean Kelly and Rosemary Rogers writing in "The Saint-a-Day Guide."

Not much is known of her years as abbess. She was well educated and read and wrote in Latin. Her account of Winnibald's travels in Palestine earned her a reputation as the first female author of England and Germa-

ny. She was also skilled in medicine, using herbs for healing.

By the time she died, she was becoming well known for many miracles. Gallick describes how she was once guided at night to the home of a dying girl. She stood outside in the darkness but did not identify herself. When the girl's father saw her, surrounded by his fierce dogs, he assumed that she was an intruder. She then told him who she was and he welcomed her inside. She spent the night praying for the girl who became completely recovered by morning.

St. Walburga is the patroness of Eichstätt and is invoked against famine. One of her emblems is three ears of corn.

There are churches dedicated to St. Walburga in Europe and in the U.S. The Abbey of St. Walburga is a small community of contemplative Benedictine nuns in Virginia Dale, Colo. There is also a Benedictine community in St. Walburga Monastery in Elizabeth, NJ.

St. Walburga's feast day is Feb. 25.



MARY LOU GIBSON is a member of St. Austin Parish in Austin. She is a retired state employee.

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Capitol Comments

Initial Victory: Texas sonogram law ruled constitutional

By **JEFFERY R. PATTERSON**
TEXAS CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Plenty of happy advocates celebrated on Jan. 10 when the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a temporary injunction prohibiting the state from enforcing the sonogram law while its constitutionality was debated in federal court.

The law, which was passed during the recent 82nd Texas Legislature, requires doctors who perform abortions to completely inform mothers of their baby's stage of development and to hear the baby's heartbeat in her womb prior to the procedure. However, before the law could be enacted, abortion proponents filed suit in federal court blocking its execution, claiming it a violation of doctors' first amendment rights because it required them to disclose information that the woman may not want or need to hear. Austin District Judge Sam Sparks sided with them, issuing a temporary order preventing the state from enforcing the law while the opponents challenged its constitutionality in court. The Texas Attorney General appealed Judge Sparks' temporary order to the Fifth Circuit Court, who overturned the injunction.

In explaining their ruling, the three-judge panel said that opponents "failed to demonstrate constitutional flaws" largely because "the required disclosures of a sonogram, the fetal

arguments made by pro-life advocates in lobbying for the bill during session. The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) was persistent in arguing that, as Catholics, we sanctify life as a precious gift

"Providing mothers access to sonograms informs them about the risks and complications associated with abortion. These consultations save lives by educating mothers who may not realize that the child they carry is exactly that — a unique, irreplaceable human life."

— *Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston.*

heartbeat, and their medical descriptions are the epitome of truthful, non-misleading information."

Because abortion is not used strictly as a medical procedure, but as an exercise in self-determination, informed consent is essential.

"The point of informed consent laws is to allow the patient to evaluate her condition and render her best decision," wrote the court's Chief Judge Edith H Jones. "Denying her up-to-date medical information is more of an abuse to her ability to decide than providing the information."

Judge Jones' ruling echoed the

given to all of us from God. It is a gift that should be nurtured and protected at all stages. Laws must be in place that protect the life of the unborn child and educate mothers who may not realize that the life in their womb is exactly that: a unique, irreplaceable human life.

This is the beauty of the sonogram law. By requiring informed consent and access to a sonogram 24 hours before an abortion occurs — including a face-to-face conversation between mother and a physician — the law provides a last opportunity for mothers to recognize the humanity of the unborn child in their womb.

"Providing mothers access to sonograms informs them about the risks and complications associated with abortion. These consultations save lives by educating mothers who may not realize that the child they carry is exactly that — a unique, irreplaceable human life," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston. Both scientific studies and practical experience have proven that when mothers are fully informed about their pregnancies, they are more likely to choose life.

While some may grumble that this falls short of the total and complete eradication of abortion for which we continue to pray and work, we should never take any success for granted. Providing comprehensive information ensures that every Texas woman seeking an abortion has all the facts about the life she is carrying and understands the devastating impact of such a life-ending decision. Every child lost to abortion is a tragedy; and every child we may save through education and compassion is a joyous victory.

JEFFERY R. PATTERSON is the executive director of the Texas Catholic Conference. The conference fosters cooperation and communication among the dioceses of Texas. For information, visit www.txatholic.org.



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Looking Ahead for

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the author
Father James Martin
Through Skype

Diocese of Austin



Old and New Testament Dreams: What Do They Tell Us? Sat., Feb. 18, 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

God chose to communicate his will to the people of Israel through dreams or "visions of the night" in the Hebrew Scriptures. The use of dreams, as an instrument of Divine communication and the plan for human salvation, continued in the New Testament. We will look at these Scriptures and reflect on ways in which God speaks to us today. Jane Gutloff, M.Div. & Catholic Chaplain will be the presenter. Cost is \$30, lunch included.

Ash Wednesday, Feb 22

So often many people make "New Year Resolutions." The church offers us an opportunity to make "Spiritual Resolutions" this Lenten season to rid ourselves of the old and put on the new. The journey begins Ash Wednesday and you are invited to start this holy season with us. Brian Egan, Bev Collin and Father Angelo Bertini will present this day. Cost is \$30 and includes lunch.

Lenten Retreat: Discerning God's Will In Our Lives, March 23-25

What is God's will for us? How do we know if we are following his will? These questions help us to discover "The Plan" God has in mind for us. Sisters Brugnoli, Cavallin and Menin from College Station will be presenting this weekend. The cost is \$155 for a shared room and \$185 for a private room.

Reflections on Holy Week, March 28

Holy Week is the most sacred time of the year for Catholics and Christians. Father Bill Wack, a Holy Cross priest and pastor of St. Ignatius, Martyr Parish in Austin, will lead this day of reflection. Father Bill will help us enter more deeply into the mystery of God's love for us, the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus' Passion and Death, and the glory of the Resurrection. Cost is \$30 and includes lunch.

Waco Catholic goes undercover for CBS reality series

By **MARK PATTISON**
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

Dina Dwyer-Owens, CEO of the Dwyer Group, a collection of home service franchises, donned a wig, pearls and blue jeans to check in on her employees for an upcoming episode of the CBS reality series "Undercover Boss." And, by and large, she liked what she saw.

"To see how much our employees and our franchisees care is really awesome," Dwyer-Owens said in a Dec. 15 telephone interview with Catholic News Service from Dwyer Group headquarters in Waco.

"Being out there in the van with the service professionals and the franchisees for a day or half a day really doing the work that they do, I have a whole new appreciation and respect for these professionals," she said. "I look at myself and think, 'I wonder what their day's going to be like today.' Their work is hard. It's hard work. It was hot when I was out there with them, and they were doing it every day."

When the "Undercover Boss" production team met with Dwyer-Owens before arranging her visits, they asked her what she did in a typical day. One part of her answer was making pancakes for breakfast. Another part was going to Mass.

"My goal is to go to Mass three to four times a week. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, I try to go five days a week," Dwyer-Owens told CNS. "It just keeps me grounded in doing the right things instead of all the oth-

er stuff that creeps into your life."

Her "Undercover Boss" segment shows her at a morning Mass at St. Louis Parish in Waco and chatting with the parish pastor, Father John Guzaldo. Waco is in the Diocese of Austin.

"He's such a cool priest," Dwyer-Owens said. "I can text him and he responds."

There's a closing segment showing her praying alone inside St. Louis. "I'm not very good on meditating on Bible Scriptures and being focused. I find things I need to do around the home (instead)," she said. "I need to be in a place that quiets me."

Dwyer-Owens said the routine of near-daily Mass came early in her tenure as CEO after she succeeded her father, who founded the company 30 years ago. The Dwyer Group had bought a company that was bigger than the original Dwyer business, and with the purchase came a seemingly endless string of things to do.

"I found I was getting very caught up in the activities on the to-do list," she said. "I was finding that I was letting negativity seep into my day. I was getting bogged down by the to-do's instead of the to-be's. I found that going to Mass was the best way to keep me grounded and focused on what I needed to do in life."

Even the undercover name she chose, Faith Brown, has its roots in, well, her faith.

"Everything became faith. I drove by a church and the billboard said, 'Is faith important?' I said to myself, 'You better believe it!'" Later on, as she was driving past the



DINA DWYER-OWENS, CEO of the Dwyer Group, a collection of home service franchises, donned a wig, pearls and blue jeans to check in on her employees for a January episode of the CBS reality series "Undercover Boss." Dwyer-Owens is a parishioner of St. Louis Parish in Waco. (CNS photos courtesy CBS (top) and Dwyer Group (left))



campus of Baylor University in Waco, she saw a banner that read, "Baylor University. Encouraging Baylor, Encouraging Faith." "It's a sign — a sign to me," Dwyer-Owens said.

Even when reading this newspaper, the Catholic Spirit, she noticed that Pope Benedict XVI "announced that this

is going to be the Year of Faith," she said, adding that her supervisor, Wayne, while she was undercover working for Mr. Rooter, would sing a George Michael oldie: "You gotta have faith, faith, faith."

CBS asked CNS to not disclose the "reveals" — what happens when Dwyer-Owens, sans disguise, reintroduc-

es herself to the people she worked with while undercover. "That was so much fun. I tend to have too big of a heart sometimes. It's nice to have heart," she said.

This episode of "Undercover Boss" originally aired on Jan. 22. It may be viewed at www.cbs.com/shows/undercover_boss/video/.

Pastoral support for victims of sexual abuse

The Diocese of Austin is committed to providing confidential and compassionate care to victims of sexual abuse, particularly if the abuse was committed by clergy or a church representative. If you have experienced abuse by someone representing the Catholic Church, please contact the diocesan coordinator of pastoral care at (512) 949-2400.

Apoyo pastoral a las víctimas de abuso sexual

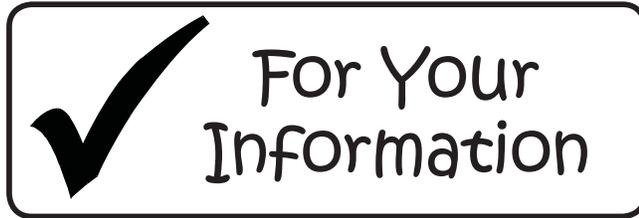
La Diócesis de Austin se compromete a proporcionar ayuda confidencial y compasiva a las víctimas de abuso sexual, especialmente si el abuso fue cometido por el clero o un representante de la iglesia. Si usted ha sufrido abusos por parte de alguien que representa la Iglesia Católica, por favor comuníquese con el coordinador diocesano del cuidado pastoral al (512) 949-2400.

How to report an incident of concern

The Diocese of Austin is committed to preventing harm from happening to any of our children or vulnerable adults. If you are aware of sexual or physical abuse and/or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, state law requires you to report that information to local law enforcement or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at (800) 252-5400 or www.dfps.state.tx.us. Additionally, if the suspected abuse is by clergy or an employee or volunteer of any diocesan parish, school or agency, a Confidential Notice of Concern should be submitted to the diocesan Ethics and Integrity in Ministry Office at (512) 949-2400. The Confidential Notice of Concern can be found at www.austindiocese.org (click on the link HOW TO REPORT ABUSE). Reports may be made anonymously.

Cómo reportar un caso de abuso

La Diócesis de Austin está comprometida a la prevención del daño que se cause a cualquier niño o adulto vulnerable. Si usted está enterado del abuso sexual o físico y/o abandono de un niño o adulto vulnerable, la ley estatal requiere que se reporte esa información a la policía local o el Departamento de Servicios Familiares y de Protección del Estado de Texas al (800) 252-5400 o al sitio: www.dfps.state.tx.us y además, si la sospecha de abuso es por parte del clero, empleado o voluntario de cualquier parroquia, escuela u organización de la diócesis, se debe enviar un Reporte Confidencial de Abuso y debe ser presentado a la Oficina de Ética e Integridad en el Ministerio de la diócesis al (512) 949-2400. El Reporte Confidencial de Abuso se encuentra en nuestra página de Internet diocesana: www.austindiocese.org (Haga click en la liga COMO REPORTAR UN CASO DE ABUSO). Estos reportes pueden ser hechos de manera anónima.



The Assembly of Catholic Professionals will meet Feb. 8 at 11:30 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Town Lake in Austin. Dr. Richard Grant will give a talk on "The Four Gospels at Work." Registration must be made before Feb. 2 at www.austindiocese.org/acp and select "RSVP/Purchase Admission."

The Austin Chapter and 54 councils of the Knights of Columbus in the Austin Diocese (south) invite all priests, deacons and their wives, religious sisters and brothers to the annual Clergy/Religious Appreciation Dinner Feb. 9 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at St. Helen Parish in Georgetown. Bishop Joe Vásquez will be the featured speaker. This event seeks to honor the clergy and religious for their dedicated ministry to the church. For more information, contact Jeremiah O'Fihely at jofiately@yahoo.com or (830) 739-5271.

The Austin Diocese will host an Annulment Writing Workshop Feb. 10 from 7 to 9 p.m. and Feb. 11 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. The workshop will give participants a step-by-step explanation of annulment procedures, including how to tell one's story and how to find witnesses to back up one's story. By the time the workshop is complete, participants will have written a first draft of their annulment case. The sessions incorporate prayer breaks throughout with an emphasis on healing the pain that often surfaces during the annulment process. The cost of the workshop is \$30. For more information or to register, contact Pat Thompson at (512) 970-7063.

The diocesan Religious Education Office will host a Publisher's Day Feb. 13 from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. Approved publishers will be on site with materials and resources for review. Each publisher will make a presentation and discuss their products. For more information, contact Carolyn Martinez at (512) 949-2461 or carolyn-martinez@austindiocese.org.

The Diocese of Austin and The John Paul II Life Center are hosting "The Silver Ring Thing – Catholic Edition" Feb. 17 at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin. The Silver Ring Thing promotes abstinence until marriage based on a Christ-focused relationship. The Silver Ring Thing presents two concurrent programs: one for teens and one for parents. For more information, e-mail silverringthing@austindiocese.org.

The diocesan Commission on Aging and the Chaplain Services Department of Seton Hospital will present a workshop on Pastoral Care for the Sick and Dying Feb. 18 from 8:30 a.m. to noon in McFadden Auditorium at Seton Medical Center, 1201 West 38th St. in Austin. The workshop will cover the church's prayers and rituals for the sick and dying and church teaching on

end of life and other pastoral care issues. This workshop is offered without charge, but parking in the garage south of the hospital will cost approximately \$5. Register by calling Yvonne Saldaña at (512) 949-2486 or e-mailing yvonne-saldana@austindiocese.org no later than Feb. 14.

A training for those who would like to administer the Prepare-Enrich Assessment in their parish or deanery will be held Feb. 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. To register or for more information, contact Rick Bologna at (512) 949-2495 or rick-bologna@austindiocese.org.

Those who feel called to befriend women in need, particularly those in crisis pregnancies, are invited to a Gabriel Angel training on Feb. 18 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Parish in San Marcos. Gabriel Angels offer one-on-one spiritual and emotional support to a mother during and after her pregnancy. Lunch and all materials will be provided. Registration is due no later than Feb. 13 as space is limited. For more information, call (512) 949-2488 or e-mail rebecca-niemerg@austindiocese.org.

The diocesan Office of Black Catholics is sponsoring a Black History Month Mass Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. For more information, contact Johnnie Dorsey at (512) 217-9616 or johnnie-dorsey@austindiocese.org.

Pax Christi Austin will meet Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Father John Payne House at St. Ignatius, Martyr Parish in Austin. Pax Christi Austin, which meets the third Sunday of every month, is a member of Pax Christi International and Pax Christi USA, the Catholic peace and justice movement that works and prays to create a world that reflects the peace of Christ. For more information, contact Bob Rankin at bob_rankin@att.net.

Catholic School religion coordinators will meet Feb. 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Ignatius Catholic School in Austin. For more information, contact Irma Perez at irma-perez@austindiocese.org or (512) 949-2497.

Hispanic young adults are invited to Mass (in Spanish) Feb. 24 at 9 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Austin. Participants will pray the rosary beginning at 8:30 p.m. For more information, contact Juan Torres at (512) 415-5908 or Lily Morales at (512) 363-3609 or pjhaustin@gmail.com.

The diocesan Office of Black Catholics is sponsoring a Day of Reflection March 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Holy Cross Parish in Austin. The day is in preparation for the National Black Catholic Congress to be held in Indianapolis in July. For information, contact Johnnie Dorsey at (512) 217-9616 or johnnie-dorsey@austindiocese.org.

NFP classes.....

The Creighton Model of natural family planning cooperates with the couple's own natural fertility process. Come and learn more about it Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. at Seton Medical Center in Austin. To register, e-mail name and the date of the class to austinfcc@gmail.com.

An introductory session of the Creighton Model of natural family planning will be held Feb. 11 at 10 a.m. at St. Mary Catholic Center in College Station. Learn how women can understand and monitor their reproductive health. Learn how couples can naturally plan their family. Registration fee is \$20. To register online visit www.aggieatholic.org/fccsm or e-mail fcctexas@gmail.com.

The Sympto-Thermal Method of natural family planning will be taught in a series of three classes spaced about one month apart for engaged or married couples. Classes will begin Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. at St. William Parish in Round Rock. To register, visit <http://register.cclli.org>.

An introductory seminar on natural family planning will be held Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. at St. Austin Parish in Austin. NFP is a way for couples to learn how to

naturally plan their family. Couples will receive a certificate of attendance. The cost is \$20 per couple.

The Austin Couple to Couple League will offer a natural family planning Introduction Seminar Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin. The class will satisfy the Austin Diocese requirement for marriage. To register, call Nick and Monica Warren at (512) 257-0857 or e-mail nfp@loswarren.com.

An introductory seminar on the Billings Ovulation Method of natural family planning will be held Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin. To learn more about this method, visit www.woomb.org. To attend the seminar, contact Amanda and Ryan Ransom at ransomsnfp@gmail.com.

The Creighton Model of natural family planning cooperates with the couple's own natural fertility process. A class with more information about this method will be presented Feb. 25 at 10 a.m. at Seton Williamson in Round Rock. To register, e-mail name and the date of the class to austinfcc@gmail.com.

Retreats.....

"Old and New Testament Dreams: What do they tell us?" will be presented Feb. 18 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. Dreams are used throughout Scripture to reveal important messages from God. This day of reflection will reflect on ways God speaks to us today. The cost is \$30, which includes lunch. For more information, contact Cedarbrake at (254) 780-2436 or cedarbrake@austindiocese.org.

"Together in God's Love," a marriage preparation series, will begin Feb. 21 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. Subsequent classes will be held Feb. 28, March 6 and 13. Couples preparing for marriage are encouraged to register as soon as possible, as these classes fill quickly. The classes include talks on faith, communication, sexuality and stewardship in the context of Catholic marriage. For registration information, contact your parish or the diocesan Catholic Family Life and Family Counseling Office at (512) 949-2495 or rick-bologna@austindiocese.org.

An Ash Wednesday day of reflection will be held Feb. 22 from 9 a.m. to

2:30 p.m. at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center in Belton. The day will include Mass and the distribution of ashes. The cost is \$30, which includes lunch. For more information, contact Cedarbrake at (254) 780-2436 or cedarbrake@austindiocese.org.

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. For confidential information about or to register for the February English program beginning with a weekend on Feb. 24-26, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

St. John Neumann Parish in Austin will present a retreat featuring writer and philosopher Peter Kreeft March 3 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theme of the day is "Whom Do We Meet in the Eucharist?" The cost is \$30 in advance (visit www.sjnaustin.org to register) or \$40 at the door. Kreeft will also present on the topic of "Catholics and Muslims" during a sponsorship dinner the evening of March 3 as well as at the weekly "Between the Masses" series on Sunday morning. For more information regarding these presentations, contact Nancy Biehler at nbiehler@sjnaustin.org.

Send in your items!

CATHOLIC SPIRIT offers this page, "For Your Information," as a "community bulletin board." Items of general interest of upcoming parish and diocesan events, including parish social events, will be printed at no charge at the discretion of the editor. The deadline for material is the 10th of the month, with publication occurring the first week of the following month. Material may be e-mailed to catholic-spirit@austindiocese.org or faxed to (512) 949-2523.



Parish and community events.....

Catholic Scripture Study meets on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. at St. Louis Parish in Austin (a group also meets at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Cedar Park). Classes consist of prayer, small group discussion, lecture, and fellowship. The first Wednesday of every month is Intro Day, where visitors are invited throughout the year to attend a session and register for class. For more information, visit www.csaustin.org or contact Patty Hogan (Austin classes) at (512) 267-4789 or csaustin@yahoo.com or Bob Gorski (Cedar Park classes) at (512) 636-2927.

The Heart of Texas Ultreya Community for the English Cursillo movement of the Austin Diocese meets the first Sunday of the month from 3 to 5 p.m. at Ft. Hood in the 58th St. Chapel. The meetings include group sharing, prayer and personal reflection. Those interested in starting an Ultreya community in their area may contact Robin Spencer at (254) 518-3609 or robins@hot.rr.com.

Catholic singles from throughout the Austin Diocese are invited to a presentation entitled "Catholic Dating: What Does It Mean?" Feb. 10 at San José Parish in Austin. Father Charlie Garza will be the presenter. The evening will begin with Mass at 5:45 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Chapel, and the presentation will begin at 6:45 p.m. in the school building, Room 1A. A potluck and discussion will be held at 7:30 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring a warm or cold dish to share. For information, contact Susan Torres at suzanbanan@yahoo.com or (512) 369-3976.

St. William Parish in Round Rock will host a Sweetheart Dinner and Dance Feb. 10 at the St. William Parish Hall. Doors will open at 6 p.m., with dinner from 6:30 to 8 p.m. and the dance from 8 p.m. until midnight. Music will be provided by Ruben Ramos. Advance tickets are \$30 per person, which includes dinner. Tickets will be \$35 per person at the door. For ticket information, call Julio Campos at (512) 635-4707, Gloria Vallejo at (512) 968-2197, or Bea Wills at (512) 600-8152.

The Adult Faith Formation program at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin will host a World Marriage Day

Retreat on Feb. 11 beginning at 2 p.m. Charlie and Beth Balsam will be the retreat leaders. The retreat includes an afternoon Mass and evening "Valentine's" dinner with entertainment. Registration is available at www.sjnaustin.org.

The Cursillo School of Leaders meets the second and fourth Tuesday of every month in Jarrell. Those who have attended a Cursillo are invited to attend. For information, contact Robin Spencer at (254) 518-3609 or robins@hot.rr.com.

The Ladies of Charity of Austin will meet Feb. 11 at the diocesan Pastoral Center in Austin. Father Matt Iwuji will celebrate Mass at 9:30 a.m. and a meeting will follow at 10 a.m. For information, contact Jo Alvarez at (512) 452-4588 or celajoa@att.net.

ENDOW, a Catholic study group for women, will meet on Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 15 through April 18 at St. Michael's Catholic Academy in Austin. Facilitated by DeeAnn Smith, the study is entitled "Redemptoris Mater" (Mother of Our Redeemer) and examines the role of Mary in the church and helps deepen devotion to the Blessed Mother. The cost of the course is \$80, which includes the study guide. There is no homework and scholarships are available. For information, contact DeeAnn Smith at (512) 899-0456 or visit www.EndowOnline.com.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Austin will host an evening with Maria Vadia Feb. 17 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Cristo Rey Parish in Austin. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Austin (CCRA) will host a conference featuring Vadia Feb. 18 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish in Austin. The cost is \$10 if pre-registered or \$15 for late registration. Lunch is included. For more information, visit www.ccrastin.org.

St. Joseph Parish in Manor will host a Christian Casino Night Feb. 18 in the parish hall. Ticket includes a meal, music and games. Door prizes will be available. Tickets are limited. For more information, contact the parish office at (512) 272-4004.

The inaugural St. Ignatius, Martyr Catholic School 2012 Mardi Gras Masquerade will be held Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. in the Father Gene Dore Family Center at 120 W. Oltorf St. in Austin. The masquerade will begin with a French Quarter reception filled with many NOLA traditions. The evening will continue with Cajun dining, a live and silent auction, and live music. All proceeds will benefit the students at St. Ignatius, Martyr Catholic School by providing new desks and furniture. Tickets start at \$25 with table sponsorships available. For more information, call (512) 422-8547 or visit www.st-ignatius.org/school.

The Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parent-Teacher Club will sponsor its 25th Anniversary Mardi Gras Casino Night Fundraiser Feb. 18 at the SSCM Recreation Hall in Granger. Doors will open at 6 p.m. Games begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person, which includes games, beverages and appetizers. For more information, call Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic School at (512) 859-2927.

February 20 begins the 33 days of preparatory prayers for "Total Consecration to Jesus through Mary" that continue until March 24. Each day of prayer, representing one year in the life of Christ, is to be done privately in our own homes using the consecration preparation books (contact local Legion of Mary for a book). After these 33 days of prayers, all are invited to make or renew their consecration at Mass on the Annunciation of the Lord. For a book or for more information, visit www.TexasToJesusThroughMary.org.

The Knights of Columbus Council of Caldwell will host Fish Fry Friday Dinners Feb. 24, March 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Mary's gym in Caldwell. The cost is \$8 per plate.

St. John Neumann Parish in Austin will host a Fish Fry at 6 p.m. and the Stations of the Cross will follow at 7 p.m. on the Fridays during Lent. Dinner includes fried catfish, cole slaw, fries and hush puppies. Suggested donation is \$5 or \$15 for families.

"A Lenten Journey of Healing," the seventh annual Lenten women's conference sponsored by the San José Council of Catholic Women, will be held Feb. 25 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at San José Parish in Austin. The keynote speaker will be Father Charlie Garza and Missionary Catechist of Divine Providence Sister Mary Louise Barba will be the program presenter. The registration fee is \$25, which includes lunch and materials (not guaranteed for registrations after Feb. 15). For information, contact Rosie Castillo at rcastillo@sanjosechurch.org or at (512) 444-7587 or Lydia Ruiz at ruiz_lydia49@yahoo.com or call (512) 523-8327.

The third annual Savio Soiree will be held March 2 at 7 p.m. at St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School in Austin. The event features keynote speaker Chris Lowney. Formerly a Jesuit seminarian, Lowney was named a Managing Director of J.P. Morgan & Co. while still in his thirties and held senior positions in

New York, Tokyo, Singapore and London until leaving the firm in 2001. He has written several books. For tickets or more information about the 2012 Savio Soiree, go to www.saviochs.org or contact Mark Sloat at (512) 388-8846 or msloat@saviochs.org.

A Boy Scout Retreat will be held March 3 at Holy Trinity Parish in Corn Hill. This retreat satisfies the Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius retreat/day of reflection requirement. For information, contact Kathleen Lossau at klossau@austin.rr.com.

The Knights of Columbus Council of Caldwell will host their 2012 Annual Homecoming Festival March 4 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the SPJST Hall on Hwy. 36 South in Caldwell. Activities include an auction at 12:30 p.m., a silent auction, music and games for all ages. Barbecue plates will be served for \$8.

Sarah's Hope is a spiritual support program for couples struggling with fertility problems or pregnancy loss. The next women's support group meeting is March 7; the rosary will be prayed at 6:45 p.m. and discussion begins at 7 p.m. at the Vitae Clinic in Austin. For information, contact Sarah's Hope Austin at SarahsHopeAustin@gmail.com. Sarah's Hope is not a ministry of the Austin Diocese.

The Therians of Austin and the Austin Council of Catholic Women will host an event entitled "Women for Women: Awareness in Action" March 8 from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Thomas More Parish in Austin. The program will feature presentations highlighting aspects of Catholic Relief Services work for women and children around the world, HIV/Aids and health issues and economic development through fair trade. Fair trade merchants will have goods for sale. Doors open at 6 p.m. and a donation of \$10 will go to the work of CRS. To pre-register e-mail Gerri Misko at gerri.misko@prutxrealty.com or call Eunice Washa at (512) 258-5243.

Burse

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has completed a burse for the Clerical Endowment Fund (CEF) in memory of Martha Sweed Walker.

The totals for the burse as of Dec. 31, 2011, are listed below by council.

Austin Council	\$845.00
Brazos Valley Council	\$1,223.00
Central Council	\$156.00
Eastern Council	\$882.00
Northern Council	\$1,772.00
Southern Council	\$811.00
Temple Council	\$1,973.00
Western Council	\$335.00
Previous Balance	\$4,760.52
Total	\$12,757.52

The Clerical Endowment Fund provides low-cost loans to parishes. Interest from the loans is used to educate diocesan seminarians. For information, contact either Father Ed Karasek at (254) 826-3705 or Mary Ann Till at (512) 353-4943.

Discernment.....

A Discernment Dinner for single, Catholic men (ages 18 and older) with an openness to a priestly vocation and discernment will be held Feb. 8 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Borromeo House in Austin. The evening includes dinner, prayer, and a presentation with discussion on topics such as the priesthood, seminary, prayer, discernment, and spiritual life. For more information, contact Father Brian McMaster at (512) 949-2405 or fr-brian-mcmaster@austindiocese.org.

Project Andrew will be held Feb. 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Catholic men between the ages of 16 and 45 interested in learning more about discernment, the priesthood and seminary life are invited to attend. There will be time for prayer, testimonials by priests and seminarians as well as Mass and lunch with Bishop Joe Vásquez. For more information, visit www.austinvocations.com.

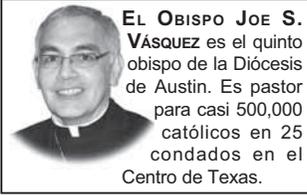
Project Miriam will be held Feb. 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. Single, Catholic women between the ages of 16 and 45 are invited to attend. The morning includes testimonials and prayer with religious sisters serving in the diocese, as well as Mass and lunch with Bishop Joe Vásquez. For more information, contact the Vocation Office at (512) 949-2430 or vocations@austindiocese.org.

A Discernment Dinner for high school age Catholic men will be held March 7 at 7 p.m. at St. William Parish Rectory in Round Rock. Men with an openness to encountering Christ, discovering their identity, and their mission are invited to join others for dinner, evening prayer, a presentation, and discussion. For more information, contact Father Jonathan Raia at (512) 255-4473 or frjonathan@saintwilliams.org.

The Salesian Sisters will host a "Come and See" weekend March 9-11 in Corralitos, Calif. Women who are discerning a call to religious life are invited to spend the weekend with the Salesian Sisters. For more information, contact Sister Jeanette Palasota at palasota@hotmail.com or visit www.salesiansisterswest.org.

Entrevista al Señor Obispo

El amor implica compromiso y sacrificio



EL OBISPO JOE S. VÁSQUEZ es el quinto obispo de la Diócesis de Austin. Es pastor para casi 500,000 católicos en 25 condados en el Centro de Texas.

Editora: Señor Obispo, febrero se conoce (por lo menos para Hallmark) como el mes del amor. Existen cuatro diferentes tipos de amor. Por favor, explíquenos para nosotros.

Obispo Vásquez: Sí, hay cuatro tipos de amor que tomamos de los griegos, quienes definían diferentes tipos de amor, compromiso y afecto. Para ellos era muy importante distinguirlos, por lo que nos han dado estas cuatro formas diferentes de amor.

Uno de ellos es "eros". Eros es la atracción hacia otra persona, es la atracción entre un hombre y una mujer que conduce al romance. Eros no es ni planeado ni forzado. Puede llegar a ser apasionado, consumidor y puede ser negativo si no se guía adecuadamente.

Luego está "storgué", que es el amor de los padres o el amor entre padre, madre e hijo y el amor del niño por los padres. Este es un amor muy fuerte, ya que es natural. Este vínculo es fuerte porque los padres pasan mucho tiempo atendiendo y cuidando a sus hijos antes de que crezcan y se conviertan en adultos independientes. Este vínculo es para siempre; un padre y una madre siguen cuidando a sus hijos y los niños siguen cuidando de sus padres. Este amor es protección. Storgué es muy sacrificado y desinteresado ya que los padres a menudo sacrifican mucho para criar a sus hijos.

Luego tenemos "filía", que es lo que llamamos amistad. Filía describe una relación especial entre las personas. La verdadera amistad se enfoca en cómo una persona beneficia a la otra. Responde a la pregunta, "¿Qué puedo hacer que eleve a mi amigo(a)?" "Filía" madura y se desarrolla en la intimidad en el sentido de conocer al otro, así como a nosotros mismos. Este amor es desear lo mejor para otra persona y no se trata de lo que sacamos de la relación.

Por último, tenemos el amor "ágape", que es la forma más alta de amor. Este amor es caridad verdadera, pero no simplemente en el sentido de dar dinero o ayudar a alguien. Ágape significa darse a sí mismo completamente, totalmente al otro y buscar el bien del otro sin esperar nada a cambio. Esta forma de amor se origina en Dios. Por las Escrituras sabemos que Dios es Uno, el Creador, como se expresa en el Antiguo Testamento. Nuestro Dios es personal y Él está interesado en su creación, específicamente en el hombre, porque hemos sido creados a su imagen y semejanza. Dios está tan enamorado de la creación y el hombre, que con el tiempo se encarna en la persona de Jesu-

cristo. Este amor es totalmente desinteresado y sacrificado.

Creo que hay un sacrificio que está involucrado en todos los tipos de amor. Incluso en eros, tiene que haber una muerte de uno mismo a fin de acercarse a quien se sienta atraído. En storgé, definitivamente hay un morir de sí mismo como los padres que sacrifican tanto por el bien de sus hijos. Y el amor filía, donde uno está dispuesto a sacrificarse por otra persona, ya que se preocupa por ella y estamos agradecidos por la amistad que se ha desarrollado. El amor ágape es el amor supremo y es del que Jesús habla en el capítulo 15 del Evangelio de Juan: "Este es mi mandamiento: Ámense los unos a los otros como Yo les he amado. Nadie tiene mayor amor que éste, que uno entregue su vida por sus amigos". Esto es lo que Jesús hace cuando voluntariamente muere en la cruz por nosotros. Este es el entendimiento más elevado del amor.

Editora: Cuando la gente piensa en las lecturas románticas de la Biblia, el capítulo 13 de 1 Corintios viene a la mente, "El amor es paciente, es bondadoso." ¿Qué clase de amor es del que Pablo está realmente hablando aquí?

Obispo Vásquez: Esta es una lectura muy popular y se utiliza en muchas bodas. Pablo está hablando de la forma más alta de amor, el amor ágape. Pablo dice que el amor es más que una sensación o un sentimiento. El verdadero amor eventualmente lleva a una persona a ponerse en segundo término y a su amado en primero. Por lo que este amor es el darse uno mismo al otro, que se basa en el amor divino. Por lo tanto, el amor es paciente, es bondadoso, el amor no es arrogante, el amor no se da aires, no se goza en el dolor. No se deleita en ver a la otra persona sufrir.

Este es el amor que Cristo nos enseña y Cristo se convierte en el verdadero ejemplo de amor por todos nosotros. Su amor por Dios motivaba a Pablo a extender este amor a aquéllos en las comunidades que servía. Él tomó un voto de celibato y se entregó por completo a Dios y al servicio de su pueblo.

Editora: ¿Cuál es el significado del amor ágape en nuestra tradición de fe, especialmente con la Cuaresma que pronto empieza?

Obispo Vásquez: Para nosotros, como católicos y como cristianos, al prepararnos para la Cuaresma, tenemos que pensar en las áreas de nuestras vidas en el que no amamos como deberíamos. Para decirlo de otra manera, las áreas en donde no estamos viviendo nuestra vocación bautismal. A través de nuestro bautismo, estamos llamados a vivir y amar como Cristo lo hizo.

Durante la Cuaresma, la Iglesia nos da tres acciones que nos ayudan a purificarnos: el ayuno, la oración y la limosna. A través de estas tres acciones nos damos cuenta que no somos la persona más importante y somos capaces

de enfocarnos en Dios. Esas cosas que nos alejan de poner a Dios primero y los demás por encima de nosotros mismos son las cosas que tenemos que dejar ir. Dios puede ayudarnos a cambiar a través de la fuerza de su amor. El amor ágape es dar por completo de sí mismo y, ¡es un reto para toda la vida! Este amor implica ayudar a los pobres, o hacer más tiempo para sus hijos, o pasar más tiempo con su cónyuge. Puede significar que visite a la persona por la calle o ayude en un hospital del ministerio o en el ministerio de prisión. Este amor implica acercarnos a los demás.

El último signo de amor para nosotros, como católicos, es Cristo voluntariamente muriendo en la cruz. Esta señal nos recuerda la manera perfecta de amor. La temporada de Cuaresma es el perfeccionamiento de nuestro amor por Dios para los demás.

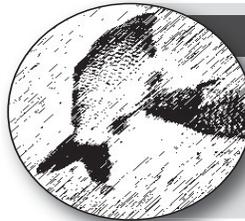
Editora: Cristo nos manda a amar a nuestro prójimo como a nosotros mismos, que es el amor fraternal. ¿Cómo podemos cumplir con ese mandato?

Obispo Vásquez: Yo creo que amar a tu prójimo como a ti mismo significa verse a sí mismo en el prójimo. Ves a tu prójimo y te das cuenta que eres como ellos y que Dios los ama tanto como él te ama. Todos tenemos luchas y desafíos, y todos tenemos dones y bendiciones. Todos tenemos la dignidad que se nos ha dado por Dios y todos somos el reflejo de la presencia de Dios. La edad no importa, la educación no importa, no importa la riqueza, no importa la posición o condición. Todos nosotros estamos obligados a respetarnos unos a otros. Esto es de lo que el amor fraternal se trata.

Editora: ¿Y qué es la oración para todos nosotros en nuestra lucha por amar a Dios, a nuestro prójimo, a nuestras familias y a nuestras parejas más plenamente?

Obispo Vásquez: Oro porque Dios que es amor, nos de la capacidad de amar como Cristo lo hizo. Y amando a los demás, que nos comprometamos a hacer lo que es mejor para ellos, buscando nada a cambio.

Penitencia cuaresmal



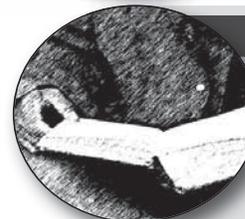
ABSTINENCIA

No pueden comer carne, los mayores de 14, el Miércoles de Ceniza y todos los viernes.



AYUNAR

Limitarse a una sola comida, las personas de 18 a 59 años, el Miércoles de Ceniza y todos los viernes.



SACRIFICIO

Actos voluntarios de privarse de las cosas que a uno le gustan, se recomiendan durante los días de la cuaresma.



ORACIÓN Y CARIDAD

Puede incluir misas diarias, estudio de la Biblia, vía crucis, caridad y mostrar misericordia y bondad a los demás.

Crisis de vivienda asequible nos llama a la acción

POR DONNA WILLIAMS POSTON
CORRESPONSAL

“Amamos nuestros nacimientos que promocionan el hecho de que Jesús nació en un estable y durmió en un pesebre duro rodeada de animales de granja - sin hogar”, reflexionó Kevin Berry. “Pero, ¿cómo reaccionamos cuando vemos a alguien durmiendo bajo un puente o en una banca del parque en nuestra ciudad?”

Barry, un feligrés de la parroquia St. Theresa en Austin y abogado de las personas sin hogar, habló recientemente en un foro auspiciado por el Ministerio de Paz y Justicia Social de la parroquia. Con la declaración de una “crisis de vivienda asequible en Austin”, Berry explicó: “el resultado es que tenemos un mayor número de personas sin hogar. Es cada vez más caro vivir en esta ciudad y la tasa de pobreza sigue creciendo. Esta es una triste realidad para muchas personas. Tenemos familias numerosas amontonadas en pequeños apartamentos deteriorados en barrios con alta criminalidad. O peor aún, algunos viven en sus coches o en las

calles”.

Citando la doctrina social católica, “un elemento central y esencial de nuestra fe”, dijo Berry los católicos somos responsables de “cuidar de los más pobres y más vulnerables de nuestra sociedad”, y asegurar sus “necesidades básicas de vida: alimento y refugio”.

Él describió su propia labor voluntaria en Habitat for Humanity de Austin e invitó a otros a participar.

Fundada en el principio de que “una casa se encuentra en el corazón de cada familia y cada comunidad,” Austin Habitat ofrece un programa de propiedad de vivienda para familias de bajos ingresos. Casas sencillas, la calidad es construida por voluntarios y luego se venden a individuos calificados que actualmente residen en viviendas precarias, sobre pobladas o costosas.

“Hay que estar empleados y ganar entre el 25 y 50 por ciento de ingresos familiares medios”, explicó Berry. “Para una familia de cuatro, es entre 18,325 dólares y 36,650 dólares al año”.

Las casas son construidas por voluntarios de Habitat y cuestan alrededor de \$60,000,

con una hipoteca sin interés durante un período de 15 a 35 años. Una vez en el hogar, las familias se ayudan con el mantenimiento del hogar y tienen acceso a otros servicios de apoyo.

“Habitat for Humanity de Austin celebra su 25 aniversario, y durante ese tiempo se han recaudado alrededor de \$25 millones de dólares para construir y reparar más de 300 viviendas a nivel local”, dijo Berry. “Con la ayuda de más de 75,000 voluntarios, que se han puesto a trabajar cogiendo una brocha o un martillo, hemos cambiado muchas vidas. Tener un hogar significa mucho más que tener un techo sobre su cabeza”, dijo Berry. “Significa dignidad y autoestima”.

Berry señaló que hay algunas familias en Austin que no tendrán derecho a una casa de Habitat, “porque no pasan las verificaciones de antecedentes o han perdido su trabajo y simplemente no tienen los ingresos para pagar la hipoteca”.

La Communities Foundation, otro grupo local sin fines de lucro, ayuda a los que fallan en calificar.

Desde 1990, Communities

Foundation ha proporcionado apartamentos asequibles y atractivos y duplexes para familias y personas que han quedado sin opciones. Poseen y administran 16 diferentes complejos residenciales, que ofrecen vivienda a más de 2,700 familias, y los servicios esenciales de apoyo para una amplia gama de Austin de bajos ingresos — desde los empleados constantes a los faltos de vivienda crónicos.

Por lo general, referidos por un trabajador social o un refugio, Communities Foundation permite una variedad de circunstancias difíciles. Apartamentos de una, dos y tres recámaras están disponibles para familias de empleados y el alquiler se basa en los ingresos. Algunos de sus complejos tienen sólo apartamentos de una pieza, amueblados y designados para los adultos que enfrentan la falta de vivienda. Los alquileres empiezan tan bajo como \$50 al mes. Hacen excepciones para las personas que no tienen ningún ingreso en absoluto.

No hay límite de tiempo para que puedan vivir en la mayoría de las 16 propiedades. Muchos de los resi-

dentos permanecen durante años, mientras que otros se mueven al comprar su propia casa.

La misión de Communities Foundation es la creación de la vivienda donde los individuos y las familias puedan recuperar su independencia y éxito. Los servicios de apoyo técnico gratuito que ofrecen incluyen asesoría financiera personal, preparación de impuestos, cuidado después de la escuela, clases de alfabetización de adultos, clases de nutrición y salud.

Ambas, Communities Foundation y Habitat for Humanity de Austin dependen en gran medida de la generosidad de voluntarios.

“Tenemos una maravillosa oportunidad de participar en soluciones reales para las personas sin hogar”, dijo Berry. “No podría estar más claro... como católicos estamos llamados a la acción”.

Los obispos de Estados Unidos han remodelado su página web, La pobreza de USA. (www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/povertyusa/) y pusieron en marcha una nueva presencia en Facebook (www.facebook.com/povertyusa).

Masses in Spanish/Misas en Español

<p>Austin St. Mary Cathedral – domingo: 1:45 p.m. Cristo Rey – domingo: 6 a.m., 7 a.m., 10 a.m., 1 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 7 p.m.; jueves: 7 p.m. Dolores – domingo: 8 a.m., mediodía; martes-viernes: 8:30 a.m. Our Lady of Guadalupe – sábado: 6 p.m.; domingo: 7:45 a.m. y 6 p.m. Sacred Heart – sábado: 7 p.m.; domingo: 9:30 a.m., 1:15 p.m., 5:30 p.m.; martes, miércoles, jueves: 7 p.m. St. Ignatius – domingo: 1 p.m. St. Julia – domingo: 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. St. Louis – domingo: 6 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 5 p.m.; martes, jueves: 6 p.m. St. Paul – domingo: 12:30 p.m. St. Peter -- domingo: 1 p.m. San Francisco Javier – domingo: 8 a.m., mediodía; miércoles, viernes: 6 p.m. San José – domingo: 7:30 a.m., 1:15 p.m.; jueves: 7 p.m.</p> <p>Bastrop Ascension – domingo: mediodía</p> <p>Belton Christ the King – domingo: 8 a.m.</p> <p>Blanco St. Ferdinand – domingo: 11 a.m.; segundo y cuarto domingos: 1 p.m.</p> <p>Brenham St. Mary – domingo: 12:30 p.m.</p> <p>Bryan Santa Teresa – sábado: 7 p.m.; domingo: 8 a.m., mediodía, 2 p.m.</p>	<p>Buda Santa Cruz – domingo: 8:30 a.m.</p> <p>Caldwell St. Mary – sábado: 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Cameron St. Monica – domingo: 7 a.m.</p> <p>Cedar Park St. Margaret Mary – domingo: mediodía</p> <p>College Station St. Mary – sábado: 7 p.m.</p> <p>Elgin Sacred Heart – domingo: 7:30, 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>Gatesville Our Lady of Lourdes – domingo: mediodía</p> <p>Georgetown St. Helen – domingo: 7:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.; miércoles: 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Giddings St. Margaret – domingo: 11 a.m.</p> <p>Hamilton St. Thomas – sábado: 7 p.m.</p> <p>Hearne St. Mary – domingo: 11 a.m.</p> <p>Hornsby Bend Santa Barbara – domingo: 8 a.m.</p> <p>Killeen St. Joseph – domingo: 9 a.m.</p> <p>Kyle St. Anthony – domingo: mediodía, martes & jueves: 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>La Grange Sacred Heart – Primer y tercer domingos: mediodía</p>	<p>Lakeway Emmaus – domingo: 12:15 p.m.</p> <p>Lampasas St. Mary – domingo: 12:15 p.m.; jueves: 6 p.m.</p> <p>Lockhart St. Mary – domingo: 7:30 a.m., 5:30 p.m.; martes: 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Luling St. John – domingo: 8 a.m.</p> <p>Manor St. Joseph – domingo: 7 a.m., 11 a.m.</p> <p>Marble Falls St. John – domingo: 12:30 p.m.</p> <p>Marlin St. Joseph – domingo: 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>Martindale Immaculate Heart of Mary – domingo: 8 a.m.; sábado: 6 p.m.; jueves: 7 p.m.</p> <p>McGregor St. Eugene – domingo: 8 a.m.</p> <p>Mexia St. Mary – domingo: mediodía; jueves: 6 p.m.</p> <p>Pflugerville St. Elizabeth – domingo: 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Rockdale St. Joseph – domingo: mediodía</p> <p>Rogers St. Matthew – domingo: 9 a.m.</p> <p>Rosebud St. Ann – domingo: 11:15 a.m.</p> <p>Round Rock St. William – domingo: 7:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.; martes: 6 p.m.; jueves: 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Salado St. Stephen – Domingo: 11:30 a.m.</p> <p>San Marcos Guadalupe Chapel – sábado: 5:30 p.m. y miércoles; 7 p.m. St. John - domingo: 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.; sábado: 8 a.m.</p> <p>San Saba St. Mary – domingo: mediodía</p> <p>Smithville St. Paul – domingo: 6 p.m.</p> <p>Stoney Point San Juan Diego – sábado: 6 p.m.; jueves: 6 p.m.</p> <p>Taylor Our Lady of Guadalupe – domingo: 8 a.m. y 1 p.m.; martes-viernes: 8 a.m.</p> <p>Temple Our Lady of Guadalupe – domingo: 8 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 6 p.m.; martes-viernes: 6 p.m.</p> <p>Uhland St. Michael – domingo: 5 p.m.</p> <p>Waco Sacred Heart – domingo 8: a.m.; mediodía St. Francis on the Brazos – sábado: 7 p.m.; domingo: 8 a.m.; mediodía St. Peter Catholic Center – viernes: 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>West Assumption – primer y tercer domingo: mediodía</p> <p>Wimberley St. Mary – domingo: 1 p.m.</p>
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Send corrections to
shelley-metcalf@austindiocese.org.

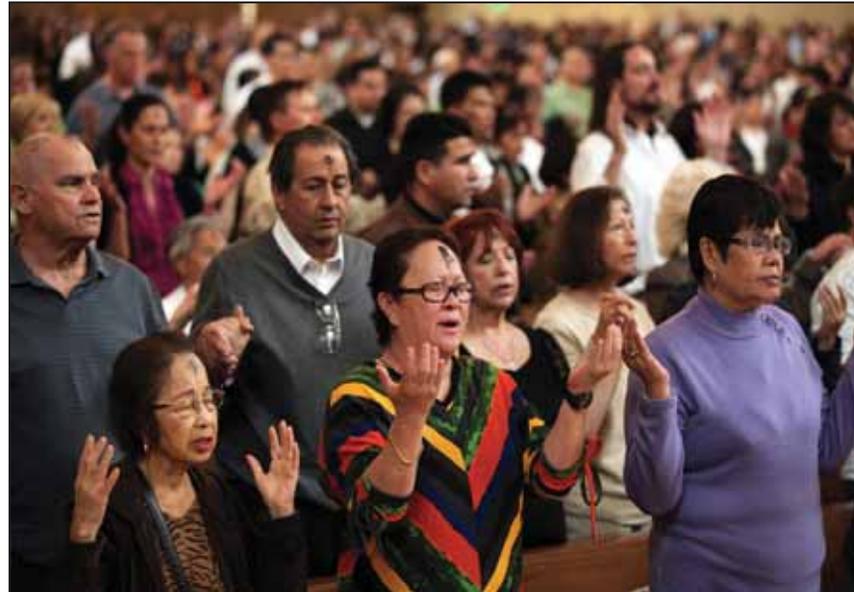
Reflexión Espiritual

La Gracia de Dios ... por encima del entendimiento

POR EDGAR RAMIREZ
DIRECTOR DEL MINISTERIO HISPANO

En este mes comenzamos la celebración de la cuaresma — cuarenta días que el calendario de la Iglesia nos regala para reflexionar, orar y viajar hacia el interior de nuestros corazones. Comenzamos este tiempo litúrgico con el Miércoles de Ceniza, las cenizas son un signo que acompañado de las palabras: “polvo eres y en polvo te convertirás”, ó “arrepíentete y cree en el Evangelio”, nos recuerdan nuestra realidad percedera y nuestro destino final: la vida eterna.

En este camino de cuarenta días la Palabra nos guiará preparándonos para entrar al misterio de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús. Caminaremos reflexionando sobre nuestras intenciones en nuestras prácticas religiosas, confrontaremos nuestras tentaciones, tentaciones a las que accedemos en los momentos de soledad, de tristeza, de hambre. Este camino cuaresmal nos llevará a conocer a un Jesús que confronta las creencias de su tiempo, que claramente señala que aquel que lo siga debe perderlo todo, incluso su vida. Esta jornada de 40 días no terminará en la Cruz, es en la Cruz donde se comienza otra nueva jornada, un camino nuevo, hacia la tumba vacía. Pero antes de entrar a este misterio, antes de hacer todas esas reflexiones es importante reflexionar y



LA CUARESMA empieza el Miércoles de Ceniza, que es el 22 de febrero. (CNS foto de Victor Aleman, Vida Nueva)

preguntarnos el por qué de nuestra participación en las prácticas religiosas de nuestras comunidades. ¿Cuál es nuestra intención al participar de todos los ritos religiosos en los que hemos participado y participaremos?

Nuestra comunidad Hispana tiene una riqueza enorme en cuanto a tradiciones religiosas. Estas tradiciones expresan nuestro carácter comunitario, deseo de justicia, la profunda e histórica relación con la

Iglesia Católica, finalmente nuestra fe. Estas tradiciones nos han transformado y dado identidad en medio de las muchas transiciones que nuestra comunidad hispana ha pasado en Latinoamérica y en los Estados Unidos. En muchas de estas tradiciones hemos descansado cuando nuestra identidad ha sido amenazada, conquistada e incluso perseguida. Somos Católicos como somos mexicanos, brasileños, colombianos, etc. Pero con un sentido más profundo que el que un país nos da o una nacionalidad, este sentido es el sentido de la fe, la fe en que Dios siempre proveerá, que Dios está ahí cuando procesamos, cuando rezamos el rosario, cuando cantamos las mañanitas a la Virgen, cuando vestimos a los santos y les ponemos veladoras, cuando hacemos el viacrucis, cuando damos el pésame a la virgen, ó bendecimos el carro ó celebramos los quince años.

En mis años de ministerio he aprendido lo importante que es el miércoles de ceniza para nuestra comunidad. En esta celebración religiosa cientos de hermanos y hermanas participan con mucho entusiasmo y alegría. Llegan a las parroquias con una sed profunda de conectarse con Dios, con ellos mismo, con su fe. Ya que muchos miembros de nuestra comunidad por alguna razón o por otra, no participan de la Eucaristía o de algún otro sacramento, el miércoles de ceniza es una oportunidad para recibir algo tangible que los conecta con su fe. Las cenizas se convierten en un signo — la cruz en la frente, que nos hace saber y al mundo conocer que estamos buscando a Dios, que le pertenecemos, que pertenecemos a una comunidad identificada por este mismo signo en la frente, esta

cruz le dice al mundo y a nosotros mismos que nuestra fe está viva aun en medio de todas las circunstancias. Las cenizas nos ayudan a expresar nuestra realidad imperfecta y el deseo de recibir las gracias de Dios.

Es aquí donde divinamente el Evangelio del miércoles de ceniza nos recuerda que cualquier rito, cualquier práctica religiosa que hagamos o en la cual participemos tiene que tener una intención transformadora, íntima y personal.

Cuando recibimos las cenizas en nuestras frentes, es importante preguntarnos: ¿por qué hago esto? ¿Qué significa para nuestra Iglesia, para nuestra comunidad, para mí? ¿Cómo me ayuda esto a ser mejor persona? ¿Cómo puedo hacer que mi vida refleje mejor mi participación en estos ritos? Lo invito a reflexionar sobre esto al participar en todas las ricas tradiciones que celebraremos como comunidad esta cuaresma.

Ultimadamente la gracia de Dios está por encima de nuestro entendimiento y la gracia que las cenizas ofrecen, es la gracia que Dios tiene planeada para usted y para mí, sin ninguna otra agenda o pero, sino simplemente se nos da. Esta misma gracia es la que nos gana la vida eterna con Jesús. El deseo de recibir estas gracias por medio de este símbolo: las cenizas, puede ser exactamente la gracia que nuestra comunidad necesita para seguir adelante consagrándose a Dios.

Que esta cuaresma usted y yo tengamos un encuentro con esta gracia y seamos transformados por ella.

Edgar Ramírez es el Director del Ministerio Hispano para la Diócesis de Austin. Se le puede llamar al (512) 949-2468 o por correo electrónico a edgar-ramirez@ausindiocese.org.

“La Total Consagración a Jesús a través de María”

El 20 de Febrero empiezan los 33 días de oraciones de preparación para “La Total Consagración a Jesús a través de María” que continúan hasta el 24 de Marzo. Cada día de oración, representa un año en la vida de Cristo, se hace en la privacidad de su hogar usando los libros de la consagración. Los libros de Preparación serán dados por la Legión de María de su parroquia durante las misas del 5-19 de Febrero. Después de estos 33 días de oraciones, todos están invitados a hacer o renovar su Consagración en Misa en la Anunciación del Señor. Para esta Consagración, se ofrecerá una misa en 4 Iglesias. Por favor visite www.TexasToJesusThroughMary.org para reservar su libro gratis y para mas información.

Los jóvenes adultos hispanos

Los jóvenes adultos hispanos están invitados a la Misa en español que será celebrada el 24 de febrero a las 9 p.m. en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en la ciudad de Austin. Los participantes rezarán el rosario a partir de las 8:30 p.m. Para mas información comuníquese con Juan Torres al (512) 415-5908 o Lily Morales al (512) 363-3609 o pjhaustin@gmail.com.

Los jóvenes adultos hispanos están invitados a la reunión Interparroquial que será el día 3 de Marzo en la Parroquia de St. Margaret Mary comenzando a las 5:30pm. Para más información comuníquese con Juan Torres al (512) 415-5908 o Lily Morales al (512) 363-3609 o pjhaustin@gmail.com.

La cruzada del Rosario de Austin

La cruzada del Rosario de Austin celebra su 37 aniversario de la promoción del Rosario y la evangelización con un retiro de 8 a 4 el sábado, 10 de marzo de 2012 en el Hall de la parroquia de St. Ignatius, Martyr, 126 Oltorf W. en Austin, TX 78704. El programa consta de un ligero desayuno, música, Rosario, confesiones, exposición del Santísimo Sacramento, Santa Misa, servicio de curación y altavoces. La entrada es gratuita. La comida es \$5 para adultos y gratis para los niños. El programa está en español. Para obtener más información, llame a Ignacio Moreno, Coordinador de (512) 443-4111 o al (512) 940-0698.

Around the Diocese



THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS from Killeen prepared and donated food baskets for needy families during the Christmas holidays. Together with the Sociedad Culhispana Group, the Knights also prepared Christmas dinner for the elderly at the Gilmore Center in Killeen. (Photos courtesy Gilbert Barratachea)



DIRECTORS of religious education at parishes in Temple and Killeen gathered for a Christmas social at St. Mary Parish in Temple. Catechists also attended the Waco Festival of Catechists. (Photos courtesy Mary Alaniz)



STUDENTS from Holy Family Catholic School in Austin donated and wrapped gifts for those in need during the Christmas holiday. (Photo courtesy Kelly Hagemeyer)



FOUR NEW GUIDES for Prayer and Life Workshops of Father Ignacio Larrañaga have been trained and sent forth to offer the workshops. (Photo courtesy Aida Calderon)



THE FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM at Emmaus Parish in Lakeway held appreciation receptions for the catechists Dec. 11 and 14. (Photo courtesy Linda Rives)



THE FOURTH GRADE religious education students at St. Martin de Porres Parish in Dripping Springs constructed a church laced with royal icing and adorned with candy for the residents of a local senior care facility. (Photo courtesy Susan Bonner)



THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS Council from Caldwell and their families prepared Christmas baskets for needy families in the Caldwell area. (Photo courtesy Tina Vavra)

EACH THURSDAY, members of the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver deliver hot meals to elderly, sick shut-in residents East Austin. (Photo courtesy Johnnie Dorsey)



THE BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAMS from St. Louis Catholic School in Austin and St. Helen Catholic School in Georgetown played Dec. 16 at the Cedar Park Center before the Austin Toros game. (Photo courtesy Debbie Chaney)



THE LAMPASAS-MARBLE FALLS Council of the DCCW heard the story of Angela Lewis, who had a bilateral lung transplant. (Photo courtesy Father Melvin Dornak)



JAKOB HURLIMANN, a junior at St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School, improved an outside area Holy Family Catholic School in Austin by adding decorative stone to an area where no grass would grow and created a prayer garden in a nearby grove of trees for his Eagle Scout project. (Photo courtesy Emily Hurlimann)

Around the Diocese



A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT portrayed by children was held Dec. 24 at San José Parish in Austin. (Photo courtesy San José Parish)

THIRD AND FOURTH GRADERS from the religious education program at San José Parish in Austin sang Christmas carols for their parents before the Christmas holidays. (Photo courtesy Anita Perez)



THE DUKE ENERGY FOUNDATION awarded grants totaling \$40,000 to San Juan Diego Catholic High School and St. Gabriel Catholic High School in Austin. San Juan Diego Catholic High School will use its \$20,000 grant to enhance its Corporate Work Study Program. Ted Matula, Deputy General Counsel for Duke Energy, played a key role in helping the schools receive these grants. (Photos courtesy Laurie Osman)



PARISHIONERS of St. Joseph Parish in Rockdale gave Christmas gift bags to the residents at Manor Oaks Nursing Home in Rockdale. (Photo courtesy Robin Manthei)



THE CHILDREN of the St. Catherine of Siena (in Austin) Parents Morning Out Program presented their annual Nativity program to family and friends on Dec. 15. (Photo courtesy Jo Ann Campbell)

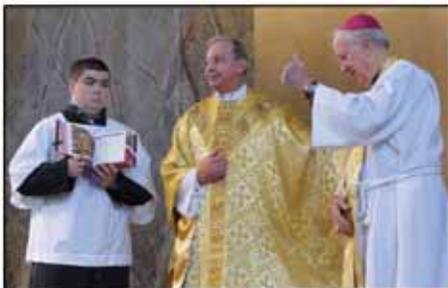
STUDENTS at St. Austin Catholic School were visited by Santa's Head Elf before Christmas. He delivered letters from the North Pole and spread good cheer and magical snowflakes in the hallways. (Photo courtesy Leah F. Esparza)



THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS Council #10209 of St. Paul Parish in Austin built and sold 60 lighted crosses to support the idea of keeping Christ in Christmas. Schoenstatt Father Christian Christensen blessed the crosses



as they were being built. (Photos courtesy Tom Natoli)



ON CHRISTMAS EVE Father Bud Roland (middle) and Bishop Emeritus John McCarthy celebrated the first Mass in the new church at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin. The church will be dedicated by Bishop Joe Vásquez on March 17 at 3 p.m. (Photograph by Donald R. Winslow)



CHILDREN from the FISCHE homeschooling group reenacted the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego at St. Mary Cathedral in Austin. (Photos courtesy Arlen Nydam)

