Largest March for Life in years — urged to make life-welcoming changes —

By Cynthia Brewer

The 22nd Candlelight March for Life on Jan. 22, 2009, was one of the largest marches seen in recent years with over 400 participants marching with lit candles from Holy Family Parish in Victoria to Grace Lutheran Church.

The numbers were impressive, but the message was clear: "We stand for the sanctity of life," Father Stan De Boe, O.Ss.T., said before he spoke.

In his message, Pope Benedict said the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are meant to help Christians focus on God and prepare for the Easter celebration of Jesus’ victory over sin and death.

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February
7 4:00 p.m., Mass, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Province meeting, Holy Family Church, Victoria
8 4:00 p.m., Mass, Ladies Night, 4th Degree Knights of Columbus, St. Andrew Church, Halletsville
9 5:00 p.m., Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting, Chancery Office
11 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Study Day for parish priests and financial managers, Sacred Heart Church Family Center, Halletsville
14 10:00 a.m., Mass, Mary Rose Barta retirement celebration, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Shiner
15 11:30 a.m., Mass, Pilgrims Reunion, St. Philip the Apostle Church, El Campo
20 8:30 a.m., School Mass, St. Philip’s School, El Campo
22 4:30 p.m., Mass, Youth Spectacular, Holy Family Church, Victoria
23 11:30 a.m., Mass, Texas Diocesan Finance Officers meeting and Catholic school principals’ retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
26-28 Texas Catholic Schools Education Summit, American Airlines Center, Dallas
March
1 3:00 p.m., Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
4 10:00 a.m., Presbyteral Council meeting, Chancery Office
13 8:00 a.m., School Mass, St. Michael Church, and annual golf tournament benefiting St. Michael’s School, Cuero

Official Appointments By Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer
Effective, January 16, 2009, the Rev. Peter Yebush-Amanfo is excardinated from the Diocese ofKonongo-Mampong, Ghana, and incardinated in the Diocese of Victoria.

Former Holy Cross altar boy ordained to the priesthood
By Cynthia Brewer
PALACIOS—Lu’a’ng Hoan Nguyen, who served as an altar boy at Holy Cross Parish in Bay City and graduated from Bay City High School in 1986, was recently ordained a priest of the Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix, a Vietnamese religious community, in Cuirague Mo.

A lovely Mass was held at Assumption Chapel in Palacios (the Vietnamese Apostolate) January 18, 2009, in thanksgiving for the ordination of Rev. Lu’a’ng Nguyen, which occurred the previous week, January 10, 2009.
Lu’a’ng is the son of Lién and the late Binh Nguyen of Bay City and the nephew of Deacon Luan Van Tran, deacon at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Bay City.
He was born April 14, 1968, and has five brothers and four sisters.
His family came to the United States after the fall of Saigon in 1975 when he was seven years old. After graduating from Bay City High School and then attending Wharton Jr. Community College, he joined the Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix in December 16, 1989.
Deacon Tran said the homily at the Thanksgiving Mass in Palacios and teased Lu’a’ng about taking so long to become a priest. He said his classmates had already been ordained three years earlier.
His love of cooking almost changed his mind about becoming a priest, he said. He is a chef for the congregation, and he would cook every year on Marian Days, the week before the Assumption of Mary in August, cooking for nearly 600 priests, deacons and sisters. Deacon Tran said that Lu’a’ng’s mother would go before the altar with his uncle, Deacon Luan Van Tran, before the Mass of Ordination January 21, 2009, at Assumption Chapel in Palacios.
Yolanda Monroy, the activity director of Twin Pines, was responsible for organizing the visit of the statue to the residents and staff of Twin Pines, which was shown by Matthew Shibler of Pennsylvania, a volunteer for ANF. He brought the statue to 15 locations in the Victoria area during the week of Jan. 18.
Mr. Shibler said there are a total of 12 Our Lady of Fatima statues that are traveling constantly throughout the country.

More than a dozen Twin Pines residents and their family members, as well as staff, came to the Twin Pines chapel to see the traveling statue of Our Lady of Fatima that visited January 21. They prayed a rosary and watched a film brought to them by the America Needs Fatima organization.

Traveling statue brings comfort
By Cynthia Brewer
Residents at Twin Pines Nursing Home enjoyed a visit from the America Needs Fatima organization and one of its traveling Our Lady of Fatima statues January 21, 2009.
Yolanda Monroy, the activity director of Twin Pines, was responsible for organizing the visit of the statue to the residents and staff of Twin Pines, which was shown by Matthew Shibler of Pennsylvania, a volunteer for ANF. He brought the statue to 15 locations in the Victoria area during the week of Jan. 18.
Mr. Shibler said there are a total of 12 Our Lady of Fatima statues that are traveling constantly throughout the country.

The objective of the traveling statue, the program of prayers and a showing of a film, he said, is to go deeper into the message and make a practical application to our day and age. He said the program is operated by volunteers who donate five to six weeks at a time traveling with the statues.
The program includes the uncovering and crowning of the statue of Our Lady, placing a rosary on her, praying the rosary and viewing a film about Our Lady of Fatima’s messages to the world.
“I have always prayed to Our Lady of Fatima,” said Twin Pines resident and St. Mary’s parishioner Annie Motal. “She’s been very good to me. She’s answered many favors for me.”
The 2008 Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA) Continues Through February 28, 2009

The 2008 Diocesan Services Appeal will continue through February 28, 2009. Any contributions received before February 28 will be applied to your parish’s 2008 Appeal. Parishes that do not reach their goal through their parishioner’s contributions will make up the difference from their parish funds. Please note that any payments received after February 28 will be automatically credited towards your parish’s 2009 Diocesan Services Appeal.

The 2009 Diocesan Services Appeal will begin in March 2009. Pledge cards will be mailed during the month of February. A pledge may be a one-time gift or 12-monthly payments, which can be paid through a regularly scheduled Monthly Reminder Statement, automatic debit of your checking account or automatic debit of your credit card.

For more information contact the Business Office or contact your local Veritas, Catholic Burse or Catholic埋se representative. The Business Office continues to monitor all pledge activity (Capital Campaign and Seminaries). The 2009 pledge cards are due on April 30, 2009. Thank you for your continued support.

Memorial Services

3,789.00
11,404.50
13,993.50

In Memory of
John Jr. & Tillie Peters
Eugene Novak
Richard & Wilma Scharfer
Joseph & Elizabeth Zarsky

Total
5,849.00

In Memory of
Lillian Boulboulas
Eugene Novak

Total
3,879.00

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Seminary Burses

Seminary burses are a permanent fund used for the education of future priests for the Diocese of Victoria. The goal of each burse is $15,000. The interest from this amount is applied yearly to the education of seminarians. The burses are in memory of or in honor of an individual priest or lay persons, living or deceased. Publication of the burses will appear periodically when new contributions are received.

As of January 26, 2009

— General Seminary Burse
Previously reported $9,329.00
In memory of Priest 50.00
In memory of Fr. Ed Kelly by Bob and Minnie Bochet 25.00
In memory of Fr. Ed Kelly by Joseph & Elizabeth Zarsky 20.00

Total $9,424.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4
Previously reported $3,789.00
In memory of Lillian Boulboulas by Richard & Wilma Scharfer 15.00
In memory of Eugene Novak by Richard & Wilma Scharfer 15.00
In memory of John Jr. & Tillie Peters by Deacon Joey and Mary Toyar 1,000.00

Total $3,849.00

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Seminary
Previously reported $11,404.50
In memory of Florence Bryan by M/M Edm Stryk 100.00
Total $11,504.50

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdranume Burse
Previously reported $8,762.89
In memory of Willie Hubenak by M/M Anton F. Schoener 20.00
Total $8,782.89

Those wishing to begin a burse or to contribute to an existing seminary burse may do so by sending their contributions with the appropriate burse designation to:

SEMINARY BURES
ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA
P.O. BOX 4070
VICTORIA, TX 77903

Thank You

Dear Bishop Fellhauer,

Thank you very much for your check for $70,280.16 for the 2007 and 2008 Holy Land Collection. In the name of the Cus tos of the Holy Land, Father Piekbatista Pizarralla, OFM, and all the Franciscans and others working there, I thank you, your priests and all your people for your generosity.

The Good Friday collection helps support the Holy Land Shrines and also the educational, pastoral and charitable programs for the people there. The Custody cares for the poorest social classes, both Christian and Non-Christian. It is not easy to be a Christian today in the Holy Land. May God bless you and the pastors and people of the Diocese of Victoria!

Gratefully in Christ,

Father Jeremy Harrington, OFM
Commissary

The Catholic Lighthouse
Page 3 — February 2009

In Memory of...

Rev. John Edward Kelly

Father John Edward Kelly, “Father Ed,” unexpectedly passed away Jan. 18, 2009, in San Antonio. He was born in Victoria on May 3, 1948, to Judge Joe E. and Sara Ross Kelly. He graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1965 where he played on the 1965 state championship football team. He attended The Victoria College. In 1966 he volunteered into the service of the U.S. Navy. He served for four years and was discharged from active duty in 1972 and returned home to Vic toria. That same year Father Ed entered Assumption Seminary in San Antonio and began his studies for the priesthood. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1976 from Incarnate Word College. He was awarded a master’s degree in theology in 1979 from the Oblate College of the Southwest. He was an avid race-car fan, especially the NASCAR races. He loved traveling to Ireland, where he frequently stayed with the Maher family.

Prior to his ordination, Father Ed participated in ministries in several parishes including St. Benedict’s, St. Matthew’s, St. Patrick’s, Christ the King, and St. Stephen’s in San Antonio, and St. Louis in Castroville. In addition he participated in hospital ministries at San Rosa Medical Center, San Antonio Community Hospital and San Antonio State Hospital. Father Ed received the sacrament of Holy Orders on Jan. 25, 1980, at Our Lady of Victory Church in Victoria. The sacrament was conferred by Bishop Patrick Flores of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. His first parish assignment was to St. Thomas More in San Antonio. Thereafter he was assigned to Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville and then later in Florence where he participated in the birth and early life of the ACTS retreat movement.

Eventually he returned to Victoria where he served at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral, as chaplain at Joseph High School and at Our Lady of Lourdes, where he was trained and participated in the Stephens Ministry (a ministry to the grieving). Ultimately he returned to the Archdiocese of San Antonio where he served at several parishes, the latest of which was San Francisco de Paula in San Antonio.

Father Ed is survived by his brothers, Mike, Mckee Kelly and wife Mary and Judge Joseph Patrick Kelly and wife Abbie. He is also survived by 14 nieces and nephews and 16 great-nieces and nephews.

A memorial Mass was con celebrated Thursday in the chapel at Incarnate Word College in San Antonio with His Excellency Archbishop Jose H. Gomez presiding. In Victoria a rosary was recited Friday evening in the St. Joseph High School gymnasium. The Mass of Christian Burial was cele breated at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, January 24, at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral with His Excellency Bishop-David Fellhauer as principal celebrant, along with many priests from the parishes in the Archdiocese of San Antonio and Diocese of Victoria. In his family, Msgr. Michael Harrold reflected on the first reading, from Samuel, “Here I am, you call me.” “The Lord called John Edward Kelly to the priest hood,” he said, “and he answered. ‘Speak Lord for your servant is listening.’”

“Twenty-nine years ago Joe and Sara Kelly brought him here to be ordained,” Msgr. Harrold said, “now his brothers and family bring him here to present him to God and enter him home.”

“He has worked as he has run the race,” Msgr. Harrold said. “Father Ed kept the faith; his was a life well spent.”

“He had already served his country for four years in the Navy; now he serves with the other people of the sea (Sts, Peter, Andrew, James and John (fisherman and apostles).”

“Pray that more and more people will recognize the call,” he said.

“The city and Diocese of Victoria in this small way, we ask, ‘who will take his place? Pray for vocations; ask him (God) to bless them and keep them true and faithful as he did Father Ed.’”

Pallbearers were Martin Kelly, Brian Kelly, Pat Kelly, Chris Kelly, Jeff Perry, Jody LaCoste, Curtis Lawrence and Gus Guinn. Honorary pallbearers were Sister Walter Maher, Amanda Lawrence, Kate Kelly, Bridget Garcia, Traci Noyola, Jordan Kelly, Joe Kelly, Rachel Kelly and Alexander Kelly.

Burial followed at Resurrection Cem etary with full military rites conducted by the Victoria County Veterans Council. Memorials may be given to St. Joseph High School Memorial fund in honor of Father John Edward Kelly or to the do nor’s choice.

Former Holy Cross altar boy ordained to the priesthood

Continued from p. 2

at Holy Cross Parish and pray for four to five hours a day for him.

Father La’o’ng Hoan Nguyen made his final vows to the congregation as a brother on March 11, 1998, was ordained a deacon June 1, 2008, and ordained to the priesthood January 10, 2009. He will return to his congregation after his visit with Father Kelly.

His cousin and Deacon and Mrs. Tram’s son, MyViet Tran, is in the same order, Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptivists, and expects, with the help of God, to be or dained a priest in two and one-half years.
The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is, like many other words in the abortionists’ vocabulary, a complete lie because it gives no freedom to oppose abortion and no choice except that of the abortionists.

Their choice is to remove all restrictions on abortions for any reason and have the taxpayers fund abortion. Reproductive rights is its euphemism for turning the womb into a killing field. It is the center-piece of the FOCA. If ever passed by the 51st Congress and has long been the goal of pro-abortion forces. Now they think that this prize is within their grasp, because it is the election of the most pro-abortion candidate in the history of the presidency and his statement as a campaigner that he would sign the act. With Democrats, whose pro-choice platform features abortion, in control there is a good chance that it could become law. A president and a political party that claim to be for morality and justice would have to incline the unborn among them.

The law is supported by abortionists (indeed it could be called the Abortionists’ Bailout Plan to counter the fact that abortions have plunged 25 percent since 1990 to 1.2 million a year in spite of being opposed by the majority of Americans. Surveys covering several years show that 4 out of 5 Americans would limit the legality of abortion. About 1 in 3 would ban abortion after the baby is viable.

Outing of the right to have a choice, to self-determination. With Democrats, whose pro-choice platform features abortion, in control there is a chance that it could become law. A president and a political party that claim to be for morality and justice would have to incline the unborn among them. FOCA, No Freedom, No Choice

550 laws including:

• Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003

Hyde Amendment and other limits on forcing taxpayer funding of elective abortions

Restictions on abortions in military hospitals

Parental consent and notification laws in the case of abortions sought by minors

Requirements that licensed physicians perform abortions

Bans on abortion after the baby is viable

• Outing of performing or assisting abortion on the part of medical personnel and pharmacists for reasons of conscience

Protection of Catholic hospitals or medical facilities against being forced to provide abortions, something that could lead to their closure

FOCA would make abortion a fundamental right like the right of free speech or religion.

Catholic bishops intend to defy the FOCA if it becomes law. Bishop Paul Loverde of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, said to a group of young people, if it becomes law and a Catholic hospital in his diocese would be forced to provide abortion services he would refuse to let the hospital comply and he would not close it.

I would say, “Yeah, I’m not going to close the hospital, you’re going to arrest me, go right ahead. You’ll have to drag me out, go right ahead. I’m not closing this hospital and we will not perform abortions, and you can take a leapfrog law.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that Catholics are “obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order, to fundamental rights of persons or the teaching of the Gospel.” The law would deprive everyone of conscientious objection to abortion. If the law were applied to Catholic hospitals they would probably have to close and there would probably be one-third fewer health facilities in the country.

The bishops are encouraging the laity to send Congress millions of postcards opposing the law. Bishop Robert McManus of Worcester, Massachusetts, is calling on the parishioners of all Catholic parishes to participate in the campaign. “See your signature on your postcard as your moral response of the words of Jesus that we will all hear on the day of our personal judgment, “I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers and sisters, you did it for me.”

In a discussion of this law, Cardinal Francis George, quoting the Catechism of the Catholic Church, stated that Catholic members of Congress who vote for the FOCA could face “automatic excommunication” if the act is determined to be for “formal cooperation” in the evil of abortion. Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life said, “Any legislator who would vote for such an extreme piece of pro-abortion legislation and any elected politician who would be an it or judge who would uphold it, or even a citizen who would lobby in any way in favor of it would be committing a serious sin, objectively speaking. It is cooperation in evil with a totally unjustified way.”

Dr. Mark Miravalle, theology professor at the Franciscan University of Steuben-ville, Ohio, of a Catholic voting for FOCA, “I think you would have to conclude that it would be a formal act, a legal cooperation in the act of abortion.” He added that if a politician intends to fund abortions, which is what FOCA would do, it would be considered formal cooperation with abortion. When asked about a pro-abortion Catholic politician seeking to receive Holy Communion he said, “Canonically, based on scandal, and based on proper protection of the Eucha-rist, no pro-abortion, pro-choice Catholic politician should be admitted to receive Holy Communion.”

This defensive battle would not have been necessary if Catholics had followed the teaching of their bishops and voted for pro-life candidates. Elections have consequences and failure to follow Church teaching has led to the potentially enslav- ing in our laws a legal right to abortion, which all taxpayers would be compelled to subsidize.

The battle should not sit in this battle: they must become involved or have the blood of millions of innocents on their hands.”

Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp

Applications are now being evalu- ated for the Ten Star All Star Summer Basketball Camp. The Ten Star All Star Summer Basketball Camp is by invitation only. Boys and girls ages 10-19 are eligible to apply. Past partici- pants include: Michael Jordan, Tim Duncan, Vince Carter, Jerry Stackhouse, Grant Hill and Shawn Jamison. Players from 50 states and 11 foreign countries attended the 2008 camp. Col- lege basketball scholarships are possible for players selected to the All-American Team. Camp locations include: Commerce, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Chicago, Illinois; Champaign Illinois; Glassboro, New Jersey; Ethica, New York; Marietta, Ohio; Lebanon, Tennessee; and Blacksburg, Virginia.

A Summer camp is also available for male and girls ages 9-18 of all skill levels.

For a free brochure on these summer camps, please call (704) 373-0873 anytime or go to www.tenstarcamp.com.
YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information on any of these events, please contact: Debbie Benelli or Jose Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at dvanel@victoriadiocese.org or Jose Ortega at jortega@victoriadiocese.org

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

February 15 — Youth Leadership Training, Chancery
February 22 — High School Spectacular, Holy Family, Victoria
February 24-27 — Region 10 Directors Meeting in Dallas
February 28 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class — Prayer and Worship
March 1 — Confirmation Retreat - Sacred Heart in Hallettsville
March 4 — Campus Ministry Association - Mass at 2:00 p.m., Student Center at Victoria College in Victoria
March 15 — Confirmation Retreat in New Taiton
March 16 — Confirmation Retreat in Bay City
March 21 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class - Justice and Service
March 24 — Sharing Faith with Adolescents
March 29 — Confirmation Retreat, St. Michael in Cuero
April 8 — Campus Ministry Association - Mass at 2:00 p.m., Student Center at Victoria College in Victoria
April 18 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class — Ethics and Crisis Management
April 24 — Bishop Fellhauer Benefit Golf Tournament
April 26 — Youth Leadership Training, Chancery
May 2 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class - Retreat Formation
June 12-20 — Camp David
June 22-25 — Discipleship Week at the Spiritual Renewal Center
July 4-12 — Rocky Mountain High, Pagosa Springs, Colorado
July 19-22 — Qos Vads, Boys Vocation Camp at the Spiritual Renewal Center
July 26-29 — St. Michael in Cuero Retreat Center
October 23-25 — Archdiocesan Conference for Catholic Youth Ministers in Houston

POPULAR YOUNG CELEBRITIES REFLECT ON ROSARY

Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel features 21 champion athletes, actors, filmmakers, directors, TV hosts, recording stars, authors and lecturers who emphasize the power of daily prayer to the rosary and encourage viewers to learn the mysteries of the rosary every day. This popular celebrity-filled video program that also features 21 champion athletes, actors, filmmakers, directors, TV hosts, recording stars, authors and lecturers who emphasize the power of daily prayer to the rosary and encourage viewers to learn the mysteries of the rosary every day.

Actor Eduardo Verástegui, star of the film Bella, holds Father Peyton's Rosary Prayer Book and a rosary during his reflection on the rosary in the Family Theater Productions' new DVD and TV program, Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel. The program features 21 young adult celebrities offering their reflections and praying a decade of the rosary in this interactive video program that also features a learning segment and a timeline on the development of the rosary.

Young adult celebrities reflect on Rosary's power in new DVD “Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel,” to debut Feb. 7

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — A new DVD from Family Theater Productions, featuring 21 young adult celebrities praying the rosary and reflecting on its importance in their daily lives will debut Feb. 7 with a screening in Hollywood and in broadcasts by several Catholic TV systems throughout the country.

This uplifting DVD includes personal reflections by all 21 celebrities, interactive teaching tools and an historical timeline of the rosary. It is produced by the media ministry production company founded by the “Rosary Priest” and Catholic media pioneer Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., and is being released in 2009 in conjunction with the year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of his birth. This DVD honors his memory and continues his mission of encouraging daily family prayer, especially the rosary.

For more information contact your parish coordinator or Debbie Benelli at the Office of Youth and Youth Adult Ministry (361) 573-0828 dvanel@victoriadiocese.org or Jose Ortega at jortega@victoriadiocese.org

Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel includes 20 Mysteries — Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowsful and Glorious. Fundraising kits involving premiers and sales of the DVD can be downloaded by youth groups, churches, parishes and other religious organizations.

Simultaneous broadcasts of Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel are being planned by Catholic TV, Boston (www.catholictv.com) and other Catholic broadcast outlets throughout the United States and Canada. The DVD sells for $19.95, plus shipping and handling, and can be ordered online from Holy Cross Family Ministries at www.hcfmstore.org or by calling 1-800-296-PRAY (7729). To view a trailer and to get more information about this program and its celebrities, go to www.FamilyTheater.org or www.RosaryStars.org.

For more information contact Debbie Benelli or Jose Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at dvanel@victoriadiocese.org or Jose Ortega at jortega@victoriadiocese.org

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

www.rosarystars.org

Popularity of Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel, among young people, is seen in the increase in sales of rosary prayer books and rosaries. The inclusion of rosary prayer and rosaries in films, books and other media has been noted by Father Peyton’s Rosary Prayer Book author, Father Willy Raymond and others who founded the San Gennaro Festival, Hollywood, in 1933.

Matthew Marsden — an actor who co-starred in Rambo (2008), has performed in 19 major films and TV dramas and will be featured in The Transformers sequel.

Alejandro Monteverde — co-producer, writer and director of Bella, the theatrical release that won the People’s Choice Award at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival.

Patrick & Molly Moo — a married couple, Patrick is a pop star in several Asian and European countries, and Molly, an actor, has been in two movies. Jessica Rey — an actor, best known for playing Alyssa, the White Ranger, in the Power Rangers Wild Force TV series (2002).

Christina Romero — an actor for the last six years, she has acted in several independent films and also stars in dozens of national television commercials.

Jeff Suppan — a starting pitcher for the Milwaukee Brewers, he is a 2006 World Series champion and NLCS MVP as a St. Louis Cardinal.

Mike Sweeney — a 14-year veteran of Major League Baseball and a five-time All-Star selection as a Kansas City Royal. In 2008, he signed with the Oakland Athletics.

Eduardo Verástegui — an actor and record artist from Mexico, he starred in Bella, the People’s Choice Award winner at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival.


Voice-over narration is provided by Matt Gallant and Chris Balish, a seven-time Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist, prime-time network TV host and best-selling “green” author.

Jake was the producer and director, while Family Theater Productions’ national director, Father Willy Raymond, CSC, was the executive producer. For more information: www.rosarystars.org or www.familytheater.org

THE CATHOLIC LIGHTHOUSE
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TAMMY EVEARD
Vice President of Development For Life
Teen Ministry

Tammie Eveard has spent the past twenty years telling anyone who will listen about the amazing love God has for us. Through her own experiences Tammy shares a journey of love, laughter, disappointments and sorrow with a constant thread of faith woven through the tapestry of many colors. Tammy lives in the beautiful city of Boulder, Colorado with her husband and three children where she enjoys a good book, diet Coke, her local work for non-profits and an occasional shoe shopping excursion. There are many things that bring Tammy alive and Tammy has found that these things are what make us who we are — the good, the bad and everything in between. As a girl, a teen and an adult woman… Tammy found that through all, there is a grace that can only come from the hand of God. Also featuring Carlos Longoria, Froylan Silva, and Jose Ortega. These three Catholic Men of God are Victoria natives and enjoy sharing what it takes to live as a faithful man in this world that can make it very difficult. They will be leading a workshop for all the young men attending. Wonderful Praise and Worship by the Our Lady of Sorrows Life Teen Music Ministry.

Tammy Eveard has spent the past twenty years telling anyone who will listen about the amazing love God has for us. Through her own experiences Tammy shares a journey of love, laughter, disappointments and sorrow with a constant thread of faith woven through the tapestry of many colors. Tammy lives in the beautiful city of Boulder, Colorado with her husband and three children where she enjoys a good book, diet Coke, her local work for non-profits and an occasional shoe shopping excursion. There are many things that bring Tammy alive and Tammy has found that these things are what make us who we are — the good, the bad and everything in between. As a girl, a teen and an adult woman… Tammy found that through all, there is a grace that can only come from the hand of God. Also featuring Carlos Longoria, Froylan Silva, and Jose Ortega. These three Catholic Men of God are Victoria natives and enjoy sharing what it takes to live as a faithful man in this world that can make it very difficult. They will be leading a workshop for all the young men attending. Wonderful Praise and Worship by the Our Lady of Sorrows Life Teen Music Ministry.

Early Registration deadline is February 19. Early Registration price is $17 — students; $25 — adults. Group rate: 8 or more students — $15; 8 — adults. NO REFUNDS AFTER FEBRUARY 19.

For more information contact your parish coordinator or Debbie Benelli at the Office of Youth and Youth Adult Ministry (361) 573-0828 dvanel@victoriadiocese.org or Jose Ortega at jortega@victoriadiocese.org

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Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice
Operation Rice Bowl Starts Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25

National Program Raises Awareness of Global Hunger, Poverty

By Ken Hackett

BALTIMORE, Md.—As we prepare to observe Lent, many of us are preoccupied with the hardships brought on by the global economic crisis that followed closely on the heels of a global food crisis. Amid dire economic news, we see the signs of stress placed upon our families and friends — the stress of dealing with home foreclosures, layoffs and increased costs of living. But these growing needs are not only evident in our own country and communities. They exist and manifest themselves many times over and with greater intensity in poor countries overseas.

The 40 days of Lent present an opportunity for us as Catholics to deepen our faith and renew our commitment to helping the poor through prayer and personal sacrifice.

In last year’s Lenten Message, Pope Benedict XVI placed special emphasis on sacrifice and “almsgiving, which represents a specific way to assist those in need and, at the same time, an exercise in self-denial to free us from attachment to worldly goods.”

News reports of impoverished children gathering corn kernels dropped in the street or parents having to choose which of their children to feed are distressing signs that the global economic and food crises have pushed billions of people to the limits of existence.

Our help is now needed more than ever, with more than 800 million people hungry — 500 million of them children.

Every year, millions of Catholics participate in Operation Rice Bowl (ORB), Catholic Relief Services’ annual Lenten program that starts Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2009. Each Lent, Catholic parishes and schools from more than 13,000 communities use symbolic rice bowls as the focal point for their Lenten observance, helping families to think beyond their daily realities and to focus on making a difference in the lives of others,” says Beth Martin, program manager for Operation Rice Bowl.

“The program also includes an educational component, sharing stories of people from developing countries that benefit from ORB.”

Last year, Catholics raised more than $7 million through Operation Rice Bowl, 75 percent of which is used to fund hunger and poverty projects in 40 countries. The remaining 25 percent stays in U.S. parishes to support food pantries and soup kitchens.

Catholic Charismatic Conference to be held in San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO—The 12th Annual Regional Catholic Charismatic Conference will be held March 6-7, at St. Mary Magdalene Church, 1710 Closter Street in San Antonio. The theme is, “In the Footsteps of St. Paul, Empowered by The Holy Spirit.” There will be English and Spanish Masses. Registration is $30 for adults, $50 for couples and $55 for youth. There is a $5 discount for early registration of adults before Feb. 17. Contact the Catholic Center for Charismatic Renewal (CCCR) in San Antonio at (210) 226-7545 for more information. For registration forms visit the Web site at www.cccrsa.net and download them

Common Practice of Penance for Lent

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 25. All Christ’s faithful are obliged by Divine Law, each in his or her own way, to do penance.

“Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin” (Ezech. 18:30).

However, so that all may be joined together in a certain common practice of penance, days and seasons of penance are officially prescribed by the church. On these days, Catholic people are, in a special way, to devote themselves to prayer, to engage in works of piety and charity and to practice self-denial especially by observing the fast and abstinence regulations prescribed by the Church, namely:

1. Fasting and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
2. Abstinence from meat on all Fridays of Lent.
3. The law of the fast means that only one full meal may be taken during the day; two light meals are permitted in addition. The consumption of solid food between meals is prohibited, but liquids may be taken at any time.
4. The law of fast binds those between the ages of 18 and 59.

Those who by reason of their young age are not bound by the laws of fast and abstinence, should be taught the true meaning of penance.

Apart from the special Lenten activities of individuals and parishes, Lent affords a special opportunity for families. Penitential practices and devotions should be conducted on a family basis. Families are encouraged to remove the distractions to works of piety and reintroduce family prayer, Scripture services, and other appropriate devotions.

May this holy season of Lent be a time of conversion and renewal for all. Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin, V.G.
Chancellor, Diocese of Victoria

Reporting Abuse

If you or someone you know has been sexually abused by a member of the clergy or other church personnel, you can register a complaint.

• Call the Chancery at (361) 573-0828 and ask to speak with the bishop or the chancellor; or
• Call Rev. Gary Janak (979) 543-5307 or Sr. Emilie Eikers (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach; or
• Write to: Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer Diocese of Victoria P.O. Box 4070 Victoria, TX 77903

Mark your letter “Personal and Confidential”

We will also help you bring your concerns to Church officials outside the diocese if the abuse occurred elsewhere and you now reside in the Diocese of Victoria.

If you are unsure about bringing a complaint or would like further information, please contact Rev. Gary Janak (at 979) 543-3770.

Diocese of Victoria Pastoral Institute

Extended P.I. Participate in the procedures for Operation Rice Bowl.

The Gospel of Mark

Instruction: Rev. Donald Hayden, O.S.S.T.

Thursdays: Feb. 19 - April 2 (no class March 19)
Place: Chancery and St. Anthony’s in Columbus by Distant Learning
Time: 7:00 - 9:15 p.m.
Fee: $15

To pre-register, call 361-573-0828, e-mail bparkan@victoriadiocese.org, or you can register the first night of class.
I have been having a terrible difficulty keeping up with time. When the Christmas Season ended, I had a hard time mentally getting back into ordinary time and realizing how far along into the month we had already progressed. As I write this, I acknowledge that I have already missed the deadline –again – and a gentle notice from our Lighthouse editor was necessary. Somehow, the days just seem to zip by. As I have been reflecting on this speedy passage of time, I remem-ber one of the first things I had learned when I first entered the convent: “Time passes; eternity approaches. Let us labor, O my soul.” At the time, time didn’t seem to move so quickly, and I like many younger people around me, thought that I’d have a lot of time left in life and have to worry too much about the “eternity” part. Now, quite a few years later, and especially at this time of the Year, the newspaper, I look at the quote differently, especially the “eternity approaches” part. I see the names of people who were called to their eternal home who are younger than I am and then I pray that they were prepared. I see the names of people that I have known and I think that maybe I know more people who are in the next world than are still among us. All this reflecting reminds me that much of my personal life has passed by and I do know how much more time I will be given. If there are things in my life that need to be appreciated, done, forgiven, or remembered, I realize that I must do it now. I ask myself if I have given and have shown appreciation for all the things with which I have been gifted: life, faith, a loving family, devoted friends, good health, talents and an array of blessings specific-ally endowed upon me by a beneficent God. Do I see the glass of life as half-full rather than half-empty? Am I being and doing the good I have been created to be the best that I can? Am I living up to my baptismal commitment? Have I fortified myself through frequent and fervent recept-ion of the Eucha-rist? Am I strengthening my relationship with God and those about me, and am I allowing God to work through me? Have I forgiven those who may have injured me and do I seek forgiveness of those whom I may have hurt? Have I availed myself of the healing graces of the sacrament of reconciliation? Do I remember blessings of the past so that these memories can enrich the present and engender wisdom in preparing for whatever lies ahead? After I can say “yes” to all of the above, I can be at peace. Although time passes and eternity approaches without my knowing when I will be summoned home, I can rest assured that I have labored well and that I will be welcomed in the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Healthy Hearts

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:23).

The untimely passing of respected journalist and fellow Tim Rus-sert in June 2008 has drawn attention to the epidemic of heart disease, which is the No. 1 killer of both women and men in the United States. Almost 54,000 Texans died from heart disease in 2001, says the Texas Heart Institute, and everyday 2,400 people nationwide are killed by this condition—also known as cardiovascular disease.

The most common form of this serious condition is coronary artery disease (CAD), which can lead to heart attack. This occurs due to the hardening and narrowing of the arteries caused by a build up of plaque, known as atherosclerosis. Per-menant damage to the heart muscle can and does happen during a heart attack, and death can occur if not treated immediately.

The plaque that sticks to the arteries and causes heart disease is a mixture of fat, cholesterol and other substances, and is found particularly in people who are overweight, have unbalanced diets, smoke, and experience limited physical activity. Dr. Danton A. Cosley, surgeon-in-chief of the Texas Heart Institute, says on their Web site, “Many people think they need to change their habits; that’s not true. You can make some changes on the way you live to lower your risk for heart disease.”

Cardiovascular health experts point to key behavioral factors that put us at extreme risk for heart disease. Changes to your lifestyle, as recommended by the American Heart Association, can greatly reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

• Tobacco use: Smoking accelerates atherosclerosis, nicotine increases blood pressure, and carbon monoxide diminishes the amount of oxygen in the blood.

• Physical Activity: Increases blood flow to the heart and helps to prevent other major cardiovascular risk factors like diabetes and high blood pressure. Thirty minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day will, if taken, even in 10 minute increments.

• Diet: Saturated fats and cholesterol elevate blood cholesterol levels and promote atherosclerosis, while high salt/sodium consumption raises blood pressure levels. Eat a low-fat, high fiber diet rich in vegetables, lean meats, fish, and heart-healthy whole grains.

• Excess weight: Over-weight and obesity are associated with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Losing just 10% of your weight can reduce your risk.

Some cardiovascular diseases are present at birth, but everyone can work to reduce his or her own personal risk fac-tors of CAD, regardless of family history. Men over the age of 45, women over 55, and all people with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes are at an increased risk of heart disease.

Visit the Catholic Health Association of Texas web site www.chateexas.org for more disease prevention tips and links to the Texas Heart Institute, CDC, and American Heart Association.

Mind, Body & Spirit, is a monthly offering about health matters presented by the Catholic Health Association of Texas and the Bishops’ Subcommittee on Health Care.

Flag Day poster contest announced

SAN ANTONIO — Catholic Life Insurance is sponsoring a poster contest to commemorate the 232nd birthday of our nation’s flag. The theme of this year’s contest is: “Free to Make a Difference.”

“Catholic Life sponsors the contest each year in an effort to in-crease our children’s aware-ness of the principles of liberty and justice for which our nation stands,” he said. “In the trying times, those principles become more important to remember,” said Barbara A. Cheaney, Vice President of Communications.

The design of this year’s poster should include a representation of the child’s plan to make a difference in America. We want students to share how they are positively impacting the environment, their commu-nity and the nation. Life strongly encour-aged creativity from poster contestants!

Elementary school students in grades kindergarten through fifth may submit one original poster no larger than 20” x 30.” Judges will evaluate posters based on eye appeal, originality and theme. Winners will receive cash awards.

Entry forms and complete contest rules may be downloaded from the company Web site at www.clin.com. Particip-ants in the contest do not have to be Catholic Life members or of the Catholic faith. The entry deadline is April 10, 2009. All entries will become the property of Catholic Life Insurance and cannot be returned unless ac-companied by return postage.

Contact Lorie Bledsoe in the Public Relations Department at (800) 292-2548 or (210) 828-9921 ext. 141 for further assistance.

Founded in 1901, Catholic Life Insur-ance offers financial services and fraternal benefits to individuals living in Texas, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi and New Mexico. As a not-for-profit entity, Catholic Life Insurance returns profits to members and the sur-rounding community through charitable, religious and patriotic community service projects, such as the Flag Day Poster Contest.
Reflections on President Obama’s inaugural speech

By Cynthia Brewer, editor

As I watched the fanfare and listened to President Barack Obama’s inaugural speech January 20, 2009, I was generally pleased; however, I was not completely satisfied. We have come a long way in determining that our great nation would rise up and meet the many challenges it faces. And he admitted that the tasks wouldn’t be easy or quickly met, but he would be met.

He said that Americans have gathered because “we have chosen hope over fear, unity over purpose and discord.”

Yes, I agree; this is great. But how do we live out that hope over fear? Or live that unity over purpose, and discord? I believe that one of our key tasks is to remain steadfast in our fight over abortion.

If we’re single, pregnant and afraid, will we accept finding family and friends to help us choose hope rather than fearfully try to make a choice of our own? Or will we be afraid of full responsibility? Yes, as difficult as it is, we must not hide from responsibility. All people, including our president, must now face the “truth” that a pregnancy carries a life, and it is one’s duty to make that responsible decision to bring that life to full term.

This should be “the price and the promise” of American leadership. Pray for wisdom for our new president.

The Catholic Difference

In praise of George W. Bush

By George Weigel

The following is best appreciated if read aloud in the best Irish accent you can manage:

Paddy, the local squire, was dead.
The entire population of the village where he spent a lifetime making others miserably attended the funeral Mass – some, double, to make sure he really was gone. Knowing the congregation’s sentiments, the wise old pastor said to his people, before the final commendation, “Now, dear brother and sisters, before we commit our brother to the sod, it would be an act of charity if one of you were to come forward and say a good word about him.”

No one moved. “Come, now, brothers and sisters,” the pastor pleaded, “surely there’s someone who can say a good word for the man.” Total silence. “My dear people, I'll be tellin’ the sacristan to lock the door in a minute, and not a one of you’s goin’ to leave this church until someone comes forward and says a good word for this departed brother.” Finally, an ancient villager got up, shuffled to the side of the produced real results. Internationally, the Bush administration stood firm against the Gadharetu rise to use international law to declare abortion an international human right. The failure of that component of the emancipation of women; as one senior Vatican official put it to me, a year ago, “We know we’re never going to fall; there’s another American administration supportive of our core issues as the Bush administration has been.”

I should like to praise the president for his work to rid Africa of the plagues and malaria and to relieve the suffering of those afflicted with those awful diseases. George W. Bush may be an object of ridicule in certain U.S. zip-codes; he is the subject of veneration among those “bottom billion” whose lives his policies have saved or enhanced.

I should like to thank the president for offering Pope Benedict XVI such a warm welcome on the South Lawn of the White House on April 15, 2008 – a welcome that ought to have put paid, once and for all, to the notion that there is something incompatable between robust Catholic faith and a mature gratitude for the political miracle of American democracy.

I should like to thank President Bush for his personal decency, manifest in his (unpublicized) personal attention to our wounded and to the families of the fallen; in his refusal to become bitter in the face of outrageous slander; and in his calm amidst tribulations that most of us can’t imagine. I should like to thank him for his unapologetic confession of Christian faith, and for his testimony to the importance that prayer plays in his life. And I should like to thank him for not giving a hoot about the mockery that such a witness draws from a secularized mass media, from American high culture, from cretins like Michael Moore, and from Euro-secularist snobs who spent eight years sneering at the evangelical cowboy in the White House while their continent was dying from spiritual boredom.

Thank you, Mr. President.

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver. Phone: 303-715-3215.

NA RECEIVES GRANT TO INCREASE SECURITY ON CAMPUS--As part of Nazareth Academy’s commitment to ensure that its students have the essential resources to learn and achieve academically in a safe environment, the school applied for and received $2,000 from the Kenedy Foundation to go towards its goal of implementing a new security system. “This money will help us to secure our campus,” said Susan DeRenzis, “because of the school’s ongoing commitment to providing a more secure environment for its students and faculty. Nazareth Pre-school will be an excellent steward of the foundation’s investment in the Victoria community.”

Nazareth Pre-school will begin implementing new security improvements for its campus in the 2010 session. “The Kenedy Memorial Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes. Founded in 1961 by Sarita Kenedy East, granddaughter of Monty Kenedy and Petra Vela Kennedy, the foundation serves the Diocese of Victoria by giving $200 million dollars to charitable causes and organizations in Texas.” Pictured above are NA’s principal, Scott Kloesel; pre-school Director DeAnn Vilchez; and Bishop David E. Fellhauer.

Catholic Schools Celebrate Service for over 140 years in the Diocese of Victoria

Continued from p. 1

the United States highlighting the service provided and the work of those who volunteer and support Catholic education.

National Catholic Schools Week took place during January 25-31, 2009. The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Victoria have a long tradition of service throughout the years as they have visited convalescent homes, held toy drives, prepared goods and clothing for the underprivileged, donated to countless causes such as troops in Iraq, hurricane victims, overseas aid, and so many more. In this issue of the Lighthouse, you will be reminded time and again how incredibly selfless and service-oriented our school communities really are.

Having recently taken over the administration of the Office of Catholic Schools in the diocese, I have been constantly impressed with the generosity of the people of our Catholic school communities. Though our schools are distinctly unique, their community support is repeated throughout the entire region. The pastors, parishioners, parents, staff and faculties, administration, general public and their friends and stakeholders have repeatedly offered their words of praise and thanks– giving that is demanded then is a return to these truths. "What we’re in a new era of responsibility, “What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required today is a new spirit of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world …” Yes, as difficult as it is, we must not hide from responsibility. All people, including our president, must now face the “truth” that a pregnancy carries a life, and it is one’s duty to make that responsible decision to bring that life to full term. This should be “the price and the promise” of American leadership. Pray for wisdom for our new president.

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NA develops students in three ways

Nazareth Academy
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1867
Principal: Scott Kloesel
Address: 206 W. Convert, Victoria, TX 77901
Contact information: (361) 573-6651
Web site: www.nazarethacademy.org

By: Malalyn Kainer and Ashley Kolar, 8th Grade

As 8th graders at Nazareth Academy, we are honored to provide this report concerning our school. We find three things here at Nazareth: excellent academics, great extracurricular activities and a Christ-like setting.

First of all, all the teachers at N.A. are challenging, yet they find exciting ways to keep the students’ interest. A result is that Nazareth academics are soaring, evidenced by 19 students receiving Duke University Talent Search recognition for scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Students are also looking forward to attending the PSAT academic competition in Fredericksburg this year. N.A. teachers have done a great job in encouraging students and getting everyone excited about academics.

In addition to academics, an educational institution must provide extra-curricular activities that allow for a well-rounded education. Nazareth Academy Catholic School excels in this area as well. The football team went undefeated and won the championship the past two years. The volleyball team also did very well this year, finishing the season with only three losses.

Sports are offered to 4th grade and up and include football, volleyball, basketball, track, soccer and softball. Many clubs are also offered, including drill team, cheerleading, band, Reading Club, National Junior Honor Society, Student Council and Safety Patrol. Every year Nazareth is changing. This year a competition cheerleading squad was started and placed first in their first contest in Corpus Christi. These activities and our curriculum make sure that our students have a well-balanced education.

As evidenced from the above, an education at Nazareth Academy includes both challenging academics and extra-curricular activities. However, the most important part of a Nazareth Academy education is the teaching of Catholic values. Students are taught the importance of Christ-like actions and attitudes through a variety of means, such as: 8th graders cleaning the classrooms’ park, National Junior Honor Society adopting a highway, 1st graders collecting tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, school-wide clothing donations/collections to help those affected by natural disasters, students serving at Christ’s Kitchen, 6th and 7th graders visiting local nursing homes, the adopt-a-nun program, and the list goes on. Students do indeed learn values through class work in religion class, attending weekly Liturgy, daily prayer, etc; but students learn the most about Catholic values through actual service to others.

Nazareth Academy Catholic School – excellent academics and great extracurricular activities – all available in a Christ-like setting of Catholic values. We’re Jets for Jesus educating students for tomorrow.

Reach Out and Touch Someone

Holy Cross Elementary
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 6th
Established: 1940
Principal: Sister Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS
Address: 2001 Katy, Bay City, TX 77414
Contact information: (979) 245-5632

The 2009 Catholic Schools Week Theme was “Celebrate Service.” The students at Holy Cross are great for service projects. They donate food for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets. They share with the needy through the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. At Christmas each class adopts a project instead of exchanging gifts. Second, third and sixth graders donated money for African Relief. Grades 4 and 1 adopted an angel from the local area. Fifth graders sponsored a pajama drive and kindergarten adopted a needy family. The pre-K-4’s purchased bees through the Heifer Program. Every class made sacrifices during Advent for the missions. Six hundred dollars was donated to Holy Childhood, the local society of St. Vincent de Paul or African Relief Services. The 100th day of school will again see students reaching out to others through some worthy projects.

The sixth and fifth graders have started a community garden. Greens are in great supply from their winter efforts and spring is just around the corner. Third and fifth graders paired with kindergarten students to share stories and prayer at Liturgy. The sixth-grade boys are marvelous examples for pre-K-4’s at weekly Mass. The sixth-grade boys, under the leadership of Mrs. Rubio, participated in the Trim-A-Tree contest. Their first prize money will benefit their class.

Students reach out by selling magazines for HAS, cookies for the advisory council and do a marathon for extra class projects. They help at the parish picnic, school bazaar and the Lenten fish fries. Students entertain their parents and visitors at the family dance with steps learned during P.E. They participate in Jump Ropes for Heart for heart research.

Other small acts of kindness are shared on a daily basis. What a way to be Jesus to others as students carry out the school’s mission statement of making a difference in the world by loving God, others and self through learning as they form Christian community.
Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville recently won its 50th state championship since it began competitive athletics in 1948. It has now won 47 state athletic championships, four instrumental music state championships and eight Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) overall state championships, including the 2008 TAPPS 3A Overall State Championship.

This is the fourth consecutive year Sacred Heart has received the overall trophy and eight total. Of the high school’s 116 students, 99 percent of them take part in one or more extracurricular activity.

The state championships include football (11), volleyball (10), girls basketball (2), baseball (8), softball (8), girls track (4), boys track (2), girls tennis (2), band (4), and overall (8).

The award winning 2008 Sacred Heart Catholic High School Indian band has a total of 82 members. The junior-high intermediate band has 32 members and the 5th grade beginner band has 20 members. All students in grades 5-8 are involved in the band program here at Sacred Heart.

As part of our effort to educate the whole child, Sacred Heart Catholic School instills in students a lifelong commitment to serving others. Every student in grades 5-12 (186 students) recently contributed over 700 gifts and $1,500.00 in cash to the Annual Adopt-A-Family Christmas service project.

Other service projects during Christmas included collecting gifts for the Lavaca County Sheriff’s Department Deputy Santa Program, Advent Mission Collection, Food Drive for the Mama Food Pantry, decorating resident doors at the Hallettsville Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, unloading and distributing food for the St. Nicholas mission, and singing Christmas carols to the nursing home residents. High school students also wrote Christmas letters to persons in the military stationed overseas and injured or wounded soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

Why Catholic School?

For many years, the families of Sacred Heart Catholic School have been proud of the dedication and hard work of the Mother’s Club and Father’s Club. The clubs’ efforts have been instrumental in ensuring that students at SHCHS had what they needed for a quality education. The clubs’ members have been an important part of the history at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

During the 20th century, the clubs’ members were active in helping out at the school. It is witnessed in the way the students are eager to give back to the parish and surrounding community through service. It is witnessed in the way the teachers cooperate and support each other to accomplish their mission to “provide an opportunity for growth in the Light of Christ.” This opportunity extends to everyone who joins the Mariner Family.

Thus, parents, students and teachers all come to Our Lady of the Gulf for a variety of reasons. Like a puzzle, they stay when they find a fit within the community. When all these pieces come together, the resulting picture is a community that recognizes the value of the human soul and gives glory to God.

St. Joseph High School Celebrates Service of Former Parents

St. Joseph High School

Grades: 9th – 12th
Established: 1868
Address: 110 E. Red River Street, Victoria, TX 77901
Contact information: (361) 573-2446
Web site: www.stjhs.org

One of the most influential traditions of St. Joseph High School is the commitment that parents make when sending their children to the school. For generations it has been parents who make sure that students have the “extras” when it comes to their education.

This tradition was started by those who served in the St. Joseph High School Mothers’ Club and Fathers’ Club. Beginning in the early 1900s, in one way or another, parents had a goal to ensure STJ students were able to participate in extra-curricular activities and have school facilities that were important to a quality education. Because of the example they set, parents today still play a critical role in students’ education at STJ.

The STJ Mothers’ Club was founded by Mrs. James Welder and 32 other mothers in 1912. The Mothers’ Club provided the maintenance and support of the school. During its existence, the club provided meals, equipment, sanitation, heat and lights, and built and staffed the school cafeteria. They also financed the library and purchased textbooks for the students.

In 1936, the STJ Fathers’ Club was founded by Mr. William A. Reuter. The leadership of these men focused on athletics, purchasing uniforms, equipment and awards. They provided upkeep and financing of the STJ athletic programs. For years, the Fathers’ Club hosted a turkey sale at Christmas time to raise money to support the school. Their efforts allowed them to purchase a new school bus in 1966.

The work of the organizations lasted until the late 1980s when the two clubs disbanded and combined to form the St. Joseph High School Parent-Teacher Club. In many ways their legacy lives on today through the current parent organization.

The work of these parents was crucial to the school. Their service was unwinding and in conjunction with this year’s Catholic Schools Week theme, Celebrate Service, the former members of the STJ Mothers’ Club and Fathers’ Club were recognized at a special school Mass and reception on January 27.

There are many parents who secured the future of STJ throughout the years with their time and resources,” said Tracy Yeates, STJ director of advancement. “Their commitment deserves recognition and we were pleased to do that during Catholic Schools Week. The foresight of those who started the parent organizations set the stage for the generations coming out our school today,” she said. “We are grateful.”
St. Michael Elementary
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1900
Principal: Sister Kathleen Goike, IWBS
Address: 103 E. North Street, Weimar, TX 78962
Contact information: (979) 725-8461

St. Michael School, celebrating 96 years, continues to play a vital role in the Weimar community. Students in Pre-K-4 – 8th Grade strive to live out the mission of the school – “to be friendly, responsible, and Christ-like” through their faith life, academics, and athletics and service. This year’s Catholic School theme focuses on service, an important component of St. Michael Catholic School. Dedicated faculty and staff provide daily service to our students in an educational environment that challenges all our students to do and be the best by using the talents that God has given them. This is done both in the classroom, as well as out of the classroom. Teachers, along with the pastor, mentor students on what it means to be Christ-like by word and example.

Parents and benefactors give time, talent and resources to ensure that St. Michael School continues to be a viable Catholic educational facility for the young people of Weimar. St. Michael Home and School Association and the Advisory Council members encourage parents and the community to become active in the various events of the school. Countless volunteers help out in the library, in our athletic program, in the cafeteria and in the office. The Weimar community rallies around and supports all the activities at St. Michael School. Variouos organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, St. Ann’s Society, KZJTI, Lions Club, Rotary Club and the Women’s Enclave, as well as individual benefactors, give monetary support to help ensure the viability of the school.

In turn, our students provide service within the parish, local community and globally. They volunteer as lectors, altar servers, baby sitters and helpers at the parish festivals and other events of the parish, school, or Weimar community. Students also contribute monies toward the African mission work of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament. An event that St. Michael Home and School Association and the Advisory Council members encourage parents and, all of Weimar, is the annual Christmas pageant. Put on two-nights, with the gym packed, people look to this event to help them recall and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

St. Michael Catholic School celebrated service during Catholic Schools Week, both within the school and in the local community, as we appreciate all those who serve and benefit from our school.

Our Lady of Victory Reflection

Our Lady of Victory School
Established: 1957
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Principal: Sister Leonita Barron, IWBS
Address: 1331 E. Mosquito Lane, Victoria, TX 77901
Contact information: (361) 575-3473
Web site: www.ourladyvictory.org

Catholic Schools Week is always a special week for the teachers and students of Our Lady of Victory School. This is the week we celebrate what it means to be a part of a faith community facing the challenges of being a follower of Jesus. The theme for this year is: Catholic Schools Celebrate Service to church, community and one another. We also plan to celebrate the acknowledgement of being named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. The week is not only celebrated with many fun activities but it also affords us the opportunity to reflect how our Catholic faith and Catholic education has touched each one of us as a person.

Two years ago, Judy Sattler returned to Our Lady of Victory as a third-grade teacher. She shares with us her reflection of her journey as a Catholic teaching in a Catholic School.

"I feel Catholic education through Catholic schools is a wonderful blessing from God. It has been a part of my life since I was a young child. After my children came of school age I began working at Our Lady of Victory School in what was then the Chapter I computer lab.

"After doing that a number of years, I left to teach in public schools, having received my teaching degree. I taught in that setting for seven years. I have great respect for public school teachers – challenges in public education are many.

"Last year I returned to Our Lady of Victory as a classroom teacher where I have the opportunity to teach religion as well as other academic subjects. I consider that to be an honor and a privilege.

"I have come to believe that God uses people like myself to do his will – there is hope that he has a place for each of us. The Catholic school setting is great because teachers can not only teach religion in class but can help students incorporate their faith throughout all classes and throughout the day. Public school teachers do not have an open opportunity to do that, and so it seems that their teaching task is more difficult. As a parent, I appreciate that my children were taught Christian values.

"May our good Lord grant that Catholic schools will remain strong and continue to support parents in their awesome responsibility to impart Christian values to their children – helping all of us to make our world a place where justice prevails.

"Yes, we all believe that we have been truly blessed to know that throughout the day we have the opportunity to pray and speak openly about God in our life.”

St. Anthony School Celebrates CSW

St. Anthony Elementary
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1955
Principal: John R. O’Leary
Address: 635 Besham, Columbus, TX 78934
Contact information: (979) 732-5505
Web site: www.homestead.com/StAnthonySchool/sashome.html

St. Anthony students had a faith and fun-filled week as they celebrated and carried out the Catholic Schools Week theme of service. The students opened the week on Sunday by celebrating Mass and welcoming visitors to an open house after Mass. The focus of the week was service. The students of SAS chose the Battered Women’s Shelter in Bastrop as their charity for the week. Students helped fill the needs of the shelter by giving a different item each day of the week.

Students of SAS were divided into teams and points were accumulated for fulfilling the service needs during the week. The events of the week were as follows:

- Monday — SAS teams celebrated service in the community by cleaning up the campus and area around the school. Some school teams went to visit the nursing homes and assisted-living homes. Students wore crazy socks and brought new socks for the shelter.

- Tuesday — Students celebrated service in school by taking time to clean classrooms, lockers, closets and other areas of need. Each team member brought another article of specific clothing for the shelter. Students participated in the annual Spelling Bee.

- Wednesday — Students gave service to the military. Each student wore, red, white and blue in honor of the armed service men and women. Each team member brought $1 to contribute toward a care package for them. Letters and cards were written to be sent with the care package. At the end of the day, students participated in a talent show.

- Thursday — Students celebrated St. Anthony’s annual field day. Each student brought a newly used stuffed animal or book to be donated to the shelter. The day began with a campus rosary and ended with the 8th-grade class playing the faculty and staff in a volleyball game.

- Friday — The week was brought to a close with Mass and a team lunch and movie. Students brought their last item to be given to the Battered Women’s Shelter and points were tallied for each team. The week ended with an early dismissal and students went home with the excitement and sincerity of serving others in a unique way of giving themselves.
St. Joseph School, Yoakum, Celebrates Service

St. Joseph Elementary
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1891
Principal: Susan Kelley
Address: 310 North St., Yoakum, TX 77995
Contact information: (979) 743-5362
Website: www.stjschools.org

Sunday, Celebrate Service in Our Parish – St. Joseph School family in Yoakum, celebrated a special Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. with the student body singing and the 8th grade participating in parts of the Mass. An Open House of the school followed Mass and students’ CSW projects were displayed. The Catholic Daughters of America’s turkey and dressing dinner was served at the Family center after Mass and Open House. All 4th -8th grade students had written essays about how CSJ celebrates service.

Monday, Celebrate Service in Our Community – Bracelets were passed out and worn by students throughout the week. Brown paper bags were decorated by K-8th grade students to promote St. Joseph School and were distributed by H.E.B. to the community during CSW. Eighth graders presented Valentine cards to local Nursing Home residents and helped residents with bingo and other fun games.

Tuesday, Celebrate Service in Our Students- Parents and grandparents are lunch with their children in the cafeteria; the tables were decorated with displays of beautiful pictures colored by the pre-k – 3rd graders. Students went to the movies in Hallettsville and there was a “No Homework Night.”

Wednesday, Celebrate Service in Our Nation – Students wore red, white and blue to show patriotism, and met at the flagpole after Mass for a prayer service for our great nation. The Band students played the National Anthem. Student council members took treats, provided by the students, and thank-you cards, made by the classes, to the Yoakum police, fire fighters and hospital to show thanks for their service. Two 7th graders spoke to the local radio station about the CSW activities and the significance of a Catholic education at St. Joseph’s.

Thursday, Celebrate Service in Our Vocations – Students wrote cards of thanks and appreciation in showing support and encouragement to those pursuing religious vocations in seminaries. To show their appreciation to all who support our Catholic school, each class put on a variety show, and everyone was invited to the Endowment Fund Stew Supper at the Family Center that evening.

Friday, Celebrate Service in Our Faculty, Staff and Volunteers – Eighth graders honored the teachers by teaching their classes in the morning and by providing snacks for all. A small token of appreciation was given to teachers with an early dismissal at 1:00 p.m.

Expect the Unexpected
St. Philip Elementary School
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1891
Principal: Garen Edwards
Address: 302 W. Church St., El Campo, TX 77437
Contact information: 979-543-2901
Website: www.stphilipsschool.org

Visitors to St. Philip Catholic School, in El Campo, can expect the unexpected. From early morning band practice to evening sports, the students are busy with not only academic lessons, but also life lessons. As the theme for Catholic Schools Week is “Catholic Schools Celebrate Service,” our students, faculty, and parents work together to serve others and God in manyways. We encourage our students to evangelize at age appropriate levels, and these activities make our textbooks come alive.

Catholic schools are taking the opportunity everyday but especially during Catholic Schools Week to “celebrate service.” This year’s theme draws attention to our duty as Christian brothers and sisters to serve the Lord and one another.

The St. Philip experience has cultivated a large group of honor graduates from El Campo High School (over 1/3 of honor graduates over the past 10 years) who are committed to community service. They also make a generous donation of food to the local area food bank, shopped for Christmas gifts for children of families in need, provided food donations to victims of hurricane Ike, and sent donations of clothing to families through missions in Mexico.

These bigger projects are not overshadowed by the daily service students provide through serving at Mass, helping to clean up in the cafeteria, coordinating the school’s recycling program, greeting and escorting younger students from vehicles into the building in the morning, helping with after school care or tutoring and taking the lead in special programs and prayer services. Students also make monthly visits to local nursing home residents, create birthday cards for them and donate their time and talents throughout the local community.

Building a community of service is another method of teaching that St. Rose of Lima Catholic school uses to “instruct in our students a knowledge and love of God.” Learning and living in service helps to develop the moral compass that all students will need on their future educational and life journeys.

It is this combination of academic principles and moral values that make St. Rose of Lima Catholic School and Catholic education unique. St. Rose School has seen growth with 24 (26%) new families and 36 (27%) new students for the current school year, offering them the wonderful gift of this unique education.

In between the numerous academic classes, sporting events, band concerts and fundraisers, lasting bonds are being formed in the Schulenburg community. These bonds tie together the people who believe in the mission of Catholic Education and its future. . . “serve Him, serve Him, serve Him when the sun goes down.”

(left) St. Joseph sixth graders work hard in class preparing for CSW projects. (right) Kindergarten through second grade practice with “Lummi,” or rhythm sticks, for the Variety Show that was held during Catholic Schools Week.

St. Rose of Lima Celebrates Service
St. Rose of Lima Elementary
Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th
Established: 1890
Address: 405 Black St., Schulenburg, TX 78956
Contact information: (979) 743-3080
Website: www.strosecardinals.com

“Serve Him in the morning, serve Him in the noontime . . .” The lyrics to the popular children’s hymn remind us that every moment is an opportunity to serve the Lord. Every moment is a gift to remember what we have been given and give back to others, for the greater glory and honor of God.

Catholic schools are taking the opportunity everyday but especially during Catholic Schools Week to “Celebrate Service.” This year’s theme draws attention to our duty as Christian brothers and sisters to serve the Lord and one another.

The academic experience not only prepares students for high school, but it also integrates disciplines so that students see how everything is intertwined. Math lessons also teach current events. Students have a strong academic base, but students also enjoy many extracurricular activities including band, chorus, one act play (Anna Champs!), PSIA competitions (Anna Champs!), volleyball, football, basketball, track, and soccer. These same students also make time to volunteer at the nursing homes, serve at weekly Mass and funeral Masses, celebrate national holidays as well as church holidays (the Saints Parade on All Saints Day is a favorite activity), peer tutor, and much more.

Their fundraising activities not only raise money, but also encourage service helps to develop the moral compass that all students will need on their future educational and life journeys.

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left) Seventh graders Tanner Canion, Megan Jurica and Rachel Saulnier work together to carefully complete their science lab project.

( below) St. Rose students and choir leader Matt Boster sing at the annual Prahia Veteran’s Day Ceremony.
Parish Diary

By Father Peter J. Daly
Catholic News Service

February 15 — Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Leviticus 13:1-2, 4-46
Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11
1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1
Mark 1:40-45

What if I wanted to be a dis

The Good News from St. Paul
Year of St. Paul — 2008-2009 Jubilee
1 Corinthians Chapter 13

1) If I speak in human and

by Seven years ago I was

I was studying for the winter sit-

ting of the District of Columbia

bar exam. It took over my whole

life.

For six weeks, night and day,

I devoted myself to study. From

the moment I got up in the morn-

ing until I went to bed at night,

my life was focused on passing

the bar exam.

So badly did I want to be a

Washington lawyer that I didn’t

go out to dinner or movies. I
didn’t have any social life.

My apartment was taken over

by my study. I wrote out legal

definitions and quotes on index

cards. I taped them up all over

my apartment, on doors, mirrors,

lampshades, windows and light

switches. Everywhere I went I

memorized the “statute of

limits” and the “rule against

perpetuities” and the elements

of a contract.

I went off to the library right

after breakfast. I came home

late at night. I didn’t answer my

phone. I didn’t pick up the phone.

I didn’t watch TV. I didn’t read

anything that didn’t have to do

with passing the bar exam.

It was, of course, impossible to

sustain for very long.

At the end of six weeks I was

ready to collapse.

But I did it. I passed.

At the end of my study I was

changed. I was a lawyer.

What if I wanted to be a dis-

cipleship of the Lord just as badly?

Even now, says the Lord, return

reading from the prophet Joel:

“For a chance at winning

“Love in the Little Things”...

The February Family Puzzle

Contest winner will receive

“The Love in the Little Things

– Tales of Family Life” by Mike

Aquilina, published by Servant

Books, a division of St.

Anthony Messenger

Press.

“God stoops down to lift up

our homes, to take off our

insecurities of his

paradise…no matter how
cold the winds may blow on a
winter day.” — from the

introduction of

2009 Holy Days

Holy Days of Obligation

Ascension: Thursday, May 21
(day transferred to Sunday, May 24)
Corpus Christi: Thursday, June 18
(transferred to Sunday, June 21)
Assumption of Mary: Saturday,
August 15 (abrogated because it falls on a Sunday)
All Saints Day: Sunday, November 1
Immaculate Conception: Tuesday, December 8
Christmas: Friday, December 25
(All Sundays are obligatory)

Moveable Feast Days

Epiphany: Sunday, January 11
Palm Sunday: April 5
Holy Thursday: April 9
Good Friday: April 10
Holy Saturday: April 11
Easter Sunday: April 12
Divine Mercy Sunday: April 19

Pentecost: Sunday, May 31
Trinity Sunday: June 7
First Sunday of Advent: November 29
Reignited from Texas Catholic

All Sundays are obligatory!

ANGER

Roman Catholic Church

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All Sundays are obligatory!
La Conferencia Episcopal de los EEUU ha pedido a los fieles católicos repetidas veces, que se involucren en los asuntos relacionados con dichos temas. Nosotros creemos que ha llegado el momento para que cada católico responda a la llamada de su Iglesia. Invitamos a todos los católicos hispanos a responder de la misma manera uniéndose a este esfuerzo importante y urgente.

El principal objetivo de la Alianza Hispana para la Vida y la Familia (AHVF) es hacer un llamado a todos los católicos de origen hispano, para que defiendan los cinco principales valores que promueven la Iglesia Católica en lo que concierne a estos asuntos: el aborto, la educación de la Iglesia contra los anticonceptivos, la clonación humana y el matrimonio homosexual, así como la enseñanza de la Iglesia Católica en lo que concierne a estos temas: el aborto, la educación religiosa de los niños, el matrimonio y el divorcio, y la enseñanza de la Iglesia Católica contra los anticonceptivos.

Nos encontramos en un mundo en el que las leyes promueven el aborto y la eutanasia, las ciencias médicas y la biotecnología están corrompiendo los valores y principios morales de los católicos. En este mundo se está buscando erradicar las enfermedades cardiovasculares.

Aunque hay muchos médicos que promueven la salud y la bienestar, muchos otros promueven la muerte. La placa que se deposita en las arterias y causa la enfermedad de las arterias coronarias, que puede acabar con la vida de un padre, madre, hermano, hermana, hijo, hija, amigo o vecino.

La buena salud depende en gran medida de que la gente haga de su parte. Los profesionales de la salud han identificado hábitos principales que nos ponen en riesgo para las enfermedades cardiovasculares. Hacer cambios a su estilo de vida—como los que son recomendados por la Asociación Americana del Corazón—reducir su riesgo del ataque cardíaco. Eso es lo que el corazón necesita.

También hay otras formas de prevenir enfermedades cardiovasculares. Por ejemplo, el ejercicio regular es una manera efectiva de prevenir enfermedades cardiovasculares. La buena salud no puede ser erradicada por la medicina. La buena salud depende en gran medida de que la gente haga de su parte. Los profesionales de la salud han identificado hábitos principales que nos ponen en riesgo para las enfermedades cardiovasculares. Hacer cambios a su estilo de vida—como los que son recomendados por la Asociación Americana del Corazón—reducir su riesgo del ataque cardíaco. Eso es lo que el corazón necesita.

Por sobre todas las cosas cuida tu corazón, porque de él mana la vida. (Proverbios 4:23)

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Por sobre todas las cosas cuida tu corazón, porque de él mana la vida. (Proverbios 4:23)
How to enjoy a loving kiss

One day a grandmother gave her 4-year-old grandson a big kiss on his cheek. When he brushed his hand against the damp spot, she asked, “Are you wiping off my kiss?” He paused, and thinking mightily fast replied, “No, Grandma, I’m rubbing it in.”

Like this loving grandmother, God also kisses each of us in many different ways.

Do we hurry to rub it off? When it comes to God’s love for us, do we dash our kiss because we do not want to be beholden to him? We like to think that we are free to be independent and make our own decisions. Do we think that if we accept God’s loving kisses, it will obligate us to submit to his authority and confirm our lives to his plan? This is too hard for us, we fear, so we are tempted to turn away from God and kiss his kisses.

A thousand times a day we may resist his kindness and block the channels of his life-giving love.

We brush off a helping hand or snub a friend.
We turn on the television or Internet instead of turning to our families and friends.
We abandon our loved ones under the pretense that we need to “find ourselves” first.
We get high on drinking or drugs rather than getting high on life.

Why do we do this to ourselves?

Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection offered by IWBS

Praying is above all, listening to the God who dwells in the very depths of our heart. Listening to the voice of God calls us to quiet listening, for in this restless and noisy world, God’s loving voice is easily drowned out.

Experience a day of quiet listening, a day of prayer, short presentations, of calm periods for individual reflection, and prayerful silence. Enjoy God’s nature as you walk the beautiful convent grounds or experience the peace of a quiet chapel space. Mass will be celebrated in the chapel as part of our day’s prayer.

This day of “Listening to your Heart” in prayer and solitude will be offered at Incarnate Word Convent, 1101 N. E. Water Street, on Saturday, February 28, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Lenten Vespers — IOWBS Convnet — Beginning March 1

Come, pray with the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, in their beautiful convent chapel at 1101 N. E. Water Street in Victoria.

You are invited to join them at 5:00 p.m. for Lenten Vespers on each of the six Sundays of Lent beginning Sunday, March 1, through Sunday, April 5.

Psalm booklets will be provided for prayer.

Evening Prayer (or Vespers) is an ancient prayer form that predates the Church. A gift from God, you decide at the last minute to attend and haven’t registered, please don’t let that keep you from coming.

Discover God's Love With Us

Pope Benedict XVI called bishops from around the world to meet at the Vatican in October to address one of the great unfinished works of the council — namely, how Catholics can make the word of God their own. Even though the Catholic Lectionary for Sundays was re-designed in 1969 to use a three-year cycle of readings in order to promote greater familiarity with the whole of Scripture, Catholics do not yet own the Scriptures as the way many Protestants, especially evangelicals, do.

The Diocese of Victoria is publishing the 6th edition of Disciples of the Journey. If you have never participated in this Lenten program, make a decision to do so in this year of the Bible. Call your parish office to find out how you can join a group. If you have participated before, you might consider forming a group of your own. Invite your friends or family to join you in your home to share and reflect on the word of God this Lent.

For more information or to order books, call the chancery office at (361) 573-0828 or e-mail djf@victoriatocatholic.org. There are no shipping fees for our diocese.
Victoria National Catholic Daughter Leader “Walks for Life”

Victoria resident and National Regent of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Libby Ramirez traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in the annual March for Life, which took place on January 22, 2009. The March for Life is held each year in the nation’s capital to protest the 1973 United States Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade legalizing abortion. An estimated 200,000 people attended this year’s march.

“It was wonderful to march with other Catholic Daughters, fellow national leaders and thousands of people past the Capitol building to the steps of the Supreme Court to express our pro-life views,” Libby said. “It was inspiring to see so many young people travel to the city by bus and express their commitment to Life. This March showed that the Pro-Life movement is very much alive in our country.”

At the March, Libby met fellow Catholic Daughter Kayla Lorsung from North Dakota. Kayla is four months’ pregnant with her fourth child. Praying and walking, while carrying a child added special meaning while marching for life.

Libby Ramirez is a member of Court St Ann # 369 of Victoria, which she joined in 1983. Since then she has held many court, state and national offices until being elected to the highest position within the organization in July 2008.

NBC rejects Super Bowl ad because it contains pro-life message

NBC television has rejected a pro-life advertisement which Catholicvote.org bought for a slot in the Super Bowl because the ad contains a pro-life message. The 30-second ad features ultrasonograms of babies in its mother’s womb. There is nothing either graphic or political and the word abortion is not even used. In fact, no words are spoken, only a quasi-person that appear on-screen. Yet, the message is extremely powerful. You can view the ad at www.Catholicvote.org.

Rumors aside, FOCA legislation no threat to Catholic health care providers

There have been three coordinated efforts to limit access to abortion, all in the days leading up to Inauguration Day. The Catholic Health Association “is strongly committed to opposing FOCA and the bill is unanimous that we do all we could to oppose it,” said Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., an elected member of theCHA board of trustees since June 2006. “But there is no plan to shut down any hospital if it passes,” he added in a Jan. 26 telephone interview.

“There’s no sense of ominous danger threatening health care institutions.”

Carol Keelhan, a Daughter of Charity who is CHA president and CEO, was equally sure that FOCA poses no threat to Catholic hospitals or to the conscience rights of those who work there. “I don’t believe that FOCA will pass, although we will fight it with all our resources for our potential to help people in this country and for any negative assault on the life issues,” she said.

Bishops say economic stimulus must help vulnerable families, the poor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishops and families and vulnerable workers should be central priorities in any economic recovery legislation Congress adopts, said the U.S. bishops. “Low-income families and individuals are experiencing the greatest hardship and have the least capacity to cope in this time of economic crisis,” Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., said in a Jan. 28 letter to the House and Senate. This segment of the population also is more likely to “quickly ‘use these new resources’ provided in any stimulus package ‘to purchase the essentials of life and to help move our economy forward,’” he said. Bishop Murphy wrote the letter on behalf of the bishops as chairman of their Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. “Economic policies that assist and protect ‘the least among us’ are the right thing to do morally, I believe they are also very effective economically,” he said. “We urge Congress to act quickly and wisely with a constant attention to addressing the human impact and moral dimensions of this moment,” he said. The House Jan. 28 approved an $819 billion economic recovery package with a 244-188 vote. The Senate was scheduled to begin debate on its version Feb. 2. It bill provides similar spending outlays.

Brain death raises questions, from Minnesota to Washington to Vatican

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Don’t talk to Rane Kupferschmidt about brain death. The 66-year-old woman from Lake Elmo, Minn., was declared brain dead nearly a year ago after a massive cerebrovascular hemorrhage. She was removed from a ventilator, following her wishes, and her family took her home to die. But when Kupferschmidt began responding to family members, they rushed her back to the hospital, where she regained what her husband called “98 percent” of her earlier vigor. In late September she experienced another health crisis, another open heart surgery. Although doctors were not as hasty to term it brain death this time, they offered little hope of her survival – a prediction she made again in October, when she said that (God) saved me a second time so I could inspire people and let them know that I shouldn’t give up even when things look hopeless,” she told the Stillwater (Minn.) Gazette in a Jan. 13 interview. Coincidentally, the newspaper’s interview with Kupferschmidt took place the day after the president’s Council on Bioethics issued “Controversies in the Determination of Death,” a 144-page white paper on what the council proposes to call total brain failure.

Vietnamese Catholics welcome US bishops from California

HUE, Vietnam (CNS) — Vietnamese Catholics welcomed 18 visiting American bishops, priests and catechists from the US to Hanoi on their annual New Year visit. Archbishop George H. Niederer of San Francisco and Bishop Ted E. McNiff of Lafayette, La., wanted to visit the Vietnamese lunar new year Archbishop George H. Niederer of San Francisco and Bishop Ted E. McNiff of Lafayette, La., wanted to visit the Vietnamese lunar new year Archbishop George T. Le Coquet, the 72-year-old Roman Catholic bishop of Hue welcomed the visitors and thanked them for praying for the local church during Tet, reported the Asian church news agency UCA News. “We would like to continue to cooperate in finding ways to foster and strengthen communion in the body of Christ in fidelity to your ’savior’s prayer that all may be one so that the world may believe,” the pope said.

Abortion opponents launch 40-day campaign to counter Roe v. Wade and new administration

WASHINGTON, DC — “As the country marks the 36th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling that imposed abortion on the United States, as well as the inauguration of the most outspokenly pro-abortion president in American history, pro-life advocates in 181 cities across 41 states — plus four Canadian provinces and even Australia — have great hope,” said Shawn Carney, spring campaign director for 40 Days for Life. “They’re all praying to participate in simultaneous 40 Days for Life campaigns from February 25 through April 5.”

Some of the 40 Days for Life praying and fasting for an end to abortion, 40 days of constant, peaceful vigil outside abortion centers and Planned Parenthood offices and 40 days of active pro-life community outreach. The list of cities is posted online at: www.40daysforlife.com/ location.html.

The campaign dates from February 25 through April 5 coincide with the Christian season of Lent. “It’s a perfect match,” said Carney. “Lent is a season of prayer, fasting, repentance and renewal. It is our prayer that the efforts of the thousands of people who will participate in 40 Days for Life will focus their devotion on hearts and minds, save lives — and show that extreme pro-abortion policies do not resonate with the values of this nation.”

There have been three coordinated national 40 Days for Life campaigns thus far, beginning in the fall of 2007. “The results have shown that leaders and the general public level have shown a profound impact,” said Carney. “More than 200 cities have participated thus far and thousands of people united in prayer and fasting. Three abortion facilities closed following 40 Days for Life campaigns, and more than 500 babies have been saved. Many others have left their jobs during these times of prayerful outreach. And most notably, we are aware of 1,128 innocent children who were spared from death by abortion during these campaigns.”
By John Thavis  

Catholic News Service  

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Benedict XVI has lifted the excommunication of four bishops ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre.

The move was considered a major concession to the archbishop’s traditionalist followers.

Archbishop Lefebvre rejected, as well as important teachings of the Second Vatican Council, including those related to religious liberty, ecumenism and liturgy.

The Vatican said the decree removing the excommunication of four bishops ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, had requested the Vatican City, Jan. 21 and made public three days later, marked an important step toward full communion with the society’s bishops and priests -- specifically, whether in the Vatican’s view they remain suspended from their ministry until they are regularized, which presumably will happen in future talks between the Vatican and the society’s leaders.

Pope Benedict also lifted the excommunication of the three other bishops illicitly ordained in 1988.

British-born Bishop Richard Williamson was pictured at an airport in Frankfurt, Germany, Feb. 28, 2007. (CNS photo/Reuters)

“Some felt that the removal of the excommunication isn’t the end but the beginning of a process of dialogue,” Cardinal Ricard said in a Jan. 24 statement. “It doesn’t regulate two fundamental questions: the juridical structure of the St. Pius X fraternity in the church and an agreement on dogmatic and ecclesiological questions. But it opens a path to travel agreement on dogmatic and ecclesiological questions.”

He repeated his position in a Swedish television interview recorded last November but aired Jan. 21 — the same day Pope Benedict lifted the excommunication against Bishop Williamson and three other bishops who had been ordained against papal orders in 1988 by the late French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre. The Vatican made the decree public Jan. 24.

Pope Benedict XVI renewed his “full and unquestionable solidarity” with the world’s Jews and condemned all ignorance, denial and downplaying of the brutal slaughter of millions of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Holocaust denial by traditionalist bishop is unacceptable, says Vatican

By Carol Glatz  

Catholic News Service  

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Remarks made by a traditionalist bishop who denied that millions of Jews were murdered during World War II are unacceptable, “foolish,” and in no way reflect the position of the Catholic Church, said the Vatican’s top excommissar and major dialogue partner with the Jews.

Pope Benedict XVI renewed his “full and unquestionable solidarity” with the world’s Jews and condemned all ignorance, denial and downplaying of the brutal slaughter of millions of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

The pope’s comments Jan. 28 came a day after the Chief Rabbinate of Israel broke off ties with the Vatican in protest over the pope lifting the excommunication of a traditionalist bishop who has minimized the severity and extent of the Holocaust.

In a separate letter written Jan. 21, Bishop Bernard Fellay, the head of the Swiss-based society, commented on Bishop Williamson’s comments about the Holocaust, saying the bishop had spoken for himself, not the society. Bishop Fellay complained that the interviewer had introduced the topic “with the obvious intention of misrepresenting and maligning the activity of our religious society.”

Speaking the day after International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Pope Benedict said he hoped “the memory of the Holocaust will persuade humanity to reflect on the unpredictable power of evil when it conquers the heart of man.” The Jews were “innocent victims of a blind racist and religious hatred,” he said at the end of his general audience in the Paul VI hall.

Father Lombardi said Pope Benedict’s remarks condemning the Holocaust Jan. 28 and on previous occasions, which included visits to the Nazi’s Auschwitz death camp, “should be more than enough of a response to the expectations of those who have expressed doubt concerning the pope and the Catholic Church’s position” on the Holocaust.

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CATHOLIC LITIGE
Prayer Vigil — 3 Days of Texas Executions

Special Collections

- Aid to Church in Europe (Ash Wednesday) - Feb. 25
- Operation Rice Bowl - Sundays of Lent and Easter Sunday, April 12

Ongoing Events

Grief Group — Have you experienced the death of a loved one? Join us this on-going grief group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor of Our Lady of Sorrows (208 W. River St.) at $7 p/p dine-in or plates-to-go available. Serving breakfast tacos and Texas barbecue lunch. To register please contact Deacon Tom Fox at (210) 521-3377 or register on-line at: www.stmariasacrament.org.

Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes.

Easter Vigil — Easter Sunday, March 29 at the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi. For more information or to register go to: www.iwbsvictoria.org. Location is the University of the Incarnate Word Center 10703 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, 78230. Call: (210) 858-3100.

The Beginning Experience — The Beginning Experience is an international ministry that helps divorced, separated and widowed persons who are ready to heal the pain of the end of a marriage partner. It is a ministry of the San Antonio Archdiocese Family Life Office. For more information, go to www.familylifeoffice.org or call (210) 734-2146.

NA Open House

Nazareth Academy in Victoria is open for Open House Saturday, Feb. 19. Pre-school open house is from 2:00-5:00 p.m. The elementary school open house is from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Registration will be held March 3, from 12:00-3:00 p.m.

As you may be aware, the State of Texas has resumed the death penalty in the State of Texas. On evenings of executions in Texas, you are invited to join us in solidarity with our Catholic Sisters in Prayer at 5:45 a.m. in the Incarnate Word Convent Chapel, 1101 NE Water Street in Victoria, Texas. We pray for the murder victim, for the family and friends of the murder victim, for the prison guards and correctional officers, for the family of the condemned person, for the person to be executed and for an end to the death penalty. Check the Sisters' Web site, www.iwbsvictoria.org, for execution dates. The executions for March 11 are listed below.

2009 Scheduled Executions

Executive: February 10: Dale Devon Scheunette

New Txalton — St. John’s Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner March 8 at Taiton Community Center. Fried-chicken and homemade dressing will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. with a $5 dine-in fee. All proceeds will go to local auction, cakewalk, country store, kiddy area, raffle drawing and much more.

Schulenburg — St. Rose Spring Festival March 8 at the KC Hall. A turkey dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and at 5:30 p.m. for children. The Children’s Participation Pancakes, Picnics, Activities, etc.

Victoria—St. Mary’s Annual Parish Festival Feb. 8 at the community center starting at 10:30 a.m. A barbeque brisket and pulled pork will be served. Admission is $5 for adults and $1 for children, under 12 and 3 years old will be free. All registrants must be 18 years of age or older. There will be a silent auction and raffle for prizes. The evening will begin at 10:00 p.m.

March 11—St. Elizabeth’s Charity Christian Education Center’s Annual Catholic Men’s Men’s Conference — March 11, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee is $25. For more information or to register go to: www.trinitylighthouse.org or call (361) 579-9739.

Easter — March 22-25, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. This annual event brings together over 600 leaders of Catholic social ministry from across the United States to discuss issues of justice and peace, including the food crisis, healthcare and economic stability. The theme of this year’s gathering is “Jesus’ Heart, Our Heart.” Keynote speaker will be Cynthia Morris-Cobler at (202) 541-3180.

St. Joseph’s Parish Hall. The Spiritual Director will be Dotty Her Castleman March 8 at Taiton Community Center. Will resume Saturday morning at 8:15, and conclude with an evening dinner.

SPEAKERS: Father Mary David Hoyt, FJ - “Taking Mary, Mother of God into Your Home”; Patrick Michael (KWTN) - “Answers to the Lies Tells You”; Arndt K. Nichols, MDV - “To Build a Culture of Life and Love”; Christopher J. Mundelein, OP - “Living the Vision of Pope John Paul II”;

Greg Alexander (Alexander House) "Including God in All Relations.” Cost (per person): Pre-registration - $35; after March 8th - $40. For more information, call Cynthia Morris-Colbert at (202) 541-3180.

St. Joseph’s Annual Parish Festival March 8 at Taiton Community Center. Fried-chicken and homemade dressing will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. All proceeds will go to local auction, cakewalk, country store, kiddy area, raffle drawing and much more.

St. Joseph’s Altar Society will hold its Noodle Soup Dinner March 8, at Our Lady of Sorrows (208 W. River St.) with Father Stan Stravitsch, MA, LMFT-A - “One Man, One Challenge, One Victory.” More information on the event, including registration information for Catholic social ministry leaders, is available at www.catholicministryleaders.org. For more information or by contacting Cynthia Morris-Cobler at (202) 541-3180.

Brunch — St. John’s Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner at a cost of $7 p/p (includes dessert and drink). There will also be a silent auction, cakewalk, country store, kiddy area, raffle drawing and much more.

The Big Event — The Big Event is an annual event designed to bring together thousands headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending. Contact Gerd and Linda Con Mayer St.) at $7 p/p dine-in or plates-to-go available. Serving breakfast tacos and Texas barbecue lunch. To register please contact Deacon Tom Fox at (210) 521-3377 or register on-line at: www.stmariasacrament.org. St. Matthew is located at 524 Austin St. in Victoria, Texas.

Catholic Men’s Men’s Conference — March 11, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee is $25. For more information or to register go to: www.trinitylighthouse.org or call (361) 579-9739.

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The greatest of these is charity

By Fr. Peter Ciuciuella, MCCJ

February is the month in which we start our journey toward Easter. As Ash Wednesday day approaches, we start thinking about how we’re going to prepare ourselves for the greatest celebration of the Church. When I was pastor in Chad, Africa, I had to think, not only about my personal journey to towards Easter, but about the whole parish as well. How do the three dimensions of our preparation for Easter—prayer, fasting and charity—it is for me to find suggestions and paths to walk as a parish community.

What kind of fasting could I ask of a people who normally eat once a day? Who for two or three months a year don’t even have that one meal? What charity could I ask of people who live with less than one U.S. dollar a day? I usually ended up not asking for fasting but inviting parishioners to try to find meaning in their year round fasting and poverty. How could they somehow fabricate a way to use their situation to help them draw near to Jesus Christ who gave his life for our salvation?

One time while I was reflecting on this, it happened that I shared my thoughts with Emmanual, one of the catechists of the parish. I had gone to visit his village, at least a three-hour drive from the center of the parish, on roads that were just a step up from paths in the bush.

As I was sitting with Emmanuel under a mango tree, I shared my pastoral preoccupation with him. I saw puzzlement settle on his face. Was I just making myself understood with my attempt at speaking his native language? Was I so confused myself that I couldn’t make myself understood? So I asked him. He answered, “No, Father, you have been very clear. I have understood you well, but I do not understand why you think it is difficult to find a meaning to our poverty.”

Just invite us to look at the Crucifix, this young catechist went on, to look at the God who became a man and to contemplate his suffering for us. He was not a rich man, and probably he suffered hunger as we do. For sure he was persecuted as we are. We have a God that knows what suffering means. We cannot say to God: you do not know what being human means, or you do not know what suffering means.

Our God knows very well our conditions. He is sharing in our suffering, and we are sharing in his. Is that not Lent, Father? Is it not about sharing in God’s suffering in order to learn how to share suffering with our fellow brothers and sisters?

“Father,” he added, “you are right in not asking us to do more fasting than what we already do. But please, help us to focus on charity. Charity is as essential to Lent as prayer and fasting, and we can share the little we have with our brothers and sisters.

I was very glad I made that long drive to Emmanuel’s village. I now had a plan for the Lenten journey of the parish: to look at the crucified Jesus in order to learn how to renounce ourselves so we can share who we are and what we have with our brothers and sisters, exactly as Jesus did.

Largest March for Life in years called to choose life

Continued from p. 1

with each child that does not receive nourishment, with each immigrant or refugee who is refused a home, with each bomb that destroys a school/hospital/home, with each mother who is told her son or daughter died in a suicide bombing, we all die.”

He also reminded the participants that throughout the world over 35,000 children die each day from malnutrition.

“Father,” he added, “you are right in not asking us to do more fasting than what we already do. But please, help us to focus on charity. Charity is as essential to Lent as prayer and fasting, and we can share the little we have with our brothers and sisters.

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On January 13 and 14, 2009, the fifth graders from the Catholic Schools in the diocese attended Church Vocation Awareness Days at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria.

The students heard a number of talks about religious life and the priesthood. They competed in a “Vocation Bingo” game and visited the Gift Shop and the Hall of Memories at the convent.

The day culminated in a Prayer Service that highlighted the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These Vocation Awareness Days are sponsored by the Vocations Office of the Diocese of Victoria, the Serra Club of Victoria, Knights of Columbus Council #1329 and the Catholic Daughters of Court St. Ann #369.

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**Vocation Awareness Days**

By Rev. David Berger

Eleven young adults from the Diocese of Victoria, including Father David Berger, associate pastor at Our Lady of Victory, made history by marching in the January 22, 2009, March for Life in our nation’s capital. They arrived, by air, in Washington, D.C., Jan. 21. They spent the evening at the vigil Mass, presided by Cardinal Rigi, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. There were close to 9,000 people in attendance with a majority of them being young people under the age of 30. Thursday morning they gathered at Mary Mother of God Catholic Church in which the group led the rosary prior to celebrating the Mass for an end to abortion. At noon, they gathered at the Mall for the Rally for Life where they listened to the Sounds of Liberty band and then heard from congressmen and women speak about the necessity of stopping the holocaust of the unborn. The crowd that gathered to march stretched a quarter mile. They then joined in the march from the Capitol to the Supreme Court building while singing praise and worship songs and praying the rosary along the way. There were people from all faiths and walks of life united to march for life.

On Friday, the Victoria group toured the basilica and then visited the Holocaust Museum. They spent the remainder of the day going to the many national monuments. They got a little taste of history and also grew in their appreciation of the value of life – from conception to natural death – before they returned to Victoria on January 24.

**Victoria Diocese young adults attend DC March**

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**Science Spectacular at Shiner Catholic School!**

St. Ludmila Academy & St. Paul High School
Established: 1897 & 1963
Grades: Pre-kindergarten - 8th & 9-12
Principal: Robert Whitworth Jr.
Address: 424 St. Ludmila St. & 425 St. Ludmila St., Shiner, TX 77984
Contact information: (361) 594-3843 & (361) 594-2313
Web site: www.shinercatholicschool.org

Students from St. Ludmila Elementary, in celebration of Catholic Schools Week, attended their annual Science Spectacular during Catholic Schools Week. Students learned about chemistry, physics and biology while traveling through the gym filled with activities. Magic sand, catapults, collisions, liquid nitrogen and a plethora of other topics were enjoyed by over 150 young scientists.

Chemistry and physics students from St. Paul High School put on this hands-on celebration of all things science. They started with a science teaching concept and developed a fun, challenging and, sometimes, messy demonstration and activity for the kids to experience. The gym was filled with kids, fun and science and each student left with a bag of science freebies and take-home lab activities. Once again, Science Spectacular 2009 was a huge success at Shiner Catholic School.

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Michael Pesek and Kendle Patek are demonstrating to the 3rd graders how “Magic Sand” works.