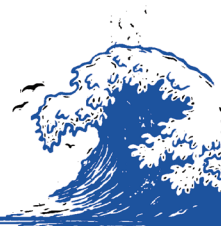


The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

February 2009



One of the largest March for Life crowds in recent times listen intently to Rev. Stan De Boe, O.Ss.T., February 22, 2009, at Grace Lutheran Church, Victoria, after having marched from Holy Family Catholic Church. Father Stan has over 20-years of social justice ministry experience focusing on international human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world.

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 years with over 400 participants marching with lit candles from Holy Family Parish in Victoria to Grace Lutheran Church.

The fact that the weather was nice and that the new presidential administration is pro-abortion may have helped to increase the numbers.

After marching to the Lutheran Church, participants settled into the sanctuary to listen to keynote speaker Father Stan De

Boe, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. Before he spoke, Msgr. James Brunner gave some insight into the Freedom of Choice Act that President Obama has said he will sign into law upon its passage. Msgr. Brunner said we need a grassroots effort to tell our congress members and senators that under no circumstances should they vote for this. He said that only nine percent of Americans support abortion without restrictions, which is what FOCA would introduce.

Father Stan De Boe, O.Ss.T., before coming to Victoria, had over 20 years of social justice ministry experience that focused on international human rights and social justice in the U.S. and around the world. He was special advisor for foreign affairs and human rights for Rep. Christopher H. Smith (NJ) and was instrumental in assisting Rep. Smith draft and sponsor legislation for many human rights issues, particularly issues dealing with human trafficking, immigration and refugees, and limiting the use of U.S. funding for population control in China and at the United Nations.

He was also the Justice and Peace Director of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Religious Institutes where he directed their public policy and advocacy work on a number of social justice issues. CSM represents the 23,000 priests and brothers in religious orders in the U.S. who are involved in many ministries responding to the needs of the marginalized in society.

He began his talk with a quote from Moses before the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, "... I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live ... " (Dt. 30:15-20).

Christians, Jews, even Muslims and Buddhists, all esteem life, Father Stan said,

See Largest March for Life, p. 19

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

By John Quarry

Catholic Schools Superintendent

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone." These words taken from 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6 remind us that the gifts, service, and workings that we do for the sake of His kingdom are ultimately produced by God through each of us.

The Catholic schools and all who have helped to further the ministry of education in our diocese have been offering their gifts, service, and workings to the people of south Texas for more than 140 years. We are so grateful to so many. It is only through the hard work and determination of these individuals, both past and present, that our Catholic schools have been able to garner such a vibrant past, arrive at such an awesome present, and are clearly poised

for such an incredible future.

With our present economic straits, high unemployment rates, a new administration at the helm of our government, and relative uncertainty for the future, we can find solace in the fact that our Catholic schools have served as a mainstay in our community and that of the entire nation... and, with God's help and your prayers and support, we will remain a "beacon of opportunity and excellence in character, Christian service, and education" for the 21st century.

For the past thirty-five years, the National Catholic Education Association, of Washington, D.C., has been providing yearly themes for celebrating Catholic Schools Week. The theme of this year's week-long events was "Catholic Schools Celebrate Service." The students in the Diocese of Victoria joined literally millions of Catholic school students around

See Catholic Schools Celebrate, p. 8



Pope says fasting in Lent opens hearts to God, hands to the poor

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Fasting from food and detaching oneself from material goods during Lent helps believers open their hearts to God and open their hands to the poor, Pope Benedict XVI said.

The Lenten fast helps Christians "mortify our egoism and open our hearts to love of God and neighbor," said the pope in his message for Lent 2009. The papal message for Lent, which begins Feb. 25 for Latin-rite Catholics, was released Feb. 3 at the Vatican.

The Vatican invited Josette Sheeran, executive director of the U.N.'s World Food Program, to help present the papal message.

"Serving the hungry is a moral call that unites people of all faiths," said Sheeran, whose organization relies heavily on Catholic charities and other faith-based organizations to distribute food aid.

"At this time of worldwide economic challenges, let us not forget that the food and financial crises hit the world's most vulnerable the hardest," she said. "Since 2007, 115 million were added to the ranks of the hungry to create a total of nearly 1 billion people without adequate food."

Sheeran said that at a time when the U.S. and other governments are announcing multitrillion-dollar packages to bailout banks, car companies and other industries, the World Food Program is asking that 0.7 percent of all stimulus plans be dedicated to hunger relief.

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.

Focusing his message specifically on the practice of fasting, the pope said it is a way for believers to submit themselves "humbly to God, trusting in his goodness and mercy."

"Denying material food, which nourishes our body, nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by his saving word," the pope wrote.

"Through fasting and prayer we allow him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God," he said.

While some people fast to cleanse their body or to lose weight, Christians fast during Lent in order "to heal all that prevents them from conformity to the will of God," he said.

"Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin," the pope wrote.

At the same time, he said, "fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live."

By fasting in solidarity with the poor, "freely embracing an act of self-denial for the sake of another, we make a statement that our brother or sister in need is not a stranger," the pope said.

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Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

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, Hillje
- 9** 5:00 p.m., Diocese Liturgical Commission meeting, Chancery Office
- 11** 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Study Day for parish priests and financial managers, Sacred Heart Church Family Center, Hallettsville
- 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 Yeboah-Amanfo** is excardinated from the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong, Ghana, and incardinated in the Diocese of Victoria.



Former Holy Cross altar boy ordained to the priesthood

By Cynthia Brewer

PALACIOS—Lu'o'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 Carthage 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'o'ng Nguyen, which occurred the previous week, January 10, 2009.

Lu'o'ng is the son of Lien 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 on December 16, 1989.

Deacon Tran said the homily at the Thanksgiving Mass in Palacios and teased Lu'o'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'o'ng's mother would go before the Blessed Sacrament in the adoration chapel

See former Holy Cross altar boy, p. 3

Newly ordained Rev. Lu'o'ng Hoan Nguyen (c.) celebrated his Mass of Thanksgiving at Assumption Chapel in Palacios January 18, 2009. He stands before the altar with his uncle, Deacon Luan Van Tran, and his mother, Lien Nguyen. Deacon Tran and Mrs. Nguyen are brother and sister.



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 Shibley of Pennsylvania, a volunteer for ANF. He brought the statue to 15 locations in the Victoria area during the week of Jan. 18.

Mr. Shibley 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."



Bishop David Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament

Save This Date

Benefiting the Youth and Vocation Activities of the
Diocese of Victoria
Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus
Council 9088

Friday, April 24, 2009

Colony Creek Country Club—Victoria, Texas
For more information, contact Monroe Rieger at 571-6595; or Benny Vitek at 576-5354



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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

	TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$ 94,329.00
In memory of Florence Bryant by Patricia Schoff & Thomas Salsbery	50.00
In memory of Fr. Ed Kelly by Bob and Minnie Bochat	25.00
In memory of Fr. Ed Kelly by Joseph & Elizabeth Zarsky	20.00
Total	\$94,424.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4	
Previously reported	\$3,789.00
In memory of Lillie Bohuslav by Richard & Wilma Schaefer	15.00
In memory of Eugene Novak by Richard & Wilma Schaefer	15.00
In memory of John Jr. & Tillie Peters by Deacon Joey and Mary Targac	30.00
Total	\$3,849.00

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

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdarama Seminary 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 BURSES
DIOCESE OF VICTORIA
P. O. BOX 4070
VICTORIA, TX 77903



INSTALLED INTO MINISTRY OF LECTOR—During Mass at St. Joseph's Church in Moulton on December 14, 2008, Bishop David Fellhauer installed three diaconate candidates into the Ministry of Lector. The candidates, Bill Briscoe of Weimar, Kenneth Fishbeck of Moulton, and Larry Koether of Bay City, have been participating in the Diaconate Formation Program for two and one-half years. Formerly reserved for clerics ordained to the minor order of lector, the Second Vatican Council reformed this minor order to a ministry which allows assignment to lay Christians. The council further states that candidates for the diaconate and priesthood must receive this ministry along with the ministry of acolyte, "to be better fitted for future service of the Word and the Altar" (Vatican II Apostolic Letter). The candidates have now reached the approximate mid-point of the formation program and wish to thank everyone for their support and prayers.

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 Custos of the Holy Land, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, 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
Commissariat of the Holy Land,
Washington, DC

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.

The Business Office continues to monitor all pledge activity (Capital Campaign and Diocesan Services Appeal) within the Diocese of Victoria. If you would like to pay off your pledge, restructure your payment plan or create automatic payments (through your checking account or credit card), please contact Sue Ellen Galvan at the Diocese of Victoria (361-573-0828 ext. 20).

Many thanks for your support of this yearly financial appeal which supports the works and activities of the diocese that directly serves you.

Sue Ellen Galvan, Coordinator
Diocesan Services Appeal

In Memory of ...

Rev. John Edward Kelly

Father John Edward Kelly, "Father Ed," unexpectedly died on 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 1968 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 Victoria. 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 Santa 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 Flatonia before returning to various parishes in San Antonio. One of those parishes was Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Selma 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 St. 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 Francesco di Paola in San Antonio.



Father Ed is survived by his brothers, Michael McKee Kelly and wife Margie 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 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 celebrated 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 homily, Msgr. Michael Harrold reflected on the first reading, from Samuel, "Here I am, you called me." "The Lord called John Edward Kelly to the priesthood," 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 usher him home."

"His work has been done, 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.

"As we celebrate Father Ed's life 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 Guzman.

Honorary pallbearers were Sister Walter Maher, Amanda Lawrence, Kate Kelly, Bridget Guzman, Taylor Kelly, Jordan Kelly, Joe Kelly, Rachel Kelly and Alexander Kelly.

Burial followed at Resurrection Cemetery 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 donor's choice.

Former Holy Cross altar boy ordained to the priesthood

Continued from p. 2

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

Father Lu'o'ng Hoan Nguyen made his final vows to the congregation as a brother May 31, 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 his family.

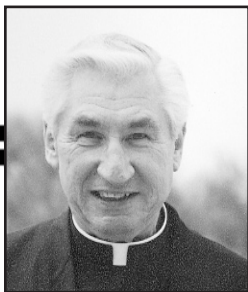
His cousin and Deacon and Mrs. Tran's son, Myviet Tran, is in the same order, Congregation of Mother Co-Redemptrix, and expects, with the help of God, to be ordained a priest in two and one-half years.



FAITH POINT

By Rev. Msgr. James C. Brunner
Vicar General, Diocese of Victoria

For past articles: www.stmaryvic.com/desk.htm



FOCA, No Freedom, No Choice

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 centerpiece of the sexual revolution of the '60s and has long been the goal of pro-abortion forces. Now they think that this prize is within their reach because of 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-death 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 minorities have no intention to include 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 limit abortion to rape, incest, or saving the mother's life. One-third would limit abortion to the first trimester of pregnancy or the first six months. Only 9 percent said abortion should be legal for any reason at any time during pregnancy. Yet this last view is the one that would be represented by passage of FOCA.

Under our Constitution the government should be in the business of protecting life, not engaged in what Pope Benedict XVI calls "state-sanctioned infanticide." Thomas Jefferson said in 1809: "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government." The legalization of abortion logically leads to a society in which the powerful, for their self-interest, decide which human beings will live and die.

The FOCA is even more radical than the Roe v. Wade decision. It would nullify

550 laws including:

- Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003
- Hyde Amendment and other limits on forcing taxpayer funding of elective abortions
- Restrictions 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
- Opting out 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 go take a flying leap."

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 care 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 "formal cooperation" in the evil of abortion. Father Frank Pavone of the Priests for Life said, "Any legislator who would vote for such an extreme piece of pro-abortion legislation and any executive who would sign 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 with evil in a totally unjustified way."

Dr. Mark Miravalle, theology professor at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, said of a Catholic politician voting for FOCA, "I think you would have to conclude that it would be a formal act, a formal 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 Eucharist, 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 enshrining in our laws a legal right to abortion, which all taxpayers would be compelled to subsidize.

The laity should not sit out this battle; they must become involved or have the blood of millions of innocents on their hands. The anthem, "Onward Christian soldiers, Marching as to war" should not be changed to "Sit back Christian soldiers, On your easy chairs." Send a postcard to your elected officials letting them know your opposition to FOCA. Send letters of protest and sign petitions that are available online such as at www.SBA-List.org/life among others. Inaction according to experts could lead to an additional 125,000 abortions each year. You are your neighbor's keeper, especially your unborn neighbor whose life is in danger.

For a list of Catholic representatives and senators and "so-called Catholic" politicians, please see the site: www.onenationundergod.org.

Fight FOCA ~ A Crime Against Humanity!

By Cynthia Brewer

Send a flood of letters, postcards, e-mails and phone calls to your U.S. representatives, senators and the president requesting them to put a stop to the Freedom of Choice Act!

Msgr. Brunner, the pro-life director for the Diocese of Victoria, has requested enough preprinted postcards regarding FOCA for each family in each parish in the diocese to send to Washington; they should have already arrived at your parish.

Until we receive them, nothing is stopping us from contacting our representatives on our own. And I suggest contacting even those who are not our representatives, particularly the "not so Catholic" politicians who usually support abortion. They can be found at www.onenationundergod.org.

To learn more about FOCA, as well as the Mexico City Policy that President Obama rescinded quietly without media attention, please go to The Catholic Lighthouse site at <http://www.victoriadiocese.org/lighthouse/FightFOCA.html> or to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.usccb.org.

It also seems that President Obama needs to learn that he cannot "end the politicization of this (abortion) issue" by just rescinding all the laws that protected us from abortion in the past. He wants to bring everybody together, but doesn't seem to realize that there are fundamental differences between those who support abortion and those who do not. He needs to learn that "pro-life" people believe abortion is a crime against humanity.

Contact him at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>; The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500; ph: 202-456-1111, FAX: 202-456-2461.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison at United States Senate, 284 Russell Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC 20510-4304; ph.: 202-224-5922, fax.: 202-224-0776, Web site: <http://hutchison.senate.gov/contact.cfm>.

Honorable John Cornyn at United States Senate, 517 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-4304; ph.: 202-224-2934, fax.: 202-228-2856, Web site: <http://cornyn.senate.gov/public/index.cfm>.

Honorable Ron Paul, U.S. House of Representatives, 203 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515-4314; ph. 202-225-2831, Web site: www.house.gov/paul/contact.shtml.

Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp

Applications are now being evaluated 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 participants include: Michael Jordan, Tim Duncan, Vince Carter, Jerry Stackhouse, Grant Hill and Antawn Jamison.

Players from 50 states and 11 foreign countries attended the 2008 camp. College basketball scholarships are possible for players selected to the All-American Team. Camp locations include: Commerce, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; Babson Park, Florida; Gainesville, Georgia; Champaign Illinois; Glassboro, New Jersey; Ithaca, New York; Marietta, Ohio; Lebanon, Tennessee; and Blacksburg, Virginia.

There is also a summer camp available for boys 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.



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2009 Youth Spectacular
FEATURING TAMMY EVEVARD


February 22,
2009
Holy Family, in
Victoria

**Vice President of Development For Life
Teen Ministry**

Tammy Evevard 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 sewn 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 make up our lives 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 Thursday, February 19; **Early Registration price is \$17 — students; \$7 — adults.** Group rate: 8 or more students — \$15; \$7 — adults.
NO REFUNDS AFTER FEBRUARY 19.
At the door price: students and adults — \$20

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





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 production ministry founded by the "Rosary Priest" and Catholic media pioneer Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, CSC, 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.

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

Simultaneous broadcasts of *Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel* are being planned by Catholic TV, Boston (www.catholicstv.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 1-800-299-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.

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Youth Calendar of Events

- 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** — Quo Vadis, Boys Vocation Camp at the Spiritual Renewal Center
- July 26-29** — St. Theresa Vocation Camp at the Spiritual Renewal Center
- October 23-25** — Archdiocesan Conference for Catholic Youth Ministers in Houston

For more information on any of these events, please contact:
Debbie Vanelli or José Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry
at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at
dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org or jortega@victoriadiocese.org
Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

Popular young celebrities pray the Rosary on new DVD

Rosary Stars: Praying the Gospel features 21 champion athletes, actors, film directors, TV hosts, recording stars, authors and lecturers who emphasize the power of daily prayer of the rosary and encourage viewers to live the mysteries of the rosary every day. These popular celebrities include:

Lauren Bauer — former professional softball player and a member of the 2001 U.S. National Softball Team, she was the 2001 "Softball Athlete of the Year."

Lourdes Benedicto — an actor who has had recurring roles on 16 television series, including *24*, *Cashmere Mafia*, *Dawson's Creek*, *ER* and *NYPD Blue*.

J. Omar Castro — an actor who has been in nine feature films and 14 TV dramas, including two episodes of *Desperate Housewives* and *The Young and the Restless*.

Samia "Sam" Doumit — an actor who has appeared in 23 films and TV shows including *The Hot Chick* (2002), *CSI*, *Dawson's Creek* and *ER*.

Justin Fatica — co-founder of *Hard As Nails* youth and young adult ministry, he is an international speaker whose message of Christ's love and salvation has impacted millions.

Matt Gallant — a TV show host, hosting five seasons of the Animal Planet's popular series *The Planet's Funniest Animal*, he also hosted ABC's *American Inventor*.

Chris Horn — a former wide receiver and special teams' player with the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, he is a devoted Catholic who speaks nationally about his faith.

Immaculée Ilibagiza — a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide who has forgiven her family's killers, she is a world renowned lecturer, humanitarian and author.

Chris Kramer — an actor who starred in the Canadian TV series *The Collector*, he has guest starred in approximately 30 TV shows, including *Jericho* and *24*.

Ali Landry — Miss USA (1996) and an actor (*Bella*), she had roles in 23 films and TV shows and appeared as herself on 24 TV programs.

Mario Macaluso — a restaurateur, film producer and actor, he has appeared in 19 films and TV shows. He, Jimmy Kimmel

and others founded the San Gennaro Festival, Hollywood.

Matthew Marsden — an actor who co-starred in *Rambo* (2008), he has performed in some 28 feature 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 Nuo — 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 recording artist from Mexico, he starred in *Bella*, the People's Choice Award winner at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival.

Luke Vercollone — a pro soccer player for the Richmond Kickers, United Soccer League, he played two seasons with Major League Soccer's New England Revolution.

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 Alba 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.



Diocese of Victoria Pastoral Institute

Extended P.I.

Intro. to the New Testament

Instructor: Sr. Digna Vela, IWBS
Tuesdays: Feb. 17 - March 31
(One class will be on Mon. March 23 instead of Tues. March 24)
Place: Chancery and Holy Rosary in Hostyn 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.

Continuing Education

The Gospel of Mark

Instructor: 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

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 find ourselves 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 — 300 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 prayer, fasting, learning and to help people in poverty around the world.

Participants in Operation Rice Bowl make the small sacrifice of preparing simple, meatless recipes (<http://orb.crs.org/features/recipes/index.cfm>) each week,

putting the money they would have spent on a big meal into symbolic rice bowls. That money goes to support CRS' mission to fight global hunger and poverty.

"Having the Rice Bowl as the focal point for their Lenten observance helps 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. dioceses 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 Magdalen Church, 1710 Clower Street in San Antonio. The theme is, "In the Footsteps of St. Paul, Empowered by The Holy Spirit." There will be English and Spanish tracks. Registration is \$30 for adults, \$50 for couples and \$5 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.

Come & See What's New at the Library & Media Center

The Diocese of Victoria's Library & Media Center is open to all persons interested in checking out books, videos, or DVDs. The library is located at the chancery in Victoria. It is open Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., or it can be accessed on-line at www.victoriadiocese.org.

Come and see what is available pertaining to the history of the Catholic Church, theology, saints, prayer and spirituality, liturgy, sacraments and so much more. There is something for everyone.

We invite you to take the opportunity to enjoy the resources available at the Library & Media Center. Call (361) 573-0828 for more information.



2009 KNOWLEDGE BOWL WINNERS—The Crusaders from Sts. Cyril & Methodius in Shiner came in first place in the 2nd Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl Sunday, January 25, 2009, after correctly answering a tiebreaker question. They won a dinner with the bishop. Last year they came in second; they must have really studied hard to take the championship this year. From left are Bishop David Fellhauer, Jennifer Peters, Connie Thomas, Mary Machacek and soon to be deacon, Joe Machacek. Second place winners were Leaders of Little Hearts Immaculate Heart Homeschoolers: Jennifer Kallus, Denise Andrus, Marie Immenhauser and Heather Bonorden. Third place were Super Soldiers Knights of Columbus #3204: Red Hensley, Marilyn Hensley, Dwayne Taylor and Brian Holub. Two family teams played this year, The Wenske-Fikac Cousins of St. Joseph Moulton and the Fishermen of Knowledge, the Kraatz Family, of Sacred Heart in Hallettsville. A total of sixteen 4-person teams entered the Knowledge Bowl, which is sponsored by the catechetical office of the diocese.

Common Practice of Penance for Lent

Dear Friends in Christ:

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. The law of abstinence from meat is required of all those fourteen years of age and older.
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) 543-3770 or Sr. Emilie Eilers (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.

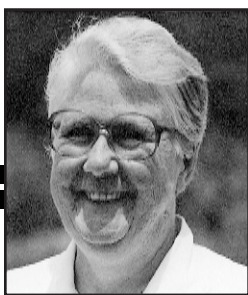
Charismatic Healing Mass

Saturday, March 7
Celebrant: Fr. Stan De Boe
Our Lady of Sorrows Church
208 W. River St., Victoria
Rosary 5:15 p.m. / Mass 6:00 p.m.
Adoration • Praising • Singing



SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Time Passes . . .

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 remember one of the first things that 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 like many younger people around me, I thought that I'd have a lot of time left in life and didn't have to worry too much about the "eternity" part.

Now, quite a few years later, and especially after I read the Death Notices in 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 don't 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 specifically 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 and do? Am I living up to my baptismal commitment? Have I fortified myself through frequent and fervent reception of the Eucharist? 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 with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."



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 increase our children's awareness of the principles of liberty and justice for which our nation stands. In these trying times, those principles become more important to remember," said Barbara A. Cheaney, Vice President of Communications.

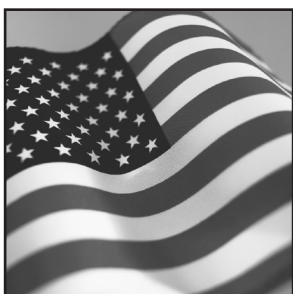
The design of this year's poster should include a representation of the child's plan to make a difference in America. We want students to share how they are positively impacting the environment, their community, etc. Catholic Life strongly encourages creativity from poster contestants!

Elementary school students in grades kindergarten through fifth may submit one original poster no larger than 20" x 20." 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.cliu.com. Participants 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 accompanied by return postage. Contact Lorie Bledsoe in the Communications Department at (800) 292-2548 or (210) 828-9921 ext. 141 for further assistance.

Founded in 1901, Catholic Life Insurance 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 surrounding community through charitable, religious and patriotic community service projects, such as the Flag Day Poster Contest.



2009 Pilgrims' Reunion

There will be a pilgrims' reunion in El Campo Sunday, February 15, at St. Philip Catholic Church. A great day is planned and will include an 11:30 a.m. Mass, celebrated by Bishop David Fellhauer and visiting priests. A covered-dish lunch will follow Mass.

At 3:00 p.m. we will say the Divine Mercy Chaplet, officiated by Father Gary Janak. It is wonderful. People who have been here for it in previous years have commented, "If I didn't get to come for the whole day, I'd at least be sure not to miss the Divine Mercy. This is one of the greatest celebrations of honoring our Lord I have ever witnessed."

The Christian ballet dancers will also be here, and we will have time to share our great experiences and visit with our fellow pilgrims.

This past year there have been many new pilgrims; I hope they and all pilgrims from past years do come. Clear your calendar and come. A great day is planned!

For those who have not come before and would like, Betty's house is open for a Saturday evening get together. We will say the rosary while we burn the prayer petitions that we were unable to leave at holy places while on pilgrimage. This is a very powerful event.

We are all pilgrims along the way, so even if you haven't had the experience of going on one of Betty's pilgrimages, please come to the Sunday reunion! You are invited!

For more information, please call Betty Urbanovsky at (979) 543-2333 or e-mail burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

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 Catholic Tim Ruscert in June 2008 has drawn attention to the epidemic of heart disease, which is the #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. It occurs due to the hardening and narrowing of the arteries caused by a build up of plaque, known as atherosclerosis. Permanent 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 unhealthy diets, smoke, and experience limited physical activity. Dr. Denton A. Cooley, surgeon-in-chief of the Texas Heart Institute, says on their Web site, "Many people take better care of their cars than their bodies....they fuel [their bodies] with high-fat and high-salt meals, they smoke, and they don't exercise routinely. Medical advances can't do away with heart disease. Good health depends largely on people taking positive action."

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 contributors to heart disease, like diabetes and high blood pressure. Thirty minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day is all it takes, 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 meat, fish, and heart-healthy whole grains.

- Excess weight: Overweight 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 factors of CVD, regardless of family history. Men over the age of 45, women over 55, and all people with high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes run a further increased risk of heart disease.

Visit the Catholic Health Association of Texas Web site www.chatexas.org for more heart 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.



Heritage Center / Pathways with Patti

Mystery Tour - ????

Make your reservations now to discover the '09 Mystery.
March 26-31 - Motorcoach Tour

Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Provinces July 6-14

Featuring a Whale Watch and the Military Tattoo in Halifax
Fly into Boston then motorcoach through Maine to Canada

Islands of New England August 28 - Sept. 04

Power Point presentation at the Heritage Center (Senior Citizens)
Port Lavaca

Thursday Feb. 26 at 3:00 p.m.

Call 361.552.2695 or 361.920.3216

Reporting Child Abuse • Hotline 1-800-252-5400

If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or to a law enforcement agency within 48 hours of the time you suspect the child had been or may be abused or neglected.



Reflections on President Obama's inaugural speech

By Cynthia Brewer, editor

As I watched the fanfare and listened to President Barak Obama's inaugural speech January 20, 2009, I was generally pleased; however, ...

He spoke with determination that our great nation would rise up and meet the many challenges it faces. And he admitted the tasks wouldn't be easily or quickly met, but they would be met.

He said that Americans have gathered because "we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

Yes, I agree; this is great. But how do we live out that hope over fear? Or live that unity over conflict and discord?

If we're single, pregnant and afraid, will we find accepting family and friends to help us choose hope rather than fearfully try to hide behind an abortion?

Since I believe that aborting a pregnancy is killing an unborn child and President Obama plans to lift every restriction from abortion, how can he and I truthfully be united?

He said "on this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics."

I know that the fight over the reversal of Roe vs. Wade has deeply divided and strangled our politics and our country. But, I hope he does not include the right to life as one of these petty grievances or worn-out dogmas. If so, I think he will be surprised when the majority of Americans will fight for some restrictions on abortion.

He continues with beautiful words and prose and even quotes Scripture, "We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

I agree; let us choose our better history and rid ourselves of the scourge that was the Supreme Court's decision in 1973.

And since President Obama is using words from the Declaration of Independence, let us proudly reaffirm life along with God's promise that we are all free and deserve to pursue happiness; for the Declaration states: ... all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

I have heard from many people that President Obama is a wordsmith; that he

can speak. Yes, and it does sound beautiful, but we should remind him that although he knew the words to the presidential oath, he forgot the first and most important human right in our U.S. Declaration: the right to life.

Nearing the end of his speech, I was greatly surprised by his insistence that we were in a new era of responsibility, "What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era 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 citizenship" and 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 scoundrel, was dead. The entire population of the village where he spent a lifetime making others miserable attended the funeral Mass — some, doubtless, to make sure he was really 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 'im.'" 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 to say a good word for this departed brother." Finally, an ancient villager got up, shuffled to the side of the casket, turned his back to the pastor, and said in a clear voice, "I think his brother was even worse."

As he leaves office, George W. Bush could be forgiven for feeling like Paddy, were he a man given to self-pity. Happily, he isn't. And it's emphatically not in the spirit of, "Well, James J. Buchanan and Herbert Hoover were even worse" that I should like to praise President Bush at the end of his two terms. For what, you ask? For many things that ought to count for Catholics.

I should like to praise him for his steadfast support of the pro-life cause, domestically and internationally. Thanks to President Bush, we have two more Supreme Court justices who likely know that Roe vs. Wade was terrible constitutional judging, and dozens more federal district court and appellate court judges with similar convictions. Thanks to President Bush, the U.S. government drew an important moral line in stem cell research, even as the administration accelerated bioethically sound research strategies that have produced real results. Internationally, the Bush administration stood firm against the Gadarene rush to use international



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 \$20,000 from the Kenedy Foundation to go towards its goal of implementing a new security system. Pre-school Director DeAnn Vilchez states, "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 security improvements for its 2009-2010 session. "The Kenedy Memorial Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes. Founded in 1961 by Sarita Kenedy East, granddaughter of Mifflin Kenedy and Petra Vela Kenedy, the foundation has donated more than 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 publics, and other friends and stakeholders have repeatedly offered their words of praise and thanksgiving for our Catholic schools. The service that our schools provide is immeasurable and spans countless generations. All you have to do is visit one of our schools and you will often find second, third, and fourth generations of families attending, teaching, leading, and worshipping in the school and parish communities. What a testimony to Catholic Schools Celebrating Service!

Let me take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to all those who have given so often, who have worked so tirelessly, who have prayed so earnestly, who have believed so unabashedly, and who have loved so tenderly... Our Catholic Schools Week 2009 celebrates your efforts and those of our students of yesterday, of today, and especially of those who will be able to walk our halls tomorrow because of you!

law to declare abortion an international human right and a necessary 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 have another American administration as 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 of AIDS 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 in the "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 incompatible 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.

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Catholic Schools

Special Supplement

Diocese of Victoria

February 2009

Holy Cross - Bay City
St. Anthony - Columbus
St. Michael - Cuero
St. Philip - El Campo
Sacred Heart - Hallettsville
Our Lady of the Gulf - Port Lavaca

St. Rose of Lima - Schulenburg
St. Ludmila Academy - Shiner
Nazareth Academy - Victoria
Our Lady of Victory - Victoria
St. Michael - Weimar
St. Joseph - Yoakum

Sacred Heart High - Hallettsville
St. Paul High - Shiner
St. Joseph High - Victoria

NA develops students in three ways

Nazareth Academy

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Established: 1867

Principal: Scott Kloesel

Address: 206 W. Convent, Victoria, TX 77901

Contact information: (361) 573-6651

Web site: www.nazarethacademy.org

By: Madalynn 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, 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 PSIA academic competition in Fredericksburg this year. N.A. teachers have done a great job in encouraging us 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 childrens' 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.



(left) Sixth graders Jacob Garcia and Sam Howard visit with their adopted Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sister, Sister Elaine Braden. The Adopt-A-Sister program allows students to meet with their religious sisters each month. They share about each other's lives and activities and learn what it would be like to live a life of service to God as a religious.

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 angel tree. 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 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 Rope 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.



(above) Students at Holy Cross School plant a memorial tree for Sister Rosario.

(left) Reaching out to others before Thanksgiving, third graders share a good book with their kindergarten partners.

St. Michael's School Celebrates Service

St. Michael Elementary

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 6th

Established: 1877

Principal: Judy Roeder

Address: 208 McLeod, Cuero, TX 77954

Contact information: (361) 277-3854

Web site: www.stmichaels-cuero.org

St. Michael's Catholic School in Cuero joined with Catholic schools throughout the nation to celebrate Catholic Schools Week. The activities began on Saturday, January 24, with an opening Mass at St. Michael's Church. The Liturgy celebrated the Conversion of St. Paul and his influence on Christianity for the past 2000 years. Students in Grades 3K – Sixth were also recognized for the many service projects they participate in throughout the year. Following the Mass, an Open House was held at the school. Family projects recognizing the attributes of St. Paul were on display. The Adventure Land Book Fair was also held.

On Monday, families brought "Birthday Bags" which were distributed to children at the Perpetual Help Home in Victoria. Students and teachers selected several members of the parish or community to perform community service by working to tidy up their yards. Teachers did the same by themselves after school.

On Tuesday, a Children's Health Fair was held. That afternoon, students brought blankets, pillows and their favorite books to share with other students. The day ended with students receiving healthy snacks.

On Wednesday, students wore red, white and blue and listened to members of the military speak about how their time in the military provided a service to our country.

Clergy and religious from the Catholic Community of Cuero and pastors from other denominations in Cuero were invited on Thursday to read their favorite books to the students and talk about their life of service. That night, a Covered Dish Supper and Talent Show was held. The theme of the Talent Show was "Celebrate the Services" and presented patriotic songs and routines.

On Friday, the school's Home and School Association presented a special meal for the faculty and staff. Volunteers supervised the students' activities in the afternoon to give the teachers extra time in their classrooms.



(above) The pre-k4 class celebrated Thanksgiving with a unit on the Pilgrims.

(left) Second grade students created "fossilized" imprints during their study of dinosaurs.



Sacred Heart – A School of Champions

Sacred Heart Elementary and High School

Established: 1882

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 12th

Principal: David Smolik

Address: 313 S. Texana St., Hallettsville, TX 77964

Contact information: (361) 798-4251

Web site: www.shschool.org

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville recently won its 59th 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), girls golf (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 Manna Food Pantry, decorating resident doors at the Hallettsville Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, unloading and distributing food for the St. Nicholas ministry, 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.



Seven seniors proudly display the four state championship trophies earned by Sacred Heart students last year. Sacred Heart school earned these highest state honors in Football, Softball, Tennis, and Band. The proud seniors are (l to r) Jennifer Kallus, Kaylie Steffek, Grant Pustejovsky, Aaron Schaefer, Kadee Bludau, Serena Remmers and Anna Hemmi.



8th grader Joe Martinez walks his kindergarten buddy, Raif Johnson, to daily Mass.

Our Lady of the Gulf Elementary

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Established: 1996

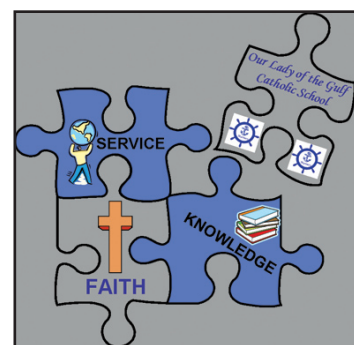
Principal: Theresa Dent

Address: 301 S. San Antonio, Port Lavaca, TX 77979

Contact information: (361) 552-6140, ext. 202

Web site: www.olgulf.org

Why Catholic School?



“Putting the Pieces Together” is the theme for Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic School's 2008-2009 year. Parents and schools must work together to ensure that the important pieces of the educational puzzle fit together. Prior to enrolling a new student into Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic School, parents are asked to fill out a survey and meet with the principal to discuss their student's educational needs.

Parents come to OLG for a variety of reasons including attendance at daily Mass, high academic standards, small class sizes, safety, recommendations by friends and family, etc. The school, in return, has a philosophy to challenge students to grow spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually and physically. All of these pieces fit well within a Catholic school. If students are to succeed and parents are to keep their students in the school, another critical piece of the puzzle must be found for each family. Parents and students must find community within the school.

This community is of course first and foremost Catholic. It is witnessed in the way eighth grade students take the kindergarten students to Mass each morning. It is witnessed in the way parents are actively involved 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

Principal: William H. McArdle Jr.

Address: 110 E. Red River Street, Victoria, TX 77901

Contact information: (361) 573-2446

Web site: www.stjvic.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 for 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 band and library for a period of time and sponsored lunch days where the St. Joseph boys could have a combined lunch with the Nazareth Academy girls.

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 program. For years, the Fathers' Club hosted a turkey sale at Christmastime 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 unending 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 through our school today,” she said. “We are grateful.”



(left) The St. Joseph High School Mothers' Club and Fathers' Clubs are an important piece of the history at the school. Throughout the 20th century, the clubs' members spent countless hours and resources making sure students at STJ had what they needed for a quality education.

(right) The legacy set forth by the two clubs continues as parents today still provide many hours of service in order for students to have a quality education. Pictured here are current PTC members, Lance Alkek and Geri Schroeder, preparing food for a STJ event.



St. Michael's partners with community

St. Michael Elementary

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Established: 1890

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 PreK-4 – 8th Grade strive to live out the mission of the school - “to be friendly, respectful, responsible, and Christ-like” through their faith life, academics, 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. Various organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, St. Ann's Society, KJZT, Lions Club, Rotary Club and the Women's Encore, 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 the school puts on for the 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.



(above) St. Michael students honor local veterans.

(left) Pre-k4 class is all smiles Front Row: Sydney Psencik, Michael Koeth, Jr., Hunter Price, Leigh Ann Koenig, Claire Antosh, Austin Stech Back Row: Bryan Hoang, Jagger Fishbeck, Zoe Urban, Ryan Kloesel, Hannah Hattermann, Caitlyn Klam, and teacher Mrs. Sandra Muras.

Our Lady of Victory Reflection

Our Lady of Victory School

Established: 1957

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Principal: Sister Leonita Barron, IWBS

Address: 1311 E. Mesquite Lane, Victoria, TX 77901

Contact information: (361) 575-3473

Web site: www.ourladyvictory.org



Our Lady of Victory School celebrates being named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

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 Saddler 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 1 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 Bonham, 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 gently 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 of themselves.



(left) St. Anthony School Student Council members joined Columbus Mayor, Richard Hefley, as he signed a proclamation declaring Catholic Schools Week. Seated to Mr. Hefley's right is President Abby Glueck, and to his left is Vice President Laura Moeller.



(right) St. Anthony School teams processed into CSW opening Mass. These teams are formed for CSW events but continue throughout the year to develop strong bonds with the older students mentoring the younger students.



St. Joseph School, Yoakum, Celebrates Service

St. Joseph Elementary

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Established: 1891

Principal: Susan Kelley

Address: 310 Orth St., Yoakum, TX 77995

Contact information: (361) 741-5362

Web site: www.stj catholic school.org

(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.



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 SJS 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 ate 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.

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

Web site: 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, all 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.

St. Rose of Lima Catholic School is especially proud of its mission to serve the Lord by fulfilling the needs of others. Throughout the year, students look for various ways to be a greater part of the community around them by contributing of themselves. As a school, students provided 12 baskets filled with food for a complete Thanksgiving dinner for a family of six. They also made 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 “instill 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) Seventh graders Tanner Canion, Megan Jurica and Rachel Sauliner work together to carefully complete their science lab project.

(below) St. Rose students and choir leader Matt Bonner sing at the annual Praha Veteran's Day Ceremony.



Expect the Unexpected

St. Philip Elementary School

Grades: Pre-kindergarten – 8th

Established: 1949

Principal: Gwen Edwards

Address: 302 W. Church St., El Campo, TX 77437

Contact information: 979-543-2901

Web site: www.stphilipschool.org

(right) Myles Svatek (Kindergarten) and Luke Warschak (3rd grade) pick out BINGO prizes! (left) Laura Dornak (5th grade), Shelby Schoppe (1st grade), and Elise Raun (5th grade) serve as greeters for the opening Mass.



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 many ways. We encourage our students to evangelize at age appropriate levels, and these activities make our textbooks come alive.

St. Philip has a strong academic base, but students also enjoy many extracurricular activities including band, chorus, one act play (Area Champs!), PSIA competitions (Area 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 students to read (annual Read-A-Thon that has raised over \$1 million to date) and recycle (aluminum can collection which benefits the PTC).

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. Science lessons require knowledge of Language Arts. And within every discipline, Christ is the ever-present teacher.

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. Our students have many opportunities to serve others. Students are encouraged to achieve academically, and to help their classmates to succeed. One well-loved tradition at St. Philip is the buddy program, where 7th and 8th grade students buddy up with kindergarten and 1st graders. The younger students' eyes light up when they see their buddies in the hallway, and the older children's excitement is evident. Having an older buddy helps ease the transition into school, and having a younger buddy teaches them the importance of serving others and reminds those about to graduate of their wonderful years at St. Philip.

The St. Philip experience is a blessing to each student and his or her family. The dedication and support of St. Philip parents is shown through many hours of volunteer effort each week. Whether it's heading a fundraiser or coaching a sport, these volunteers are dedicated to the success of St. Philip.

The students celebrate Catholic Schools Week with our own motto in mind, “Teaching Minds and Touching Hearts to Know, Love and Serve God and Others.”

If you would like more information about St. Philip Catholic School, please call the office.



Parish Diary

By Father Peter J. Daly
Catholic News Service



Maybe This Lent

Twenty-seven years ago I was studying for the winter sitting 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 morning to the moment 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 cabinet doors, mirrors, lampshades, windows and light switches. Everywhere I went I memorized the "statute of frauds," 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 mail. 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 I was changed. I was a lawyer.

What if I wanted to be a disciple of the Lord just as badly?

Every year we begin Lent reading from the prophet Joel: "Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart."

When I think about "wholeheartedness" I think about the

bar exam.

Imagine if for the six weeks of Lent I focused on the Christian life the way I once focused on passing the bar.

What if I made prayer, fasting, almsgiving the exclusive focus? What if I wrote out Bible verses and quotes from the saints and taped them up on my mirror and cabinet doors? What if I spent every spare moment in spiritual reading, prayer and devotion?

What if I turned off the TV, stopped going out to dinner, stopped watching movies?

What if I tuned out every distraction for six weeks so that I could focus only on learning and growing in my spiritual life?

I think that at the end of that time I would be a different person, just as if I had spent six weeks exclusively exercising or dieting.

"Love in the Little Things ~ Tales of Family Life" Feb. Book Giveaway

The February Family Puzzle Contest winner will receive "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 make them outposts of his paradise...no matter how cold the winds may blow on a winter day." — from the introduction of



I would be changed.

It would be a wonderful experiment. Perhaps it would be impossible to achieve. But it would be a grand experiment.

People would find it hard to understand. They would find it hard to accept that I wanted just to concentrate on prayer and charity.

As I grow older, I realize that there are so many pointless distractions. It would be nice to be focused on the real final exam. The accounting we will have to make to the Lord.

When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at Jesus' feet and listened to the Lord, her sister Martha objected because Mary was not helping out. Martha thought Mary was not engaged in life the way she should be.

But Jesus said, "Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

Just once in my life I would like to do that. Choose the better part. Sit at the feet of the Lord and listen.

I would like to do it with my "whole heart."

Maybe this Lent.

"Love in the Little Things."

Paradise? Family life? Really? Yes—and one filled with laughter. If that doesn't sound

like your family but you wish it did, or if you're just looking for a book to lighten your spirit, "Love in the Little Things" is for you. Love involves sacrifice, Mike Aquilina notes, but as he spins humorous stories from his own family, it is

evident that moms, dads and kids are happier when they lay down their lives for one another. "Love in the Little Things" nudges the reader toward a more satisfying family life.

"I wish I could have read this book when I was a young dad, but I was too busy learning all the lessons alongside Mike Aquilina. No matter what stage of the parenting game you're at, don't delay—start reading this book now!" - Scott Hahn, author, "Letter and Spirit: From Written Text to Living Word in the Liturgy."

"...a domestic catechism for the domestic church...absolutely delightful and insightful" - Bishop Thomas J. Tobin, Providence, R.I.

"Love in the Little Things" may be purchased on many Web sites. It sells for \$12.99.

For a chance at winning "Love in the Little Things," please send in completed puzzle to *The Catholic Lighthouse* with your name, address, phone number and parish name by February 25.

Sunday readings from Feb. 15 to Mar. 8

February 15 — Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46 Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1 Mark 1:40-45
February 22 — Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25 Psalm 41:2-3, 4-5, 13-14 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 Mark 2:1-12
February 25 — Ash Wednesday	Joel 2:12-18 Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14, 17 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
March 1 — First Sunday of Lent	Genesis 9:8-15 Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:12-15
March 8 — Second Sunday of Lent	Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18 Psalm 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 Romans 8:31b-34 Mark 9:2-10

ANGELS

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

M	H	N	T	N	E	G	I	L	L	E	T	N	I	J
Q	H	X	R	U	Y	N	Z	V	I	R	T	U	E	O
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ARCHANGEL
CHERUB
DOMINION
GUARDIAN
INTELLIGENT

JOPHIEL
MICHAEL
POWERS
PRINCIPALITY
RAPHAEL

SERAPHIM
SPIRIT
THRONE
URIEL
VIRTUE

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Linda Lockhart of St. Mary's Parish in Victoria has won the January Family Puzzle Contest Drawing, winning "The Rosary ~ A Journey to the Beloved." There were only five contestants who braved doing the new History Quiz, so I've decided all those who sent in their History Quiz to be winners. I will be sending them a small gift for taking the time to try something new.

The other winners are: Tracy Olivarez and Elaine Janak of Sacred Heart in Hallettsville; Lucille A. Williams of Holy Cross in Bay City; and Sylvia Peter of St. Philip the Apostle in El Campo.

There were no child contestants.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number and parish name by February 25 for a chance to win "Love in the Little Things;" (see review on this page). Send to: Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

2009 Holy Days

Holy Days of Obligation

Ascension: Thursday, May 21
(transferred to Sunday, May 24)
Corpus Christi: Thursday,
June 11 (transferred to Sunday,
June 14)
Assumption of Mary: Sat-
urday, August 15 (abrogated
because it falls on a Saturday)
All Saints Day: Sunday,
Nov. 1
Immaculate Conception:
Tuesday, Dec. 8
Christmas: Friday, Dec. 25
(All Sundays are obligatory)

Moveable Feast Days

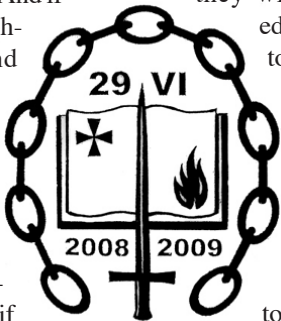
Ash Wednesday: Feb. 25
Palm Sunday: April 5
Holy Thursday: April 9
Good Friday: April 10
Holy Saturday: April 11
Easter: Sunday, April 12
Divine Mercy Sunday: April
19
Pentecost: Sunday, May 31
Trinity Sunday: June 7
First Sunday of Advent: Nov.
29
*Reprinted from
Texas Catholic*

The Good News from St. Paul
Year of St. Paul ~ 2008-2009 Jubilee

1 Corinthians Chapter 13

1) If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. 2) And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. 3) If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. 4) Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, 5) it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, 6) it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. 7)

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8) Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. 9) For we know partially and we prophesy partially, 10) but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11) When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. 12) At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. 13) So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.





Alianza Hispana Para la Vida y la Familia

Con mucha satisfacción deseamos informarles que como resultado del Primer Congreso Nacional Hispano Pro-Vida que se llevó a cabo en Dallas, en septiembre del 2008, varias organizaciones hispanas pro-vida incluyendo a Human Life International / Vida Humana Internacional, Hispanics for Life and Human Rights (Hispanos a favor de la Vida y Derechos Humanos), el Ministerio en Español del Comité Católico Pro-Vida del norte de Texas, y Voces por la Vida de Phoenix, Az., decidieron establecer una alianza para defender la vida humana desde el momento de la fecundación hasta la muerte natural e informar a los hispanos en EEUU sobre los temas vida y la familia.

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 principios esenciales y no negociables que promueve la Iglesia Católica en lo que concierne a estos temas: el aborto, la eutanasia, la investigación de células embrionarias, la clonación humana y el matrimonio homosexual, así como la enseñanza de la Iglesia Católica contra los anticonceptivos. Todos estos actos son moralmente malos y nunca deberían ser promovidos mediante las leyes.

La Junta Directiva esta conformada por líderes pro-vida bien conocidos en la comunidad hispana en Estados Unidos:

- Dra. Martha Garza, Presidente. Obstetra-Ginecóloga / Endocrinología Reproductiva / Consultor medico y Conferencista de PNF

- Sra. Marcella Meléndez, Vicepresidente. Ex – Presidente de Hispanics For Life

- Sra. Alicia Leyva, Secretaria, Tesorera

La Junta Consultiva esta conformada por:

Magaly Llaguno, Directora Ejecutiva, Vida Humana Internacional (VHI), Sección hispana de Human Life International (HLI)

Aurora Tinajero, Directora del Ministerio en Español del Comité Católico Pro-Vida del Norte de Texas

Adolfo Castañeda, Director de Programas Educativos de VHI, y entrevistador en programas de EWTN y Radio Católica Mundial

Astrid Bennett Gutiérrez, Vicepresidente, Hispanics for Life and Human Rights y Directora Ejecutiva del Centro de Embarazos de Los Ángeles, CA

Mario Rojas, Asesor Hispano de HLI.

La Junta Consultiva Espiritual esta conformada por:

Rev. Thomas J. Euteneuer, Presidente de Human Life International (HLI)

Nota: Otros sacerdotes y obispos han sido invitados a ser parte de esta Junta Consultiva Espiritual.

Planes para el futuro inmediato de la Alianza:

- Organizar el Segundo Congreso Nacional Hispano Pro-Vida de los Estados Unidos que se llevará a cabo en septiembre de 2009. Fecha y lugar del congreso se anunciará próximamente.

- Organizar seminarios y talleres para capacitar líderes pro-vida hispanos en los cinco principios esenciales y no negociables que promueve la Iglesia Católica.

- Elaborar un boletín de noticias mensuales con temas de interés para la comunidad hispana.

Los interesados en participar activamente en la Alianza Hispana por la Vida y la Familia (AHVF) o que deseen inscribirse para recibir información de interés en temas de vida y familia, pueden hacerlo escribiendo a la dirección indicada arriba.

Todos los líderes hispanos de las diferentes diócesis de los Estados Unidos, quedan cordialmente invitados a unirse a la Alianza.

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

(South American dialect)

La muerte prematura del periodista respetado y católico Tim Russert en Junio ha llamado la atención del país a la epidemia de enfermedades cardiovasculares, la cual es la primera causa de muerte para tanto los hombres como las mujeres en los EEUU. Casi 54,000 tejanos murieron de esa enfermedad en el año 2001, dice el Instituto del Corazón en Texas, y cada día 2400 personas fallan en todo el país por causa de una enfermedad cardiovascular.

La forma más común de esa condición muy seria es la enfermedad de las arterias coronarias, que puede acabar en un ataque cardíaco. Eso sucede debido a la acumulación o depósito de placa dentro de las arterias coronarias, llamado aterosclerosis. A menudo, el corazón sufre daño permanente durante un ataque cardíaco y uno se puede morir si no se trata inmediatamente.

La placa que se deposita en las arterias y causa la enfermedad cardiovascular se forma por grasa, colesterol y otras sustancias. Se encuentra la placa con frecuencia en las personas con sobrepeso y quienes mantienen una dieta poco saludable, usan tabaco y hacen poco ejercicio. Dr. Denton A. Cooley, el cirujano en jefe del Instituto del Corazón en Texas, dice: “Muchas personas cuidan mejor de su auto que de su cuerpo.... lo alimentan [a su cuerpo] con comidas que contienen mucha grasa y sal, fuman y no hacen ejercicio en forma regular. Los adelantos médicos no pueden erradicar las enfermedades cardiovasculares.

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 a un riesgo extremo para las enfermedades cardiovasculares. Hacer cambios a su estilo de vida--como los que son recomendados por la Asociación Americana del Corazón—puede reducir mucho su riesgo de enfermedades cardiovasculares y la muerte prematura.

Tabaquismo: Fumar acelera la aterosclerosis, la nicotina aumenta presión arterial y el monóxido de carbono disminuye el nivel de oxígeno en la sangre.

Actividad física: Aumenta el flujo de sangre al corazón y ayuda a prevenir otro factores contribuyentes de las enfermedades cardiovasculares, como la diabetes y la presión sanguínea alta. Solo se necesitan 30 minutos de actividad de intensidad moderada al día para mejorar la salud.

Dieta: La grasa saturada y el colesterol en la comida elevan los niveles de colesterol en la sangre y promuevan la aterosclerosis, mientras el consumo de sal aumenta la presión arterial. Come una dieta baja en grasa y rica en fibra, con muchas verduras, carne magra, pescado y granos enteros.

Peso excesivo: El sobrepeso y la obesidad son asociados con el colesterol elevado, la presión arterial alta y la diabetes. Al perder solo 10% de su peso corporal puede reducir su riesgo.

Algunas enfermedades cardiovasculares se presentan desde la infancia, pero todos pueden reducir su propio riesgo de enfermedades cardiovasculares, sin importar su historia medica. Los hombres mayores de los 45 años, mujeres mayores de los 55 y personas de cualquier edad con colesterol elevado, presión arterial alta o la diabetes tienen un riesgo aumentado de enfermedades cardiovasculares.

Visite el sitio Web de la Asociación Católica de la Salud de Texas www.chatexas.org para mayor información sobre la prevención de enfermedades cardiovasculares y para encontrar enlaces al Instituto del Corazón de Texas, los Centros para la Prevención y Control de Enfermedades y la Asociación Americana del Corazón.

Misa De Sanacion

Sabado, Marzo 7

Nuestra Señora De Los Dolores

208 W. River St., Victoria, Texas

Confesiones 4:00-5:45 p.m.

Rosario 5:15 p.m. / Misa 6:00 p.m.

celebrante: Padre Stan De Boe

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EPA 18 MPG City, 23 MPG Hwy, 57,543 mi. - [See Website](#)

05 Mercury Mountaineer "Luxury," STK# 7142.....~~SOLD~~ \$14,495
1 Female Owner, Non-Smoker, Leather, 39K Miles - [See Website](#)

07 Pontiac G6 "Like New" STK# 7299.....~~SOLD~~ \$13,995
Only 508 Miles, Lady Owner No Longer Drives - [See Website](#)

05 Chev. Impala "LS" STK# 7292.....\$13,995
Leather, Only 39,379 Miles, EPA 28MPG Hwy. - [See Website](#)

04 GMC 2500 SLE Crew Cab, STK# 7175~~SOLD~~ \$14,695
Gorgeous! See Photos! 1 Owner, 59K - [See Website](#)

03 Buick Century Sedan. 1 Female Owner, STK# 7002.....~~SOLD~~ \$8,995
Only 37,387 miles. EPA 29 Highway - [See Website](#)

06 Pontiac Grand Prix GT, STK# 7301.....~~SOLD~~ \$13,995
Leather, Only 35,030 Miles, EPA 28 MPG - [See Website](#)

05 Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo STK# 7303 ..~~SOLD~~ \$12,995
V-8, Non-smoker, 1 Owner, only 45K - [See Website](#)

04 Chevy Silverado, Ext. Cab, STK# 7124.....\$12,495
"LS", 5.3 V-8, 53K, EPA EST 19 MPG HWY - [See Website](#)

04 Saturn VUE STK#7297.....\$9,995
EPA EST. 24 MPG CITY, 29 MPG HWY, 5 Speed! - [See Website](#)

05 GMC Envoy SLE STK# 7286.....~~SOLD~~ \$13,495
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04 Pontiac Grand Am GT, STK# 7269.....\$9,995
4 dr., V-6, EPA Hwy. 29 MPG Est., nice - [See Website](#)

02 Ford Expedition XLT STK# 7289~~SOLD~~ \$6,995
Leather, Nice, Female Owner, EPA 20MPG Hwy. - [See Website](#)

06 Dodge Grand Caravan SXT STK# 7300.....\$13,995
"Stow-n-Go" Seats store in floor. 23,017 miles - [See Website](#)

05 Saturn VUE, STK# 7304.....\$13,495
2 Owners, Non-Smoker, V6, EPA 28 MPG Hwy. - [See Website](#)

07 Ford E350 12 passenger van, STK# 7274.....\$16,995
1 owner, only 24,307 mi., like new! Warr. - [See Website](#)

05 Ford F150 XLT 4x4 Ext. Cab, STK# 7275.....~~SOLD~~ \$15,995
Price Sticker New \$33,780, only 24,229 mi., - [See Website](#)

04 Impala LS, Leather, STK# 7308.....\$11,995
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The Joyful Catholic

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E-mail: RH222@sbcglobal.net



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 mighty 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 duck his kiss because we do not want to be beholden to him?

We all want 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 conform our lives to his plans?

This is too hard for us, we fear, so we are tempted to turn away from God and 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.

Father Donald Hayden, O.Ss.T., chaplain, will guide us through the day beginning in Annunciation Library.

You are invited to park in front of Incarnate Word Convent and enter the library from the north sidewalk. A box lunch can be purchased for \$5.00 when you arrive.

Pre-register by Tuesday, February 24, by calling the convent number 361-575-7111. Ask for Sister Alberta at extension #224 or e-mail Sister Mary Jean at smjbludau@yahoo.com. If you decide at the last minute to attend and haven't registered, please don't let that keep you from coming.

**Discover God In A New Way
On This Lenten Journey**

We hurry past a poor beggar as he holds out his dirty hand for a coin.

We avert our eyes from an invalid in a wheelchair.

We close our doors to the downtrodden and miss the chance to entertain an angel.

Why do we make it so difficult to receive a kiss?

Soon we neglect the sun shining brightly overhead. We protest against God's authority. We may even leave our church and start a new one.

We disregard his loving commandments and treat them as mere suggestions.

We disdain his righteous ways, dismiss his sacred Word and brush aside his grace-filled sacraments.

Finally we lose the hospitality in our hearts, and our cheeks grow cold.

Why do we rub off his kisses in this manner?

Thank God our Creator is persistent in seeking us! Our Prince of Peace yearns to awaken us from our lonely dream with his irresistible kiss of love.

If we accept the embrace of our Creator, we will be truly liberated. If we do not wipe away his kiss, we will discover that we are able to do his will with ease.

Far from being stifled or oppressed by his reign, as we feared, we rejoice to find ourselves truly liberated and free at last.

We are free to do his will and we do it gladly because we know he seeks only our best.

Now we see ourselves clearly in the parable of the prodigal son: "while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

Gradually we discover a thousand of God's kisses coming our way every day.

Every smile that we receive and every kindness that we perceive is now recognized as a life-giving blessing from God.

We find faith, hope and love in unexpected places.

To our surprise, as often as we receive God's kisses we find ourselves inspired to offer similar blessings to others.

With every helping hand we give, every sin that we forgive, and every life that we let live, we magnify his love and multiply his blessings.

So the next time God kisses your cheek, don't be so quick to rub it off. Rub it in.

Then turn the other cheek... for more kisses.

Hermann is a popular Catholic writer enjoyed by millions of readers worldwide.

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pastors need to be strong, loving fathers of God's children, says pope

By Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI prayed that Christians would treat all people lovingly as members of God's one family and that pastors would be strong yet tender fathers of the Christian community.

"Christians are no longer strangers or guests, but fellow citizens with the saints and family members of the household of God," the pope said Jan. 28 at his weekly general audience.

The Christian community is also open to everyone, as all people are capable of knowing the truth of God's love and message of salvation, he said.

With an estimated 4,000 people gathered inside the Paul VI hall, Pope Benedict continued his audience talks about the life and teaching of St. Paul, focusing on his letters to Timothy and Titus -- also known as the pastoral epistles.

Even though the Christian community was still quite small at the time the pastoral epistles were written, its universality was strongly emphasized, said the pope.

Christianity is "a living faith open to everyone and gives witness to God's love for all people," he said.

Therefore, Christians are "to slander no one, to be peaceable, considerate, exercising all graciousness toward everyone," he said quoting from St. Paul's Letter to Titus.

The letters "present the church in very human terms as God's household, a family in which the bishop acts with the authority of a father," he said.

In his First Letter to Timothy, St. Paul lists detailed traits and qualities needed for the office of bishop. These included such things as being temperate, self-disciplined, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, having a good reputation among non-Christians and being fatherly, said the pope.

He prayed that the church's bishops and priests increasingly take on more fatherly feelings for their flocks and be "loving and strong fathers who build up God's house, the Christian community and the church."

The pope also asked that the Christian faithful increasingly show a loving attitude for other people in society and treat everyone as members of God's family.

At the end of his audience talk, Pope Benedict was treated to a festive juggling act by members of the Italian Medrano circus troupe.

Four women and one man juggled bowling pins and rings onstage next to the pope while a band played a rousing Italian folk tune.

The pope smiled and clapped even when some ill-timed tosses sent pins and rings clattering to the floor.

When a circus performer approached the pope with a feisty lion cub, the pope stood and enthusiastically petted the squirming feline.

Pope Calls Synod on the Word of God Victoria Diocese Publishes 6th edition of Disciples of the Journey

Pope Benedict XVI called bishops from around the world to a synod at the Vatican

especially evangelicals, do.

The Diocese of Victoria is publishing

the 6th edition of Disciples on the Journey Lent 2009 in English and Spanish for faith sharing in groups of adults, teens, and families around the Sunday Lenten readings.

Bishop Fellhauer, who has written two commentaries for this edition of Disciples on the Journey, strongly encourages all Catholics in the diocese to join a group of fellow parishioners to share

faith using Disciples on the Journey Lent 2009.

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 dj@victoriadiocese.org. There are no shipping fees for our diocese.



Discover God's Love With Us

Lenten Vespers — IWBS Convent — 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 our Jewish brothers and sisters, Evening Prayer finds its base in the prayers of the Psalms. The clear, simple and beautiful ritual of Evening Prayer carries us to something beyond our own energy as we give praise and thanksgiving to our loving God. Evening Praise closes with a solemn blessing — Benediction.

These weeks of Evening Prayer can prepare us for the great feast of Easter in ways we could never imagine.



Libby Ramirez (left) stands with Kayla Lorsung (right) at the opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life held the night before the march at the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

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 capitol 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 first 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 ultrasound pictures from a baby 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 graphics that appear on-screen. Yet, the message is extremely powerful. You can view the at www.Catholicvote.org.

Rumors aside, FOCA legislation no threat to Catholic health care

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Internet rumors to the contrary, no Catholic hospital in the United States is in danger of closing because of the Freedom of Choice Act. As a matter of fact, the Freedom of Choice Act died with the 110th Congress and, a week after the inauguration of President Barack Obama, has not been reintroduced. But that hasn’t kept misleading e-mails from flying around the Internet, warning of the

dire consequences if Obama signs FOCA into law and promoting a “FOCA novena” in the days leading up to Inauguration Day. The Catholic Health Association “is strongly committed to opposing FOCA and (the board) is unanimous that we would do all we could to oppose it,” said Bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., an elected member of the CHA 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.” Sister Carol Keehan, 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 continue to monitor all proposed regulations for their 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) — Poor 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 recession,” 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. Its bill provides similar spending outlays.

Brain death raises questions, from Minnesota to Washington to Vatican

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Don’t talk to Raleane “Rae” Kupferschmidt about brain death. The 66-year-old woman from Lake Elmo, Minn., was declared brain dead nearly a year ago after a massive cerebral 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 and went into a coma. Although doctors were not as hasty to term it brain death this time, they offered little hope of her survival -- a prediction she defied again in October. “I keep thinking that (God) saved me a second time so I could inspire people and let them know they 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 prefers to call total brain failure.

Vietnamese Catholics welcome US bishops from California

HUE, Vietnam (CNS) — Vietnamese Catholics welcomed 18 visiting American bishops, priests and laypeople on Tet, the Vietnamese lunar new year. Archbishop George H. Niederauer of San Francisco and Bishop Tod D. Brown of Orange, Calif., led a delegation to visit Phu Cam Cathedral in the Archdiocese of Hue Jan. 26, the beginning of the three-day Tet festival. Archbishop Etienne Nguyen Nhu The 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

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 some 118 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 preparing to participate in simultaneous 40 Days for Life campaigns from February 25 through April 5.” 40 Days for Life consists of 40 days of prayer 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 of February 25 through April 5 coincide with the Christian season of Lent. “It’s a perfect match,”

wish all of you a new year full of ‘phuc,’ ‘loc’ and ‘tho,’ which means happiness, blessing and longevity,” Archbishop The told the visitors. He noted that during the festival, local people traditionally visit each other and offer these wishes, UCA News reported. Archbishop The said local Catholics are grateful to the Catholic Church in the United States for providing pastoral care for Vietnamese-Americans, many of whom fled Vietnam after communists reunified the country in 1975. Archbishop The also urged local Catholics to pray for Catholics in the United States to live their faith bravely.

New York archdiocese Catholic high schools to become self-sufficient

NEW YORK (CNS) — The New York Archdiocese has announced that the 10 archdiocesan Catholic high schools it operates will become self-sufficient, effective with the start of the 2009-10 school year in September. Each school will be under the control of a local board of directors that also will be responsible for the school’s funding and operation. Timothy McNiff, archdiocesan superintendent of schools, made the announcement to school parents in a Jan. 23 letter. “These high schools, like all Catholic high schools in the country, are becoming fairly complicated business operations,” McNiff said in an interview with Catholic New York, the archdiocesan newspaper. “The schools that seem to be doing very well in that respect are private Catholic high schools that have incorporated local school boards who have accepted the responsibility for the operations of the schools,” he added. McNiff said the schools will have “two layers of governance.” The boards will operate the schools, but the archdiocese will continue to own each school’s buildings and grounds and “will continue to support the capital needs” of the school plants.

Pope sends message, chalice to new Russian Orthodox patriarch

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI gave a chalice to Patriarch Kirill, 62, the new patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church and expressed his hope that Catholics and Russian Orthodox can improve their relationship. “It is my earnest hope that we will continue to cooperate in finding ways to foster and strengthen communion in the body of Christ in fidelity to our savior’s prayer that all may be one so that the world may believe,” the pope said.

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 in their home towns will touch 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 efforts of people at the grassroots level have shown a profound impact,” said Carney. “More than 200 cities have participated, reporting more than 175,000 people united in prayer and fasting. Three abortion facilities closed following 40 Days for Life campaigns, and more than a dozen abortion industry employees 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.”

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Pope lifts excommunications of Lefebvrite bishops

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 several important teachings of the Second Vatican Council, including those related to religious liberty, ecumenism and liturgy.

The Vatican said the decree removing the excommunication, signed Jan. 21 and made public three days later, marked an important step toward full communion with the Society of St. Pius X, founded by Archbishop Lefebvre in 1970.

It said some questions remain unresolved with the society, including its future status and that of its priests, and that these issues would be the subject of further talks.

The pope said he considered the restoration of full unity in the church as one of his primary pastoral tasks, one he had emphasized at the inaugural Mass of his pontificate in 2005. This task of maintaining unity, he said, is symbolized by the Gospel account of the miraculous catch of fishes, when the net did not break despite the heavy catch.

"I hope my gesture is followed by the hoped-for commitment on their part to take the further steps necessary to realize full communion with the church, thus witnessing true fidelity, and true recognition of the magisterium and the authority of the pope and of the Second Vatican Council," he said.

The head of the Swiss-based society, Bishop Bernard Fellay, had requested the removal of the excommunication in a letter Dec. 15. Bishop Fellay wrote that he and the three other bishops illicitly ordained in 1988 were determined to remain Catholic and accepted the teachings of Pope Benedict "with filial spirit."

The Vatican said the pope had responded positively to the request in order to promote "the unity in charity of the universal church and succeed in removing the scandal of division."

The Vatican action came the day before the 50th anniversary of Pope John XXIII's announcement of the Second Vatican Council. Father Lombardi said it would be wrong to see the lifting of the excommunication as a rejection of Vatican II.

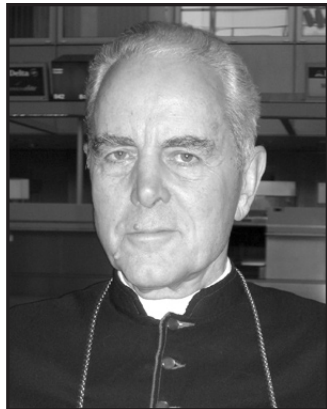
In addition to Bishops Fellay and Williamson, the decree removed the excommunication of French Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais and Argentine Bishop Alphonso de Galarreta.

Bishop Fellay called the pope's action a "unilateral, benevolent and courageous act" and described it as a victory for Catholic traditionalists worldwide. But he said he had made clear to the Vatican that the society still has problems with Vatican II.

Bishop Fellay added in his communique that "we are convinced that we remain faithful to the line of conduct initiated by our founder, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose reputation we hope to soon see restored."

One of the biggest short-term questions

regards the standing of the Swiss-based society's bishops and priests -- specifically, whether in the Vatican's view they remain suspended from their ministry until a more complete agreement is reached. The answer, according to several Vatican



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

sources, is that there's no clear answer. The Vatican's own experts had different interpretations of how canon law applies in this case. Some felt that the removal of excommunication for the four bishops implied removal of their suspension, but others disagreed. Most at the Vatican hold that the priests of the Society of St. Pius X remain suspended from ministry until they are regularized, which presumably will happen in future talks between the Vatican and the society's leaders.

"The lifting 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 together, which will doubtless be long and demand better mutual knowledge and esteem."

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 ecumenist and major dialogue partner with the Jews.

"Such gibberish is unacceptable," said German Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews in an interview with the Italian daily La Repubblica Jan. 26.

"To deny the Holocaust is unacceptable and is absolutely not the position of the Catholic Church," he said, adding that the bishop's remarks were "foolish."

British-born Bishop Richard Williamson of the traditionalist Society of St. Pius X has claimed that reports about the Holocaust were exaggerated and that no Jews died in Nazi gas chambers.

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 bru-

tal 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 expectation of those who have expressed doubt concerning the pope and the Catholic Church's position" on the Holocaust.

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NA Open House

Nazareth Academy in Victoria will host an Open House February 19. Pre-school open house is from 2:00-5:00 p.m. The elementary school open house is from 1:00-3 p.m. and 5:00-7:00 p.m. Registration will be held March 3, from 12:00-6:00 p.m.

As you may be aware, the State of Texas has resumed the execution of inmates on its Death Row. On evenings of executions in Texas, you are invited to join the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters in a Prayer Vigil at 5:45 p.m. in the Incarnate Word Convent Chapel, 1101 NE

Water Street in Victoria, Texas.

We pray for the murder victim, for 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 February–March 11 are listed below.

2009 Scheduled Executions:

February 10:
Dale Devon Scheanette

February 12:
Johnny Johnson
March 3:
Willie Earl Pondexter
March 10:
James Edward Martinez
March 11:
Luis Salazar

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 in this on-going grief group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room at Holy Family Church, 704 Mallette Drive, Victoria. For information, please call (361) 578-7572.

Mini-Life-Chain—In Victoria every Wednesday before the 2nd Thursday of each month. Call (361) 578-2506 or (361) 578-2002 for time and intersection location.

St. Francis and St. Clare Fraternity/Secular Franciscans — For meeting dates call Mary Ann LeBlanc at (361) 575-1858.

Our Lady of the Rosary Fraternity Emerging/Secular Franciscans— meets every other Wednesday from 7:00-9:00 p.m. For dates and location call Jay Howard at (361) 574-8487.

St. Padre Pio Prayer Group meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at St. Mary Church Activity Center (audio-visual room) in Victoria for a 7:30 a.m. Mass, followed by prayer and light refreshments.

Extraordinary Form of the Roman Latin Rite (Traditional Latin Mass) — is celebrated every Sunday at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Shiner at 11:00 a.m. For more info. call (361) 594-3836.

Engaged Encounter—Register as soon as you have contacted your pastor due to limited space. **It is strongly recommended that you attend an encounter weekend four to six months prior to your wedding date.** For a registration form, contact your pastor, visit the [Web site at www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm), or write to: Engaged Encounter, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. The weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. The dates for 2009 are: June 26-28; Sept. 11-13; and Nov. 20-22. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 30. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form.

Marriage Encounter—Marriage Encounter weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. For more information or to register, write or call Milton and Diane Rejcek, 2512 Hillcrest, Bay City, Texas 77414; (979) 245-0323; register@mevictoria.org www.mevictoria.org

Retrouvaille — The word Retrouvaille means 'rediscovery.' It is a program that offers the chance to rediscover yourself, your spouse, and a loving relationship in your marriage. Tens of thousands headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending. Contact Gerd and Linda Conner (979) 543-3493 or (800) 470-2230 for more information or for dates in Texas, please go to www.retrouvaille.org or www.helpourmarriage.org.

The Beginning Experience—The Beginning Experience is an international ministry that helps divorced, separated and widowed individuals resolve their grief surrounding the loss of a marriage partner. It is a ministry of the San Antonio Archdiocese Family Life Office. For more information, go to their Web site: www.beginningexperience.org; e-mail: sanantonioe@yahoo.com; phone: (210) 734-2146.

Singles — Catholic Singles, 40 and over, meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month at Holy Family Education Building at 7:00 p.m. Call Georgia (361) 573-9435, or Jean at (361) 578-8760, or Sue at (361) 578-3106.

Young Adults—Between the ages of 21 and 45 meet for an evening of fellowship and good company every 1st and 3rd Thursday at Holy Family at 7:00 p.m. Call Jim Wearden at (361) 579-9737 or (361) 649-9157.

ACTS Retreats—For more information see the ACTS Web site at www.actsmissions.org.

Natural Family Planning—For English or bilingual sessions of the **Sympto-Thermal Method** (S-TM) in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. For information about the Sympto-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella De Los Santos (361) 894-6950. Introductory presentations on the **Creighton Model Ovulation Method** are offered in Wharton at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and in East Bernard at Holy Cross Catholic Church. Please contact Melissa Morse at (979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

Goliad—Presidio La Bahia Museum and Visitor Center — a National Historic Landmark — is the only Spanish fort remaining in the possession of the Catholic Church in North America. A tour program is available to groups. The Presidio is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is closed on major holidays. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children under 12. The fort is handicapped accessible. For more information call (361) 645-3752 or see the Web site at www.presidiolabahia.org. **Upcoming events:** March 28

& 29 – 24th Annual Goliad Massacre - Fort Defiance Living History Program and recreation of the occupation of the fort by Col. Fannin and the Goliad Massacre will be held. The only event of its kind in the State of Texas. Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Candlelight Tours 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday, following the Massacre Reenactment at 10:00 a.m., there will be a memorial service and a pilgrimage to the Fannin Memorial.

Picnics, Activities, etc.

February

Victoria—St. Mary's Annual Parish Festival Feb. 8 at the community center starting at 10:30 a.m.. A barbeque brisket and sausage dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at \$7/p. The live auction begins at 12:30 p.m.

Hallettsville—Parish Mission at Sacred Heart Parish Feb. 12 – 13, with Priests for Life Father Denis Wilde. The mission will begin at 7 p.m. each evening.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Feb. 15 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Victoria—KJZT Society #101 will host District IX meeting at Holy Family meeting room Feb. 15. Registration from 12:30-1:00 p.m. A meal will be furnished at 1:30 p.m. Members are invited.

Schulenburg—Catholic Daughters of the America's Court St. Rose #1597 will hold its 16th Annual Fried-Chicken Dinner with all the trimmings Feb. 15, at the KC Hall. Serving begins at 11:00 a.m.; meals \$7 adults / \$3.50 children; dine-in or take home/drive thru (adult plates only). There will be a silent auction starting at 10:00 a.m. Cakewalk, country store and raffle are also available. Any questions? Please call Cynthia Kosler at (979) 561-6369.

Moulton—St. Joseph's Altar Society will hold its Noodle Soup Dinner Feb. 22. Homemade chicken-noodle soup, sandwiches and desserts will be available, dine-in or food-to-go (bring your own container for soup), from 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon in St. Joseph's Parish Hall.

Washington—The 2009 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering will be held Feb. 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 "Christ Our Hope: Healing a Broken World." More information on the event, including registration information for Catholic social ministry leaders, is available at www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org or by contacting Cynthia Morris-Colbert at (202) 541-3180.

Victoria—Our Lady of Lourdes Holy Name Society annual chicken and sausage dinner Feb. 24 at the church (105 N. William St.) at \$7 p/p dine-in or plates-to-go available. Serving from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

San Antonio—A Beginning Experience retreat will be held Feb. 27 – March 1 in San Antonio. The weekend is an intense healing encounter for divorced, separated and widowed individuals. It is focused on grief recovery and assists them in moving through the grief process following the loss of their spouse. For more information, call (210) 478-0690 or e-mail: sanantonioe@yahoo.com.

El Campo—St. Philip School's Annual Dinner & Dance, Saturday, Feb. 28, at the KC Hall. Tickets are \$35 p/p; purchase from Susie Gaines @ 979-543-6469 or from the school office.

Victoria—Listen to Your Heart – A Lenten Day of Prayer and Reflection will be held at Incarnate Word Convent Saturday, Feb. 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. See page 15 for details.

Upcoming Events

Victoria—Come join the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament for Lenten Vespers on each of the six Sundays of Lent beginning Sunday, March 1. See page 15 for more information.

Hungerford—Hungerford KJT Society #70 and KJZT Society #57 will be hosting their annual barbecue-chicken and sausage dinner March 1 at the community center. Serving begins at 10:30 a.m. with dine-in or plates-to-go available. There will be an auction, free dance until 5:00 p.m. with music by The Texas Legacy Czech Band. Raffle drawing at 5:00 p.m.

Victoria—Bilingual charismatic healing Mass, Saturday, March 7, at Our Lady of Sorrows (208 W. River St.) with Father Stan De Boe as celebrant. There will be singing, praising, adoration, confession (4:00 p.m.), rosary (5:15 p.m.) and Mass (6:00 p.m.). Misa de sanacion, Sabado, Marzo 7. Vengan todos!

Blessing—Knights of Columbus Council 4307 will sponsor their annual fish fry and raffle March 8 at St. Peter's Parish Hall. Fried-catfish dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at \$7 p/p (includes dessert and drink). There will also be an auction. The proceeds will benefit KC scholarships and charities.

New Taiton—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 dine-in or plates-to-go at \$7 p/p. There will be an 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. at \$7 p/p adult and \$3 p/p children with drive-thru available for adult plates only. Live auction at 11:30 a.m. There will be a cakewalk, music and much more.

Victoria—Our Lady of Sorrows is sponsoring a retreat for women March 13-14, at the Incarnate Word Mother House. The retreat will begin on Friday evening at 6:00 p.m., ending at 9:00 p.m. (no over-night stay; no need to pack a suitcase). We will resume Saturday morning at 8:15, and conclude with an evening dinner. The Spiritual Director will be Dotty Hernandez of Houston; scheduled speakers will include Nancy Neuman, Houston; Lupe Schaefer, Victoria; Darla Hickman, Houston; and Susan Kristnek, Bay City. Registration is \$25/ person to cover the cost of our speakers and meals. Space is limited; must register prior to retreat by calling Sally Palacios at (361) 576-2333 or 676-8286.

San Antonio— 2009 4th Annual Catholic Men's Conference Saturday, March 14, from 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., at St. Matthew Church in San Antonio, sponsored by The Pilgrim Center of Hope (A Catholic Evangelization Center for the Archdiocese of San Antonio). There will be internationally known speakers, Mass with Bishop Oscar Cantu, Eucharistic Healing Service with Father Joseph Mary Marshall, meals and more! **SPEAKERS:** Father Mary David Hoyt, FJ - "Taking Mary, Mother of God Into Your Home;" Patrick Madrid (EWTN) - "Answers to the Lies Society Tells You;" Arland K. Nichols, MDiv - To "Build a Culture of Life and Love;" Christopher J. Stravitsch, MA, LMFT-A - "One Man, One Challenge, One Mission;" Greg Alexander (Alexander House) "Including God in All Relations." Cost (per person): Pre-registration - \$35; after Wednesday, March 11, \$45 (Includes conference packet, breakfast tacos and Texas barbecue lunch). To register please contact Deacon Tom Fox at (210) 521-3377 or register on-line at: trust@catholic.org. St. Matthew is located at McDonald Center 10703 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, 78230. www.pilgrimcenterforhope.org.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser March 15 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Hallettsville—John Michael Talbot will be in concert at Sacred Heart Parish Thursday, March 26, at 7:00 p.m.; admission \$10. Call parish office at (361) 798-5888 for more information.

Corpus Christi—Fullness of Truth 5th Annual Lenten Catholic Family Conference – Search & Rescue will be held March 28-29 at the American Bank Center in Corpus Christi. For more information or to register go to: www.FullnessOfTruth.org or 1-877-21truth (218-7448).

Inez—Catholic Daughters Court 2475 Games Party March 29 at the CCD Center (on Church St.) from 2:00-5:00 p.m. Entrance fee of \$6 p/p includes refreshments. Make reservations to Kathy at (361) 575-3559 or Laura at (361) 935-6918.

Discernment/Vocation Retreats

Ferdinand, Ind.—"Discover the Treasure of the Hill" High School Visiting Weekend Feb. 27 – March 1. Did you ever wonder what it is like to live in a monastery? Have you ever wished you could get an inside view of a nun's life? Would you like to spend a weekend hanging out with some sisters and learning about religious life and getting to know other high-school-age girls? Come find the treasure of the hill for yourself and your friends with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana. For more information call Sister Michelle Sinkhorn at (800) 734-9999, ext. 2830 or visit our Web site: www.thedome.org, where you can also register online. Parent permission is required.

Houston—The Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament will be hosting a Day of Discernment with a Pauline theme Saturday, Feb. 28 from 8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at their Motherhouse, 3400 Bradford (77002). Please contact Sister Madeleine (grace@incarnateword.org) or Sister Helen (hspanos@incarnateword.org) at (713) 223-4143 or (713) 525-3529 for more information or notification of attendance. One may also sign up at the Web site <http://incarnateword-sistershoustan.org>.

Victoria—The Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters are hosting a Discernment Weekend for single Catholic women (high school seniors through 50 years-old) on Feb. 28-March 1, at Incarnate Word Convent. If you are interested, you may check them out at www.iwbsvictoria.org or call (361) 575-7111 or e-mail iwbsvoc@yahoo.com for more details.



MOTHER STANDS WITH CHILDREN OUTSIDE CHURCH-RUN SHELTER FOR DEPORTEES IN NOGALES, MEXICO—

Leoba Marcos, who tried entering the United States illegally with her family in January, stands with her two children outside a church-run shelter for deportees in Nogales, Mexico, Jan. 18. The shelter operated by the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist serves women and children who have been deported by U.S. officials. It is part of the Jesuit's binational Kino Border Initiative launched in mid-January. (J.D. Long-Garcia/Catholic Sun)

Vatican official: Integration needs effort from immigrants, neighbors

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The integration of immigrants into a new society requires effort from both the immigrants and their new neighbors, said a Vatican official. Integration is a two-way process, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers, said during a speech Jan. 28 at the University of San Diego. Integration “is the responsibility not only of the immigrant but also of the host society” and is achieved through open dialogue, the archbishop added. His office at the Vatican released the text of his speech on the efforts of different faith communities to understand and approach the challenges of contemporary immigration. The speech was billed as a preview to an international conference April 15-16 at the Catholic university in California; the conference will discuss the relationships among migration, religious experience and national identity.

Largest March for Life in years called to choose life

Continued from p. 1

“And our greatest horrors come when we uncover movements that debate and destroy human dignity.”

He thanked those who had written Letters to the Editor in *The Victoria Advocate* in the week prior to the march. He was hopeful that those who wrote were not lured into the debate by laws, court rulings, and political promises.

He said often times we are only disappointed by our politicians, especially those who run on a pro-life ticket.

At the same time, he is often disheartened when those who support life “don’t see the parallels that exist between abortion and a lack of opportunity for minority women and children, educational systems that leave so many without the ability to read or write, an economy that leaves so many in poverty, a health care system that is broken, an immigration policy that forces people to live in fear, a world situation that sees the divide between the haves and the have-nots grow wider each day.”

He encouraged everyone who took the stand to march for life to continue by making life-welcoming changes in their lives.

He drew a larger picture to include the millions who die from other injustices along with the millions aborted each year, “with each man or woman who will die tonight from exposure,

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.

“We’ve become a people who have strayed so far from the path of life. Too many people are worshiping at the altars of drugs, sex, pornography, alcohol, materialism, self-interests, isolation, workaholism, and other gods that make them feel good – that they think fulfill them. And on these altars their very lives, and ours, are sacrificed,” he said. “We were created to love people and to use things, but we have become a culture that loves things and uses people.”

He said it was no wonder that “it has become easy to terminate a pregnancy, to abandon the elderly, to neglect our hungering neighbor, to walk by the crack addict, to build fences, to deny housing and health care – because we’ve already chosen death for them, thinking that the less of them, the more there will be for me.”

Father Stan was putting the ball back into our hands. He was challenging each participant to continue to choose life and to

By Fr. Peter Ciuciulla, MCCJ
www.combonimissionaries.org

February is the month in which we start our journey towards Easter. As Ash Wednesday 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 towards Easter, but about the whole parish as well. Looking at the three dimensions of our preparation for Easter – prayer, fasting and charity – it wasn’t easy 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 from a 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 to their year round fasting and poverty. How could they somehow find 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 Emmanuel, 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 not 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 condition, 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.

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi



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SOBERING WAKE-UP CALL—Holy Cross Parish in Bay City put out 520 crosses for the Cemetery of the Innocent on January 4, 2009. The memorial cemetery remained on the site for the month of January. The crosses represent the number of abortions from Matagorda County over the last decade. The teens and parishioners gathered on the land in front of the church to pray the rosary as the crosses were placed in the ground.



A group of young adults from the Victoria Diocese marched in the national March for Life in Washington, DC, January 22, 2009. From the left is Chase Goodman, Kevin Janecka, Luke Atchison, Madelyne Adams, Rachel Grahmann, Savannah Hardin, Laura Lee Steele and Father David Berger, kneeling. Not pictured are adult chaperones Robbie Lauger, Jose and Kim Ortega.



Victoria Diocese young adults attend DC March

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 Rigali, 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.

Vocation Awareness Days

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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Students from St. Ludmilla 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!



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