

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 22, NO. 9

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

January 2009

A multi-billion dollar gift given in challenging economic times

WASHINGTON, D.C.—While auto manufacturers, secondary mortgage lenders and investment bankers are reaping billions of dollars in federal funds, there is one entity that is saving the nation billions — the network of almost 7,400 Catholic schools across the country.

According to Karen Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), Catholic schools provide \$19.8 billion in savings each year for the nation. The figure is based on the average public school per pupil cost of \$8,701 and the total Catholic school enrollment of more than 2.2 million students.

“Catholic schools are a gift to the church — and to the nation,” said Dr. Ristau. “The enormity of this gift is more striking during these challenging economic times.”

In addition to the monetary rewards, the nation also gains in other ways. Catholic school students excel academically on standardized tests, more than 99% graduate and 94% go on to college. Studies show that graduates of Catholic schools are reliable workers, good citizens and more likely to attend church.

“Our graduates have a strong commit-

ment to community service because that is a foundation of our schools,” added Dr. Ristau. “In fact, this past year Catholic school students performed 2.2 million hours of public service in honor of Pope Benedict’s visit. That kind of involvement is also a gift to the country — and one that cannot be measured in dollars alone.”

Catholic school effectiveness

Research on school effectiveness in the last 10 years has continued to focus on academic outcomes of students. The outcomes include standardized test scores, graduation rates, post-secondary aspirations and college atten-

dance. Catholic schools, while they aspire to academic success, include among their primary objectives an understanding of the Catholic faith, a commitment to the

See *A multi-billion dollar gift*, p. 16



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Week January 25-31

22nd Candlelight March ~ Jan. 22

Life and Family Advocates is sponsoring the 22nd Candlelight March for Life, Thursday, January 22, at 7:00 p.m. Carrying candles or flashlights, participants will begin the march at Holy Family Catholic Church, 704 Mallette Dr. and end at Grace Lutheran Church at 9806 Zac Lentz Parkway. Candles will be available and transportation will be provided back to the starting place. Come and show your support for those too little to defend themselves. Father Stan De Boe, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church will be the principal speaker.



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Photos clockwise from top left: The mosaic indicating the chapel is named in honor of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters — the mosaic itself was created in honor of artist Madeline F. O'Connor; stained-glass window of the Eucharist at the entrance to the chapel; the renovated chapel; interior of chapel, facing entrance and tabernacle; Bishop Fellhauer's 10th annual Christmas party held at the SRC; youth help move furnishings into the chapel on Youth Leadership Training day, Dec. 7; window of Moses and burning bush representing the Law and dedicated to Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin, diocesan chancellor.

Capital Campaign Fund brings SRC chapel to completion

The renovation of the chapel at the Diocese of Victoria's Spiritual Renewal Center has been completed and has already been put to use several times during the Christmas holidays.

According to Mike Brown, the financial officer of the diocese, the generosity of the faithful to the Capital Campaign has allowed the diocese to complete the

renovation of the chapel, as well as begin the construction of the new multi-purpose building at the renewal center.

The chapel, newly named the Incarnate Word Chapel, has had both sides extended to provide more seating than the original chapel and many beautiful stained-glass

See *Capital Campaign*, p. 7



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

Jan.	
11-15	First week of Diocesan Priests' retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
15	2:00 p.m., Our Lady of Victory School Spelling Bee
18-22	Second week of Diocesan Priests' retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
25	9:00 a.m., Mass, opening Catholic Schools Week, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
31	4:00 p.m., Mass, Boy Scouts' retreat, Camp Mauritz, Ganado
Feb.	
7	4:00 p.m., Mass, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Province meeting, Holy Family Church, Victoria

Thank You

Your Excellency:

I am grateful for your contribution of \$17,499.46 to the 2008 Collection for the Church in Latin America.

As you know, one of the Subcommittee's major responsibilities is to provide grants to projects which address the pastoral needs of the faithful in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2007, we were able to award 566 grants totaling just over \$7.75 million. These grants responded to the self-identified needs of the Church across the hemisphere. They included assistance to:

- 63 parish based projects
- 228 diocesan programs
- 38 seminaries
- 48 Episcopal Conferences and
- 87 religious congregations

In 2008, the Subcommittee approved over 530 projects surpassing \$8,000,000. This is the largest amount granted in the 45 years of the collection.

Because of your personal support and the generosity of the faithful in your diocese we have the ability to respond year after year. Our next collection is scheduled in most dioceses the weekend of January 24-25, 2009.

May the Lord continue to bless you, your ministry and the Catholic faithful of your diocese. May our Blessed Mother, Santa María de Guadalupe, continue to draw us together under the mantle of her maternal love.

Respectfully
Most Rev. Jaime Soto, Chairman
Subcommittee/Church in
Latin America

In Memory of ...

Sister Euphrosine Honc

SAN ANTONIO - Sister Euphrosine Honc, age 92, a Sister of Divine Providence, entered eternal life on Nov. 25, 2008.

She was born in Yoakum on April 29, 1916, and became a Sister of Divine Providence at 17 years of age. Sister Euphrosine began her ministerial life at Guardian Angel School in Wallis in 1938.

In the 63 years that followed, she taught in various schools in Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas. During this time, she taught elementary and middle school and served as principal at many schools in Texas. Some of her most treasured memories were in creating books and writing songs for the children she loved. In 2006, Sister Euphrosine retired to Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center.

She is survived by her brother, Valentin Honc and numerous nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and six siblings.

Mass of Christian Burial was held on Nov. 28. All services were held in Annunciation Chapel at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center.

In lieu of flowers, you may wish to make a memorial contribution to the Sisters of Divine Providence, 515 S.W. 24th Street, San Antonio, TX 78207-4619.



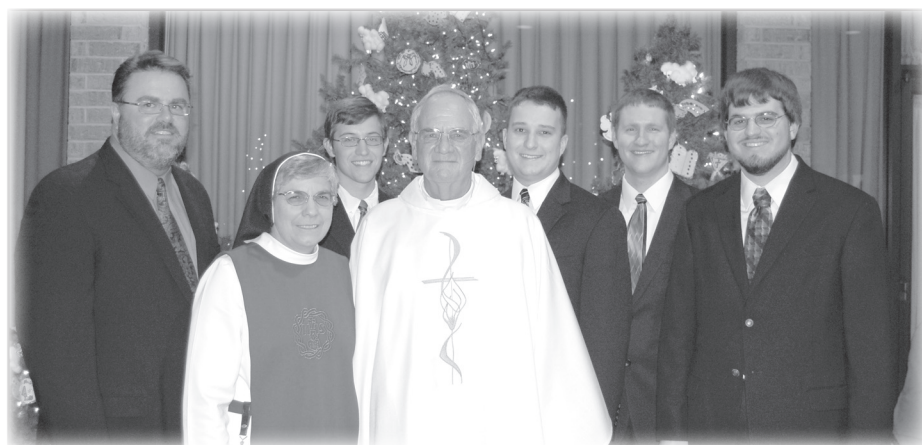
Father Richard Filice

Rev. Richard Filice, 63, pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Violet, Texas, passed away December 19, 2008. He was ordained in Philadelphia, Penn., in 1976 by Bishop Murphy, and at the age of 40 joined the Diocese of Corpus Christi. He has served most recently in the Diocese of Corpus Christi as pastor of St. Andrew by the Sea Catholic Church and St. Anthony Catholic Church.

He served in the Diocese of Victoria at Our Lady of Victory in Victoria and St. Rose of Lima in Schulenburg during the 1980s.

Father Filice was the son of the late Charles and Shirley Filice. Surviving are his sister, Donna Jean Vitas, and brothers Randy Filice and Daryl Filice, and five nieces and nephews.

Funeral Mass was celebrated on December 22, at St. Anthony Church in Violet with Bishop Edmond Carmody as celebrant and burial was at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Worth, Illinois.



Seminarians and a religious sister were honored at the 2008 Serra Club Christmas Party. From left: Patrick Knippenberg, Shiner; Sister Louise Marie Jones (IWBS), Victoria; Sean Breeden, Bay City; Bishop David E. Fellhauer; Scott Hill, Mentz; Jacob Koether, Bay City; and Philip Brune, Frelsburg. E.J. Gutierrez, Wharton, was unable to attend the event.

Seminarians and religious honored

By Joann Bleier

The Serra Club of Victoria held their annual Christmas party at Holy Family Catholic Church on December 30, 2008, honoring six seminarians and Sister Louise Marie Jones, in formation at Incarnate Word Convent. Approximately 150 Serans and guests were in attendance.

The evening began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop David E. Fellhauer and concelebrated by Msgr. Eustace Hermes, chaplain of the Victoria Club; Father Greg Korenek, pastor of Holy Family; Father Bob Knippenberg, Shiner; Father Casey Jarzombek, Bay City; Father Dan Morales, diocese vocation director, Port Lavaca; Father John Peters, chaplain for the Northwest Serra Club, Hallettsville; Father Michael Rother, Hallettsville; and Father Don Hayden, chaplain at Incarnate Word Convent.

The seminarians provided the music, served as cantors, lectors, and Mass servers. After Mass, a short social time was

followed by a covered-dish meal hosted by the Victoria Serra Club.

Nuns from the Incarnate Word Congregation attending with Sister Louise Marie were Sisters Evelyn Korenek, Mildred Truchard, Marietta Hajdek and Amata Hollas.

Also, honored were members who received year-pins for their service to the club. Two members were especially honored for being 50-year and charter members: Dr. R. A. Stevenson and the late Ervin Vrazel. Ervin was a very dedicated member having served as president and in many other capacities. He will truly be missed.

President Otto Bleier, assisted by District Governor Joann Bleier, presented pins to the following 10-year members: Gerald Bludau, Robert Bochat, Dr. Mary Finehout, Kenneth French, Joe Jurica, Chris Krejci, John Stevenson and Lisa and Tom Null; 25-year pins were given to Joe Pustka, Hal Redmon, George Totah and Henry Schroeder.




Serra Club of Victoria honored its charter members at the 2008 Serra Club Christmas Party at Holy Family Parish in Victoria. Otto Bleier, president of Serra Club of Victoria, presented 50-year pins to Gladys Vrazel, wife of the late Ervin Vrazel, who accepted the pin on behalf of her husband, and Dr. R. A. Stevenson. Pictured are Bishop Fellhauer, Otto Bleier, Gladys Vrazel, Dr. Stevenson, Msgr. Eustace Hermes and District Deputy Joann Bleier.

Diocese of Victoria 2008 Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA) Update as of 12-31-2008

Diocesan Goal	\$1,282,100.00
Number of Parishes Participating	66
Number of Potential Donors	23,248
Number of Donors Participating	3,796
Total Amount Pledged	\$741,504.97
Total Amount Contributed	\$732,196.69
Percent of Diocesan Goal	57%
Percent of Diocesan Participation	16%
Average Gift	\$192

Congratulations to the 13 parishes who met or exceeded their goal; the money exceeding their goal will be returned to them. Parishes that did not reach their goal through their parishioner's contributions will make up the difference from their parish funds. Thank you for your support of this yearly financial appeal which supports the works and activities of the diocese that directly serves you.

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).



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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 December 31, 2008

	TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$ 92,934.00
In memory of Ervin Vrazel by:	
Bob & Minnie Bochat	25.00
Mrs. Pat Hessler	20.00
M/M Claud Jacobs	100.00
In memory of Florence Bryant by:	
Mrs. Pat Hessler	20.00
Bob, John, Tom & Dan Ortbal	60.00
Clara Shoff	50.00
M/M Frank O. Fox	60.00
Dona Fox	60.00
Gift to burse by Romanus & Helen Stuekerjuergen	1,000.00
Total	\$94,329.00

— Rev. John C. Bily Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$7,484.00
In memory of Sylvia Dusek by Rita and Franklin Addicks	20.00
In memory of Gene Vacek by Annette & Richard Coever	100.00
Total	\$7,604.00

— Catholic Daughters of America Our Lady Queen of Peace Court #1374	
Previously reported	\$3,478.72
In honor of Goddaughter Kimberly Witcher by Tommy & Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Godson Kody Witcher by Tommy & Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Godson Troy Riha by Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Godson Lee Orr by Tommy & Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Godson Toby Riha by Tommy & Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Lindsey Riha by Carol Turner	20.00
In honor of Scott Kulcak by Tommy Turner	20.00
In honor of Will Orr by Tommy Turner	20.00
In honor of Lee Orr by Tommy Turner	20.00
In honor of G.H. & Betty Parma by Godson Justin Turner	20.00
In honor of Chris Goerig by Justin Turner	20.00
Total	\$3,698.72

— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann #369 Seminary Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$6,283.99
In memory of Helen Janca by M/M Benjamin Matus	10.00
Total	\$6,293.99

— Rev. Sean Donohue Seminary Burse #2	
Previously reported	\$4,074.36
In memory of Vlasta Kovar by Bernard & Madeline Rother	25.00
Total	\$4,099.36

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council #1329 Seminary Burse #3	
Previously reported	\$8,107.50
In memory of Herbert Schoener Sr. and Joseph Lee Waer by K of C #1329	200.00
Total	\$8,307.50

— Knights of Columbus Holy Family Victoria Council #9088 Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$520.00
Donation from KC Holy Family Council #9088	200.00
Total	\$720.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4	
Previously reported	\$3,654.00
In honor of Fr. John Peters' 60th birthday by Gene & Irene Cerny	100.00
Best wishes for a joyful Christmas season and blessed new year from Angela Hermes	25.00
In memory of Adela Pohl and Timothy Kostelnik by KJZT Society No. 2	10.00
Total	\$3,789.00

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Seminary	
Previously reported	\$11,289.50
In memory of M/M Frank A. Stryk and Sr. Robert Lev by Dan Stryk	100.00
In memory of Joe R. Svatek by M/M Lad V. Muras	15.00
Total	\$11,404.50

— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,298.00
Donation to burse by Ervin & Catherine Buchta	10.00
Total	\$6,308.00

— Rev. Msgr. Stanley Petru Burse	
Previously reported	25.00
To honor Msgr. Stanley Petru by:	
M/M Robert B. Kallus	60.00
M/M Theo Svec	20.00
M/M Ralph J. Goerig	25.00
M/M Benedict Kallus	60.00
M/M Steven Kallus	20.00
M/M E. F. Muras	50.00
M/M Harold Fietsam	15.00
M/M V. T. Richter	25.00
M/M Clarence Faldyn	30.00
KJT No. 3	250.00
Total	\$580.00

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

A rancher's journey to the diaconate

Milburn Kram, and his wife, Marian, are parishioners of St. Joseph Parish in Moulton. They have three adult sons and six grandchildren. He and his youngest son have been self-employed ranchers for the past 24 years. Milburn will be ordained as a permanent deacon in 2009. He was interviewed by *The Catholic Lighthouse* in December 2008.

When did you first think about becoming a deacon for the church, and how did you go about looking further into the possibility?

Only God knows the plan of life for each of us. I have been actively involved in several ministries of the church since 1972 when I returned to the rural area of Moulton from which my family came. My first serious thoughts of entering the diaconate came about five and one-half years ago when Father Gabriel, my pastor and the diaconate director, spoke to me regarding the diaconate. He explained the requirements of entering the program, the recommendation required, and a letter stating my interest in the program.

When did your journey begin?

Our Catholic faith is filled with beautiful ritual and prayer, which touch people's hearts to great depth. Over the years, being involved in the ministries of lector, extraordinary minister of the Eucharist at Mass and with the homebound, and performing vigil services and rosaries for the deceased have made it very clear to me as to how well the guidance of the church serves humankind. One of the most rewarding ministries for me has been performing the Communion Service outside of Mass for our local nursing home. As I look back, it seems that the Holy Spirit was moving me step by step to this point without my knowledge of it, also creating in me a desire for a deeper knowledge of my faith and service to God. The question that always seemed to lurk in my mind was: Would I be worthy of this position in our Church? I have come to realize that the answer is to be left to God's judgment and that I need only to have faith in Jesus, his son, and follow his ways to the best of my ability in my day to day ordinary life.

How has Father Gabriel Maison helped you?

Father Gabriel is the type of person who believes that if something is worth doing, you do it to the best of your ability. Formation of a person in the diaconate is necessary, and his guidance to do this is excellent. He has helped me in numerous ways through the program to achieve goals I could not have accomplished alone. He sets high standards and demands, but will be the first to help when the need arises. I have been fortunate to have his help not only in the diaconate but also as my personal pastor for the past eighteen years.

What were your spouse's first thoughts/words when you told her of your interest?

Over the years others have encouraged me to enter the diaconate, which Marian was aware of, but due to a schedule of the many hours as a self-employed rancher in partnership with my youngest son, I did not give it serious consideration, which I now have come to understand as one of the major mistakes of many that I have

made in my life. Five and one-half years ago when Marian approached me and told me that if I were interested in entering the diaconate, she would support me, although at first not fully understanding, she

was apprehensive of the program. We discussed what the commitment would mean in our lives and family, and I was accepted into the program. Shortly after entering the program and learning what the journey would be like, her doubts slowly disappeared, and with her deep faith, a lot of prayers and the intervention of the Holy Spirit, we are walking the journey



Milburn and Marian Kram

together.

What have been some of the greatest joys of the journey?

The joys have been many. The wonderful spiritual formation taught to us by Michael Fonseca from Michigan whose knowledge knows no bounds, who spends time with us once a month, and also serves as the director of our silent, spiritual retreats has brought God into our hearts and minds. The professors from St. Thomas School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston have been outstanding and have gone out of their way to help us acquire the needed knowledge. Also encouragement and prayers that have come from family, friends and fellow parishioners have been great.

What have been some of the most difficult times of your journey/schooling/etc.?

The only difficult time that I had to encounter was when, due to health problems during a semester I found myself studying out of a hospital bed to keep up my academics. With the help of Father Gabriel, the university, and my fellow classmates, things worked out fine. It is with challenges of this nature in my life that God seems to bring the strength that we need through the hands of others. It also helped me to realize how totally dependent we are on God.

What are you most looking forward to about your ordination?

I look forward to service to others through the guidance of the Church and the Holy Spirit. Through my studies and spiritual formation, I have come to understand that this is just the beginning of the learning process that is before me. One of the duties of the deacon is to proclaim the Gospel. At ordination, the bishop hands the candidates the Book of Gospels and states: "Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." With the help of the Holy Spirit, I pray that I may fulfill this duty.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about the ministry of the diaconate?

The talents we use in our occupation and life are many. They are God's gift to us, and sometimes we fail to recognize their presence for many years, or until God brings about a situation or time in our life that will bring these talents out. I would encourage anyone with interest in service to the Church to contact his pastor, or the diaconate director for information regarding the program. This may be one of the

See A rancher's journey, p. 6

Historical

St. Mary's Church

Victoria, Texas

The First Catholic Parish in the New Republic of Texas

Annual Parish Festival

Cake Wheel • Concessions • Bingo • Silent Auction
Jewelry • Plants • Country Store • Children's Games
Barbeque Brisket & Sausage and Great Side Dishes
Serving 11:00am - 1:30 pm • Adults \$7 • Kids \$4

Sunday, February 8 • 10:30 am - 6:00 pm

Victoria Community Center

LIVE AUCTION BEGINS AT 12:30
Quilts • Antiques • Collectibles • Crystal
Religious Items • Memberships • Baked Goods
Sporting/Hunting Items

"No Sunday Mass At Community Center"

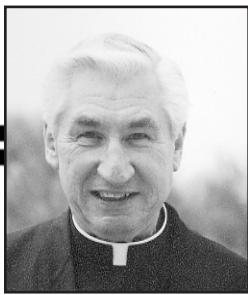
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FAITH POINT

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

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



What God Has Put Asunder Let No Man Join Together

California has recently passed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriages. Gay activists who lost the election, in an outbreak of the tolerance they cry for, went ballistic. An event that is a metaphor for the nastiness of gay reaction involved an old lady peacefully demonstrating while carrying a large Styrofoam cross. Gays ripped the cross from her hands and stomped it into tiny pieces.

Gays have made threats against the Mormon church with signs calling Mormons “hateful” and “bigoted” although many Christian, Jewish, and presumably Muslim groups supported the ban. By luck

many blacks who voted 96% for Barack Obama for President also voted 70% in favor of the ban. It is likely that these votes were decisive for the outcome. Oddly, little gay venom has been directed against them.

Gays are waging an effective propaganda war trying to show same-sex marriage is a civil right. They equate the ban to an earlier ban on interracial marriage. The analogy trivializes the black struggle against real discrimination. “Don’t compare your sin to my skin,” goes the African-American mantra. Race is irrelevant to marriage whereas gender is essential to it. Our laws should be color blind but not gender blind.

Homosexuals believe that they are being discriminated against because their sexual desires should give them special rights. That is preposterous. If desires guarantee someone special rights then we must give special rights to pedophiles, polygamists, incestuous persons, bisexuals, those who practice bestiality, alcoholics, drug addicts... and gay bashers.

Desires are irrelevant in making laws. We enact all kinds of law that conflict with some people’s desires, e.g., against rape, stealing, etc. The desires of some are precisely why laws are necessary. Behaviors and not desires are what matter in making laws. Homosexuals want the law to promote their behavior. If they can get the government to call their deviation “marriage” they can force approval

of it on others. If heterosexuality and homosexuality are both marriage, then they are equally acceptable. They can also use the law as a club to beat homosexual values into our school children, businesses, charities,

practice of medicine, and even our religious pronouncements. The debate on same-sex marriage has nothing to do with civil rights, hatred, or bigotry but whether it would be good or bad for the country.

The media are allies in the gay propaganda campaign. Recently Newsweek magazine published a cover story, “The Religious Case for Gay Marriage,” in which it tried to show that the Bible is not a good guide to marriage. Newsweek says the Bible has many forms of marriage. True, but marriage is procreative and unambiguously heterosexual. The writer, Lisa Miller, says that the Bible does not explicitly define marriage as between one man and one woman. Perhaps she should read Genesis 2:24-25 and Matthew 19:1-8 which make no sense unless marriage between one man and one woman is normative. Miller quotes the Anchor Bible as maintaining that nowhere in the Bible is there a reference to sex between women. How about Romans 1:26-27? For someone to comment on the Bible should not reading it be a minimum requirement?

Gay activists ask, “How can legalizing homosexual marriage do any harm? Let me count the ways just in Massachusetts. There are now school-wide assemblies to celebrate same-sex marriage day. Lesbianism is discussed in middle schools.

Kindergarteners are taught that same-sex couples are just another kind of family. Second graders were read a book, King and King, about two men marrying one another. A federal judge ruled that schools have an obligation to teach the normalcy of homosexual relations—parents’ values be damned. School libraries display books celebrating homosexual marriage. Gay teachers bring their “spouses” to school functions. “Gay Days” celebrate homosexuality to combat “homophobia.” The Massachusetts Department of Public Health distributes a book of obscene pornography which teaches students how to perform gay sex. Businesses must recognize same-sex “married” couples in all their benefits and activities. The wedding industry, photographers, halls, caterers, etc. must serve the homosexual community or be arrested for discrimination. Catholic Charities of Boston abandoned handling adoptions because the law requires them to allow homosexuals to adopt children in their care. Justices of the Peace must perform homosexual marriages or be fired. And the homosexuals have only just begun. Watch for the day when condemning homosexuality will be a hate crime.

Marriage exists for what it does for society, namely, propagate our species and civilization. Marriage is given recognition in law because spouses undertake great responsibilities for the continuation of the society and is irreplaceable. Homosexuality does not fulfill the essential purposes of marriage. Cohabiting homosexuals offer no compelling interest to society. Marriage is not for tax breaks or inheritance benefits or even for love. If a coupling by definition can never propagate there is no reason to call it marriage. Redefining marriage to accommodate homosexuals would mean that sex has no meaning beyond pleasure. If marriage is stripped of its openness to children there will be more illegitimate births with their attendant social pathology.

Healthy households are found mainly where children live with their biological parents in a low-conflict marriage, not in gay households. Domestic violence among homosexual pairs is rampant. Homosexuals have double and triple the rate of drug abuse, alcoholism, and depression of heterosexuals. Gays are fourteen times more likely to commit suicide. The risk of sexual abuse in homosexual households is fifty times greater than in heterosexual households.

Homosexuals maintain that they were “born that way” and therefore God wants them to be gay. No genetic component for homosexuality has been found and some gays have changed. But even if persons are “born that way” it should have no impact on marriage laws. Everyone is born a specific gender. Why do homosexuals follow their desires rather than their gender which is stamped into their being at the DNA level?

The movement to legalize gay marriage is an attempt to put a cosmetic face on an abnormal and destructive lifestyle. Homosexual acts are sterile and make no sense to nature and are therefore rightly called unnatural. Gay marriage should be banned because homosexuality is a public health disaster that often leads to disease and death. It is more dangerous than a lifetime of chain smoking. Life expectancy at age 20 years for gay and bisexual men is eight to 20 years less than for all men. It is more a “deathstyle” than a “lifestyle.” Although self-identified homosexuals are less than 5 percent of the population they are carriers of over 50 percent of HIV/AIDS. It is insane to argue that homosexuality is a perfectly normal and healthy alternative sexual orientation. Gays have astronomically higher rates of STDs than the rest of the population. The Hepatitis B virus is about five to six times more prevalent among gays and Hepatitis C is twice as common. Gays who may be only two percent of the population account for 64 percent of all syphilis cases. Perhaps homophobia should be redefined to mean the very rational fear that homosexuality kills.

The taxpayer burden for medical care of homosexuals runs into the billions of dollars. A typical homosexual male in San Diego County costs about \$60,000 annually in public funds. Not only do gays want us to accept their depraved lifestyle, they also want us to pay for the completely avoidable diseases that they contract.

The US spends millions of dollars to dissuade people from smoking and yet spends billions promoting and subsidizing homosexuality, which is far more dangerous. Secularists never allow reality to intrude on their ideology.

Approving and celebrating homosexuality is nothing short of educational and governmental malpractice. It is not hatred or bigotry to refuse to promote homosexuality by giving it marital status. It is love to dissuade homosexuals from their destructive behavior.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor and Readers:

Wish you a very happy Christmas and bright New Year. There are five thousand children and three schools in my residential area. Kindly help me by sending pens, pencils, rosaries, used cards and used magazines and statues for the children. I am grateful to you for helping me for missionary work in the past years.

We shall be praying for you in return. Please help.

Love and blessings,
Father Paul Cruz
P. O. Box – 691571
Kottiyam – P O
Kollam – 691 571
Kerala – India

Heritage Center / Pathways with Patti

Mystery Tour - ????

Going Somewhere March 26-31 by Motor Coach \$1,095 p/p based on double

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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.

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A knight of Texas history

Director of Presidio La Bahia honored by the Sons of the Republic of Texas

By Madeline Lewis - The Victoria Advocate / mlewis@vicad.com

GOLIAD — For many years, Newton Warzecha wasn't that interested in Texas history.

"When I was a child studying it, I did like so many others do and I didn't study it enough," he said.

This changed about 17 years ago when Mr. Warzecha agreed to take over as director of the national historic landmark, the Presidio La

ed in the order during its more than 160 years of existence, Dunbar said. Sam Houston founded it when Texas was still an independent republic.

"At the time, Texas had nothing," Dunbar said. "We were trying to be something."

When Mr. Warzecha heard about the Sons of the Republic's decision, he felt honored.

"It is recognition for the work that I have done

in preserving and keeping the history of Texas," he said.

A Cuero native, Mr. Warzecha spent much of his professional life as a financial advisor in Corpus Christi. In 1988, he returned to the Crossroads area to work as a general manager at KAVU-TV in Victoria, but left this position a few years later when the television station was sold.

"Then I had time," he said.

He volunteered to help the Catholic Diocese in Victoria come up with a plan to run the Presidio affordably. In May

1991, the diocese asked him to accept the directorship of the historic site until it found a permanent replacement.

"In 17 years, they haven't found someone else - so I'm stuck here," he said, laughing.

Warzecha worked on making the Presidio self-supporting and adding to and improving its programs.

When he took the job, 800 people attended the annual Goliad Massacre Fort Defiance Living History Weekend in March. Now, about 5,000 go to the event, which generates as much as 12 percent of the Presidio's yearly operating income.



Knight Commander Al Davis IV knights Newton Warzecha, director of Presidio La Bahia, a Knight of the Order of San Jacinto December 6, 2008. This is the highest honor bestowed by the Sons of the Republic of Texas. (Inset) Newly Knighted Newton Warzecha stands with Bishop David E. Fellhauer.

Bahia. Now, he is an avid history buff who received the knighthood of the Knights of the Order of San Jacinto on December 6, 2008.

"One of the reasons that we made him an honorary member is all the work he has done preserving history at the Presidio," said Scott Dunbar, an order member.

Dunbar nominated Mr. Warzecha at the December meeting of the Sons of the Republic of Texas. Three-fourths of the membership must vote to knight a fellow member. In April, members voted unanimously in his favor.

Fewer than 230 men have been knight-

About The Sons of the Republic of Texas

The Sons of the Republic of Texas is a perpetually chartered Texas non-profit corporation with more than 4,000 members in 58 chartered chapters in Texas. One chapter is in Santa Fe, N.M.

The first Sons of the Republic of Texas was formed on April 21, 1893, at Richmond by several sons and grandsons of veterans of the Texas Revolution. Their main purpose was to accompany the Texas Veterans Association members to their annual reunions. The Texas Veterans Association ceased to exist when its last member, Alphonso Steele, died in 1911. With the demise of the Texas Veterans Association, the Sons of the Republic of Texas slowly became inactive.

On March 2, 1922, the group was reorganized. Its revitalization was due in a large part by the realization that Texas heritage would not be remembered without

constant reminders to the community.

Membership requirements for the group were broadened to include any male being a direct descendant of a resident of the Republic of Texas.

Some of the group's accomplishments include:

1936, instrumental in the design and construction of the San Jacinto Monument and museum.

1957, influenced the Texas legislature to fund the construction of the Texas State Library and Archive Building.

2003, worked with other historical organizations and legislature to designate March as Texas History Month.

2005, led the movement for the Texas Legislature to designate the third Saturday in September as Texian Navy Day.

Source: Sons of the Republic of Texas (<http://www.srptexas.org>)

There are several goals Mr. Warzecha plans to accomplish before he leaves the Presidio. He wants to publish a detailed report of the site's archeology and artifact collection in time for the Living History Weekend. This collection contains about 10,000 items that go as far back as 1749, when the Presidio was first established.

Later on, he plans to digitize the objects, so that Internet browsers can view them on the Web, and redesign the museum at the Presidio. Both efforts will require a lot of fundraising.

"We are looking at something under a million dollars," he said.

To assist in this effort, the Presidio La Bahia Foundation was created more than a year ago. Mr. Warzecha is president of this organization.

His knighting ceremony took place

on Saturday, December 6, 2008, in Our Lady of Loreto Chapel at the Presidio. It coincided with the Presidio La Bahia Award ceremony, an annual event during which the Sons of the Republic recognize two works about Texas history.

Mr. Warzecha won the award in 2001 for his 54-minute video, "Presidio La Bahia and Its Place in the History of Texas."

"We all need to understand what happens when a dictator runs amok," he said.

This year, both prize-winning entries were also about Goliad - Dr. Malcolm McLean's translation of the minutes of the town council meetings of La Bahia and Goliad between 1821 and 1835, "Voices from the Goliad Frontier," and Jay Stout's history, "Slaughter at Goliad."



Each member of the 2007-2008 Our Lady of Victory Girl Scout Troop 9557 from Victoria received the Junior Girl Scouts highest award, the Girl Scout Bronze Award, December 13. The junior scouts are, left to right, back row: Isabella Aparicio, Emma Andruss, Haley van Slooten, Iris Young, Danielle Malik, Olivia Creager, Emily Omecinski; kneeling in front: Natalie Brown, Faith Barton and Sarah Andruss.

OLV Junior Scouts earn highest award

At an awards ceremony December 13, 2008, each member of the 2007-2008 Our Lady of Victory Girl Scout Troop 9557 received the Junior Girl Scout's highest award, the Girl Scout Bronze Award.

The Girl Scout Bronze Award was introduced in the year 2000 in an effort to challenge girls to fully live out the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The Bronze Award recognizes a girl's commitment to excellence as she develops new skills in leadership and service. It is a noteworthy accomplishment that the entire Our Lady of Victory troop completed the requirements to earn this award. The girls performed a combined total of over 150 service hours in order to earn this award.

The troop began planning for this award in February of 2008. To earn the award, each girl had to complete two Girl Scout badges related to their chosen project, spend many hours developing their leadership skills, and earn a Girl Scout sign based on the goals of Girl Scouting.

The final requirement for the award was to design and carry out a community service project demonstrating a Girl Scout's promise to help others, improve the community, and to do her best.

For their project, the girls planned, designed, and hosted a sports and drama field day on September 6 for younger Girl Scouts. The field day included activities, such as obstacle courses, relay races, karaoke, face painting, and charades. A special highlight of the event was a demonstration on how to apply clown make up.

Our Lady of Victory Troop 9557 members receiving the Girl Scout Bronze Award included the following young ladies: Our Lady of Victory students Natalie Brown, Olivia Creager, Danielle Malik, Emily Omecinski, Haley van Slooten, Iris Young; and Immaculate Heart Home School Students: Emma Andruss, Sarah Andruss, Isabella Aparicio, and Faith Barton.

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Pastoral Institute to Offer

Introduction to the New Testament, The Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles

February 17 — March 31



This Lent, walk in the footsteps of Jesus as you study, reflect upon, and discuss the Synoptic Gospels: Mark, Matthew and Luke.

Sister Digna Vela, IWBS, will introduce the New Testament and explore how the Gospels came to be written and what the Scriptures have to say for our lives today.

Classes will be offered at the chancery in Victoria and at Holy Rosary in Hostyn by means of distant learning on Tuesdays from 9:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 7:00 p.m. to 9:15

p.m. Registration is \$15.00. Bibles are available for \$35.00. For more information call 361-573-0828 or visit www.victoriadiocese.org

Second Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl

Sunday, January 25, 2009
1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Holy Family Parish, Victoria

It's not too late to register for the Diocese of Victoria's Second Annual Catholic Knowledge Bowl, which is being sponsored by the catechetical office.

This year adult, family, and teen groups can enter this fun, energy-filled event. Last year over 120 persons (31 teams) took part in the first-ever Adult Catholic Knowledge Bowl.

A team is made of four members in the following categories

- **Adult teams** (anyone over the age of 18 and not in high school)
- **Teen teams** (teens between the ages of 13-18 who are still in school)
- **Family teams** (adults with at least one or more children)
- Clergy, religious, chancery staff, and Knowledge Bowl committee members are not eligible to be on a team.

Registration Information:

Cost: \$20 per team

Deadline: January 21, 2009

Register by calling 361-573-0828 or visit www.victoriadiocese.org

Study questions and answers for the Knowledge Bowl can be found on the diocesan web page.

Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each of the divisions.

- K - Knowledge you can share
- N - Neat way to enrich your faith life
- O - Opportunity to learn
- W - Wonderful way to have fun
- L - Let the Holy Spirit lead you
- E - Enjoy being with friends
- D - Dare to take the challenge
- G - Great for adults, teens, and families
- E - Enjoy the rewards of learning

Come enjoy a day of fellowship, fun, and learning with Bishop Fellhauer and others from around the diocese!

Charismatic Healing Mass

Wednesday, February 4
Celebrant: Fr. Stan De Boe
Our Lady of Sorrows Church
208 W. River St., Victoria
Rosary 7:00 p.m. / Mass 7:30 p.m.
Adoration • Praising • Singing

Holy Family Catechism Contest announced

The Holy Family CCD Program in Victoria has scheduled its Fourth Annual Catechism Contest for Saturday, Feb. 28, 2009, with more and bigger prizes being offered by Knights of Columbus Council 9088.

The classroom written test will be given on Wednesday, Feb. 11, and Sunday, Feb. 15.

Thanks to the generosity of The Knights of Columbus, the 1st place winners in Grades 1-8 will be given \$100. The 2nd and 3rd place winners in each grade will receive \$25, and the 4th place winners in each grade will receive \$10.

Study booklets were distributed to all students in Grades 1-8. Parents are encouraged to study ten minutes each night with their children making this a family project. Parents have indicated that while studying with their children, they, too, learned a lot about the Catholic Faith. High school students will not participate in our contest this year because they have been invited to participate in the Diocese Knowledge Bowl on January 25.

Diocese of Victoria Library & Media Center

Happy New Year!

Individually or as a family make time for reading or watching videos or DVDs about the Catholic faith. Explore topics such as Scripture, the lives of the saints, prayer, sacraments, and much more.

Books

- Your One-Stop Guide to the Bible
- The Seeker's Guide to Building a Christian Marriage
- Did Adam & Eve Have Belly Buttons?
- Essentials for Christian Living
- God Knows Parenting is a Wild Ride
- Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of Your Adolescent

- The Angel's Mass Lesson
- Catholic Basics for Kids
- Bridge to Forgiveness
- Paul the Apostle
- Church Without Borders
- Close Encounters with the Sacraments
- The Gospel of Mark
- What Catholics Believe About Prayer

Go to www.victoriadiocese.org to browse our on-line library catalog, or for more information email calvarez@victoriadiocese.org.

Videos/DVDs

Natural Family Planning Institute Feb 5-8

SAN ANTONIO—The Office of Marriage and Family Life and Natural Family Planning of the Archdiocese of San Antonio will be hosting a four-day Master Teacher Institute Training February 5 – 8, 2009.

Mercedes Arzú Wilson, founder of the Family of the Americas Foundation and one of the most experienced instructors, nationally and international, in the field of Natural Family Planning will be conducting the training in both Spanish and English. This training is for women and couples committed to becoming Master Teachers at the parish, deanery or diocese level.

The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning is not the old "rhythm method" or the temperature method. It is based on the simple recognition of natural signs of fertility that appear for a few days during the woman's cycle. God placed these signs in the woman's body to enable her and her husband to knowingly choose to bring new life into the world or to postpone pregnancy while respecting God's Natural Law and Divine Law.

The Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning is practiced in over 100 countries because it is:

- Completely natural
- Easy to learn and follow
- 98-99% effective in postponing a pregnancy
- effective for women with regular or

irregular cycles

- helpful for couples struggling with infertility to conceive
- strengthening marriages
- ideal in helping women discontinue the use of contraception
- teaching women to know and recognize their short period of fertility – approx. 100 hours in each cycle
- giving knowledge and understanding to married couples about the wisdom of the teachings of the Catholic Church

This form of family planning is the only positive form especially now that artificial methods of birth control, sterilization and abortion have demonstrated how harmful – physically, morally and spiritually – they have been to women, marriages and family life.

To register please contact the Office of Marriage and Family Life at (210) 734-2620 or go to: <http://www.archdiossa.org/familylife/> and click on Natural Family Planning.

"The work of educating in the service of life involves the training of married couples in responsible procreation. In its true meaning, responsible procreation requires couples to be obedient to the Lord's call and to act as faithful interpreters of His plan."

Evangelium Vitae
(The Gospel of Life) Pope John Paul II
1995

A rancher's journey to the diaconate

Continued from p. 3

special talents that God has given to you.

Do you have children? How many / how old are they?

We have three sons and are blessed with six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Two of our sons, four grandchildren and the two great-grandchildren live within a five-mile radius of us, with the last son and two grandchildren living in the Houston area.

What is your profession/job? How has your journey/ministry affected your work?

I am a self-employed rancher in partnership with my youngest son for the past twenty-four years. My journey has affected my work in that it has helped me to gain much more patience and acceptance of problems I face in my daily life, as well as being more thankful to God for his creation of the nature that surrounds us and

provides for us. Also I am very thankful for my son who when I need time to devote to service in the church, has always been there to help in my absence.

Any special thoughts? Stories?

The time in this journey has created a very special relationship with all of the diaconate candidates and their spouses and has bonded us into a diaconate family. I am thankful for the support of Father Gabriel and the encouragement of family, friends and St. Joseph parishioners during my journey. Almost all of the practice and growth of our faith for Marian and myself has been at St Joseph where we received all the sacraments and worshiped our God for these many years. The only remaining sacrament for me would be Holy Orders. I am grateful for the support of my wife during this journey, as well as for the companionship and support she has given to me in our marriage of 50 years.

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.



Diocese of Victoria Reflection of Faith Capital Campaign Update as of 12-31-2008

Thank you for your on-going support of the Diocese of Victoria Capital Campaign. Your generosity has allowed the Diocese of Victoria to complete the renovation of the Chapel at the Spiritual Renewal Center

as well as begin the new construction of the multi-purpose building. In addition, your generosity has supported the Priest Retirement Fund, Religious Education, and the Catholic Education Fund.

Parish Name -Parish City	5-Year Parish Goal	All Totals As of 12-31-2008 Contributions	Rebate
St. John the Baptist - Ammansville	\$19,947.00	\$12,028.16	\$2,405.63
Holy Cross - Bay City	\$326,976.00	\$151,987.91	\$30,397.58
Our Lady of Guadalupe - Bay City	\$144,438.00	\$41,488.12	\$8,297.62
St. Peter - Blessing	\$56,384.00	\$39,403.69	\$7,880.74
St. Joseph - Boling	\$48,652.00	\$24,105.15	\$4,821.03
St. Anthony - Columbus	\$237,050.00	\$123,961.93	\$24,792.39
Our Lady of Guadalupe - Cuero	\$85,269.00	\$5,451.82	\$1,090.36
St. Michael - Cuero	\$211,802.00	\$87,271.62	\$17,454.32
Sts. Cyril and Methodius - Dubina	\$20,060.00	\$18,506.00	\$3,701.20
Parish of the Nativity - Eagle Lake	\$106,677.00	\$29,942.87	\$5,988.57
Holy Cross - East Bernard	\$306,499.00	\$151,999.44	\$30,399.89
St. Agnes - Edna	\$222,893.00	\$121,175.25	\$24,235.05
St. John Nepomucene - New Taiton	\$73,075.00	\$98,153.84	\$27,154.42
St. Philip the Apostle - El Campo	\$593,919.00	\$303,667.29	\$60,733.46
St. Robert Bellarmine - El Campo	\$166,422.00	\$23,706.93	\$4,741.39
Sacred Heart - Flatonia	\$95,047.00	\$41,198.93	\$8,239.79
Sts. Cyril and Methodius - Cistern	\$39,932.00	\$13,330.50	\$2,666.10
Sts. Peter and Paul - Frelsburg	\$150,767.00	\$81,801.50	\$16,360.30
Assumption of the BVM - Ganado	\$165,228.00	\$50,148.15	\$10,029.63
Immaculate Conception - Goliad	\$58,300.00	\$39,169.52	\$7,833.90
St. Mary - St. Mary	\$28,698.00	\$18,483.75	\$3,696.75
Sacred Heart - Hallettsville	\$293,582.00	\$206,286.39	\$41,257.28
St. John the Baptist - St. John	\$21,607.00	\$14,675.21	\$2,935.04
Nativity of the BVM (St. Mary) - High Hill	\$43,057.00	\$29,890.00	\$5,978.00
St. Ann Mission - Hochheim	\$17,276.00	\$8,433.50	\$1,686.70
St. John the Baptist - Hungerford	\$123,823.00	\$98,193.40	\$19,638.68
St. Joseph - Inez	\$63,647.00	\$37,651.79	\$7,530.36
St. John the Baptist - Koerth	\$39,751.00	\$35,377.50	\$7,075.50
Queen of the Holy Rosary - Hostyn	\$113,194.00	\$79,898.00	\$15,979.60
St. Wenceslaus - Holman	\$13,440.00	\$7,295.00	\$1,459.00
St. Theresa - LaSalle	\$22,644.00	\$4,385.06	\$877.01
St. Robert - Markham	\$23,793.00	\$13,027.00	\$2,605.40
St. Roch - Mentz	\$108,456.00	\$43,407.23	\$8,681.45
Sts. Peter and Paul - Meyersville	\$62,670.00	\$32,792.04	\$6,558.41
Ascension of our Lord - Moravia	\$27,666.00	\$13,923.52	\$2,784.70
St. Joseph - Moulton	\$87,194.00	\$33,272.25	\$6,654.45
Nativity of the BVM (St. Mary) - Nada	\$88,854.00	\$49,668.55	\$9,933.71
St. Anthony of Padua - Palacios	\$142,729.00	\$41,242.11	\$8,248.42
Sts. Peter and Paul - Plum	\$54,742.00	\$35,579.65	\$7,115.93
St. Ann - Point Comfort	\$26,299.00	\$16,977.09	\$3,395.42
Our Lady of the Gulf - Port Lavaca	\$286,245.00	\$62,318.44	\$12,463.69
St. Joseph - Port O'Connor	\$28,221.00	\$5,375.82	\$1,075.16
St. Rose of Lima - Schulenburg	\$247,191.00	\$97,634.28	\$19,526.86
St. Patrick - Seadrift	\$17,116.00	\$8,370.00	\$1,674.00
Sts. Cyril and Methodius - Shiner	\$413,481.00	\$183,756.55	\$36,751.31
Queen of Peace - Sweet Home	\$66,045.00	\$39,097.00	\$7,819.40
St. John Bosco - Vanderbilt	\$37,186.00	\$8,239.33	\$1,647.87
Diocese of Victoria, Chancery - Victoria	\$-	\$10,776.90	No Rebate
Holy Family - Victoria	\$757,222.00	\$523,056.93	\$104,611.39
Our Lady of Lourdes - Victoria	\$163,782.00	\$187,293.63	\$44,512.22
Our Lady of Sorrows - Victoria	\$417,057.00	\$44,411.95	\$8,882.39
Our Lady of Victory Cathedral - Victoria	\$639,747.00	\$641,124.51	\$128,638.16
St. Mary - Victoria	\$270,965.00	\$394,342.82	\$115,881.91
Sacred Heart - Wadsworth	\$-	\$965.00	\$193.00
St. Michael - Weimar	\$157,733.00	\$169,097.30	\$37,228.75
St. Aloysius - Westhoff	\$17,730.00	\$6,580.00	\$1,316.00
Holy Family - Wharton	\$177,803.00	\$201,701.37	\$47,509.79
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel - Wharton	\$130,087.00	\$26,958.57	\$5,391.71
St. Joseph - Yoakum	\$132,486.00	\$124,899.25	\$24,979.85
Holy Cross - Yorktown	\$97,988.00	\$40,770.13	\$8,154.03
San Luis Mission -Yorktown	\$27,360.00	\$3,206.19	\$641.24
St. Ann - Nordheim	\$3,220.00	\$700.00	\$140.00
TOTALS	\$8,879,361.00	\$5,087,211.54	\$1,072,353.89

Built into the Capital Campaign is a financial rebate for each parish. Parishes receive a 20% rebate for contributions up to their parish goal. Once contributions exceed their parish goal, parishes receive a 50% rebate for all contributions received. To date, \$1,072,353.89 has been rebated back to the parishes for their needs. Congratulations to the following six parishes: St. John Nepomucene (New Taiton), Our Lady of Lourdes (Victoria), Our Lady of Victory Cathedral (Victoria), St. Mary (Victoria), St. Michael (Weimar) and Holy

Family (Wharton) whose contributions have exceeded their parish goal and thus these parishes are receiving a rebate of 50% of all contributions received.

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).

Capital Campaign Fund brings SRC chapel to completion

Continued from p. 1

windows have been added.

On December 10, 2008, Bishop David E. Fellhauer dedicated and blessed the chapel at a Mass with the diocesan religious and clergy present. On the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12, the chapel provided the site for a “day of reflection” led by the administrator of the center, Ron Friedel, for chancery staff. And the renovation was completed in

time for Bishop Fellhauer’s 10th annual Christmas dinner at the Spiritual Renewal Center. Prior to the dinner, which was attended by the largest number of donors since the first fund-raising dinner in 1999, participants were able to see the chapel and attend Mass celebrated by Bishop Fellhauer.

See above for the Capital Campaign’s 2008 financial statement and parish totals.



Alberta Herring of Wal-Mart presents Doris Fenner with a certificate in recognizing her as Wal-Mart’s Teacher of the Year. Wal-Mart also donated a \$1,000 grant to Sacred Heart Catholic School in Fenner’s name. Back row is Father John Peters, Bishop David Fellhauer and Sacred Heart Principal David Smolik. Photo by Kristie Bludau, SHCS.

Sixth Sacred Heart teacher awarded Teacher of the Year

By Jimmy Appelt
Tribune Herald - Staff Writer

HALLETTSVILLE— Sacred Heart Catholic School teacher Doris Fenner was recently selected as the 2008 Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year from Lavaca County. Mrs. Fenner has been teaching junior high math at SHCS in Hallettsville for 27 years and marks the sixth Sacred Heart teacher to receive this honor.

The award presented by the Hallettsville Wal-Mart is given to a Lavaca County public or private school teacher each year and has been the store’s practice for over 15 years.

Mrs. Fenner, who was nominated by fellow teachers, as well as students and parents, handles a number of responsibilities at the school.

Besides teaching math to 5th-8th grade students and serving as the 5th grade homeroom teacher, she also coordinates

the standard testing program for the entire school, as well as junior high academic meets.

Mrs. Fenner also is involved with coordinating Sacred Heart’s participation in district and state academic meets sponsored by the Private School Interscholastic Association.

“Doris is a total team player who does everything possible to see that her students succeed and consistently assists her students in a special way,” Principal David Smolik said.

Planning to continue teaching for a number of years, Mrs. Fenner says she enjoys getting involved with the many things she does at Sacred Heart.

“I really enjoy doing things for other people — I see it as a way of serving others,” she said.

Mrs. Fenner and husband, John, have three children.

National Council of Catholic Women Province to hold winter meeting in Victoria

The winter meeting of the Province of Galveston Houston National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) will be held Saturday, February 7, at the Holy Family Catholic Church Annex in Victoria. The theme for the event will be Women of Faith, Women of Action. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Father David Berger will be the keynote speaker for the event. Father James Stembler, province moderator; Father Michael Petering, Victoria Diocesan moderator; and Eunice Washa, National Region II vice president, will be special guests in attendance.

There will be a silent auction to raise funds for the province. Arch/diocesan presidents will give reports about events held in parishes that address the commissions of the Council of Catholic Women.

Answers to the Quiz on page 12:

1-n, 2-d, 3-r, 4-m, 5-j, 6-f, 7-s, 8-e, 9-b, 10-t, 11-q, 12-h, 13-a, 14-i, 15-o, 16-g, 17-l, 18-p, 19-c, 20-p

The event will end at 4:00 p.m. with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by Most Reverend David Fellhauer. Charlotte Boudreaux, province director Galveston-Houston, invites all women of the Victoria diocese to attend.

Registration/lunch fee will be \$25. Please send your check to Treasurer Kathy Strader, P.O. Box 1391, LaPorte, TX 77572 by January 30. For more information about this event, please contact Janice Ohrt, Victoria Diocese CCW president at (361) 575-2056.

The National Council of Catholic Women consists of more than 5,000 affiliated Catholic women’s organizations in parishes and dioceses throughout the U.S., representing hundreds of thousands of Catholic women. NCCW acts through its membership to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

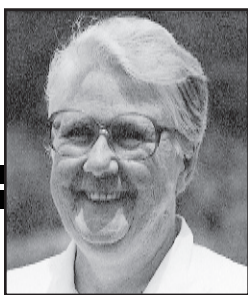
Our Lady of Victory School
National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence 2008

Open House for Pre-K3 through 8th
Monday, January 26, at 6:30 p.m.
School Cafeteria - 1311 E. Mesquite Lane
Prospective families will have an opportunity to learn what OLV has to offer.
For more information, call the school office at 575-5391.



SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



A New Year Brings New Hopes and New Challenges

The New Year gives us an opportunity to hope and dream that this year will be better than the last one. It's a good time to evaluate our lives; we can plan to bring our hopes and dreams to greater realization. As we take time to look about us, we see numerous opportunities that we may never have observed before. We see them because we're in a new space; we've been blessed with new insights and experiences during the past year. If we have been open to the action of God's grace in our lives, we have strengthened our personal relationship with Jesus and with our fellow human beings. Thus, we are more able to look at life and whatever it presents "through the eyes of Jesus" and with empathy for others. Let us embrace the hope that energizes us to pray and act to improve our lives and the lives of those about us.

At the same time, we can expect new challenges to surface in the year ahead. Moral and economic headlines may disturb us and become a source of anxiety. While we plan to be prudent and to be prepared to make the best of the situation by doing what we can to alleviate its effects, it would be good for us to heed the advice of Jesus and of our beloved Pope

John Paul II, "Be not afraid." Sometimes we worry so much about what "might happen" in the future that we spoil our chances for happiness in the present. We may be burdening ourselves with overwhelming anxiety about fears that may never be realized. We may think "How will I cope if such and such happens?" even though we may know that God is always with us and will grant us the grace if and when "such and such" happens — if we only ask. God does not grant the grace for future actions at this time; grace is granted for the present.

Therefore, let us see what needs to be done today; let our prayers, words and actions be filled with hope as challenges present themselves. Moreover, may we have courage to exercise our civic responsibility, if need be, whenever dignity of the person, respect for life, and sanctity of marriage and family are threatened. If we act in the Name of God, we will be given the grace and strength to witness to God's law, even when our society seems to have strayed away from the spirit of the Christian principles upon which our nation was founded. So, may our renewed hope sustain and energize us in addressing challenges in the New Year.



The Christophers invite college students to enter video contest

NEW YORK, NY — The Christophers are announcing their Twenty-Second Annual Video Contest for College Students, a competition that challenges students to interpret the theme, "One Person Can Make a Difference," in a short film of five minutes or less. Cash prizes totaling \$6,000 will be awarded, including a first prize of \$3000.

Past winning films have included narratives, documentaries, animation and even music videos. Entrants represent diverse fields of studies and national origins. "This is a wonderful opportunity for students to use their creativity to show how individuals can positively influence the

world around them," said Mary Ellen Robinson, vice-president of The Christophers, in announcing the competition.

The contest is open to all students currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs at colleges or universities worldwide. Entries will be judged on overall impact, effectiveness in conveying theme, artistic merit and technical proficiency. The deadline for entries is June 8, 2009. Winners will be announced in September 2009. Videos become the property of The Christophers and will not be returned.

Official entry forms are available by writing to: College Video Contest, The Christophers, 5 Hanover Square, New York, NY 10004; by calling the Youth Department at 212-759-4008; or online at www.christophers.org/videocontest

The Christophers, a non-profit organization founded in 1945 by Father James Keller, uses print and electronic media to encourage all individuals to use their God-given talents to make a positive difference in the world. The Christopher motto is: "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

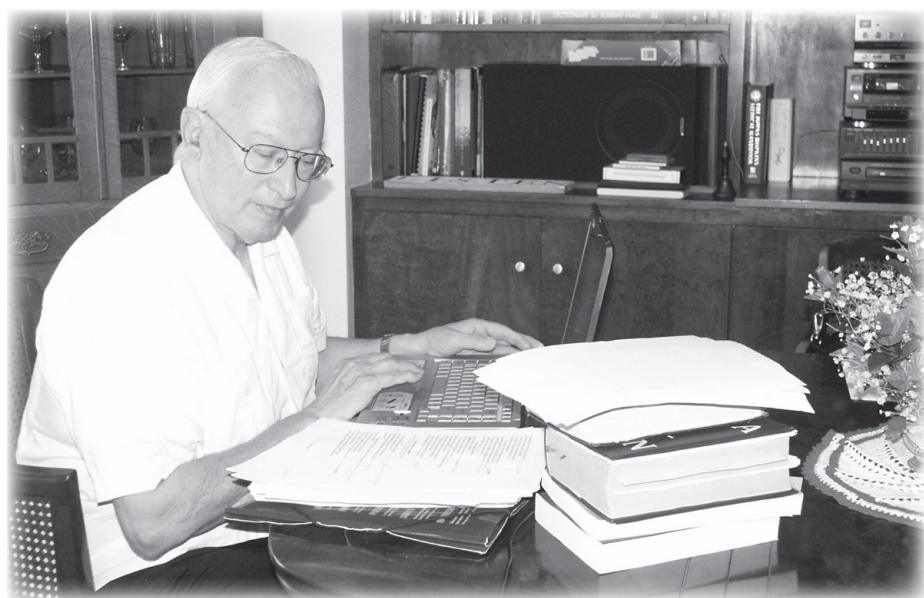
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**Catholic Schools
Week Jan. 25-31**



Msgr. Juan Alfaro finds a quiet place to work at OLL rectory in Victoria.

Friend of Father Say to assist in translation of new Spanish language Bible

By Cynthia Brewer

When I went to Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes in Victoria last month, I met such a fascinating person.

Msgr. Juan I. Alfaro, a long-time friend of Father Celestino Say, came to Victoria for a visit and to say the daily Mass for Father Say who said Mass at Nazareth Academy. Msgr. Alfaro also hoped to find a peaceful place to catch up on some work.

Msgr. Alfaro and Father Say attended the same seminary in Manila, the Philippines, although Msgr. Alfaro was a native of Spain and was 10 years behind Father Say in age. They met again in San Antonio in 1973 after having left the Philippines, which was under martial law. They became U.S. citizens on the same day in 1980.

Besides having such a diverse background as having been born in Spain, attending seminary in the Philippines and now serving as pastor at St. Rose of Lima in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Msgr. Alfaro has spent the past three years assisting the Church in making a new Spanish translation of the Bible, La Biblia de la Iglesia en America.

The central committee taking on this task is made up of eight theologians from various American countries and is presided over by Bishop Santiago Silva, Auxiliary Bishop of Valparaiso, Chile. Both the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Conferencia Episcopal Latino Americano (CELAM) sponsor the project.

Msgr. Alfaro said that the 10-year project expects to create a new Spanish translation of the Bible that will become official for all Spanish-speaking peoples, from Canada to Argentina, and that eventually this translation will be adapted for liturgical use. They expect the four Gospels to be published by the end of 2009. The rest of the Bible will take six more years and should be completed in 2015, he said.

The central committee has chosen 32 translators from different countries in Latin America. Msgr. Alfaro is the representative for the United States and Canada. All the translators are graduates from the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

The new translation will be approved by the two conferences, USCCB and CELAM; and when they adopt it for the Liturgy, it will have to be approved by Rome.

"A special challenge," Msgr. Alfaro said, "is to reach out to the different Spanish-speaking blocks in Latin America, which often use different verbal forms and vocabulary."

The four linguistic regions are the United States and Canada; Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean; the Bolivarian

countries (Columbia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia); and the southern cone of Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

In some areas long words, with three and four syllables, are objectionable. In different regions, some words have different meanings and the committee will have to agree to use another word that will make sense to all the Spanish-speaking people.

"We make the translation directly from original text — from Greek and Hebrew and a few chapters of Aramaic," he said.

The translators have to decide what the original author meant. "We have to go to the root of the word," he said, "and we argue a lot about what is the most accurate way of interpreting the original language."

All of the translators are well versed in several languages. He said his entrance exam into Pontifical Biblical Institute was in English, French, German, Greek and Hebrew; but the classes were in Latin, so he needed to know Latin; and since he had studied in Rome, he also spoke Italian; and because he is from Spain, he also speaks Spanish and Catalan.

"Then we had to study Aramaic, and another oriental language. I chose Arabic because in Spanish we have a lot of Arabic roots and words," he said.

"The translator is the first interpreter of the Bible," Msgr. Alfaro said.

"That is why some Protestant translations are considered inaccurate, because the translators pushed for the doctrines of their church."

He used the verse in John 2:4, Jesus' response to Mary telling him that the wedding couple was out of wine, as an example. In Greek, the literal interpretation is "What is that to you and to me?"

However, some translations interpret it to say: "Your thoughts are not my thoughts," or the American Bible Society Contemporary English Version interprets it to say: "Jesus replied 'Mother, my time hasn't yet come! You must not tell me what to do.'" Or another, "Jesus said, 'Is that any of our business, Mother — yours or mine? This isn't my time. Don't push me'" (The Message Bible).

Msgr. Alfaro said that in the biblical translation program they use, there are 30-plus versions of the Bible in English alone, seven in French, 11 in German, and many more in other languages.

"We are guided by a double principal of fidelity — to the meaning of the original text and fidelity to the readers who will be using our Bible," Msgr. Alfaro said. "And we make sure they understand what the author meant."

Msgr. Alfaro celebrated his 70th birthday while visiting Our Lady of Lourdes.



A group of teen-age girls from Holy Cross in East Bernard and St. Anthony in Columbus attended the Region X Youth Conference in Amarillo November 21-23, 2008.

14 teens go to Region X Youth Conference

By Jose Ortega
Associate Youth Director

Be Bold! Be Proud! Be Catholic! This was the theme for the 2008 Region X Youth Conference, which was held in Amarillo.

Before the break of dawn, on Friday, November 21, 2008, four mini-vans set out from Victoria on a journey to the Panhandle. Their first stop was at Holy Cross in East Bernard to pick up 13 teen-age girls and two chaperones. The next pick-up was in Columbus at St. Anthony's Parish where another teen-age girl and one more chaperone were added to the convoy.

Now the real pilgrimage began!! They drove 12 hours across Texas, stopping only for food, fuel, and rest. The road trip went fairly well. The 14 teen-age girls' singing, chatting, and laughing definitely helped with keeping the drivers alert!!

They finally made it to the conference. Over two thousand youth, adult chaperones, priests and religious were greeted by Most Reverend Patrick J. Zurek, Bishop of Amarillo. He expressed how excited he was that so many young people made the journey to Amarillo.

The house band, "One-Seven," led the young people in songs of praise and worship. Then keynote Steve Angrisano took over with his musical talent and captivating speaking capabilities. He shared

about his thoughts on: Be Bold, Be Proud, Be Catholic! The second keynote for the conference, Mike Patin, spoke Saturday morning. His exciting and animated session was a great way to start off the day. The rest of this day consisted of many different breakout sessions in which the young people took part and learned more about their faith.

Then, for the evening session, Steve and Mike came out together challenging the youth once again to Be Bold, Be Proud, Be Catholic! They challenged them to finish the race, to take what has been taught and handed on to them back home to everyone they come across.

On Sunday morning, November 23, the conference concluded with Bishop Zurek celebrating Liturgy on the Feast of Christ the King. Then, it was time to return home. The 12 hours back, was filled with laughter, songs and some sleep. Each one of the girls seemed to be smiling so much, they were glowing. They were filled with something special that God had intended for them to have that weekend. Something that would allow them to BE BOLD, BE PROUD, BE CATHOLIC!

Region X is made up of the dioceses within Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. The Region X Youth Conference is held bi-annually in a city in one of these three states.

Time for KC Free-Throw Contest

All boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2009 Knights of Columbus Free-Throw Contest beginning in January. Age eligibility is determined as of January 1, 2009. Proof of age is required.

Your local Knights of Columbus Council will sponsor a council contest in late January or early February. There is no fee to register or participate; however, all competitors must register using the official Knights of Columbus Free-Throw Championship Entry Form/Score Sheet (KC form #1598). The Entry Form/Score Sheet and proof of age MUST accompany the participants through all levels of competition.

Most councils in the Victoria Diocese will sponsor a Free-Throw Competition. If

a local council does not sponsor a council contest, that council's grand knight can provide an official entry form so a child in that area may still compete but with another council. Each competitor may compete in only one council competition.

Council winners advance to the district level with district winners advancing to the regional (diocesan). There are eight KC districts in the Diocese of Victoria. Regional winners advance to the state competition. Results of state winners from throughout the order are sent to the supreme office in Connecticut where the international winners will be determined.

Check with your local council for competition dates for council level competition and the district competition, which will be held in early February.



Youth Calendar of Events

January 17 — Youth Ministry Certificate Class — **Leadership Development - Planning and Programming**

February 1 — Youth Leadership Training, Holy Family, Victoria

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 15 — Confirmation Retreat, location TBA

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 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

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

Czech student enjoys her time in Texas

By Jimmy Appelt
Tribune-Herald - Staff Writer

HALLETTSVILLE—Exchange student Terezie Sedlinská, who has been attending Sacred Heart Catholic High School during the first three months of the school year, departed December 21, 2008, returning to her home in Brno, Czech Republic.

She said the idea to come to the United States and Hallettsville resulted from a visit made by her cousin, Vit Pestuka, to

a trade school.

"Over there, a public school is more difficult to enter because you have to pass an entrance exam," Terezie said. "They can also remove you from a public school because you are already considered finished with your required education."

The course of study is different as well with the Czech Republic requiring a student to take 15 subjects every year.

In addition, Terezie said there is also a difference in sports by saying there are not as many team sports back home and not as many students choose to participate.

She said she could have tried volleyball at Sacred Heart but chose not to simply because she lacked experience in the sport.

When asked what she thought of football played in Texas, Terezie answered by saying that the rules confused her and caused her not to be that interested in the sport.

"To tell you the truth, football is kind of crazy and I don't understand the rules," Terezie said. "In football, they fight and then move the ball. They then fight again and move the ball again," Terezie said explaining how football appears to her.

She said volleyball, soccer, and basketball have a lot of movement, which interested her more.

Terezie said she plans to pursue a degree in architecture when she finishes high school but added that getting accepted in the colleges of the Czech Republic are very difficult.

"Many people want to go to college, but not all get to go," Terezie said. "The colleges only take about 10 percent of the applicants."

In her two-month stay in Texas, Terezie said she got to see some of the sites by going to the Renaissance Festival, the Riverwalk/Alamo, and swim in the Gulf of Mexico at Corpus Christi.

While in Hallettsville, Terezie lived with Evelyn Konvicka and is very grateful to her for the opportunities she provided.

She said she will miss the people and the atmosphere of a small community.

"Here, the people care about you and that made it perfect," Terezie said complimenting the school and community for their kindness.

When Terezie returns, she will reunite with her parents, Radovan and Iveta, and her younger sister Marie-Anna.



Terezie Sedlinská from
Brno Czech Republic

this community approximately 10 years ago.

Sedlinská (17) arrived in Hallettsville one day before the start of school this past August and while attending classes found her stay very enjoyable.

"This whole experience means so much to me — it's been perfect," Terezie said.

"Terezie has been a real asset by sharing her culture with our students," SHCHS principal David Smolik said.

Terezie said schools here in the United States are different than back in her native country.

She said here she is considered a senior but in the Czech Republic she's classified a junior.

Terezie shared educational differences between the two countries by saying that in the Czech Republic a student finishes their "elementary" education after the 9th grade.

She added that after a student ends this education period, they are considered finished with school. She said a student then can choose to pursue a high school education or a specified school similar to



Court St. Bernadette #1108 Catholic Daughters of the Americas celebrated the 80th anniversary of their court's institution on November 15, 2008. Pictured after the Mass at Holy Cross Church in East Bernard in the front row are District Deputy #14 and State JCDA Chairman Terri Beltran, El Campo; #1108 Financial Secretary Debbie Guthman; #1108 Treasurer Patricia Michulka; State Secretary Peggy Rosales, Austin; 2nd row: National Director Duchess Collins, Sugar Land; Second Vice State Regent Carolyn Malik, Shiner; 3rd row: District Deputy #28 Carolyn Rapsilver, San Felipe; #1108 Vice Regent Janice Polak; #1108 Regent Henriette Jalowy; First Vice State Regent Sheila Martinka, Houston; top row: National Regent Libby Ramirez, Victoria; State Chaplain and National Clergy Consultant Rev. Donald Ruppert, East Bernard; and State Regent Carolyn Bachmann, Scotland.

CDA court in East Bernard celebrates 80 years

EAST BERNARD—Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court St. Bernadette #1108 celebrated the 80th anniversary of its institution on Saturday, November 15, beginning with a rosary and Mass, followed by a dinner and program. Representatives from the state court and national court were present. The date of the institution of the court was November 4, 1928.

Rev. Donald Ruppert, court and state chaplain and national clergy consultant, was the celebrant at the Mass. Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Honor Guard participated. Junior Catholic Daughters were altar servers. CDA members served as rosary leaders, greeters, color guard, lectors, gift bearers, and EMEs. CDA member Jan Kopycinski and Steve Sims provided the music.

Everyone gathered in the meeting room for a dinner prepared by a group of Knights of Columbus, with Albert Smaistrla as the chief cook.

Terrie Vacek was master of ceremonies for the dinner and program. Henriette Jalowy, #1108 regent, introduced guests in addition to those that Vacek had introduced at the head table. Local court vice-regent Janice Polak read correspondences.

Financial secretary Debbie Guthman introduced the lifetime members who have 50 years of membership in CDA. Local court treasurer Patricia Michulka recognized the past regents of Court #1108,

and Carolyn Rapsilver, district deputy #28, formally received new members in the court.

Greetings were given by the following present state officers: State Regent Carolyn Bachmann of Scotland, First Vice State Regent Sheila Martinka of Houston, Second Vice State Regent Carolyn Malik of Shiner, State Secretary Peggy Rosales of Austin, and District Deputy #28 Carolyn Rapsilver of San Felipe. State Junior Catholic Daughters of the Americas Chairperson Terri Beltran of El Campo presented greetings from the State JCDA. Liz Sims, local advisor, introduced the local JCDA officers.

National Director Duchess Collins of Sugar Land, brought greetings from National. Her husband, State Treasurer of the Knights of Columbus Jim Collins, accompanied her.

Rev. Donald Ruppert spoke on CDA history and related some humorous stories.

The keynote speaker was National Regent Libby Ramirez of Victoria. She spoke on "Challenge in the Future."

During the evening Jan Kopycinski and Janice Polak sang appropriate songs. Door prizes were given before Terrie Vacek thanked many people for their efforts in making the memorable evening. The closing prayer and blessing were given by Rev. Donald Ruppert.



Helen Mica was up at 4 a.m. the morning this picture was taken to prepare her kitchen to make noodles for St. Bernadette #1108's chicken-noodle soup and sandwich supper January 28, 2009.

Catholic Daughters prepare for annual Chicken Soup fund-raiser

EAST BERNARD—Court St. Bernadette #1108 Catholic Daughters of the Americas of East Bernard are preparing their annual chicken-noodle soup and sandwich supper fund-raiser, which will be held Wednesday, January 28, 2009.

Helen Mica plans to make 150 lbs. of noodles for the supper fund-raiser that will be held at the American Legion Hall, Highway 60, in East Bernard. The soup supper and raffle are the main fund-raisers for Court St. Bernadette #1108.

Helen says the court members start lighting burners at 5:30 a.m. to cook 145 hens. Filling the many pots with hens, water and seasonings would total 1,680 gallons. Husbands of members help in setting up and stirring the hens.

Another group tediously de-bones the cooked hens, more than once. By 4:00 p.m. another group of members is busy

making 2,100 chicken-salad sandwiches, using 190 loaves of bread.

Helen not only makes most of the noodles, but she is the chairman of the soup and sandwich portion of the fund-raiser. The raffle, with 71 items, will be at 7 pm. that evening. Tickets will be available at the hall.

Helen has commented, "Members are very cooperative. They come with a smile and leave with a smile."

A bowl of chicken-noodle soup is \$2.50 and a chicken-salad sandwich is \$2.50. Coffee and tea are complementary. Many desserts will be available for sale.

Selling of the food begins at 5:00 p.m. until all is sold. If one plans to take soup home, one must bring a container.

Proceeds from the evening are used to support the court's projects and activities on the local, state and national levels.



Holy Cross CDA Court #1598 members Theresa Jendrzey, Beth Pokluda, Leona Berckenhoff, JoAnn Hoelscher, Hedwig Jendry and Margie Smith, made a yo-yo quilt for a fund-raiser. Also participating, but not pictured: Lillian Warzecha, Flo Jacob and Georgia Guzy.

Yorktown CDA holds 3rd annual Christmas Bazaar

YORKTOWN—This beautiful hand-made yo-yo quilt, which was made by members of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas of Yorktown, Holy Cross Court #1598, was raffled December 6, 2008, at the 3rd Annual Christmas Bazaar held at the Yorktown Community Hall.

The quilt was made by Theresa Jendrzey, Beth Pokluda, Leona Berckenhoff, JoAnn Hoelscher, Hedwig Jendry, Margie Smith, Lillian Warzecha, Flo Jacob and Georgia Guzy.

The winner of the yo-yo quilt was Nicholas Broll. The Christmas ornaments were won by Janet Hadash of San Antonio, Joanie Lytle of Victoria and Irene Ibrom of Westhoff. The Catholic Daughters of the Americas in Yorktown wish to thank all who came and helped make this raffle, the Santa's Café and our Bake Sale a success. The profits from the sales go to local, state and national charities and our scholarship fund.



ST. JOSEPH CCD PUTS ON CHRISTMAS PLAYS—The students of the CCD classes of St. Joseph Parish in Yoakum presented "The Birth of Jesus" and "The Reason for Christmas" during Christmas 2008. Joseph was played by Tyler Kvinta, the Drummer Boy was played by Dean Klesel and Mary was played by Kendall Pekar.



RAPHAEL'S REFUGE CELEBRATES MASS FOR THE HOLY INNOCENTS

About 50 people gathered from far and near on December 28 to celebrate the second annual Mass in honor of the Holy Innocents at The Monument of the Innocents at Raphael's Refuge. The morning dawned with rain – considerable rain – enough rain to cause rejoicing among the local residents and enough to cause a mess in the parking area and temporary road. There were various glitches – a delayed start, a vestment misunderstanding, a forgotten candle, a neglected processional cross, no altar server, music ministry matters, and so on – but when Mass began, the chapel was transformed with a sweet, sweet spirit. There were no instruments for the music, but the hymns, selected by Jeanette Zouzalik, were wonderful and the whole congregation joined in – the little chapel was filled with song. Msgr. Edward Bartsch, of Praha; Rev. Joe Hybner, of Flatonia; and Rev. Dean Wilhelm, of Houston, concelebrated the Mass. David Michael Moses (son of the president of the board) from Nassau Bay became the altar server. His family had driven directly to Raphael's Refuge that morning from the Fort Worth area. Elizabeth Bishop, from Austin, led a special rosary before the Mass began. To learn more about Raphael's Refuge and its healing ministry, please go to: <http://www.raphaelrefuge.org/> or contact Midge Elam at raphaels@awesomenet.net, or at (361) 865-3021.



EARNING THEIR ANGEL WINGS—The second-grade class at St. Rose of Lima Catholic School in Schulenburg earned their angel wings December 18, 2008, as they donated presents to the Deputy Santa program. The students held a school-wide bake sale on Dec. 15 in which the student body, teachers and staff graciously bought the delicious baked goods. The students shopped for the gifts and wrapped them. The second graders learned the true meaning behind Christmas ... to give to others. Pictured with presents, front row, from left: Cory Heger, Branson Fowlkes, Madeline Sommer, Andrew Fogelman, Jasmeen Modhi, and Wesley Liere; second row, from left: Jack Jacobs, Dylan Godlberg, John Corbitt, Rylie Lux, and Allison Mican. Pictured in back is second-grade teacher Pam Wick.

Diocesan priests attend CAPA meeting

GEORGETOWN, Texas—Priests of Czech descent met at the latest Czech American Priest Association (CAPA) meeting at St. Helen Parish in Georgetown, Texas, November 18, 2008. From the Diocese of Victoria, Father John Peters of Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville and Father Gary Janak of St. Philip of El Campo, attended the meeting, which included the celebration of Mass and a luncheon.

The objectives of CAPA are to foster fraternity, unity, solidarity and mutual support of Czech-American priests to deepen their spirituality and understanding of Czech history; to collaborate with Czech bishops for renewal and preservation of liturgical customs, traditions and heritage of

the Czech people; to foster understanding and appreciation of the valued traditions and customs of the Czech ancestors in faith; to collaborate with Czech Catholic organizations to promote faith-filled Catholic family life; to promote the Czech language and history through courses in high schools, colleges, universities and cities; to promote and encourage Czech music and song at churches, festivals, family reunions and in the home; to promote the rich, educational and social history of Czech-American communities; to promote religious vocations and lay ministries within the Czech-American communities; and to have an exchange program of priests and seminarians between the Czech Republic and the United States.



Czech-American priests attending the Czech American Priest Association meeting November 18 are pictured from left: Fathers Stephen Duyka of Rusk; John Peters (treasurer) of Hallettsville, Dennis Darilek (secretary) of Seguin, Louis Pavlicek of Georgetown, Gary Janak of El Campo and Ed Karasek of West. Missing from the photo are Bishop Patrick Zurek (president) of Amarillo and Father Joe Hybner (vice-president) of Flatonia.

Msgr. Stanley Petru celebrates 60th anniversary and 86th birthday

HOSTYN—In honor of Msgr. Stanley Joseph Petru's 86th birthday and the diamond (60th) jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood, Bishop David E. Fellhauer, Bishop Charles V. Grahmann; his brother, Rev. Gus Petru, OMI, from Mexico; and over 20 priests joyously concelebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at Queen of the Holy Rosary in Hostyn on November 28, 2008.

Parishioners from both Queen of the Holy Rosary and Sts. Peter and Paul in Plum, hosted a reception following the Mass and blessing of Holy Rosary's new adoration chapel and narthex. Along with the many parishioners, special guests included Msgr. Petru's brother, Robert and Bernice Petru, many nieces, nephews and friends.

The Knights of Columbus Council 2574 donated \$5,000 towards the construction of the new adoration chapel in honor of Msgr. Petru, and KJT #3 donated \$250 to start a Seminary Bursary in Msgr. Petru's name.

A special blessing to Msgr. Petru was the construction of the narthex and the adoration chapel, which, according to Gina Kozelsky, the parish secretary, had always been Msgr. Petru's dream.

The 2,350 square-foot addition to Queen of the Holy Rosary includes the adoration chapel, storage, restrooms and the narthex, which allows for visiting amongst parishioners outside of the church, yet protected from the outdoor elements.

left, Bishop Fellhauer blesses the new altar in the adoration chapel; below, the outside of the narthex; right, Msgr. Petru at his reception



A generous donation toward the chapel was given by Msgr. Petru's sister, Mary Jackson, in the form of her estate upon her death.

Msgr. Stanislaus Joseph Petru was born on Nov. 22, 1922, in Shiner to Frank and Johanna Petru. He grew up with one sis-

ter and eight brothers. Three of the boys became priests: Msgr. Stanley Petru, Rev. Gus Petru and the late Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru.

He entered into St. John's Seminary in San Antonio in 1937 and was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 1948, by the late Arch-



bishop Robert E. Lucey. He celebrated his first Solemn High Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Raymondville on Sunday, May 30, 1948, and was assisted by his two brothers, Rev. Julius A. Petru, pastor of St. John Church near Schulenburg, and Brother Gus Petru, OMI, a student in De Mozonod Scholasticate in San Antonio.

His first assignment was at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in El Campo in 1949. In 1952 he was assigned to Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Shiner. From 1956 he served at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Schulenburg, from 1958 at St. Cornelius Parish in Karnes City, and from 1964 he served St. Agnes Parish in Edna. He served at Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville from 1968 to 1980. In 1979 he was elevated to Domestic Prelate by his Holiness Pope John Paul II with the title Rev. Monsignor. He served another twelve years at St. Gregory the Great Parish in San Antonio from 1980 to 1992.

In 1992 he became pastor of Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish in Hostyn, along with Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Cistern and later Sts. Peter and Paul in Plum. The church in Cistern is now served by Rev. Joseph Hybner.

Msgr. Petru is a member of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus; co-chaplain for the KC's; spiritual director for the KJT; chaplain for the ACTS group; and is a big supporter of the youth – including the Youth Group and the Young Neighbors in Action. He also brought the Christmas pageant to Hostyn. He enjoys giving bulletins to his "bambinos" and they enjoy getting them from him; some practically run to get their copy.



Faith History Quiz

(Family Puzzle Contest)

Please match data in column A with answers in column B.

Column A

1. This author of Don Quixote fought in the battle of Lepanto.
2. This man was St. John Bosco's favorite saint.
3. He was the father of John the Baptist.
4. He was the first apostle to see the risen Christ.
5. This pope placed England under papal interdiction because of King John's misdeeds and interference in Church affairs.
6. The meaning of Paraclete
7. The patron saint for a happy death.
8. An estimated one million pilgrims visited Rome during the year 1300 for this spiritual event, the first of its kind celebrated by the Church.
9. Chief sacrament for the forgiveness of sins
10. This saintly king of Hungary's wife was Gise-la, sister of the Emperor Saint Henry II.
11. Latinized form of Greek for chair.
12. Cardinal Newman said of this Bishop of Alexandria, whose steadfastness in defense of the orthodox faith greatly helped combat Arianism, "A principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been secured and conveyed to the world".
13. Classical learning and civilization was preserved in the Dark Ages primarily by the labor of these individuals.
14. This Greek title of the Virgin Mary means "God-bearer".
15. This allows the baptized to be forgiven of their sins.
16. Dignitatis Humanae, the most controversial document of the Second Vatican Council deals with this topic.
17. This bishop played a major role in bringing Christianity to France in the fourth century.
18. As the Roman Empire weakened in the west and the Roman government became increasingly ineffective, these clerics had to assume more secular tasks.
19. This longest reigning pope in history wrote the Syllabus of Errors and witnessed the dissolution of the Papal States.
20. He has spoken through the prophets.

To check answers to above questions please see page 7.

Column B

- A. Monks
- B. Baptism
- C. Pius IX
- D. St. Francis de Sales
- E. Great Jubilee
- F. Consoler
- G. Religious freedom
- H. St. Athanasius
- I. Theotokos
- J. Innocent III
- K. Holy Spirit
- L. St. Martin of Tours
- M. Peter
- N. Miguel Cervantes
- O. Sacrament of Penance
- P. Bishops
- Q. Cathedra
- R. Zechariah
- S. St. Joseph
- T. St. Stephen

This quiz has been prepared by various individuals who share the Knights of Columbus Council 3051's concern for the importance of children receiving an authentic Catholic education at a time when the teaching and values of the Catholic Church that are reflected in this quiz are facing unprecedented challenges of unforeseen consequences for those who hold them. Therefore, we believe the primary value of this quiz is a careful reading of the questions which, with the exception of the few that ask for the identification of biblical figures, contain materials that refer to dogmas and values of the Church and/or how Catholics holding these values have impacted history or have been impacted by it.

Primary sources for these questions are from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Holy Bible, Church documents, and various books on both Church and secular history and lives of the saints.

Subject of History May be our First Hope for Restoring our Society

By Cynthia Brewer

Since the turn of the 20th century and particularly since the 1950s, why have United States students' international test scores declined drastically? Why is the U.S. divorce rate at 50 percent, with a 60 to 75 percent rate in southern California? Why do one in three high school students drop out before graduating? What really caused the 60s sexual revolution and the "do your own thing" attitude? Why did birth control and abortion become legalized and so easily accepted?

In other words ... what is leading the Western Civilization to collapse?

A little pamphlet titled, "Why History Matters and Why Christian History Matters in Particular?" by Ted Byfield, general editor of The Christian History Project, may just provide the answers.

In this short (39-page) pamphlet, Ted Byfield testifies that all previous civilizations have failed and the Western Civilization is nearing the same fate. A copy of "Why History Matters ..." may be purchased for \$10 or free copies may be downloaded at: http://thechristians.ca/Search_essay_layout.pdf

The chief cause of a civilizations' failure is the breakdown of morality – the erosion of respect for rules. Rules, values and

morals are the glue that holds together the foundation of a society, Byfield states.

He shows how the philosophy of one man, John Dewey, a U.S. educator in the early 1900s, influenced by Rousseau, Hobbes, Darwin and Spencer, influenced educators in universities, who influenced soon-to-be school teachers, who eventually influenced generations of students to believe there is no good or evil, there are no right or wrong answers, nor limits or boundaries to their freedom.

"He envisioned a new civilization, liberated from its ancient taboos and enslavement to outdated creeds and codes of conduct,"

p. 6.

And once liberated from a culture's mores, the culture soon falls apart.

Here is where history comes in. Humans are instinctively curious, and their curiosities might only be satisfied through history, properly presented. History gives us the answers to: why and how did we get here, how did the U.S. government form, why do we have schools and universities, how did hospitals come to be, etc., etc.? Only by rediscovering the past can we securely direct our future.

And in studying Western Civilization, why must we include the study of Christi-

See Subject of History, p. 17



Volume 4 of The Christians

Puzzle (Quiz) Contest Prize is "The Rosary" book

"The Rosary ~ A Journey to the Beloved," written by Gary Jansen and published by Faith Words, will guide readers to connect with God through prayer in an approachable way. The book explains the history and significance of the Rosary, as well as instructions on how to get the most of the meditative and spiritual exercise of repeating prayers.

"The Rosary" walks readers through each of the twenty mysteries combining biblical excerpts and reproductions of famous biblical artwork by Tissot, Raphael, Gauguin and many others to illustrate the power of this beloved act of devotion.

The time for prayer is now! We live in a multi-tasking age where we hurry

and worry through life, seldom taking the time to be alone with our thoughts and prayers. To many, the idea of praying can be intimidating, and people often wonder, "Can God really hear me?"

A better question to ask may be, "Can we slow down long enough to hear God?"

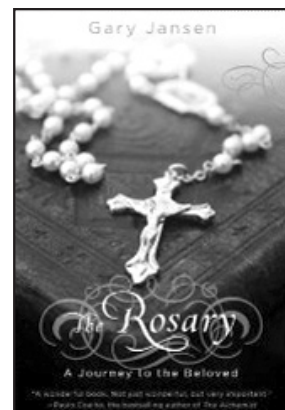
For more than 600 years worshipers have turned to the Rosary in times of need and times of joy. Though seen by many as a Catholic practice, this devotion, whose primary focus is on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, can appeal to Christians of all denominations. It can also help you to hear the voice of

God in intimate and profound ways.

This is the perfect book for individuals and groups who are seeking a practical and affective way to pray. "Gary Jansen's book is a godsend," said Brad Miner, author of "The Complete Gentleman."

Gary Jansen is an editor at Doubleday Religion. His writing has appeared in USA Today, Newsday and the Chicago Sun-Times. "The Rosary" (Faith Words, ISBN: 978-0-446-53584-7) is his first book. It can be purchased for \$11.99 on many Web sites.

For a chance to win "The Rosary ~ A Journey to the Beloved" in a drawing, please send completed QUIZ with your name, address, phone number and your parish name to The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903



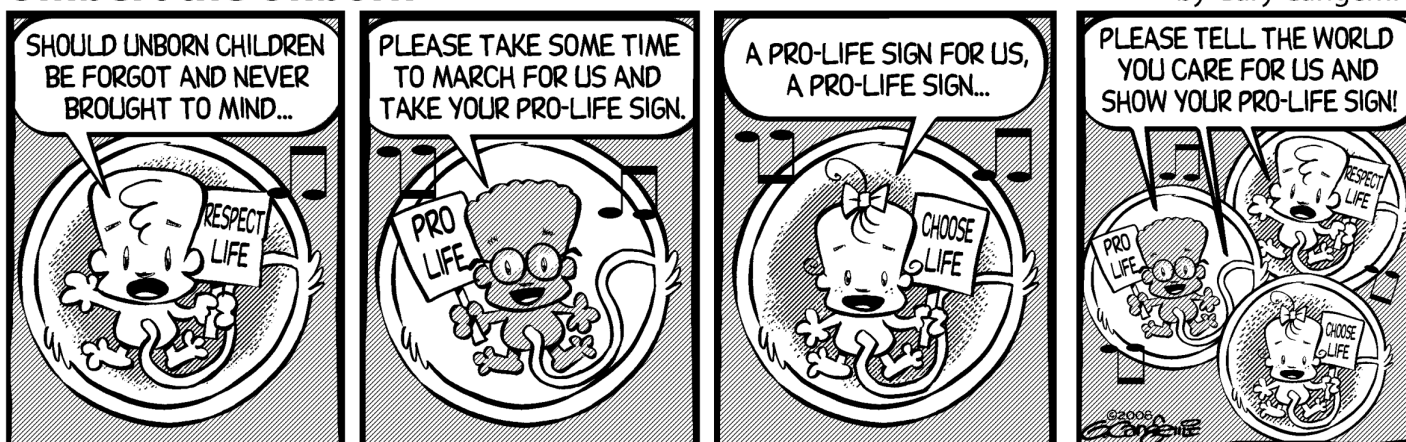
Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Frances Vesely of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Ganado is the December Family Puzzle Contest winner, and has won "Notre Dame Golden Moments" book and DVD. There were a lot of contestants – thank you all for your response.

The youth puzzle contest winner was Bryan Sturm (10) of Holy Family Church in Victoria. He will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed contest, name, address, phone number and parish name by Jan. 29 for a chance to win "The Rosary – A Journey to the Beloved" by Gary Jansen. See review on this page. Send to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903

Umbert the Unborn





Catholic By Grace

By Denise E. Bossert



Dear Mr. President

A few weeks ago, my ten-year-old daughter sat at the kitchen table and nibbled on a snack. She thumbed through a Christmas catalog and asked me to get her a typewriter for Christmas. She pointed to a picture on the page in front of her. It was a cheap plastic replica of an old typewriter. I told her she didn't need it. She could use my computer any time she wanted. She explained that a typewriter captures the words immediately and puts them on paper. No printer needed, she said, and emphatically added that she had an important letter to write.

Now I was curious.

I asked her who she needed to write. In a matter-of-fact tone, she replied, "The president — about the abortion thing." She whispered the last part, almost like she was sharing some profanity that she had overheard and found distasteful to repeat.

It made me want to buy her that plastic typewriter on the spot. It also made me reflect on the twists and turns of the past couple of months.

We've had an interesting year in the Bossert household. Even though we are a pro-life family, the subject of abortion rarely came up in our home before 2008, but then my older daughter moved back home. She took a job at a shelter for pregnant women. Our Lady's Inn not only helps women choose life over abortion, they give the women a place to live for up to two years. They help them complete school, learn a trade, and find employment. We're a pro-life Catholic family. We were thrilled when our older daughter started working at Our Lady's Inn. But then something happened to make us really pro-life, right down to our DNA.

The twenty-one-year-old daughter became pregnant. She isn't married. She hasn't completed college — not even one full year of college. She doesn't own her own car. She doesn't have her own place. And now, she doesn't have a job because she is in almost the same situation as the clients at the women's shelter. No longer the house monitor, she is now the unmarried mother-to-be. The only thing that separates her from the clients that live in the shelter is that she has familial support. Still, by President Obama's standard, she is a prime candidate for an abortion. If she wanted to terminate the pregnancy, he would think she'd made a difficult, but wise decision.

Even our ten-year-old knows how wrong that would be. She knows that she will be an aunt sometime in June. She knows the new baby will make her daddy and me grandparents for the first time. She knows that will make

her sister a mother, even though she isn't married. And she knows that there is a baby growing inside her big sister, not a blob, not tissue, not a potential baby. It is a baby. And she prays for that baby every night.

For that ten-year-old, "the abortion thing" is a very big deal. She cannot imagine why any president would support pro-choice laws. And she's innocent enough to believe her little letter might make a difference.

I can almost imagine what she would write.

Dear Mr. President,

I know you think abortion is okay, but maybe there are a few things you haven't thought about in awhile. I'd like to tell you what I've decided now that my sister is going to have a baby. Even when it doesn't seem like

the right time for a baby to come into our lives, babies are always a gift from God. They are always a blessing. I'm sure you would understand if you could just live here a little while. You might see something familiar in our family. You might see yourself in the baby's face. Maybe then you will want to change things so that all babies have a chance to live, no matter what. In your deepest part, you have to know that this is only fair. So, about that abortion thing — maybe God protected you all those years ago from just such a tragedy for a moment in time such as this. Please do whatever you can to protect babies. It's okay to change your mind on the subject. Change is often a good thing. I'm praying that you will have the strength to make the right changes.

During this month when our country has both a Presidential Inauguration and a March for Life, let us continue to believe that our little letters and prayers do make a difference. Let us keep our new president in our prayers, and may God protect the most defenseless among us!



Looking Around

By Father William J. Byron, SJ
Catholic News Service

Enhancing 'customer satisfaction' in the parish

Parish churches can take a page from the business playbook to make the worship environment more inviting to both parishioners and visitors. All it takes is a bit of planning and not much expense.

Restaurants, retail apparel outlets and even banks are finding ways to become more warm, inviting and "customer friendly." Low prices alone won't do it, nor will personal attention without imagination.

But when personal attention is wrapped in a welcoming environment by the use of lights, display and music, there is a tug on the heart that draws people in and encourages them to return. Businesses — stores, banks, restaurants, client services — are consciously trying to connect with customer emotions.

Creative pastoral planning can enable the church to do the same.

Go online to the American Customer Satisfaction Index and you will be welcomed by these words from Professor Claes Fornell of the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, founder of ACSI: "As long as repeat business is important,

and as long as customers have a chance to go somewhere else, employees must deliver high levels of customer satisfaction for a company to be successful."

Substitute "parish staff" for "employees" and "parish" for "company," and you have the makings of a good strategic plan for any parish.

An obvious area calling for some measure of "parishioner satisfaction" is the homily. It takes a bit of courage to invite homily evaluations from a parish congregation. But it is happening and should become commonplace. A one-page questionnaire, used on a random basis several times a year, can invite a checkmark response on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor, relating to content, organization, ease of hearing, length and timeliness of the homily just delivered at a given Mass.

The form should invite additional comments, and respondents should be told that there is no need to sign the sheet. If audibility is a problem, respondents might be asked to indicate where they were sitting when the homily was delivered.

Any service-rendering agen-

Pope Benedict XVI January 2009 Intentions

General: That the family may become more and more a place of training in charity, personal growth and transmission of the faith.

Mission: That the different Christian confessions, aware of the need for a new evangelization in this period of profound transformations, may be committed to announcing the Good News and moving towards the full unity of all Christians in order to offer a more credible testimony of the Gospel.

Sunday readings from Jan. 18 to Feb. 22

January 18, 2009 — Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19 Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20 John 1:35-42
January 25 — Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	Jonah 3:1-5, 10 Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20
February 1 — Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 Mark 1:21-28
February 8 — Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Job 7:1-4, 6-7 Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 Mark 1:29-39
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

cy welcomes client or customer feedback. Any company that puts a product on the market wants to know whether it is ringing up positive or negative marks on the customer-satisfaction register. Why would parishes not want to know how their homilies are being received?

A useful mood-setting device for the eucharistic liturgy might be thought of as "lights down, music up." For 10 minutes before Mass begins, let the organist play quietly the melodies of the several hymns to be sung during Mass. With lighting dimmed to about half the normal intensity, the music works its way into the consciousness of those who will soon be singing the hymns.

A moment before Mass begins, the lights come up and the music for the opening hymn comes in at full volume. The congregation rises and so does the heartfelt expectancy of those whose voices join in the entrance

hymn.

Again, with lights dimmed as the assembly gathers, another device that serves to focus attention and cultivate devotion is a targeted spotlight on specific objects of visual art, not all at once but selectively on the crucifix, tabernacle, altar, statues, stained glass windows, paintings, Stations of the Cross.

This works before Mass and again in the moments after Communion. It creates a visual hush. The impression can be preserved, even taken home, by simply making available to all who want one an inexpensive postcard-sized reproduction of the artwork.

This sort of thing works in business; it could bring more "business" to the pews.

(Jesuit Father Byron is university professor of business and society at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. E-mail: whyron@sju.edu.)

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Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval
Servició Noticiero Católico



Memorias encariadas de un amigo del misionario

Mientras cursábamos por más y más desastres económicos, una carta de Bangladesh renovó mi espíritu.

El sobre contiene una memoria por el padre de Maryknoll Douglas F. Venne de su vida como joven y de sus 50 años como sacerdote. Incluye dos retratos, uno a la edad de 30 años el día que fue ordenado y otro a la edad actual de 80 años, titulado “con las cicatrices del Señor, 2009”.

La expresión en ambas es la misma; los labios sugieren sonrisa y los ojos muestran alegría y anticipación.

La única ambición de padre Venne era trabajar con los pobres, destino cumplido ampliamente en las Filipinas y después en Bangladesh, una de las naciones más pobres en el mundo. “No todo era bonito”, escribe padre Venne.

En su primera parroquia, en la isla de Mindanao, la iglesia estaba en la orilla de un río que se desbordaba seis veces al año, inundando la iglesia. Al regresar, padre Venne descubría los bancos flotando en agua lodosa, cada vez requiriendo limpia muy difícil.

Después, en la isla de Bohol, donde fundó una nueva parroquia, padre Venne luchó contra los madereros que les quitaban la tierra a los pobladores.

Un día se puso en frente de un tractor nivelador que no paró hasta que había demolido la casa de uno de sus parroquianos. Más tarde, en 1968, un camión de los madereros destruyó su jeep, causando graves heridas. Padre Venne perdió la vista de un ojo y tuvo que pasar dos años en Estados Unidos recuperando.

Su espíritu sin merma, volvió a las Filipinas y trabajó allí hasta 1975 cuando empezó con cuatro compañeros voluntarios una misión en Bangladesh.

Mientras que su trabajo en las Filipinas era evangelizar, eso no se permitía en Bangladesh, un país musulmán e hindú.

Por eso, padre Venne ayudó a un médico inglés a cuidar a los enfermos sin casa. Después alfabetizó pero se sentía incapaz.

“El idioma no es fácil para mí. No oigo bien. Ser pobre en el idioma es mi cruz más grande”.

Pero por medio de uno de sus estudiantes, “el Señor finalmente me permitió estar con los pobres.”

Trabajó con ellos en los campos y asistió a los enfermos. Cuando un compañero de 15 años se enfermó y murió, dejando a su padre sin su ayuda, padre Venne trabajó en su lugar por dos años. Por fin, después de otras aventuras, realizó su sueño de vivir en una aldea entre la gente corriente.

Kashem Ali, un musulmán de 80 años lo aceptó y sus amigos le construyeron una casa de bambú. Cuando Kashem Ali tenía 103 años, mandó llamar al misionero.

“Me estoy muriendo. Si te he ofendido o dañado en algún modo, por favor perdóname.” Padre Venne quedó maravillado. “Aquí estaba un musulmán que nunca había hecho nada contra mí pidiendo mi perdón.” La memoria contiene muchas otras viñetas similares.

En una página encontré una nota escrita por mano.

“Moisés, saludos de Bangladesh. Espero que todavía estés proclamando el reino de Dios. Ha sido una maravillosa jornada. Tú eres parte de mi historia. Paz.”

Pasé un fin de semana a principios de los 1990 trabajando con él en Detroit, donde él promovía las misiones. Me esperó en el aeropuerto vestido en un “lungi”, un lienzo envuelto en el cuerpo como un sarong, el traje de los pobres en Bangladesh.

Nos hicimos amigos. Me impresionó mucho su compasión y humildad.

“Muchas personas dinámicas me han acompañado,” escribió en su memoria. “Mientras que yo ayudé a algunos, más de ellos me cogieron por la mano y me llevaron a donde yo quería ir.”

Misa De Sanacion

Miércoles, Febrero 4
Nuestra Señora De Los Dolores
208 W. River St., Victoria, Texas
Rosario 7:00 p.m. / Misa 7:30 p.m.
celebrante: Padre Stan De Boe
Vengan Todos!

Sobre La Inmigración Ilegal Y El Derecho A La Vida

Por Mar Muñoz-Visoso

Casi me caigo de la silla. Finalmente alguien se atrevió a decirlo alto y claro: “La inmigración es la prueba más importante para los derechos civiles en nuestra generación...Está muy cerca del derecho a la vida”. Y lo dijo con la autoridad que, en la Iglesia, confiere el oficio de ser maestro. Sucedió en una reunión de la Conferencia Católica de Missouri donde el Arzobispo José H. Gómez de San Antonio, Texas, ofreció un discurso sobre la necesidad de continuar la lucha por una reforma migratoria integral tan pronto como el nuevo presidente y los miembros del nuevo congreso tomen posesión de sus cargos.

Lo sorprendente no fue tanto la parte de ser “una prueba para los derechos civiles” — acerca de lo cual la campaña Justicia para Inmigrantes de los Obispos Católicos estadounidenses lleva ya varios años creando conciencia — sino el hecho de que pusiera este tema a la par con el derecho a la vida. Y tiene toda la razón. La emigración, cualquiera que sea la forma que toma, siempre tiene que ver con el derecho a la vida.

Ya sea que los inmigrantes vengán huyendo de la persecución política o religiosa, del genocidio masivo o del hambre y la pobreza, el espíritu humano de supervivencia y el sentido de responsabilidad por cuidar de los suyos — aunque sea al precio de no verlos nunca más — todo tiene que ver con la búsqueda de la vida, con querer conservar la vida y mejorarla. Tiene que ver con el derecho a existir y a hacerlo en condiciones humanas dignas.

No voy a hacer un resumen aquí de la conferencia del Arzobispo. Para hacerle justicia debe leerse completa (una copia en inglés se puede obtener pidiéndola a www.originsonline.com).

En cierto punto de mi vida yo también fui inmigrante. A lo largo de los años me he sentido conmovida al escuchar la razones convincentes por la cuales la mayoría de la gente emigra. Tiene muy poco que ver con el sentido aventurero. Es cierto que, idealmente, la gente debería emigrar legalmente. Pero ¿qué sucede cuando la ventanilla donde dice “entre por aquí de forma legal” no está casi nunca abierta y en un gran letrero a su lado con bonitos colores se lee “se busca mano de obra (y ¡mucha!)” y apunta hacia una grieta

en el muro? Eso es exactamente lo que ha estado sucediendo durante décadas con nuestras leyes de inmigración, las cuales han probado ser inadecuadas a las demandas de mano de obra internas, y con las políticas de comercio internacional que liberalizaron el transporte de mercancías pero no la circulación de mano de obra.

Las políticas migratorias restrictivas tienen el efecto de encerrar adentro a los que ya están aquí, no de sacarlos. Han llevado a millones de personas a vivir en los márgenes de nuestra sociedad y han puesto a los empresarios entre la espada y la pared. Mientras viví en Colorado conocí a granjeros y agricultores, dueños de restaurantes, de negocios de construcción y otros empresarios en dificultades. No conseguían atraer el interés de suficiente mano de obra nacional a su área de trabajo (algunos ofrecían un sueldo más que decente) pero tampoco podían obtener suficientes visados para trabajadores extranjeros. El sistema actual claramente no funcionaba para ellos. El dilema estaba en si dejar las cosechas pudrirse, reducir el negocio a la mera economía de subsistencia o cerrarlo, o contratar la mano de obra inmigrante, si bien ilegal, que abundaba alrededor.

Realmente nuestro sistema migratorio está en ruinas. Una reforma responsable es lo único que nos ofrece esperanza como individuos y como nación. Personalmente me sentiría más segura, y creo que nuestra nación también se beneficiaría, sabiendo quién forma parte de la fuerza laboral y el tejido social en nuestro país. Un incremento, casi de la noche a la mañana, de varios millones en la base de personas que paga impuestos por ingresos no le vendría mal tampoco a nuestra tesorería que tanto sufre estos días. Y dar oportunidad para que personas que ahora se ven forzadas al anonimato se conviertan en ciudadanos respetuosos de la ley no puede hacer otra cosa que beneficiar al país en su conjunto.

Somos una nación práctica a la que no le gustan los sinsentidos. Pero en esta cuestión de la inmigración ilegal ya hemos escuchado suficientes de ellos. No esperen que los católicos permanezcamos por más tiempo callados sobre esto.

¡Reforma migratoria, ya! Sí se puede, yes we can! ¿Les suena familiar?

2008



Noticias más importantes

1. ELECCIONES

Senador Barack Obama (IL) derrota al senador John McCain (AZ) y se convierte en el primer presidente afroamericano en la historia de EE.UU. El senador Joe Biden (DE) se convierte en el primer vicepresidente católico.

2. CRISIS ECONÓMICA

3. VISITA PAPAL

4. ABORTO

5. TENSIONES GLOBALES

Hicieron noticia

1. PAPA BENEDICTO XVI

Hizo su primera visita a EE.UU. como Papa, viajó a Francia y Australia, inauguró el año de St. Pablo y presidió el Sínodo Mundial de Obispos sobre la Biblia.

2. PRESIDENTE ELECTO BARACK OBAMA

3. VOTANTES CATÓLICOS

4. SAN PABLO

5. CRISTIANOS IRAQUÍES





Christians can find hope despite evil, danger in world, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Even though evil and environmental degradation threaten to destroy the world, Christians can always remain hopeful in their efforts to free humanity from sin and destruction, said Pope Benedict XVI.

“No matter how gloomy, there is no darkness that can blot out the light of Christ,” he said.

God’s promises and grace also give his people the courage and direction to weather “the great social and economic crises afflicting humanity” today, he said.

The pope made the remarks at a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 6 on the feast of the Epiphany, which marks the manifestation of Jesus as savior to the world.

“Our efforts to liberate human life and the world from the poison and pollution which could destroy the present and the future still have value and meaning” despite the enormity of the challenge, he said in his homily.

Today humanity must face global, economic and social crises and “hatred and destructive violence that do not stop spilling blood across many regions of the earth,” he said.

Other dangers are egoism and human pretension which can dangerously distort “the divine plan concerning life and human dignity, the family and the harmony of creation,” he said.

Even though it sometimes appears that people of faith have accomplished nothing in their efforts to bring God’s healing power to the world “or we seem powerless before overwhelming, hostile forces,” Christians will not give up hope, he said.

“It is the great hope based upon God’s promises that gives us courage and directs our action in good times and bad,” he said quoting his encyclical, “Spe Salvi” (on Christian hope).

The church recognizes its own humanity, with its limitations and misfortunes, yet no one can take away Christ’s light and glory because they do not come from a human church, but from God, he said.

The pope dedicated much of his homily to the symbolic and theological significance of the star that shone over Bethlehem at Christ’s birth. He linked the Gospel image to the field of science and astronomy.

After noting the year 2009 marked the 400th anniversary of Galileo Galilei’s first observations of the cosmos with

a telescope, the pope recalled the New Testament account of the three Wise Men or Magi who were guided by a star to the grotto where Christ was born.

He said the Fathers of the Church saw this new star as a kind of “cosmic revolution caused by the Son of God coming into the world.”

While pagan theology divinized countless natural elements and the powers of the cosmos, Christianity contemplated the one God who was creator and lord over the whole universe, he said.

The world and the heavens are not driven by blind, cruel or anonymous forces, the pope said.

“The fundamental and universal law of creation is divine love, made flesh in Christ,” he said.

Pope Benedict said St. Paul taught that through Christ people are not slaves to cosmic forces. Instead, they are “free and capable of realizing themselves” through their relationship with God, he said.

The universe is not an empty, cold place because “within everything and above everything there is a personal will -- the Spirit of God who in Christ is revealed as love,” he said.

Christ, the new sun who shines upon the whole universe, was born man so he could “again take on himself the earth and heavens, nature and the Creator, flesh and the spirit,” he said.

Jesus “is the center of the cosmos and history because in him the author and his work unmistakably merge,” said the pope.

Christianity’s special view of the cosmos is showing signs of a “new flowering” in the world of science thanks to the many scientists of faith who, “following in the footsteps of Galileo, do not renounce reason or faith,” he said.

These men and women place enormous value on both faith and reason and recognize how they mutually enrich each other, the pope said.

The pope urged the church and today’s Christians to be like the star that drew the three kings to Christ, and to help lead the world’s people to God.

After the Mass, Pope Benedict gave his noonday Angelus address to those gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

From his studio window, the pope asked people to “abandon wicked deeds,” open their hearts to the Gospel of salvation and follow the right path.

May people let themselves be conquered and transformed by the God who “came among us in order to give us the gift of his peace and love,” he said.

The pope also extended a Christmas greeting to Eastern Christians who follow the Julian calendar and were preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ Jan. 7.

“Even though it sometimes appears that people of faith have accomplished nothing in their efforts to bring God’s healing power to the world ..., Christians will not give up hope.”

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pope calls for Gaza peace talks, deplores violence in Congo

By Carol Glatz Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As fighting continued in the Gaza Strip, Pope Benedict XVI urged Israelis and Palestinians to end the violent, armed clashes and start peace talks.

“Hatred and the rejection of dialogue bring nothing but war,” he said after reciting the Angelus Jan. 6 with pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

“Today I would like to encourage the initiatives and efforts of all those who, having a heart of peace, are trying to help Israelis and Palestinians agree to sit down together and talk,” he said.

He prayed God would help sustain the dedicated efforts of these “courageous builders of peace.”

The pope also appealed for an end to the “inhumane brutality” unfolding in eastern Congo where some 20 children were abducted over the Christmas period by armed bandits who launched attacks against villages, leaving many people dead or injured.

Caritas Congo reported Dec. 29 that the children were abducted as child soldiers for the Lord’s Resistance Army -- a Ugandan rebel group. Caritas Congo is the local affiliate of the international Catholic umbrella group Caritas Internationalis.

Caritas said violence in the region flared in late December leaving hundreds of people dead. It said 50 bodies were found in the courtyard of a Catholic church in Doruma on Christmas morning.

The pope urged those responsible for such “inhumane brutality to give the (kidnapped) children back to their families” so that the future of these young people may be safe and fruitful.

The pope made the appeals on the feast of the Epiphany, which is a national holiday in Italy and is largely dedicated to children.

He said he was praying for the world’s children, especially those experiencing a troubled childhood.

The violence against children worldwide “appears even more appalling considering that 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child,” he said.

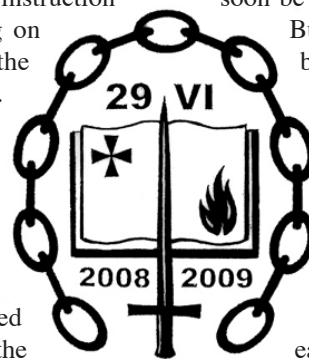
He called on world leaders to renew their promises to defend, safeguard and foster the development of the world’s children.

Pope Benedict noted that the Epiphany was dedicated to the Holy Childhood Association, a children-supported missionary organization that works in more than 100 countries. He thanked young people for their support of works that are designed to aid the world’s needy.

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

Hebrews Chapter 6

1 Therefore, let us leave behind the basic teaching about Christ and advance to maturity, without laying the foundation all over again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms and laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And we shall do this, if only God permits. 4 For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift 2 and shared in the holy Spirit 5 and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, to bring them to repentance again, since they are recrucifying the Son of God for themselves and holding him up to contempt. 7 Ground



that has absorbed the rain falling upon it repeatedly and brings forth crops useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is rejected; it will soon be cursed and finally burned. 9

But we are sure in your regard, beloved, of better things related to salvation, even though we speak in this way. 10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name by having served and continuing to serve the holy ones. 11 We earnestly desire each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of hope until the end, 12 so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.

Latest ‘Chicken Soup for the Soul’ series is written for Catholics

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The “Chicken Soup for the Soul” series can now add Catholics to the more than 200 groups in its targeted audience. In mid-December, Simon & Schuster published “Chicken Soup for the Soul: Living Catholic Faith,” making it the most recent addition to a series that has sold more than 112 million copies in 40 languages over the past 16 years. LeAnn Thieman, who co-authored

“Living Catholic Faith,” is no stranger to the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” phenomenon. She has co-authored nine other books in the series and is currently working on a new “Chicken Soup” book about miracles. When Thieman, a Catholic, was first approached about working on a “Chicken Soup” book for Catholics, she wasn’t sure such a book was necessary since the series already had a book

addressing Christians. She changed her mind in 2005 during the media coverage of Pope John Paul II’s death and funeral Mass, which she said revealed the large number of devout Catholics in the world. The book’s stories include anecdotes about the sacraments, praying the rosary, growing up Catholic, good role models and challenges in living the faith.





2008



Top Stories

1. ELECTIONS

Illinois Sen. Barack Obama defeats Arizona Sen. John McCain to become first African-American president in U.S. history. Delaware Sen. Joe Biden becomes first Catholic vice president.

2. ECONOMIC CRISIS

3. PAPAL VISIT

4. ABORTION

5. GLOBAL TENSIONS

Top Newsmakers

1. POPE BENEDICT XVI

Makes first U.S. visit as pope, travels to France and Australia, opens year of St. Paul and leads world Synod of Bishops on the Bible.

2. PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA

3. CATHOLIC VOTERS

4. ST. PAUL

5. IRAQI CHRISTIANS



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CNS photos

Wife of member of EOHSJ Grand Magisterium dies

Lady Betsy Ann Earthman, wife of H. E. Michael Earthman, member of the Grand Magisterium and former lieutenant of the Equestrian Order of The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem – Southwestern United States, passed away December 29, 2008, in Houston. She was born on November 27, 1947, in Lubbock, Texas.

Betsy was a Lady Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. In 1996, she served as General Co-Chairman of the Annual Meeting and Investiture of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. She also received the Gold Palm of Jerusalem.

At the time of her passing, Betsy was serving on the board of directors for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Betsy served as vice president of the Earthman Foundation, a private foundation that donated to various charities including Inner City Catholic Schools,

Catholic Near East Welfare Association, the University of St. Thomas, Texas Children's Hospital, Texas Tech University, and San Jose Clinic.

Betsy was buried with her hands wrapped in a maniturgium. A maniturgium is a cloth traditionally used to wipe the anointing oils from a new priest's hands. Betsy's son, Rev. Michael G. Earthman, presented the maniturgium to her after his ordination to the priesthood in 2007.

A wake service was held at St. Anne Catholic Church, Houston, January 1, 2009. The funeral took place January 2 at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Earthman Foundation, 2121 Sage Boulevard, Suite 245, Houston, Texas, 77056.

Cards and correspondence can be sent to: H. E. Michael R. Earthman, 3220 Avalon Place, Houston, TX 77019.

A multi-billion dollar gift given in challenging economic times

Continued from p. 1

practice of religion and a strong set of values. These goals, along with academic achievement, are the key components of the Catholic school's effectiveness.

Catholic schools provide faith formation and values. Teachers view the formation of Christian character as a non-negotiable, which is Gospel centered, environmental, cross-curricular and essential in a society where values are often ignored.

The NCEA, founded in 1904, is a professional membership organization that provides leadership, direction and service to fulfill the evangelizing, catechizing and

teaching mission of the church. NCEA members include elementary schools, high schools, parish religious education programs and seminaries.

Sources:

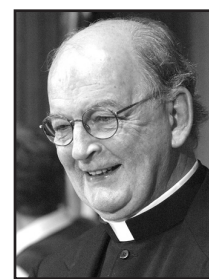
National Catholic Educational Association

Window on Mission, a report on Catholic secondary schools, 2002.

Catholic Schools Still Make a Difference: Ten Years of Research, 2004.

U.S. Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2008: The Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing.

Father Richard John Neuhaus, founder of the journal First Things, smiles after speaking at the National Press Club in Washington in 2005. Father Neuhaus died Jan. 8 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. He was 72. (CNS file photo/Bob Roller)



First Things founder Father Richard John Neuhaus dies from cancer

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Political, Catholic and pro-life leaders expressed their grief over the January 8, 2009, death of Father Richard John Neuhaus, an outspoken opponent of abortion and an adviser to President George W. Bush on bioethical issues.

Father Neuhaus, a former Lutheran minister who became a Catholic priest and a staunch defender of church teaching on abortion and other life issues, was 72.

Father Neuhaus was hospitalized in New York after becoming ill Dec. 26 with a systemic infection, according to a message sent to e-mail contacts and posted on the magazine's Web site. He had been diagnosed with cancer in late November.

Father Neuhaus, a native of Pembroke, Ontario, often was invited to lecture and participate in panel discussions on religion in the contemporary world. His views on abortion, stem-cell research, cloning and social issues contributed greatly to Catholic and other religious discourse on politics and society.

Father Neuhaus founded First Things, a journal published by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, in 1990. The magazine was established as an ecumenical journal "whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society," according to its mission statement.

Cardinal Dulles remembered as 'priest's priest' at New York funeral

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Cardinal Avery Dulles was remembered as a theologian, mentor, counselor and "a priest's priest" at his funeral December 18, 2008, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

At the request of Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Edward M. Egan of New York was the principal celebrant of the Mass. Five other cardinals, 20 archbishops and bishops and more than 125 priests concelebrated. Among the mourners were Archbishop Demetrios, primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, and representatives of ecumenical organizations.

Cardinal Dulles died Dec. 12 at the age of 90. Since 1988, he had been a professor of religion and society at Jesuit-run Fordham University in New York. In 2001, the Jesuit priest was the first American to be named a cardinal without first being a bishop.

Cardinal Egan, who was elevated by Pope John Paul II at the same consistory, said Cardinal Dulles' life story mixed triumph with suffering. He described a crucifix he saw as a seminarian in Umbria, Italy, that showed Christ's face as joyful or tortured, depending on the viewer's position. He said, "Death will always have two faces and neither should be ignored."

Cardinal Egan said Cardinal Dulles' triumphs included an unequalled career as an acclaimed American Catholic theologian and author of 23 books and more than 800 articles on "every aspect of theology." He taught theology at colleges and seminaries in the United States and overseas, advised and wrote for departments at the Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and served as the president of both the Catholic Theological Society of America and the American Theological Society.

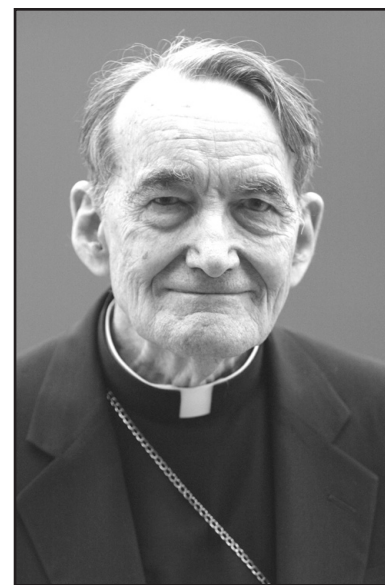
Cardinal Dulles was raised a Presbyterian in a prominent family noted for its

public service. His father, great-grandfather and great-uncle served as secretary of state in three presidential administrations. Cardinal Egan said Cardinal Dulles' conversion to Catholicism and his decision to

seek the priesthood "entailed a certain measure of pain" in the reaction of his family.

His physical suffering related to polio he contracted during World War II. He recovered from the initial bout, but developed post-polio syndrome 20 years before he died and was paralyzed and unable to speak in recent months.

Cardinal Egan quoted from Cardinal Dulles' final lecture, delivered April 1, 2008, at Fordham University by Jesuit Father Joseph O'Hare, to describe Cardinal Dulles' acceptance



Cardinal Avery Dulles
CNS file photo/Bob Roller

of suffering:

"Suffering and diminishment are not the greatest of evils, but are normal ingredients in life, especially in old age. They are to be accepted as elements of a full human existence. Well into my 90th year I have been able to work productively. As I become increasingly paralyzed and unable to speak, I can identify with the many paralytics and mute persons in the Gospels, grateful for the loving and skillful care I receive and for the hope of everlasting life in Christ. If the Lord now calls me to a period of weakness, I know well that his power can be made perfect in infirmity. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord!'"

Cardinal Egan described pushing Cardinal Dulles into a 90th birthday Mass in August on a bed with wheels. Cardinal Egan, who walks with a limp because of polio, said he apologized to Cardinal Dulles if the procession was bumpy.

"I told him it was a case of the lame pushing the lame, and the smile that came across Cardinal Dulles' face was very similar to what I saw on the face of the crucifix a half-century earlier," he said.



Palestinian families juggle to keep children in Catholic schools

Continued from p. 20

registration fee or incidentals such as uniforms, books and daily transportation.

For Handal, whose income barely reaches \$400 a month, the monthly payments he must make constitute almost 25 percent of the family income. The Handals try to cut costs in small ways, like packing lunches instead of buying them.

Some months Handal simply does not have the money for the tuition payment, and he swallows his pride and asks the school principals for help.

The schools try to accommodate him, but with so many needy families the schools, too, need to juggle their assistance each month.

For families like the Handals, the periodic tuition reduction they receive is not enough to alleviate the financial burden private education puts on their budget.

The economic situation in Bethlehem has been in a constant decline since the outbreak of the second intifada eight years ago, said Handal, and the cost of living has gone up while salaries decreased.

"Just this year the price for a loaf of bread has doubled," he said.

The only inheritance he can give to his children is a good education, he said, and he is not willing to give up on that.

According to the Office of Catholic Schools in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which oversees all Catholic schools and kindergartens in the Palestinian territories and Israel, some 60 percent of the families who send their children to Catholic schools in the Palestinian territories need financial assistance.

Franciscan Father Abdel Masiach, director of the office, said the situation in the Gaza Strip is worse. Most of the families are working poor. The situation in Israel is better, he said.

Throughout the patriarchate, he said, the average family only pays 40 percent of the cost of tuition per child.

According to a study undertaken by the Jerusalem Inter-Church Center last year, Jerusalem and the West Bank have 65 Christian schools. In 2006 the Catholic Church had the largest number, with 45 schools and more than 17,000 students throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Despite the steep financial burden of running schools without the full tuition being paid, officials' main concern at the moment is to keep the children in the Catholic schools, he said. School directors and principals seek financial help for their

schools wherever they can.

"It is very rare for children to have to drop out of school. The principals do not permit that to happen," said Father Masiach.

Palestinian public schools are not considered to have the same standard of education as the private Christian schools, and for most Christian families it is important that their children receive proper religious education at school, he said.

For Palestinian Christians, attending Christian schools is part of their identity, said Fuad Giacaman, general director of the Arab Education Institute in Beit Sahour (Shepherd's Field). Since Muslim students also attend Christian schools, their classrooms are the perfect setting for children to learn about concepts such as tolerance and respect, he said.

Christian schools teach "about peace, harmony, tolerance and openness. These are concepts which the Christian schools preach and practice," he said.

Most Christian schools also include several foreign language classes, such as English, Italian, French and German, and in general demand academic excellence, he said.

Some Christian educators feel that if the possibility of Christians and Muslims learning together in an atmosphere of love and respect is lost, it will be only a matter of time until extremists who have had no contact with other segments of society take full control of Palestinian society.

See Child Sponsorship article on page 20.

Subject of History May be our First Hope of Restoring our Society

Continued from p. 12

anity? Because, Mr. Byfield states, "from the fourth century to the late eighteenth, Christian history and the history of the Western world are the same history ... and any attempt to divorce the religious from the secular renders both incomprehensible."

This is why the non-profit organization SEARCH, the Society to Explore and Record Christian History, was formed. Its goal is to publish 12-volumes of the book series called "The Christians." The first set of six, "The Christians: Part I The First Millennium," have been printed, and the "blueprints" of the remaining six are completed and ready to be printed. The series is acceptable to Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox. Here is what has been written by Catholics about the series:

"This series is incredibly handsome.... The purpose of [it] is to put Christians in touch with their roots. Volume one is certainly a smashing success from that perspective and indeed from any perspective." ~ Father Alphonse de Valk, C.S.B., Editor, "Catholic Insight"

"The books have been widely praised in Evangelical periodicals and circles, and for good reason. Well-researched, filled with wonderful illustrations and photography, and containing numerous sidebars and profiles, the books are similar in feel and make to the Time/Life books they are modeled after.... The writing is excellent, the stories are engaging and well told, and many lesser-known martyrs and historical characters are brought out of the shadows

of time." ~ "The National Catholic Register" published Carl Olson's review of the second volume, "A Pinch of Incense."

Mr. Byfield doesn't say that a set of books can change the direction of society, but it's a start, as the old Jewish saying goes: "It's better to light one candle than complain about the dark." He believes this series is such a candle.

To read more about this series or to order, please go to: www.christianhistoryproject.com, SEARCH, 4609 Flower Valley Dr., Rockville, MD 20853; or 1-888-234-HISTORY(4478). Regularly priced volumes are \$45 each or \$199 for the first set of six. The Christian History Project is currently running a special on the first volume: two copies for \$45.

Not interested in history, but want to learn how Dewey's philosophy has affected our culture, then read the 39-page pamphlet "Why History Matters?" at: http://thechristians.ca/Search_essay_layout.pdf.

Cardinal George pledges to work with Obama

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In a Jan. 13 letter to the president-elect, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has pledged to work with the incoming administration of Barack Obama to "advance the common good and defend the life and dignity of all, especially the vulnerable and poor."

Rallies marking abortion anniversary set for days after inauguration

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Thousands of pro-life marchers are expected to rally in Washington Jan. 22 to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion, just days after President-elect Barack Obama is inaugurated. Abortion opponents also will hold multiple events in the nation's capital and throughout the U.S. the day before and the day of the official 2009 March for Life, as well as the following days. Participants are encouraged to meet with members of Congress to lobby on abortion-related issues. "We shall be a large group of Americans to bring our prayers and our important simple pro-life message to this new administration and new Congress," organizers of the march wrote on the official Web site, www.marchforlife.org. The theme of this year's march is "Remember — The Life Principles Mean 'Equal Care' With No Exceptions," the Web site said.

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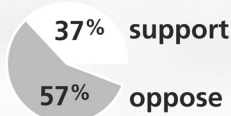
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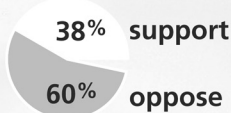


Catholics on Immigration

Would you support or oppose U.S. government assistance and trade policies that would create jobs abroad in order to prevent immigrants from coming here illegally to seek employment?



Would you support or oppose federal legislation to build a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border that is intended to stop illegal immigration?



Do you agree or disagree that the church has a moral obligation to help provide for the humanitarian needs of immigrants regardless of their legal status?



Telephone survey conducted among 1,000 Catholic adults in the U.S. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

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Of illegal immigration and the right to life

By Mar Muñoz-Visoso, USCCB

I was shocked. Finally someone said it loud and clear: “Immigration is the greatest civil rights test of our generation... It is very close to the right to life.” And he said it with the authority that, in the Church, comes with the teaching office. It happened at a meeting of the Missouri Catholic Conference where Archbishop José Gomez of San Antonio, Texas, delivered a speech on continuing to fight for comprehensive immigration reform as soon as the new president and congress are sworn in.

What was surprising was not so much the “civil rights test” portion of the message—around which the Justice for Immigrants campaign of the U.S. Catholic Bishops has been building awareness for a few years now—but the fact that he put this issue right up there with the right to life. And he is right, migration, whichever form it takes, is always about the right to life. Whether immigrants flee political or religious persecution, mass genocide or hunger and poverty, their human spirit of survival and the sense of responsibility to take care of your own, even if it comes at the price of never seeing them again, is all about seeking life, preserving life and improving life. It is about the right to exist and to do so in dignified human conditions.

I am not going to summarize here the archbishop’s talk. I think it should be read in its entirety (a copy can be obtained at www.originsonline.com).

Over the years I’ve been moved when hearing the compelling reasons why most people emigrate. I was at one point an immigrant myself. It has little to do with a sense of adventure. And yes, ideally, people ought to emigrate legally. But what happens when the “come-here-legally” window is practically closed for business but a big colorful sign that reads “help wanted (lots of it!)” sits right next to it suggesting a crack in the wall? That is what has been happening for decades with our immigration laws, which have proven inadequate to our labor needs, and trade

policies that liberalized the movement of merchandise across borders but not the movement of labor.

Restrictionist policies fence people in. They have led to millions of people living in the shadows of our society, and have left employers, as we say in Spanish, entre la espada y la pared (between the sword and the wall). While I lived in Colorado I met farmers, fast food restaurant and construction company owners who struggled after failing to interest enough nationals to work in their trade (some of them were offering more than a decent wage) and were not able to obtain enough visas for foreign workers. The current system was clearly not working for them. The dilemma was to let their crops rot, go into a mere economy of survival, close their businesses and cut off the livelihood of their families, or hire the plentiful immigrant labor at hand, even if illegally.

Clearly our immigrant program is in shambles. Responsible reform offers hope for individuals and our nation. I will feel more secure, and our nation will benefit from, knowing the actual composition of its work force and social fabric. An increase of several million taxpayers almost over night won’t be bad medicine for our ailing treasury either. Turning anonymous people into law abiding citizens could benefit the country as a whole.

We are a no-nonsense nation, but on this issue of illegal immigration I have heard enough nonsense already. Don’t expect Catholics to be silent about it anymore.

Comprehensive immigration reform now! Yes we can! Sounds familiar?

*Disciples.
Missionaries. Leaders.*

**National Collection for the
Church in Latin America
January 24-25**

Making A Difference

By Tony Magliano
Catholic News Service



A King’s wisdom for the president

What advice would America’s most-renowned black man offer to America’s first black president? If he were alive today, what advice would the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. offer to President-elect Barack Obama?

This question takes on added significance when we consider that this year the federal holiday honoring King just happens to fall on Jan. 19 — the day before Obama becomes the first African-American president of the United States.

First, a little background information. In imitation of the king of kings, King was nonviolent. His courageous stance for universal civil rights was always framed within the context of nonviolence.

In his book “Stride Toward Freedom,” King recounts events following the firebombing of his home during the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott. As he approached his house, he explained, he saw hundreds of angry faces: “The police were trying, in their usual rough manner, to clear the streets, but they were ignored by the crowd. ... Nonviolent resistance was on the verge of being transformed into violence.”

King recalled saying, “We must love our white brothers ... no matter what they do to us. ... Jesus still cries out in words that echo across the centuries: ‘Love your enemies; bless them that curse you.’ ... We must meet hate with love.”

To fight poverty, nonviolently of course, King organized the Poor People’s Campaign. He saw poor blacks and poor whites as natural allies. Around the same time he started speaking out strongly against the immorality of the Vietnam War.

King was connecting the moral dots of social justice and peace. He was becoming a prophetic advocate of what Catholic social teaching would later call the “consistent ethic of life.”

But what about abortion? If he were

alive today, would King oppose the killing of unborn babies?

According to his niece, the Dr. Alveda King, the answer is yes! In an interview with LifeNews.com, she said, “I know in my heart if Uncle Martin were alive today, he would join with me in the greatest civil rights struggle of this generation -- the recognition of the unborn child’s basic right to life.”

So, what wisdom would America’s most-renowned black man share with America’s first black president?

On the basis of the life of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., it seems obvious that he would advise a more accelerated withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and the complete rebuilding of that war-torn nation.

He would oppose increasing troop levels in Afghanistan, and instead would support a quick and total withdrawal of all military forces. He would counsel for an energetic diplomatic and humanitarian solution there.

King would always advise diplomacy over military intervention. Understanding the connection between poverty and war, he would urge Obama to transfer hundreds of billions of dollars from the military’s astronomical budget and use it instead to eliminate domestic and global poverty.

He would equally urge Obama to work for an end to nuclear weapons, the arms trade and capital punishment.

And yes, he would call for the total end of abortion.

Let us pray that our new president will totally share King’s dream of speeding up “that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!’”

Congo Crisis

1.4 million
people displaced in country

250,000
fled homes since August

90,000
displaced in North Kivu region

27,000
fled to Uganda since August

5.4 million
dead from war, disease
and hunger since 1998
(2008 population estimate: 66.5 million)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Rape: UNICEF estimates that 1,000 women and girls are raped per month. The majority of victims are in displaced populations.

Forced Recruitment: An estimated 3,000 displaced children were reported to be in armed groups in the east. Children and adults have been subject to forced conscription in North Kivu.



Sources: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, International Displacement Monitoring Centre, www.alertnet.org
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Make Reservations for “At the Death House Door”

The Victoria College will host Rev. Carroll Pickett, VC alumnus, for a screening of the documentary “At the Death House Door” at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 26, in the VC Fine Arts Auditorium. The film is a personal and intimate look at the death penalty in the state of Texas through the eyes of Rev. Pickett, who served 15 years and presided over 95 executions as the death house chaplain to the infamous “Walls” prison unit in Huntsville. After each execution, Pickett recorded an audiotape account of his trip to the death chamber. The documentary also focuses on the story of Carlos De Luna, a convict Pickett counseled and whose execution troubled Pickett more than any other. He firmly believed De Luna was innocent, and the film tracks the investigative efforts of a team of Chicago Tribune reporters who have turned up evidence that strongly suggests he was.

The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are requested. Parish and school groups are invited to attend. To make reservations, please contact Darin at (361) 582-2417 or e-mail at darin.kazmir@victoriacollege.edu.

“The Last Templar,” Jan. 25-26, NBC

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — Although officially disbanded almost 700 years ago, the Knights Templar -- a medieval order of chivalry whose members took monastic vows and dedicated themselves to protecting Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land -- have survived down the centuries in frequently fanciful legend. They figure in the pseudohistorical back story of Dan Brown’s 2003 novel, “The Da Vinci Code,” and provide the basis for Raymond Khoury’s 2005 best-selling adventure tale, “The Last Templar.”

A two-part, four-hour television miniseries based on Khoury’s work (which he originally wrote as a screenplay) premieres on NBC Sunday, Jan. 25, and Monday, Jan. 26, 8-10 p.m. CST each night. Directed by Paolo Barzman, this combination of romance and globe-trotting mystery stars Mira Sorvino, Scott Foley and the venerable Omar Sharif.

Sorvino plays New York-based archaeologist turned stay-at-home mom Tess Chaykin. She crosses paths with Foley’s FBI agent, Sean Daley, after four sword-wielding thieves dressed as Templars ride horses into the opening of a museum exhibit of Vatican art treasures and make off with an ancient decoding device.

This delicate set of gears and pulleys, we eventually learn, could be used to

decipher a long-buried manuscript with the potential to “destroy the foundation of Christianity.”

Though initially at cross-purposes, freewheeling, agnostic Tess and by-the-book, practicing Catholic Sean eventually learn to play nice and even discover that opposites attract. Where exactly that leaves Tess’ sometimes live-in boyfriend Clive (Anthony Lemke) -- known to her dewy-eyed daughter Kim (Rebecca Windheim) as “Uncle Clive” -- the script never makes clear.

Sean’s faith inspires him to give up for Lent a whole series of items, including coffee, chocolate and, oddly, fruit juice. But it fails to hinder him from falling into Tess’ arms at the earliest opportunity.

Despite a muddled account of the Templars’ tragic undoing that blames the church for their fate, rather than the real culprit, the greedy French king, Philip IV, and despite the glowering presence of not-to-be-trusted Vatican official Msgr. De Angelis (Victor Garber), “The Last Templar” reaches a very different, far more acceptable resolution than “The Da Vinci Code.”

In addition to the aforementioned premarital situation, occasional crass language and sexual references -- as well as the need for caution in approaching the portrayal of the church -- make this best for older viewers.

Addictions workshop – Monday, Jan. 19

A Drug and Alcohol Addictions Workshop will be held Monday, January 19, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Doubletree Hotel Houston Downtown. It is sponsored by the National Catholic Council on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. This free workshop will provide a full-day training for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and surrounding area and will focus on learning about medical aspects of Addiction, Family and Addictions, Spirituality and Recovery from Addictions and Steps to Establish a Parish-based Substance Addiction Ministry. It is open to persons of all faiths and beliefs, Addiction Treatment and Prevention Professionals, persons at work in parish/church addiction ministries, or reps. from parishes/churches wanting to establish an addictions ministry. There will be a Spanish Track and an English Track. CEU credits approved by the National Association of Addiction Professionals (NAAP) are available.

Register by January 18 by calling (713) 874-6650.

Special Collections 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 Mallett 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: April 24-26; 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. For more information, go to their Web site: www.beginningexperience.org; e-mail: sanantonio@yaho.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.**

When & Where

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.

January

Beasley — St. Wenceslaus Annual Chicken-fried Steak Dinner Jan. 18 with serving beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the CCD building on the church grounds. A drive-thru will be available for plates-to-go. Pastries will also be available.

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Jan. 18 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 — St. Joseph High School Family Festival Jan. 25 at the community center. A barbecue lunch will be served from 11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. with an auction starting at 12:30 p.m. There will also be a silent auction, games, raffle and live entertainment by STJ Spirit and music groups.

Victoria — Our Lady of Victory School, National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence 2008, will host an Open House for prospective parents and students in grades Pre-K3 through 8th

on Monday, January 26, at 6:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria, 1311 E. Mesquite Lane. Families will tour the campus and have an opportunity to learn what OLV has to offer. For more information, call the school office at 575-5391.

Upcoming Events

Victoria — The African Children’s Choir will be performing at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, 3310 N. Ben Jordan (at corner of Airline and Ben Jordan) on Feb. 4 at 7:00 p.m. This choir has performed at the White House and on American Idol. The specific choir coming to St. Mark’s is from Uganda. For more local information call the church at (361) 575-8206 or go to the children’s choir Web site at www.AfricanChildrensChoir.com.

Victoria — Bilingual charismatic healing Mass, Wednesday, Feb. 4, at Our Lady of Sorrows (208 W. River St.) with Father Stan De Boe as celebrant. There will be singing, praising, adoration, rosary (7:00 p.m.) and Mass (7:30 p.m.). Misa de sanacion, Miércoles, Febrero 4. Vengan todos!

San Antonio — Four-day Natural Family Planning Institute Feb. 5-8 hosted by the Office of Marriage and Family Life and Natural Family Planning of the Archdiocese of San Antonio and taught by nationally and internationally recognized instructor Mercedes Arzú Wilson. For more information go to: <http://www.archdiocese.org/familylife/> and click on Natural Family Planning. Read more on page 6.

Hallettsville — *Night in Ol’ Paris* 2009 Extravaganza to benefit Sacred Heart School Feb. 7 at the KC Hall. Only 250 tickets will be sold at \$125 each (includes admission for two people and a chance to win up to \$1,000). There will be a steak dinner, dancing, silent auction and much much more. For more information or tickets call, (361) 798-4251 or (361) 798-5888.

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.

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!

New Taiton — St. John’s Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner March 8 at Taiton Community Center. Serving fried-chicken, homemade dressing plates begins at 11:00 a.m. with dine-in or plates-to-go at \$7 p/p. There will be an auction, cakewalk, country store, kiddie area, raffle drawing, silent auction and much more.

Do You Have A When & Where Item?

FAX To: (361) 573-5725

E-mail: janakr@victoriadiocese.org
ASAP



KC 8388 leaders, Johnny Smith and Ram Longoria, sold olive wood gifts for HCEF at Our Lady of Sorrows (OLS) and Trinity Chapel in Victoria. This is the fifth year the Knights at OLS and the Knights of KC Council 1329 in Victoria have held an HCEF olive wood sale. (Inset) Father Stan addresses his parishioners about HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program. Following his homilies, his parishioners sponsored 11 Christian children from the Holy Land. In his homily he also spoke of Our Lady Queen of Peace – Guadalupe Parish in Bir Zeit (West Bank – Palestinian Territory), which was built from funds from parishioners in Mexico. The church was built in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Gaza priest's message at Mass for peace: 'We cry and nobody hears us'

By Judith Sudilovsky
Catholic News Service

JERUSALEM (CNS) — The pastor of the Catholic parish in Gaza City described Gaza as “drowning in blood” as hospitals overflowed with patients.

In a message to participants in a special Mass for peace at St. Stephen Church in Jerusalem Jan. 4, Msgr. Manuel Musalam, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Gaza City, wrote: “What you see on television cannot be compared to what is happening. The word love is choking in my throat. ... We are living like animals in Gaza. We cry and nobody hears us. I am asking God for mercy and pray that the light of Christianity continues to shine in Gaza.”

Church leaders from the Holy Land attended the Mass at St. Stephen's while local and international Christians gathered elsewhere in Israel and the West Bank to pray for a halt to the violence in Gaza. When Israel began its military operation in Gaza in late December, the heads of Christian churches in the Holy Land called for Jan. 4 to be a day of prayer for peace.

At St. Stephen's, retired Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah of Jerusalem said the Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip means death for both sides.

“What is happening now is death for Palestinians as well as Israelis,” Patriarch Sabbah said at the Mass. “What is happening in Gaza has made us all come to pray and join in a prayer that says stop the massacre. We are calling to God to look at Gaza and see what is happening there and to all of us.”

Peace only can come through justice, not war, he said.

“We are looking at ourselves and we are not doing our best. Israel should stop this and will stop, but then after this destruction there will be more destruction,” he said.

He called on Palestinians to realize that the only way to regain their freedom and independence is through nonviolent means.

Israel launched a ground attack in Gaza Jan. 3 after several days of airstrikes to stop the Palestinian militant group Hamas from launching rockets into Israel. Since

the start of the airstrikes Dec. 27, at least 13 Israelis and more than 850 Palestinians, including 300 children, have been killed.

In a center pew of St. Catherine's, Victor Zoughbi knelt in prayer.

He told Catholic News Service after Mass he was praying “not just for the people in Gaza but also for those in Tel Aviv. Every (Israeli) soldier going into Gaza now has a mother who is sitting glued to the television with her heart in her throat. He who truly has God in his heart loves everybody.”

Zoughbi said he did not understand the purpose of Hamas' rockets, given their inaccuracy, and he emphasized the fact that there is only one Palestinian government headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. In June 2007, Hamas split with Abbas' Fatah movement and took control of the Gaza Strip. Abbas' government still controls the West Bank.



PALESTINIAN WORKER LAYS DOWN BODY OF CHILD AT MORGUE IN GAZA—A Palestinian hospital worker lays the body of a child beside the bodies of two other children in the Shifa hospital morgue in Gaza Jan. 5. An Israeli tank shell killed the three Palestinian children in their home in eastern Gaza City Jan. 5, medical officials said. (CNS photo/Suhaib Salem, Reuters)

Diocese of Victoria collects over \$23,000 for Holy Land Christians

By Cynthia Brewer

From October to Christmas, parish organizations within the Diocese of Victoria held olive wood gifts sales at over 25 parishes. Organizations holding the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation olive wood crafts' sales included the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, the Knights of Columbus, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, altar societies, youth groups and groups of parishioners.

A special addition to the cause to assist the Christians in the Holy Land is the help of Father Stan DeBoe, OSST, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows. He has volunteered to be the speaker for HCEF's Holy Land Days in the Diocese of Victoria.

Father Stan has a special place in his heart for the Holy Land as he was on the board of Churches for Middle East Peace and chaired the board of two years while he was the Justice and Peace director for the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM).

A Holy Land Day is different than the usual olive wood sale days. On a Holy Land Day someone, in this case Father

Stan, applies his homily to the Christians in the Holy Land and speaks on behalf of HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program.

A Holy Land Day was held at St. Joseph Parish in Inez, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish and at Trinity Chapel in Victoria, which brought about 16 child sponsorships.

Father Stan and Father Gabriel Bentil, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, traded places on the weekend of Inez's Holy Land Day. Father Stan said the Mass at St. Joseph Parish, while Father Gabriel Bentil said the Mass at Our Lady of Sorrows. Because of the priests' efforts, the Catholic Daughters at St. Joseph Parish doubled their olive wood sales from the previous year and parishioners sponsored five children.

A huge thank you goes to all the priests who allowed an HCEF sale at his parish, the organizations who held the sales, the parishioners who purchased olive wood gifts or sponsored children and Father Gabriel and Father Stan holding Holy Land Days for the benefit of the Christians in the Holy Land.

Please read more about the Child Sponsorship Program on this page.

An answer to the Holy Land Christian school's financial problem

HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program links a sponsor in the West with a student in the Holy Land. Sponsorships foster unity in Christ among Arab and Western Christians and help Holy Land Christian schools continue to provide quality Christian education in difficult economic times.

Why Do Christian Schools Need Our Help? The Holy Land's Christian Schools face a critical financial situation. Prior to the start of the Intifada, Holy Land Christian schools were running large deficits. These deficits have risen sharply this year as families are no longer able to pay tuition. Schools are hard-pressed to cover operating costs, teachers' salaries, maintenance, etc.

While private schools typically turn away students who cannot pay tuition, the Holy Lands' Christian schools recognize the importance of their role in preserving the Christian presence. Thus they subsidize the tuition of Christian students whose families cannot pay which, at present, are the great majority of students. The schools, however, cannot continue to cover their large deficits and need our help.

A Call to All Christians and Churches in America: There are over 15,000 Christian students in Christian schools throughout Palestine, Jordan, and Israel. HCEF hopes to find sponsors for all of these children from amongst concerned Christian faithful in the West.

Sponsorship Builds Solidarity: Individuals, families, church organizations, and school groups can sponsor a child in the Holy Land. Sponsorship builds a real, interactive relationship between the Holy Land child and his or her sponsor. A photo of and information about the student are provided to the sponsor, along with a certificate and accompanying material. Communications between sponsor and child are exchanged on Easter, Christmas, and within the first two months of the school year.

Sponsorship is Ecumenical in Nature: Sponsorship involves children from all denominations, and the sponsor's contribution goes directly to the child's school rather than to the child's family. Sponsorship is intended to help the schools continue to provide a solid Christian education and thereby benefits the entire student body.

HCEF's Child Sponsorship Program Gets Maximum Benefit From Your Donation: \$300 a year or \$25 a month helps support the Christian education of a child in a Christian School, which costs roughly \$900 per student. HCEF directs a greater portion of funds to school support than other Christian organizations with sponsorship programs in the Holy Land.

How do I sponsor a child? To learn more about the HCEF Child Sponsorship program or to sponsor a child in the name of Christian education in the Holy Land, please go to <http://www.hcef.org/>, or contact Victoria's HCEF Holy Land Christian Support Network director, Cindy Brewer, at the Diocese of Victoria (361) 573-0828 ext. 31 or cbrewer@victoriadiocese.org.



Palestinian families juggle to keep children in Catholic schools

By Judith Sudilovsky
Catholic News Service

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (CNS) — For six months last year Adel Handal was unable to pay his phone bill, and the electricity has been cut off more times than he cares to remember because he did not pay the bill.

But while Handal, 44, a hairdresser, and his wife cut corners to maintain their household, they have never considered taking their four children out of Catholic

schools.

“They have been going to these schools since kindergarten, and we prefer them to stay there. It is better for them to be in a Christian environment. We will do whatever it takes to keep them there,” said Handal, who pays about \$1,500 per year for all his children to attend the girls schools run by the Rosary Sisters and the De La Salle Holy Land school for boys. Tuition does not include the yearly \$120-per-child

See *Palestinian families*, p. 17