At 88 years, Msgr. Petru retires

By Father Tommy Chen, director of Diocesan Pro-Life Concerns, from his talk at Pro-Life Novena in Hallettsville

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Thus, on July 4, 1776, our nation was founded on these bold words: words that testified to the “self-evident truth”… the obvious and apparent truth … that every human being possessed the intrinsic dignity, given by God, of the right to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

These words embodied the hope of a people seeking deliverance from a govemment that had become tyrannical … a government that was trampling upon the God-given rights of its people.

These words gave purpose to the great Revolution which gave birth to this great nation … a nation whose existence emerged from the rubble of an oppres- sor’s disrespect for the Life, Freedom, and Happiness of fellow human beings and therefore this nation, learning from the error of its sovereign, became a nation that guaranteed to its citizens what at one time was denied to it … namely the Right to Life … the Right to Liberty … and the Right to Happiness.

This is our legacy as Americans! This was the inheritance that we received from our Founding Fathers.

And it was a heritage that we proudly preserved and strove to hold intact, at least until January 22, 1973.

On that fateful day, the Truths that were once proclaimed to be “self-evident,” apparent, obvious, and clear – seemed to become obscure and ambiguous, if not doubtful.

On that day, our government, through its Supreme Court, made an arrogant dec- laration against the very will of Almighty God.

On that day, the Supreme Court of this land, pronounced a presumptuous judgment that caused the Heavenly Courts to tremble and weep…

On that day, our nation, founded on the “unalienable Rights of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”… and therefore this nation, learning from the error of its sovereign, became a nation that guaranteed to its citizens what at one time was denied to it … namely the Right to Life … the Right to Liberty … and the Right to Happiness.

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These words gave purpose to the great Revolution which gave birth to this great nation … a nation whose existence emerged from the rubble of an oppres-sor’s disrespect for the Life, Freedom, and Happiness of fellow human beings of the programs he helped to begin at the parishes, including a Christmas Pageant; encouraging Disciples on the Journey from which developed a group that began a scholarship breakfast, which last year provided $15,000 in scholarships to the parishes’ high school graduates and college students; the ACTS retreats, “which have revolutionized the whole church – we thank you and God”; for supporting the youth in Young Neighbors in Action; and for creating the Adoration Chapel, “which has been an obvious blessing.” He also told Msgr. Petru that the parishioners purchased a flat-screen TV for him – “so that he could follow the US bishops’ conferences,” and then he presented him with a plaque from the two parishes.

Administrative Assistant Gina Kozelsky

See At 88 years, p. 11
Due to the unexpected closing of Adgraphics Printing, the regularly scheduled Printer’s Date of the first Wednesday of the month for DIOCESE — Page 2 — March 2011

Bishop Fellhauer’s Schedule

March
6 8:00 a.m., Mass, Assumption Chapel, Palacios
11:15 a.m., Pilgrims’ Mass, St. Philip Church, El Campo
1:30-4:30 p.m., Catholic Knowledge Bowl, Holy Family Church, Victoria
6:00 p.m., Mass, Girl Scout Awards, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
11 8:00 a.m., School Mass, St. Michael Church, and golf tournament benefiting St. Michael School, Cuero
13 8:00 a.m., Mass, the Stevenson Detention Unit, Cuero
3:00 p.m., Rite of Election, Call to Continued Conversion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
15 6:30 p.m., Catholic Daughters of the Americas and the Knights of Columbus Council #1329, Clergy and Religious Appreciation Night, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria
16 3:00 p.m., Diocesan Finance Board meeting, Chancery Office
4:00 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
19 4:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Mary Church, St. Mary (Hallettsville)
20 10:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Family Church, Wharton
27 10:30 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Hallettsville
7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Mary Church, Nada, including St. John Church, New Taillon
31 6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. John the Baptist Church, Hungerford
April
2 6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Family Church, Victoria
3 11:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Cross Church, East Bernard
8 Knights of Columbus Council #988 Bishop’s Charity Golf Tournament, Colony Creek Country Club, Victoria
9 8:00 a.m., Mass, Teen ACTS retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
2:00 p.m., Mass, DeLeon Family reunion, St. Mary Church, Victoria
6:30 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Gaudalupe Church, Bay City

Official Appointments By Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

Effective February 27, 2011, the following provision is made for Queen of the Holy Rosary Church, Hostyn, and Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Plum:

The retirement of Monsignor Stanley J. Petrus as pastor of both parishes is accept- ed; the Rev. Timothy Kosler is appointed “Priest Supervisor” of both parishes, while retaining his current assignment (Code of Canon Law, can. 517); Deacon John McCourt is appointed “Parish Director” of both parishes (can. 517); the Rev. Joseph Kariuki is appointed “Sacramental Minister” of both parishes.

~ IMPORTANT NOTICE ~

Due to the unexpected closing of Adgraphics Printing, the regularly scheduled print date of the first Wednesday of the month for The Catholic Lighthouse may be changed. The paper will be printed for the month of April, we just do not print date of the first Wednesday of the month for Neighbors.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Brewer, editor

The Catholic Lighthouse

Published monthly (1st Wednesday) at 1505 E. Mesquite Lane — Victoria, TX 77901
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DEADLINE IS THE THIRD TUESDAY OF THE PRECEDING MONTH.

14th Annual Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament is on the horizon

It is almost impossible to remember how tragic a place this world is when one is playing golf. — Robert Lynd

The Youth and Vocations programs are about to set up a much appreciated booth with the help of the Knights of Columbus #9088 at Holy Family in Victoria. These two programs are the beneficiaries of the 14th annual Bishop Fellhauer Golf Tournament, scheduled for April 8, 2011, at Colonoy Creek Country Club in Victoria. The Rev. Joseph Kariuki, chairman of the tournament, along with the committee, has been busy preparing for this jam-packed day!

Funds received from the tournament will be used for new youth and voca- tions activities and to subsidize existing programs. Our diocese is very blessed to have active youth and vocation ministries that work hand in hand to minister more effectively to the young people of the diocese. Unfortunately, due to limited re- sources, some young people are unable to participate in the various activities without subsidization. The funds from this tour- nament will help alleviate that situation, as well as provide opportunities for new and innovative programming to be intro- duced. Past tournaments have allowed these offices to bring in adult-formation sessions in human sexuality and sessions in technical areas to strengthen the family. They have also made it possible for all high school students who wish to attend the pro-life rally in Austin to do so. The proceeds of this tournament has also helped subsidize funding of an annual boys vocation camp, as well as an annual mission trip to an orphanage in Guatemala and allowed for expansion of the retreat programs for confirmation, junior high, and high school students — just to name a few of the many projects these funds have supported. In measurable outcomes, the diocese has realized a 300-percent increase in vocations since implementing the vari- ous camps and direct-contact initiatives and has sparked renewed enthusiasm for the tenets of Catholic social teaching by being given the opportunity to put their faith in action.

You can help with this fundraising event by being a sponsor. All Deacon Level sponsors and higher will be given first priority to play in the tournament. Sponsor signs will be displayed on the tee boxes and on a large display sign at the main scoreboard. Bishop Fellhauer See 14th Annual, p. 3

DSA & Reflection of Faith Capital Campaign Updates

2010 DSA

Diocesan Goal: $1,349,808.00
Parish Pledge Totals: $734,898.67
Parish Contribution Totals: $726,365.81

Reflection of Faith Capital Campaign

Diocesan Goal: $9,000,000.00
Parish Pledge Totals: $12,965,380.95
Parish Contribution Totals: $8,851,515.56

You have Moved? Address Changed?

Call 361-573-0828 with the change in your address.

Saves Money!
Changes to the peoples’ part of the “Gloria”

From http://www.usccb.org/romannmissal/samples-people.shtml

The use of the new Roman Missal begins Nov. 27, 2011. Between now and the implementation of the new Roman Missal on the First Sunday of Advent, The Catholic Lighthouse will highlight changes in the parts of the people in the Order of the Mass. Text that will change is marked with italics and bold printing.

Present Text:
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

New Text:
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We pray you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, 0 God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

you are seated at the right hand of the Father: have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

2011 Study Week focuses on Revised Roman Missal — music showcases to be held in diocese

By Cynthia Goering, director, Diocesan Liturgical Commission

The Southwest Liturgical Conference 49th Annual Study Week, held Feb. 2-5, 2011, concentrated on the Revised Roman Missal; its theme was “Ever-Ancient, Ever New: Preparing for the Revised Roman Missal – music showcases to be held in diocese.” The conference was held at the Calvin L. Rampton Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Some of the major speakers included Rev. Paul Turner, noted author and pastor in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri; Dr. David Fingerberg, associate professor in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame; the Most Reverend Gerald Kicanas, bishop of Tucson, Arizona; Dr. Jane Regan, associate professor of theology and religious education at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, Boston, Mass.; and Rev. Jan Michael Joncas, theologian and musician, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota. Included also in the Study Week were four music publishers namely Good For the Soul Music, GLA, Oregon Catholic Press, and World Library Publications (J. S. Paluch), who showcased new and revised musical settings for the Revised Roman Missal.

There were 1410 registrants who were catechized in the preparation of receiving the Roman Missal, which will be implemented on November 27, 2011, First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the Church Year.

Those attending from the Diocese of Victoria were Mary Kay Heffley, St. Anthony Parish, Columbus; Judy and George Panza, St. Agnes Parish, Edna; Stephen and Vivian Spanihel, St. Mary Parish, Nada; Cynthia Sunderman, Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake; and Cynthia Goering, St. Philip the Apostle Parish, El Campo.

As an aid to parish musicians and pastors, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission will be sponsoring various music showcases throughout the Diocese of Victoria featuring the new music settings for Mass. The showcases will be held in Columbus, El Campo, Shiner and Victoria. Sample booklets containing the music from WLP, OCP, and GLA will be made available. All parish music directors, organists and musicians should make time to attend.

Watch for future details concerning these showcases.

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The Catholic Lighthouse
Page 3 — March 2011

The Eucharistic Prayer: our response to God’s invitation

By Lisa Maxson, The Catholic Voice, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Omaha, Neb.

What congregations say and hear at Mass will change with the new English translation of the Roman Missal, but the meaning of what one Catholic theologian calls the greatest prayer of the Church is unchanged.

The Eucharistic Prayer is heard in the middle of every liturgy around the world, recalls the saving mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection and is the highest point of every Mass, says Msgr. Joseph DeGrocco, professor of liturgy and director of liturgical formation at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, New York.

The new translation does not change what’s happening during the Mass, especially during the consecration, he says. It just brings the words said closer to the literal Latin translation.

“We believe that when the Church prays the Eucharistic Prayer, that mystery is actually made present,” Msgr. DeGrocco says. “Within that prayer, as part of that making present the mystery, the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.”

Various forms of the Eucharistic Prayer will continue to be used throughout the year, depending on liturgical seasons and special occasions, Msgr. DeGrocco says. Each form expresses the essential beliefs of the Catholic Church, but emphasizes different aspects of the theology, he says.

In addition to four principal Eucharistic Prayers, Eucharistic Prayer forms exist for Masses of reconciliation and Masses for various needs and occasions.

Essentially the priest is free to choose whichever prayer he wants to use, but there are guidelines and aspects of good liturgical practice and theology that make some prayers more appropriate at times than others.

Each of the expressions of Eucharistic Prayer offers an emphasis, says Eileen Burke-Sullivan, S.T.D., assistant professor of pastoral and systematic theology and director of the master of arts in ministry program at Creighton University in Omaha.

The reconciliation canons are usually prayed during Lent or during other times of public repentance or calls to repentance and forgiveness, she says.

The canons of various needs and occasions can be prayed when a group is gathered for a particular purpose.

See The Eucharistic Prayer, p. 7

14th Annual Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament is on the horizon

Continued from p. 2

14th Annual Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament

Tournaments: BISHOP-$1,000.00; MONSIGNOR - $500.00; PRIEST - $200.00; DEACON - $100.00; and SEMINARIAN - $50.00.

If you have any questions, please contact Monroe Rieger at 361-571-6535.

Our Lady of Victory School
2011-2012 New Student Registration Pre-Ks through 8th Grade

Thursday, March 10 — OLY Parishioners
Friday, March 11 — All Other Students

8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
School Office — 1311 E. Mesquite Lane

For more information, call the school office at 575-5391
www.ourladyvictory.org
Support our Seminarians and Win a Car!

The Serra clubs of the Diocese of Victoria are sponsoring a car raffle to help defray some of the associated expenses with recruitment and education of our seminarians. In recent years the Diocese of Victoria has been extremely blessed to realize a 300-percent increase in the number of seminarians studying for the priesthood. The diocese is defying all national trends in this area! With this huge blessing, comes an equally huge responsibility and challenge for all Catholics. A few facts to consider:

- The cost of educating one seminarian is currently $225,000.00; $25,000.00 a year for nine years.
- To date we have ten seminarians studying for the Diocese of Victoria.
- There is a very real possibility that we will have an additional three seminarians before the end of 2011.
- The cost of relational ministry that has realized a 300-percent growth in seminarians for our diocese in the past 4 years is also a costly endeavor.

Since 1935, Serra International has responded to challenges similar to the challenges the Diocese of Victoria is facing at this time. Our goal as an organization is to support, assist and affirm dynamic men and women as they share their ministry in the service of the Church.

One very tangible way that Serra clubs of the Diocese of Victoria are showing their support for seminarians is to help insure that adequate recruitment and educational funds are available, through projects such as this car raffle.

The car, a NEW 2010 Toyota Corolla Sport, has been donated for this raffle, so 100 percent of the proceeds will benefit the vocation efforts of the diocese. The cost of a ticket is $5.00 or 3 for $10.00. Please contact George Wenzel at 361-649-7307 for more information or to obtain your tickets.

A Seminarian’s Thoughts …

By Philip Brune, Theology II

The greatest joy of being a seminarian is being able to experience the love of God with other people through my vocation. The joy of helping students prepare for confirmation, sharing the faith with those about to become Catholic and visiting with the dying, are all moments when God has clearly spoken to me. At these times God’s love pours down and I receive so much more from those I minister to than I feel I could ever give them. Yet at the same time God is feeding their faith through me. If that’s not the most humbling thing in the world, then I don’t know what is. There is such a deep hunger to experience God’s love and the love of others in the world, but most of us don’t really recognize that need in ourselves. One of my greatest joys is being with someone when they do realize that hunger for love, and they desire to receive it.

Of the several times I’ve experienced this, one time was at the UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. I knocked on the door of the patient’s room, asked if I could come in, and he said I could. After a little conversation I found out he had a painful disease that had taken many of his family members and he was going to die next. He was married. It didn’t take long for him to tell me what was on his mind when he said, “I’ve talked with a lot of preachers and they all tell me that I’ll go to hell if I commit suicide. Do you believe I’ll go to hell if I commit suicide?” I responded with the correct Catholic theological answer, “Suicide is a really serious sin, but I’m not God and I don’t know if you’d go to hell or not. No one can know that.” He wasn’t satisfied with the answer and I felt he just wanted to hear me say that I thought he’d go to hell. Then he said, “If you heard that I jumped out of this window on the five o’clock news, would you think I went to hell, yes or no?” I answered with the correct Catholic answer, “I’d be really sad if you jumped out of that window, and your wife would be very sad also. She’s been by your side because she loves you and I’d be sad because I love you. God loves you too, and we would miss you.” The room was silent for a while. I don’t know what ever happened to that man, but at that moment I knew God was speaking to both of us.

My greatest joy as a seminarian is encountering God wherever I may find him. I find him in my family, my friends, in the beauty of creation and even in situations that seem hopeless. I find Jesus, the joy of man’s desire, through living my vocation. The greatest joy of being a seminarian is being able to experience the love of God with those with whom I minister, and women as they share their ministry in the service of the Church.

Support our Seminarians and Win a Car!

The Catholic Lighthouse
Friday, March 11 • 5-8 p.m.
ABCATS Travel 361-578-0828
Call Jim or Malvina Slovak
www.abcatstravel.com
The Catholic Lighthouse Page 5 — March– 2011

Volunteer Opportunities for Young Adults

Heart’s Home, an international Catholic organization recognizing and promoting a culture of compassion, is currently accepting applications for volunteers. Heart’s Home provides an opportunity for young people to dedicate at least 14 months of their lives to serve the most suffering people in the world. Founded in 1950 by Father Thierry de Roucy, the organization has 35 communities located in 20 countries, in addition to having recruited and trained more than 1,400 missionaries from 24 countries and from every continent. Mission countries include France, Italy, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Peru, India, El Salvador and the U.S.

Heart’s Home accepts volunteers at any time during the year. Young Catholics interested in this opportunity should visit the Web site at www.heartshomena.org or call (718) 522-2121.

Teen Health and Safety

BY Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Women entering religious orders today are highly educated and actively engaged in parish ministries, according to a new national survey.

The results of “The Profession Class of 2010: Survey of Women Religious Perpetual Professing Vows” were released in advance of World Day for Consecrated Life Feb. 2.

It was conducted by the Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and commissioned by the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.

The survey was sent to sisters represented by the two conferences of religious women in the United States — the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious — and to contemplative communities.

Major superiors of women religious who were able to participate reported that 79 women who professed perpetual vows in 2010. Of that number, 68 responded by Dec. 15, representing 52 religious congregations, provinces or monasteries, according to a news release from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The 2010 class of women religious was more diverse by race and ethnicity than the U.S. population of women religious in general. Six in 10 identified themselves as white; one in five as Asian and one in 10 as Hispanic. Six percent were African-American or African.

Among other findings:

• The average age for these new women religious is 43.
• Women religious making perpetual vows in 2010 ranged in age from 25 to 62.
• Eighty-seven percent of the sisters were born Catholic and eight in 10 came from families where both parents are Catholic.
• Although 71 percent of the new women religious were born in the United States, the new women religious came from 10 different countries of origin. The most popular non-U.S. countries of birth were Mexico (7 percent), Philippines (4 percent) and Nigeria (3 percent).
• Half of responding women religious attended a Catholic elementary school.
• More than 25 percent earned a graduate degree before entering their religious institute. Nearly six in 10 entered religious life with at least a bachelor’s degree.
• Most women religious were active in parish life before entering their religious institute. Four in 10 participated in a youth group and three in 10 participated in a young adult group; 85 percent had ministry experience before entering their religious institute, most commonly in liturgical ministry, faith formation or social service.
• Half said they were under age 18 when they first considered a religious vocation; the average age when a vocation was first considered was 20.
• Seventy-five percent of the sisters and nuns regularly participated in retreats before they entered their religious institute.
• Two-thirds regularly prayed the rosary or participated in eucharistic adoration. Six in 10 regularly participated in a faith sharing or Bible study group or regular spiritual direction.
• Nine in 10 women religious said they were encouraged to consider religious life by someone in their life. Of those who reported this, more than half said they were encouraged by a religious sister. A third of the sisters said they were introduced to their institute by the recommendation of a priest or adviser.
• Even though these women were encouraged by other religious to pursue their vocation, two-thirds of respondents said they were discouraged from considering a vocation — most often by parents or family members.

By Sara Angle

Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) — When Pope Benedict XVI travels to Madrid for World Youth Day in August, he will hold special meetings with young Catholic university professors and with young religious sisters.

In early February, organizers of World Youth Day 2011 published what they said was the pope’s “entire agenda” for his Aug. 18-21 trip to Spain.

WYD will begin Aug. 16, before the pope arrives; many of the events will take place near Madrid’s central Plaza de Cibeles and at the Cuatro Vientos Air Base, organizers said.

The pope will arrive at the Barajas airport Aug. 18, where he will be greeted by the king and queen of Spain, they said. The usual welcoming ceremony with youths and at the Cuatro Vientos Air Base, organizers said.

While much of the schedule repeats standard World Youth Day events, a couple of new appointments have been added to the pope’s schedule, the organizers said.

On his second day in Spain, Aug. 19, the pope will meet young religious sisters at the Monastery of El Escorial, about 27 miles north of Madrid. Afterward, he will meet about 2,000 young university professors there.

In what has become a standard World Youth Day appointment, Pope Benedict will celebrate Mass Aug. 20 with seminarians in La Almudena Cathedral.

Also on the pope’s agenda is a visit with a delegation of disabled persons participating in World Youth Day and with residents at a center for those with handicapping conditions.

In addition, the organizers said, Pope Benedict will be present in the Plaza de Cibeles Aug. 19 for the beginning of the Stations of the Cross, which will be spaced out over just under a mile of a main Madrid street. Each station will focus on one of 14 statues contributed from 10 different cities across Spain. The statues normally are seen only during Holy Week.

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In addition, the organizers said, Pope Benedict will be present in the Plaza de Cibeles Aug. 19 for the beginning of the Stations of the Cross, which will be spaced out over just under a mile of a main Madrid street. Each station will focus on one of 14 statues contributed from 10 different cities across Spain. The statues normally are seen only during Holy Week.

Survey: Women entering religious life well educated, active in parishes

NUN PLAYS WITH CHILD OUTSIDE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GAZA CITY—Sister Mariam Almiron, a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word from Argentina, spins a small child around following Sunday Mass at the Holy Family Catholic Parish in Gaza. There are only some 3,000 Catholics in Gaza, of which a little more than 200 are Catholic. (CNS photo/Paul Jeffrey)
Participants of “Celebration of Life,” held in Edna on Jan. 19, are pictured above. From left to right: Arnold, Deacon Larry Hoelscher, Rev. Gary Roberts, and Mrs. Patricia Kromka, with the audience.

Catholic Daughters host “life” program

EDNA—The Catholic Daughters of the American Court #1350 of St. Agnes Parish in Edna, hosted “A Celebration of Life” program January 19, 2011, at the Jackson County Services Building. The ecumenical program explained the impor- tance of all life from conception to natural death, the sanctity of life, and the need for respect, dignity and justice for the unborn, the aged and for all human life. Those participating in the program were Rev. Gary Roberts of Shiloh Baptist Church in Edna and Deacon Larry Hoelscher, all of St. Philip Parish in El Campo; Mrs. Leslie Kallis, Allison Genzer, Cale Hollas, Brooke Sa- blatura, Tate Darlick, Rev. Luis Mendialdo of Mission Baptist in Edna, George and Judy Panza, Mrs. Patricia Kromka, CDA Court #155 regent; and Mrs. Madeline Novian. Many CDA members and St. Agnes parishioners helped in serving refresh- ments and assisted where needed, before and after the program. Some 175 people from Jackson and surrounding counties attended the event.

At the Sanctity of Life event held in El Campo January 26, the “Praise Life Band” sang the song selections “Let it Rain,” “Open The Eyes of my Heart Lord” and “Amazing Grace.”

Sanctity of Life event held in El Campo

EL CAMPO—The Sanctity of Life Celebration was sponsored by El Campo Life Advocates and hosted by First Lu- theran Church. Pastor Gary Janak followed a 16-week training program beginning of January 26, 2011, beginning with a welcome by Andy Taylor, pastor of the First Lutheran Church and speaker for the event. President Otta Edison of El Campo Life Advocates opened the evening with prayer.

The Lighting of Life Candle was lit by Ariel, Arianna and Avery Falcon and Adriana Rodriguez of the First Lutheran Church, along with the participation of more than 115 people, including St. Philip the Apostle Catholic CCE students. All raised their Candles of Life in song and prayer to a video “Go Light Your World” by Kathy Troccoli in memory of the unborn who have died through abortion.

Denise Cooper, an active member of St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church and the coordinating activity director for El Campo Life Advocates, works to keep the Sanctity of Life Pro-life event an ecumenical event, reaching out to all of God’s people.

In preparation for a moment of silence Mrs. Casey stated, “Statistics have proved that we are one step closer towards tomor- row’s justice, for our community, state, nation, and God’s entire creation, for an end to abortion. Beginning with us here tonight, we are making a difference in God’s world by honoring the sacredness of life that God has given to each of us and in each conception … to be born. We are the voice, the Pro-life advocates, of the silent cry ... of this pure and innocent gift, the unborn baby. She continued, “Therefore, we would like to share our respect for life, in loving memory of the 50,000,000 unborn infants, who have died... through legalized aborti- on ..., and to also celebrate the life of a friend, Dennis Kana, who entered eternal life March 2010. Dennis was a founder and a charter member of El Campo Life Advo- cates and is dearly missed by many. Den- nis’ well lived life has left us with beautiful treasures.”

Following the moment of silent prayer, Pastor Taylor invited Rev. Harold Simmons of New Life Ministries Church in El Campo to read the Scripture, Matthew 5:13-16, the similes of salt and light. Chaplain Don Storey of Houston Hospice also read a Scripture response. Pastor Taylor followed with a message raising awareness concerning the atrocities of abortion and encouraging participants to create a culture of life. He then led every- one in a Prayer of Reparation and a prayer for those wounded by abortion.

Helen Kight, organist of the First Lu- theran Church, played “Amazing Grace” based on double occupancy.

All prices are per person

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Parish Catechetical leaders attend Webinar at three sites

By Sister Digna Vela, IWBS, director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry

On Thursday, February 17, 2011, technology made it possible for 75 parish catechetical leaders, catechists, religious school teachers and others in the Diocese of Victoria to participate in a Webinar taught via the Internet from Chicago, Ill. The two-hour professional development Webinar, “Connect, Awaken, & Share,” Tom McGrath and Joellyn Cicciarella from Loyola Press in Chicago modeled innovative ideas and experiences that can energize parents and help them become active participants in their children’s faith formation.

Gathered by means of the Internet at Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Wharton, and the chancery building in Victoria, participants learned more than a dozen ways they can connect with parents, awaken their desire for a faith that matters, and share ways they can nurture the faith of their children.

Father Michael Petering, pastor of St. Agnes Parish in Edna, awards door prizes at the Church Ministry Dinner held in the parish hall January 2.

The month of January continued with opportunities for fellowship as St. Agnes parishioners celebrated the feast day of their patron saint, St. Agnes, on January 21. Following the evening Mass, a covered-dish meal, ice cream and the decorated St. Agnes cake were served. The St. Agnes statue, with the saint holding a lamb — Agnes means lamb — and a palm branch, which represents martyrdom, was on display near the registration table. Likewise, the dinner tables were decorated with greenery, lambs and flowers. Many door prizes were awarded during the fun-filled celebration at which approximately 75 parishioners attended.

Did God command the killing of innocent people?

Q. I am a regular reader of the Old and New Testaments, and have been troubled about how the Jewish people, with God’s approval, treated their enemies so viciously as they progressed to the Promised Land. Joshua says they killed everyone and everything. Other instances in the Book of Deuteronomy are even more graphic and violent.

I know the Bible is the inspired word of God, but are we to take all these violent actions against women and children literally? (Maryland)

A. The practice to which you refer was known as the ban. Conquering armies (including the Hebrews), when following some alleged divine sign or command, massacring everyone. As you note, Joshua observed the ban after taking the city of Jericho, “putting to the sword all living creatures in the city: men and women, young and old, as well as oxen, sheep and asses” (6:21).

We probably will never have a completely satisfying answer to your question, but I believe a few points may be helpful. Because the sacred authors always necessarily wrote in the context of their own beliefs and cultures, Scriptures generally speak of God and his actions anthropomorphically, describing God in human terms, and with human characteristics.

In the fact, the only way we can speak of God is with our inevitably limited human words and experiences. When we say God is loving or gracious or just or wise, we’re speaking analogously; we mean only that.

See Did God command, p. 13

Sanctity of Life

event held in El Campo

Continued from p. 6

The active board members of El Campo Life Advocates are Charlie Merta - Vice President, and spouse Ellia Merta, Frank Milder - Treasurer, and spouse Barbara Milder - Secretary, Denise Couey - Co-ordinating Activity Director, and spouse Blaze Couey Sr., all of St. Philip Apostle Catholic Church, and President Otha Edison. The ecumenical “Life Praise Band” members consisted of Anne Marie Novosad – rhythm guitar and vocals; Tiffany Joy Taylor - lead guitar, Kerry Brandl - bass guitar, Kyle Milder - rhythm guitar and vocals; Tiffany Joy Taylor sang a solo. “A Baby’s Prayer” was then sung followed by “Lay all your life on the altar” and the other songs from “Life Praise Band” were sung.

The annual Church Ministry Dinner Jan. 2, 2011, at St. Agnes parish hall. About 100 parishioners, serving in various ministries, were present. The ministries represented were Extraordinary Ministers, Lectors, Music, Religious Education, Ushers, Liturgical Environment, Prayer Blanket, Gabriel Project, Landscape, Money Counters and Parish Finance.

A catered meal with dessert was served, a time of fellowship was enjoyed and door prizes were awarded by Father Petering.

The Eucharistic Prayer: our response to God’s invitation

Continued from p. 3

Prayers throughout the year, people gain a better understanding of the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

“The way the prayers are written gives a sense of why and when they help the assembly to understand more fully how it is called to act more fully in the person of Christ,” she says.

Mgr. DeGrico agrees.

“The prayer of the Lectionary of texts allows us to explore and enter in to the mystery of Christ in all its richness and various facets in a deeper way.”

BACKGROUND:

The Eucharistic Prayer is the prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification that takes place in the center of the Mass. During the prayer, the celebrant specializes in the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Eucharistic Prayer takes place after the Liturgy of the Word and is introduced by a Preface. The congregation kneels or stands during the Eucharistic Prayer, which ends at the singing of the Great Amen.

By Father John Dietzen

Catholic News Service

The Catholic Lighthouse

Page 7 — March 2011
Lent, Time to Care

Headlines of natural disasters, political unrest, violent crimes, disease outbreaks, and other calamities bombard us every day. Closer to home, even in our own homes and local communities, we see the results of unemployment, home foreclosures, accidents, illnesses, consequences of poor judgment and numerous other personal misfortunes. Sometimes we feel so overwhelmed with these woes that we have no idea what we give up. Consequently we may think, “What can I do? There’s only so much that one can do.” As a result we may end up doing nothing, which only makes the situation worse because of the non-caring example that we give to those around us.

Fortunately, the Church in its wisdom provides us with liturgical seasons, which help us pause and reflect upon our relationship with God and our neighbor. Lent is such a season: it calls us to conversion through prayer, fasting and giving alms. Let us explore how these activities address the woes that have been described above. For example, we can pray for strength to overcome our enemies with God and with one another. We may under- stand the power of prayer; even scientific research has shown that hospital patients who have been prayed for have quicker recovery rates than patients who have not been prayed for.

Along with prayer, we are called to fast during this penitential season. Now we all know that the minimum required fast days (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) are for Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59, unless one has a legitimate excuse. Now, some of us might not meet these age requirements for fasting from food; however, there are many other ways all of us could deprive ourselves or refrain from anything that may be endangering our relationship with God and one another. We may also want to deny ourselves legitimate goods or desires; foregoing such pleasurable but non-essential things or experiences, done in a spirit of penance, can illustrate our solidarity with those who are experiencing difficult times. Moreover, the money and time we can save through this voluntary self-denial leads us to the third means of conversion, that of almsgiving.

Regarding almsgiving, we are so con- stantly being beseeched to give to various causes that it is hard to decide how to set priorities in our giving. While it is wise to investigate the various causes and give where it is most needed, our motivation for giving is most important. Let us give in a spirit of charity and remember, “Whatsoever you do...”

Therefore, may this penitential season be a time of continued conversion as we embrace prayer, fasting and almsgiving as a means of strengthening our relationship with God and with one another.

By Albert Alvarado, The Victoria Advocate, Advosports

Patrick Sohrt may only make it onto the field for a handful of plays, but his coach knows how he can affect the outcome of a football game.

“Having that range brings a whole new arsenal in,” said St. Joseph football coach Donnie Slatter. “It’s always a real dangerous threat if you have a good kicker.”

Even in the offseason, Sohrt’s leg is turning heads as he finished second overall among kickers in the High School Division at the Ray Guy National Kicking Championships.

“I was a little bit nervous going into it, but once I started, doing it didn’t really matter,” said Sohrt about the competition.

In 2010, the junior kicker hit 62 percent of his field goals including one from 23 yards out against 61 yards per kick with 17 of his 37 kicks going into the end zone for touchbacks.

Sohrt punted 27 times for an average of 41.3 yards per punt. The Ray Guy National Championship is a kicking competition held in Dallas, Phoenix and Tampa where kickers are judged on kickoff distance, kickoff hang time and field goal accuracy.

Sohrt competed at the University of Texas-Arlington’s Maverick Stadium in November and finished first in the High School Division at that location and second nationally.

Kyle Federico of Ponte Verda High School in Florida finished ahead of Sohrt in the national competition.

Sohrt boomed a kickoff for a competition best 73 yards in addition to having an average kickoff distance of 59 yards. He also hit 90 percent of his field goals.”

“It gives them no chance to run it back,” said Sohrt about the importance of long kickoffs.

Even though Sohrt was more accurate kicking field goals, Federico had a better average kickoff distance and kickoff hang time.

Sohrt played soccer from four years old to 12, smoothing over the transition to being a football kicker at St. Joseph.

“Kicking just came naturally to me,” Sohrt said.

Although many football fans will overlook and even poke fun at the kickers on their favorite football team, they can have a huge role in deciding the game.

St. Joseph’s Patrick Sohrt takes top spot at regional kicking competition, second nationally

Kickers can turn a stalled drive into one that results in three points and can back the opposition up with a kickoff or punt. And at any point of the game kickers can be called up to hit a field goal to tie the game or win.

Slatter has no doubt Sohrt is capable of coming through in the clutch for the Flyers next year.

“He’s got the confidence and the leg that helps with his confidence,” Slatter said.

Added Sohrt: “You can’t really think about kicks you’ve previously done, you have to move on because your next kick might be in that instant.”

The Flyers finished the 2010 regular season with a 4-6 record and were eliminated by eventual TAPPS Div. I State Finalists Fort Worth Nolan Catholic in the Area Playoff round.

During his time as an assistant at New Braunfels Canyon, Slatter saw Wes Zunker go on to kick for the University of New Mexico of the Mountain West Conference.

And he thinks Sohrt can make a similar leap. But is he good enough to kick at the college level?

“It’s got to be potential to be a good kicker at the next level,” Slatter said.

Sohrt said he hasn’t been actively looking for colleges to kick for, but he said the best way to get noticed is to meet his responsibilities on and off the field.

“Just keep practicing and keep doing everything I need to so I can get to the next level,” Sohrt said.
**TEENS**

**Youth Calendar of Events**

**March 1, 2, 3** — NET at Sacred Heart in Hallettsville

**March 4** — NET at Our Lady of Sorrow in Victoria

**March 5** — NET at Immaculate Conception in Goliad

**March 6** — NET at St. Joseph in Moulton

**March 6** — Catholic Knowledge Bowl

**March 12** — Founders Youth Ministry Retreat

**March 14** — Our Lady of Guadalupe Confirmation Retreat at SRC

**March 27** — Diocesan Confirmation Retreat at St. Michael's in Cuero

**April 2** — Foundations Youth Ministry

**April 6** — Texas Catholic Conference Advocacy Days

**April 8** — Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament

**April 10** — Diocesan Confirmation Retreat

**April 17** — Camp David Planning Meeting

**Find us now on Facebook!** At Diocese of Victoria – Youth Ministry

**For more information on any of these events, please contact:**

Debbie Vanelli or José Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry

Phone: (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at dvanellel@victoriadiocese.org or jose.vanelli@victoriadiocese.org

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

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**A Personal Paparazzi**

By Camille Mica, a senior at East Bernard High School and parishioner of Holy Cross Church

**Status updates. Friend requests. Chat. Connect. Don’t think of it as gossip...**

**The possibilities are virtually endless on Inter-net sites like Facebook.**

In today’s crazy world, Facebook is a great tool for staying connected. Social networking over the Internet is one of the best ways to be in touch with friends and family, and it’s even better for keeping up with people we meet at camps or don’t see very often. Some people even find contacts for future jobs on Facebook. Of course, sometimes it’s just perfect for killing time when we are bored.

I remember when I first made my Facebook account a few years ago. I was estatic! The virtual world was at my fingertips. With a click of a mouse I could online, join groups, find out what was happening in my friends’ lives, and tell everyone about mine. I was having a blast.

But a few weeks after creating a Facebook account, I found myself spending so much time online. Almost every free moment, I would go to the computer and log on.

It finally hit me: Through Facebook, we are sometimes creating our own paparazzi. When we share everything online, our accounts become just like magazine tab- loids, where celebrity secrets, relationship issues and personal problems are publicly displayed for everyone to see.

In the Bible, the book of Proverbs says, “With closest custody, guard your heart... Let your fountain be turned not to one side, but to another... Do not put on your neck proud clothing.”

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**Editor’s Note:** According to the diocesan Youth Office staff, there are at least two apps available to assist drivers like you, either by answering text-message for you or by preventing their phone from receiving text messages while driving. Thanks to Debbie Vanelli and Jose Ortega.

**DriverSafe, Inc.** is a mobil application that reads texts, texts and emails aloud in real time and automatically responds with the message: “I am driving right now. I will respond shortly” with out drivers to view the mobile phone screen and information and download is available at [http://www.driversafe.com](http://www.driversafe.com).

**LocationSmart Plus application** is a one-time opt-in subscription service that automatically prevents the driver from receiving or making calls or texts while driving. Learn more at [http://reviews.cnet.com/8301-13746_7-20029063-48.html](http://reviews.cnet.com/8301-13746_7-20029063-48.html)

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**OLV PLACES 2ND IN LOCAL MATHCOUNTS COMPETITION—Our Lady of Victory students scored highly in the Diocesan Mathcounts competition with eight Victoria area middle schools. The competition was sponsored by the local chapter of the Texas Society for Professional Engineers. Madison Hoang also placed second in the individual competition. Mathcounts is a national mathematics competition for middle school students.**

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**Don’t ruin your future by texting and driving!**

By Karen Osborne

Catholic News Service

It seems like such a silly little thing, sometimes we need to remember how a small mistake can hurt a person. Last week, a senior was hit by a car that was racing down the road safely at ridiculous speeds.

Since Alex wasn’t wearing a seatbelt, she skidded off the road and flipped over. She lost control of her vehicle. Her truck was destroyed in November 2009, and because of that, Alex is still on target.

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Holy Family KC #9088 holds awards banquet

Knights of Columbus Council #9088 held its awards banquet at the Holy Family Church activity center in Victoria Tuesday, January 18, 2011. The Council celebrated its 25th Anniversary. The event was made special by the attendance of twelve of the past Grand Knights of the council, including Gaylan Duncan, George Wenzel, Otto Blierer, Rubein Petrueselek, Richard Ramano, Gerald Bryant, Carl Kirst, Bryan Ellis, Michael Gabrysch, Bob Leach, Bob Biryaty and Dennis Locksztin, in the order they served; not present was David Hahn.

Grand Knight Charles Bluntzer and Deputy Grand Knight and Financial Secretary Jerry Hajek presented membership pins and certificates, including numerous 25-year certificates and pins to the members who were a part of Council #9088 since its beginning. Honorary Membership certificates and pins were given to the members who had reached the age of 65 with 25 years of continuous service and Honorary Life Membership certificates were given to those members who had reached the age of 70 with at least 25 years of continuous service. Plaques were presented to the 12 Knights of the Month with the honor of Knight of the Year going to Emory Migura. Plaques were presented to the Families of the Quarter: Marlin and Betty Frederick, Nick and Janie Castro, 3rd qtr.; and Edwin and Julie Stylik, 4th qtr. The honor of Family of the Year went to Emory and Betty Migura. The Miguras have been very involved with Holy Family Church. Betty has been a CCD teacher for many years and prepared the students for first Communion. She is a member of the Altar Society and Catholic Daughters. She has served as chairperson for the Altar Society Bake Sales. Emory is known for his dedicated service in the kitchen washing dishes. He is always there to help whenever and wherever help is needed. The Miguras recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Congratulations to Emory and Betty Migura.

Above are the grand knights who have served KC Council #9088 since its founding, 25 years ago. Charles Bluntzer, center, is the current grand knight. Not present was former grand knight David Hahn.

SCOUT SUNDAY CELEBRATED AT CATHEDRAL—Boy Scout Troop #364 and Cub Pack #364 observed Scout Sunday February 6, 2011, with Mass at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral, which was celebrated by Rev. Charles Otisivah, parochial vicar, who was assisted by Deacon Larry Ros sow. After Mass, Deacon Larry presented religious awards to members of the Cub Scouts. Members who received the Light of Christ award were Zachary Shaver, Hunter Aldridge, Reed Rivera and Nicholas Zerangue. Those who received the Agnus Dei award were Jackson Stekfa, Reed Rivera and Trey Lawrence. Parvuli Dei awardees were Alex Bonorden and Logan Rivera; Grayson Seals received the God and Me award. The Scouting Spirit and Clean Tables, Pictured, left to right are Todd Hoge, Lane Haseo, Bailey Cernosek, Clay Harmon, Ms. Kim Path, principal; Mr. Jerry Mikeska, Shelby Vaeck, Jacob Horton, Hayden Sestak, Michael Mason and Drew Adamick.

SPS presents Distinguished Alumni Award to Phyllis Appling

EL CAMPO—St. Philip Catholic School annually recognizes a distinguished graduate whose accomplishments continue to reflect the values and character of the school. Phyllis Appling was this year’s recipient. Following her graduation from St. Philip School in 1974, the former Phyllis Parma carried out her love of education in her profession as a teacher, reaching out to those in most need of extra instruction. Not only teaching the mind, she tries to instill good moral values to help students succeed in everyday life.

She proved her appreciation of her own Catholic school education by seeing her three children also educated through the doors of SPS. During those years, she was very active as a room mother, volunteer coach, and a School Advisory Board member. Phyllis continues to carry on her sense of service to the Church by working with Vacation Bible School, teaching CCE, currently working with confirmation candidates and by working on various committees to promote the church and school.

To this day, she feels a sense of family, community, and God, with a strong emphasis on academics is the foundation on which she believes is vital to a student’s growth. Most recently, Phyllis worked on helping to organize the 60th anniversary celebration of St. Philip School.

Her name is engraved on a perpetual plaque that hangs in the lobby of the school.
Gina Kozelsky and Jennifer Boening (not shown) display to the congregation the handmade quilt that was presented to Msgr. Petru. Parishioners signed each quilt square.

At 88 years, Msgr. Petru retires

Continued from p. 1

M s g r . S t a n l e y P e t r u now lives at the Oblate Madonna Residence in San Antonio.

Editor’s note: To learn more about Msgr. Stanley Petru, please look at the May 2010 issue of The Catholic Lighthouse on our Web site.

Msgr. Petru hands bulletins to his “bambinos.” Pictured with him are Matthew Marek, Grace Marek, Zachary Janda and Austin Wick. Bishop Fellhauer assists him.

Ben Petru (kneeling), shares stories with his uncles, Msgr. Stanley Petru and Father Gus Petru, following Mass. Parishioners and friends wait to congrat- late Msgr. Petru.

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During his homily, Bishop Fellhauer speaks of Msgr. Petru’s 63-year priestly career.

(below right) Deacon McCourt hands Msgr. Petru a plaque from his parishioners. Father Joseph Kariuki (r.) is the sacramental minister for both parishes.
We can't hide our Catholic faith

I tell people that I’m a contemplative by nature. And there’s actually some truth to that. And also true that I am a bit agoraphobic. I am more comfortable at home than I am anywhere else.

One of the hardest things about being Catholic is the simple fact that we do not have a private faith. We may have a private prayer life. Conversion may begin as a quiet, hidden movement of the Spirit. But when we receive the Eucharist, we are sent out to do something about it. Our faith gets turned inside out.

We cannot hide from our neighbors. We cannot hide from work. We cannot hide from making friends and trying new things.

As much as I would like to receive Our Eucharistic Lord and then head home until next Sunday, I can’t do it. I grew up in a pastor’s home, and for a couple of years I was even a pastor’s wife. For a reason I never quite understood, the parishioners enjoyed getting behind the inside scoop on life in the parsonage (Protestant equivalent of the rectory). Those years in the father’s fishbowl had an impact on me. The once-outgoing girl is now a slightly anti-social grown-up.

Then we are also to place like home. Indeed! Reclusive writer. Sign me up! I’m not great at chit-chat. I’d rather take on an on-line class than become part of a Bible study. One of the best inventions was the telephone answering machine. I just don’t do crowds, shopping, or socializing.

So, in order to thrive on meetings and greeting the world. I’m just not one of them.

Like it or not, as a Catholic, I’m under the microscope even more than I was as a preacher’s daughter or preacher’s wife. The laity doesn’t have any eye on me any more. But the non-Catholic world is watching – and the world is watching you. The world wants to know whether or not Catholics really live what they profess. They are fascinated by our weaknesses, though they often ignore our strengths. We’re under a microscope, and that complicates things.

I don’t know anyone, but that makes me want to hide. If I keep to myself, I can control what gets judged. And I like that way.

The saints set the record straight. We are meant to engage the world. Clothe yourself in Christ and get out there. The saints are like the friendly coach who puts his JV team in the back and says get up. ‘The coach watches from the sidelines, knowing all too well that the kid is afraid of the half-court. He might miss a shot or afraid of getting creamed by some oversized opponent.

If I could have a chat with my guardian angel, I suppose he would have a bit of wisdom for me. He’d probably say what angels have always said when they greet someone. “Don’t be afraid.”

“I’m glad my little phobia is just that – little. It is something I can wrestle with and overcome through the gift of God’s grace. It only has the upper hand if I let it. When I manage to set aside the fear of looking like a weak specimen of the faith, then it’s not so overwhelming.”

That’s when I get out there and strike up conversations and let those conversations touch on the things that matter most.

Oh, I’d still prefer the life of a recluse writer to that of an active Christian. I’d still prefer to be on my knees after receiving the Eucharist rather than out in that very challenging world where anger and fear and pride hit me at every turn. But this faith isn’t an either/or kind of faith. It is a both/and faith. Eucharist and society. Contemplation and action. Prayer and participation.

I’d rather call myself a contemplative than admit that I have social anxiety.

Sure, I could spin it. I could even de-ceive myself and keep the world at arm’s length. And you might miss the opportu-nity to share the Gospel in word or deed. I might miss the chance to connect with someone who might teach me a thing or two about this journey to God.

So, I listen to the wisdom of the saints and my guardian angel. I leave the fear on the bench, and I got up.

Bio: Ms. Bossert is a convert to the Catholic Church. Her column Catholic by Grace has appeared in 43 diocesan newspapers. She lives in the Archdiocese of St. Louis and is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Melle, Mo.

Catholic By Grace
By Denise E. Bossert
catholicbygrace.blogspot.com

Family Puzzle Contest Winners!
Annie Munsch of St. Anthony Parish in Columbus is the winner of the February Family Puzzle Contest and “The Hope Prayer” by Father Liam Lawton. Congratulations. The winners of the youth contests (individual and school or CCD group) are Taylor Hlavac (7) of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish in Shiner and Katherine Gubbels (9) of St. Philip School in El Campo. Each 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 puzzle and contest form to The Catholic Lighthouse, P. O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903, by March 25 to have a chance to win “What Catholics Really Believe” by Karl Keating. See book review on this page.

Apologetics book to be prize for Puzzle Contest
What Catholics Really Believe by Karl Keating will be the March Family Puzzle Contest prize. Have you heard these common misconceptions?
• Whatever the pope says is the gospel truth.
• At every Mass Jesus is sacrificed again.

This book addresses these and another fifty of the most common misconceptions about the Catholic Faith. Drawing upon Scripture and Catholic Tradition, Keating not only shows the logical errors in these positions, but also clearly spells out Catholic teaching and explains the rationale behind frequently misunderstood doctrines and practices.


Karl Keating is founder and president of Catholic Answers, a lay-run apologetics and evangelization organization. He is the author of the best seller Catholicism and Fundamentalism. Complete puzzle and send into The Catholic Lighthouse by March 25 to have a chance at winning this book from a random drawing.

The Catholic Lighthouse
Page 12 — March 2011
Ross and Clarabelle Snodgrass of Kerrville, Texas, were married 77 years. This recent photo of the Snodgrasses was taken on Valentines Day 2009.

Winners of Longest Married Couple Project announced

San Bernardino, Calif.—Worldwide Marriage Encounter, the original faith-based marriage enrichment program in the United States, announces the winners of the Longest Married Couple Project to be Marshall and Winnie Kuykendall of Lordsburg, N.M. They were married 82 years on Feb. 14, 2011.

“What a privilege and honor it is to recognize the Kuykendalls for their commitment to marriage,” said Scott and Karen Seaborn, the United States Ecclesiastical Team for WWME. “We look forward to personally recognizing them on Feb. 12 in their hometown of Lordsburg,” they added. The Seaborns serve with Father Tom Griffith, SVD, as the U.S. leadership for the marriage enrichment movement.

The Kuykendalls were married Feb. 14, 1929. Originally from Arizona, they were married five months after meeting each other. They have a daughter, who is 56 years old, and two grandchildren.

The New Mexico couple achieved the honor of being the longest married couple honored on the over 300 nominations submitted to Worldwide Marriage Encounter beginning in October of 2010. It should be noted that a couple from North Carolina who were married longer (86 years) were also nominated, but they and their family chose to graciously pass the honor onto the Kuykendalls.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering weekend experiences for over 42 years and is considered the original faith-based marriage enrichment program. WWME offers married couples the opportunity to spend time together away from the busyness of the world to focus on each other. It offers tools for building and maintaining a strong, Christian marriage in today’s world. To learn more go to www.wwme.org, or call 1-800-795-LOVE (English) or 1-800-599-AMOR (Spanish).

Christian's in Libya face uncertainty as opposition strengthens support

BEIRUT (CNS) — Christians in Libya are afraid that a takeover of the country by Islamic fundamentalists, should leader Moammar Gadhafi fall, will threaten their safety, said a Franciscan priest who has served in the North African nation for seven years. “Under Gadhafi, we’ve been protected,” the priest told Catholic News Service from Rome Feb. 24, eight days after leaving the country on a pre-planned trip. He asked not to be identified so as not to jeopardize his return to Libya. The priest said he left Libya the day before a revolt against Gadhafi started in the eastern city of Benghazi. The uprising is the most recent and most violent in a tide of protests against autocratic leaders in the region. Gadhafi rose to power following a coup in 1969. One of 13 Franciscans serving the apostolic vicariate of Tripoli, the Libyan capital, and Benghazi, the priest said it was difficult being away from the parishes he served during a time of distress. “At this time I feel I should be with the people. I could be a support to them. Even though we wouldn’t have access to a lot of communication, we could be in touch with one another somehow,” he said.

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Sunday Readings from March 6 to April 10

March 6 — Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28, 32

Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time Romans 3:21-25, 28

March 9 — Joel 2:12-18

Ash Wednesday Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 & 17

Two Corinthians 5:20, 6, 2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

March 13 — Genesis 2:7-9, 31-7

First Sunday of Lent Psalms 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

March 20 — Genesis 12:1-4a

Second Sunday of Lent Psalms 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

Two Timothy 1:8-10

Matthew 17:1-9

March 27 — Exodus 17:3-7

Third Sunday of Lent Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42

April 3 — John 16:15, 6-7, 10-13a

Psalms 23:1-3a, 4-5, 6

Ephesians 5:18-4

John 9:1-41

April 10 — Ezekiel 37:12-14

Fourth Sunday of Lent Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:45

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Holy Week Begins — April 17 with Palm Sunday

All daily and Sunday readings, as well as a daily reflection video, are available in text or audio at: www.usccb.org/nab/

Brought to you by the Catholic Communications Campaign — please be generous.

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Scene from movie ‘Of Gods and Men’

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Of Gods and Men

By John Mulderig

Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — A brilliant dramatization of real events, “Of Gods and Men” (Sony Pictures Classics) is a restrained religious masterpiece and a memorable viewing experience from which every adult — as well as many mature teens — can expect to profit. The film recounts the fate of a small community of French Trappists living in Algeria during that nation’s civil war in the 1990s.

Targeted by violent Muslim extremists — the Algerian conflict pitted militant Islamists against a secularly oriented military government — the monks must decide whether to continue their medical and social work for the vulnerable local population or abandon them by fleeing to safety.

The film, in French with subtitles, contains brief gory violence, some unsettling images and a single instance each of rough and crass language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Editor’s note: Please see news brief on Christians in Libya on this page. It seems ironic that this movie seems to tell the story of what is happening right now to Christians in Libya.

More reviews are available online at www.usccb.org/movie.

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Did God command the killing of innocent people?

Continued from p. 7

god is “something like” what we mean when we apply those words to our own religious communities. Similarly, when someone deliberately hurts us badly, our instinct is to punish them, hurt them in return. When they’re nice, we try to be nice in return. We tend to assume, wrongly of course, that God reacts in the same way.

When the Hebrew people win or lose a battle, it is because God is either for them or against them at the moment. God is either punishing or rewarding them, depending on their feelings that day. In other words, their ways of thinking are projected onto God.

One essential element of God’s holiness throughout the Scriptures is his righteousness, his justice. The Hebrew word (“seidad”) has a legal background; God righteously punishes because he desires and helps people to achieve the rights to which they are entitled.

God expresses a fierce concern for those who have nothing to depend on except his righteousness. God’s “anger” is toward those who would deprive the poor and the weak of what is rightly theirs. This is the source of the words that have to refer to as God’s option for the poor.

We have here at least hints about the apparently divinely inspired viciousness of the Jewish treatment of their enemies. God, they believed, considered as his own enemies any who would destroy or violate the existence of the insignificant people he had mysteriously chosen as peculiarly his own.

Originally, the ban was considered a Hebrew offering to God. Later on, details changed and eventually the practice lost nearly all religious connotation. As the Jewish concept of God matured, it gradually disappeared.

After King Saul’s slaughter of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15) about 1,000 years before Christ, the practice does not reappear in the historical books of the Old Testament.

Tragically, the mass murder of innocents by victorious and other military forces has continued through the centuries, up to our own day.

Prayer For Peace

Mary, Queen of Peace, save us all, who have so much need of peace in the world, from wars, hatred, and oppression. Make us all learn to live in peace, and educate ourselves for peace, do what is demanded by justice and respect the rights of every person, so that peace may be firmly established. Amen.

Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) From Today’s Missal by OCP/Rowe
By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Lent is a time for self-examination and to let go of all traces of selfishness, which is the root of violence, Pope Benedict XVI said.

“The greed of possession leads to violence, exploitation and death,” which is why during Lent the Church encourages almsgiving, “which is the capacity to share,” the pope said in his annual message for Lent.

The theme of the pope’s message was taken from the Letter to the Colossians: “You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him.”

Pope Benedict said Lent is a special time for people either to prepare for baptism or to strengthen their commitment to following Christ originally made at baptism.

“The fact that in most cases baptism is received in infancy highlights how it is a gift of God. No one earns eternal life through their own efforts,” the pope said.

In his message, the pope took the year’s Lenten Sunday Gospels and used them to draw lessons he said would be helpful in making the Lenten journey toward Christian conversion.

The Gospel account of Jesus’ victory over temptations in the desert “is an invitation to become aware of our own fragility in order to accept the grace that frees from sin and infuses new strength,” he said.

The story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well is a reminder that all people, like the woman, desire the “water” of eternal life, he said. Only the water offered by Jesus can irrigate the deserts of our restless and unsatisfied soul until it “finds rest in God,” as St. Augustine said.

The Gospel account of Jesus healing the man born blind “is a sign that Christ wants not only to give us sight, but also to open our interior vision so that our faith may become ever deeper and we may recognize him as our only savior,” the pope said.

The story of the raising of Lazarus, read on the fifth Sunday of Lent, reminds Christians that their destiny is eternal life with God, who “created men and women for resurrection and life,” he said.

The Lenten process of conversion, he said, is designed “to free our hearts every day from the burden of material things, from a self-centered relationship with the ‘world’ that impoverishes us and prevents us from being available and open to God and our neighbor,” Pope Benedict wrote.

Through fasting, almsgiving and prayer, he said, “Lent teaches us how to live the love of Christ in an ever more radical way.”

Fasting helps people overcome selfishness and self-centeredness; almsgiving is a reminder of the sharing that should mark each day of a Christian’s life; and time dedicated to prayer is a reminder that time belongs to God and his desire is for people to spend eternity with him.

The text of the pope’s message for Lent 2011, may be found under Messages, Lent at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/index.htm.
Straining for Sabbath amidst the Demands of Phones and Computers

By Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI

A comic recently quipped that today’s information technologies have effectively rendered a number of things obsolete, including toilets, limited edition books, and hot air balloons. “It’s really too bad,” the comic mused, “because I was saving up a load of hot air for an occasion.”

The archdiocesan newspaper. “I did not anticipate that the day’s information technologies would have effectively rendered a number of things obsolete, including toilets, limited edition books, and hot air balloons. It’s really too bad, because I was saving up a load of hot air for an occasion.”

The next day with the Catholic Standard, I warmly recommended our book “The Glory, the Mystery, the Tradition,” written by Abby Johnson with Cindy Lambert. (CNS)

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — A woman who walked away from her job as a Planned Parenthood worker after helping with an ultrasound-guided abortion is preparing to enter the Catholic Church.

Abby Johnson, 30, who has been speaking at pro-life events around the country, will become a Catholic, along with her husband, Doug, in her native Texas within the next few months.

The couple has a 4-year-old daughter. “When we went to the Catholic Church for the first time, we knew that Johnson was supposed to be there and we have been there ever since,” said Johnson, who said she particularly loves the Church’s reverence for Mary as the Mother of God. “That’s how we started learning about the beliefs of the Church and the Eucharist and everything, it seemed like this was what had been missing our whole lives.”

For more than 50 years. He operated soup kitchens and a hospital, as well as homes for unwed mothers, homeless and troubled boys and abandoned infants. “I ask all of us, whether you’re a Planned Parenthood worker or a Planned Parenthood director, and those whose lives were touched by Father Baker in some way, to join me in praying that, if it be God’s will, Venerable Nelson Baker be canonized,” said Buffalo Bishop Edward U. Kmiec at a Jan. 25 news conference at the basilica.

The Catholic Lighthouse Web site: www.catholiclighthouse.com

Pauline Books & Media offers Mobile App on Contemplative Prayer

Boston — Pauline Books & Media and the Daughters of St. Paul are pleased to announce the release of their newest Catholic app, Beginning Contemplative Prayer, which is available for download through iTunes and soon-to-be available to Android users, based on best-selling author Sister Kathleen J. Henry’s new book of the same title. Father Timothy Gallagher, OVM, said of the book: “[Hermes’] tone is warm and encouraging; her content is solidly rooted in the Catholic spiritual tradition. I warmly recommend it.”

The Beginning Contemplative Prayer app features:

• Step-by-step preparation for deeper prayer with the Lord
• A twenty-five minute audio prayer experiences
• A five-week personal plan for growth in contemplative prayer, which includes a different Morning Meditation, Midday Pause, and Evening Prayer for each week
• Journal and photo gallery (settings include personalized backgrounds, text color, and text size)
• Prayer starters to guide you to a deeper relationship with God.

Sister Kathleen Henry says “Those who have used this guide in retreats and conferences have unearthed a greater sense of God’s presence and love for them.”

This latest addition to Pauline Books & Media’s growing collection of Catholic apps continues the work of the Daughters of St. Paul, helping house’s passion for the mission of evangelization through all modern means of communication. Beginning Contemplative Prayer is available for download in the App Store on iTunes.
The Right to Life used to be self-evident

Continued from p. 1

The Right to Life necessarily comes from the Right to the Pursuit of Happiness, because the Right to the Pursuit of Happiness ranks last, because a person must enjoy the Right to Life and be alive in order for him to exercise his Right to the Pursuit of Happiness. Finally, the Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on what is good...and in his choice of what is good in this world, he truly pursues what will make him happy. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether the nation has the liberty to be free from persecution and to be able to pursue the good of the nation, or whether it is constrained by the governments of other nations. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether there is freedom of religion, or whether the government mandates a certain religion. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether there is freedom from persecution, or whether the government imposes a certain religion. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether there is freedom from persecution, or whether the government imposes a certain religion. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether there is freedom from persecution, or whether the government imposes a certain religion. This final Right to the Pursuit of Happiness depends on whether there is freedom from persecution, or whether the government imposes a certain religion.
had spoken out against anti-blasphemy laws. “The assassination of the Pakistani minister for minorities, Shaukat Bhatti, is a new and terribly serious act of violence. It demonstrates that the pope is correct in insisting on the issue of violence against Christians and against religious freedom in general,” Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said March 2. Bhatti, the first Catholic to serve in that position, received several threats against his life after criticizing the country’s anti-blasphemy laws, which have been used to persecute Christians and other religious minorities. Bhatti was received by Pope Benedict XVI last September and spoke about his commitment to promoting peaceful coexistence between the religious communities of his country. “Along with prayers for the victim, with the condemnation of the unspeakable act of violence and with assurances of closeness to Pakistani Christians who are suffering from hatred, we urge that everyone will now realize the dramatic urgency of the need to defend religious freedom and Christians targeted by violence and persecution,” Father Lombardi said. Bhatti was attacked in his car in Islamabad March 2, when gunmen opened fire on his vehicle and proceeded to drag him out, according to press reports. Bhatti was immediately taken to the hospital, where doctors were unable to save him from massive gunshot wounds. A note found at the crime scene led authorities to believe Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, a radical Muslim group, was responsible for the murder, the Catholic agency AsiaNews reported. Since the Jan. 4 assassination of the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, who defended a Christian woman accused of blasphemy, Bhatti had been one of the only public figures to speak out against the laws. Despite threats, Bhatti continued promoting religious and social harmony.

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican condemned the killing of a Catholic government minister in Pakistan who had spoken out against anti-blasphemy laws. “The assassination of the Pakistani minister for minorities, Shaukat Bhatti, is a new and terribly serious act of violence. It demonstrates that the pope is correct in insisting on the issue of violence against Christians and against religious freedom in general,” Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, said March 2. Bhatti, the first Catholic to serve in that position, received several threats against his life after criticizing the country’s anti-blasphemy laws, which have been used to persecute Christians and other religious minorities. Bhatti was received by Pope Benedict XVI last September and spoke about his commitment to promoting peaceful coexistence between the religious communities of his country. “Along with prayers for the victim, with the condemnation of the unspeakable act of violence and with assurances of closeness to Pakistani Christians who are suffering from hatred, we urge that everyone will now realize the dramatic urgency of the need to defend religious freedom and Christians targeted by violence and persecution,” Father Lombardi said. Bhatti was attacked in his car in Islamabad March 2, when gunmen opened fire on his vehicle and proceeded to drag him out, according to press reports. Bhatti was immediately taken to the hospital, where doctors were unable to save him from massive gunshot wounds. A note found at the crime scene led authorities to believe Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, a radical Muslim group, was responsible for the murder, the Catholic agency AsiaNews reported. Since the Jan. 4 assassination of the governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, who defended a Christian woman accused of blasphemy, Bhatti had been one of the only public figures to speak out against the laws. Despite threats, Bhatti continued promoting religious and social harmony.

US cardinal keeps watchful eye on situation unfolding in Middle East

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Cardinal John P. Foley is keeping a watchful eye on the revolution in Egypt and other nations in the Middle East, despite his recent retirement and resignation as grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. The organization helps to raise funds for the works of the Church in that region. “I can understand the current unrest — it’s an expression of desire for democracy, but I hope it doesn’t become a situation in which Christians are further discriminated against in any of these countries,” Cardinal Foley said. “The situation is so unstable there, and of course Christians are such a minority there.” In Egypt, about 10 percent of the population is Christian, primarily Coptic Orthodox, he explained. “We had just been asked by the Holy Father to help especially the Latin-rite Christians in Egypt and Lebanon in addition to Israel, Palestine and Jordan,” Cardinal Foley said. The latter three countries are part of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher support. “Egypt and Lebanon are separate Latin dioceses, but they are in need of assistance also and are considered part of the Holy Land,” he added. The support aids parishes and schools in those lands, and to help Christians maintain their institutions and their presence in a heavily non-Christian environment, as well as some humanitarian assistance, the cardinal said. “We certainly want to maintain the continued presence of Christians in the Holy Land, the successors of the original followers of Christ, in the land where he was born, where he lived, where he died and where he rose from the dead,” Cardinal Foley said. “That’s very important, I think. And it’s a privilege to have been associated with it.”

Strong earthquake puts Diocese of Christchurch ‘out of action’

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (CNS) — A devastating midday earthquake Feb. 22 caused at least 160 deaths, seriously damaged the Catholic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament and put the Diocese of Christchurch “out of action.” The magnitude 6.3 jolt struck the city of 350,000 during the bustling noon hour, sending many buildings tumbling and people rushing into the streets. The earth- quake was the second to hit Christchurch, located on the east coast of New Zealand’s South Island, since Sept. 4. A magnitude 7.1 temblor shook the region then. Rescue workers worked around the clock to dig out survivors trapped in the rubble and recover bodies of those who died. Authorities expected the death toll to rise. Prime Minister John Key declared a state of emergency Feb. 23, a day after saying the disaster that hit the country’s second-largest city resulted in “New Zealand’s darkest day.” In addition to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, several of the city’s historic churches were damaged or destroyed. Among them was the iconic Anglican Cathedral of Christchurch in the city center, which lost its 200-foot steeple. Christchurch Bishop Barry P. Jones told the NZ Catholic newspaper that diocesan officials was “out of action” and that he was relying on a cell phone for communications with diocesan staff. “So I’m not in a position to get information,” he said. In a statement to the diocese, Bishop Jones said he was “stunned and deeply saddened by the loss of so many lives, the serious injuries to so many and the destruction of property that has been visited upon us so violently and suddenly.”

“The overwhelming generosity of Catholics in the United States has helped Catholic Relief Services move earthquake survivors from destruction and despair to transitional shelter and new hope for a better life. Follow the progress of our work in Haiti at crs.org/emergency/haith/index.cfm

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.”

Proverbs 16:3
Tucson shooting spree prompts renewed debate on gun-control issue in US

By Marylynn G. Hewitt Catholic News Service DETROIT (CNS) — Avid outdoorsman and hunter Father Joe Classen, associate pastor at Holy Spirit Parish in Maryland Heights, Mo., has a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

"I rarely ever conceal and carry, but sometimes if I'm in a very bad area, I do take protection," he said. "I tell people all the time, "It's life or death.""

Father Theodore Parker said he knows he has the constitutional right to own a gun, but can't see any reason why he would. The pastor of two inner-city Detroit parishes said, "The real purpose of a gun in our culture is violence." And there's just too much of that, he contends.

One point on which both priests agree is that personal responsibility is key to preventing gun crimes against those who possess firearms.

The shooting rampage at U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords' Jan. 8 community meeting in Tucson, Ariz., which left Giffords and 12 others wounded and six dead, has renewed debate on gun control. While bishops across the nation have called for stronger regulation of handguns and light weapons, they are divided on whether people have the right to own a gun for reasons of legitimate self-defense.

A Persistent Peace Conference on April 16, 2011, at the Do- minican Center for Spirituality at Pax Christi Texas State Conference, no reduction or limitation of gun rights in the United States. The current document calls on nations to impose a complete ban on small arms and light weapons, leading to the eventual elimination of this threat from our society.

On the world stage, the Vatican has called for effective and courageous action to control handguns, and the United Nations has called for much tighter regulation of handguns and light weapons. The United Nations has also called for a global arms trade treaty that in the long run and with few exceptions — i.e., police officers, armed forces and law enforcement — handguns should be eliminated from our society.

The Vatican's justice and peace council is working to update its 1994 document, "Theological Considerations on the Possession of Firearms," to further emphasize the importance of enacting concrete controls on handguns and light weapons, he said.

The current document calls on every nation and state "to impose a complete ban on small arms and light weapons, limiting the purchase of such arms would certainly not infringe on the rights of anyone."

The more weapons there are in circulation, the more likely there is that someone will grab them on their own, the document said.

The Catholic Church recognizes that "states will need to be armed for reason of legitimate defense," as Pope Benedict XVI said in a message to a Vatican-sponsored disarmament conference in April 2008.

However, armed defense is something appropriate for nations, not for all individual citizens in a state where role of law is effective, said Di Ruzza. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, individuals have a right and a duty to protect their own lives when in danger, and someone who "defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow."

How that "lethal blow" could be legally wielded is unclear, but the catechism clarifies that repelling the aggressor must be done "with moderation in order to be "lawful" in the eyes of the Church; using "more than necessary violence" would be unlawful, it says.

According to the catechism, the right to use firearms to "repel aggressors" or render them harmless is specifically sanctioned for "those who legitimately hold authority." But it doesn't lay out the duty of protecting the community.

"There is a sort of natural right to defend the common interest and the common good, and in 1791 (when the United States passed the Second Amendment), my right to have a weapon served the common good because there wasn't an army; the democratic institutions were fragile."

Father Classen's love of hunting, fishing and the outdoors includes his outdoor ministries, most notably "Fishing for the Lord" is one of three of his published books, he hosts "Faith Adventures" on the Covenant Radio network and his Website is www.huntingforgod.com.

Avant, a professor of criminal justice at the University of De- troit Mercy in Detroit. He recommended the following specific strategies:

1. Increase gun purchases and sales, including those of handguns, shall be regulated in order to control the sale and use of arms. By Father Classen.

"Criminal aren't going to get their guns through legal means," said Father Classen.

... while many countries are open to limits on larger weapons systems, most nations aren't interested in regulating small arms even though they "cause more deaths than all other arms (conventional and non-conventional) together."

The more weapons there are in circulation, the more likely there is that someone will grab them on their own, the document said.

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"There is a sort of natural right to defend the common interest and the common good, and in 1791 (when the United States passed the Second Amendment), my right to have a weapon served the common good because there wasn't an army; the democratic institutions were fragile."

But once a nation has a functioning army, police force and court system, "I don't still serve the needs of society," said Di Ruzza. In the world of international security, it wasn't "just a matter of principle." And I could have been put at even greater danger?" and promote a lawless kind of "street justice" where if you steal my car, I shoot you," he asked.

The Vatican's justice and peace council's 1994 document said, "In a world marked by evil and sin, the right of legitimate defense by armed means exists, but, Di Ruzza said, it wasn't "causing much" to be said of the existence of arms in an imperfect world.

"Nations have a duty, the docu- ment said, to reduce or elimi- nate their stockpiles of arms.

But as Pope Benedict wrote in his message to the disarma- ment conference, no reduction or elimination of arms can happen without eliminating violence at its root.

Every person "is called to disarm his own heart and be a peacemaker everywhere," the pope said.

Nonviolence speaker comes to Houston

Harry John Dear to speak at Pax Christi Texas State Confer- ence on April 16, 2011, at the Do- minican Center for Spirituality at 6011 Audelia in Houston.

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GreeK WeDding” Dinner Improvement in an effort to raise funds and support friends to child advocacy in Calhoun, Deaf, Down's, Grief, Autism, Alzheimer's, Lavadro, Lavaque, and Victoria counties. Tickets are $35/person, and sponsor- ships are available starting at $250. The event will be held at St. Mary’s Activity Center in Victoria on Friday, March 11, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Take-out or dine-in at Trinity Hall, 206 W. River. Plates are $7 and include fried tilapia, fried chicken, homemade biscuits, cole slaw, and a drink. For more information, please call (979) 535-3929. Please come; bring your family and friends! Please come; bring your family and friends! Please come; bring your family and friends!

El Campo—Blessing—Engaged Encounter—
at (979) 543-2333 or at any Catholic Church in the following areas: Fort Bend, Liberty, Lavaca, Lavaque, Victoria, and Victoria counties. Tickets are $35/person, and sponsor- ships are available starting at $250. The event will be held at St. Mary’s Activity Center in Victoria on Friday, March 11, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Take-out or dine-in at Trinity Hall, 206 W. River. Plates are $7 and include fried tilapia, fried chicken, homemade biscuits, cole slaw, and a drink. For more information, please call (979) 535-3929. Please come; bring your family and friends! Please come; bring your family and friends! Please come; bring your family and friends!

Hungerford—El Campo—Blessing—Engaged Encounter—
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St. Mary (near Hallettsville) — Holy Rosary Mayfest May 1 beginning with a Polka Mass and Prayer Service every First Friday of the month at 7:00 a.m. For more information, call Sr. Louise Marie Jones at iPh 575-7111 or Sr. Michelle Miller at (361) 575-7120 or Sr. Louise Marie Miller at (361) 575-7120 or Sr. Louise Marie Miller at (361) 575-7120 or Sr. Louise Marie Miller at (361) 575-7120.

St. Mary’s—Altar Society will hold its Annual Games Party Tuesday, April 26, at 4:00 S. Liberty Street from 11:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Admission is $7 which includes lunch, beverages and other refreshments. There will be a raffle for many door prizes. For reservations, please call Ann Carver at (361) 575-2050 or Martha Hamel at (361) 575-1932.

St. Mary—Holy Family Parish Hall, 206 W. River. Plates are $7 p/p and include fried tilapia, homemade biscuits, cole slaw, and a drink. The event is open to married couples, Catholic and non-Catholic. For more information, please contact Donna Carver at (361) 575-2050 or Martha Hamel at (361) 575-1932.

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Betty takes final pilgrimage tour

By Quada Matocha, El Campo Leader-News, and Cindy Brewer, Kathi Moore, The Catholic Lighthouse

With worn feet and arthritis, Betty Urbanovsky led her final pilgrimage to the Holy Land last November. She has walked the streets where Jesus was born. She has led countless pilgrims to Bethlehem and other religious sites across the globe the past 25 years. And because of the tourism she has brought to the Holy Land, Betty received the key to the city of Bethlehem during her trip last November.

“I had no clue,” she said, “This has never been done before. A key to the city has never been given to a pilgrim. I was never so surprised and so honored to have the key of Bethlehem presented to me by the mayor.”

Also, the Kando Family, owners of Kando Store that specializes in religious items, presented Betty with a 30” olive wood carving of “Jesus, the Good Shepherd.” Shibly Kando told Betty it was fitting to present her with the statue because she “was like a shepherd” that brought many pilgrims to the Holy Land.

“Betty was recognized and honored for the many pilgrimages she has led to the Holy Land, and especially to Bethlehem,” said Ceci Triska, who has been on three trips with her.

At one time, tour groups were not allowed into Bethlehem because of political unrest, but that didn’t stop Betty.

“Nothing deters Betty because she says she is doing the Blessed Mother’s work,” Ceci said.

While Betty’s last trip as a pilgrim leader has a great ending, she isn’t calling it quits just yet. She plans to continue organizing trips to Italy, the Holy Land and other religious places, but she won’t be leading them. Her friend Paul Mazoch will be taking over that role. He has been on many of Betty’s trips with her and each trip has about 40-50 pilgrims. Finding Jesus, this is the main goal Betty insists pilgrims keep in mind.

“Every trip is different because everyone experiences it differently,” Betty said. “I tell them to find Jesus wherever they can. I ask them, ‘Where would you like to have a conversation with him?’ It might be through a 12-year-old or a dancer. When I met Jesus, we danced in the wheat fields.”

Betty said the trips are not a tour. “It is a pilgrimage. Everyone receives something.” But how did all this begin? Known for its healing waters, Betty and her late husband Vic made a trip to Lourdes, France, for his ailing heart. They also visited Fatima. This was in 1983.

“Vic had a heart attack and I thought taking a bath in the miraculous waters he would be healed,” she said.

Wearing a neck and back brace, Betty had ailments of her own. She took off her braces and they both immersed themselves in the waters, but to her surprise, she was the one who received the healing. She had tried to put the brace back on, but couldn’t. It was then she noticed she didn’t need it after all.

“They eaved Betty the key of Bethlehem because of the tourism she has brought to the Holy Land. She was there giving her last guided pilgrimage in November 2010.”

Dr. Victor Batarseh, the mayor of Bethlehem, presented Betty Urbanovsky with a key to the city of Bethlehem in thanksgiving for all the tourism she has brought to the Holy Land. She was there giving her last guided pilgrimage in November 2010.

Following Mass, Father Khoa Xuan Nguyen, (hidden), Father Bryan Heyer, Father Dominic Trung Nguyen, Deacon Vietra and altar boys process out of the Assumption Chapel. The altar was decorated in the Tet Lunar New Year colors of red and yellow, chrysanthemums, symbolizing longevity, and hoa mai, a yellow tree decorated with red ornaments and firecrackers.

Palacios Vietnamese Community Celebrates New Year

PALACIOS—The Vietnamese community of the Assumption Chapel in Palacios celebrated the Vietnamese Lunar New Year February 3-5, 2011, by celebrating Mass Saturday, February 5, fasting on favorite Vietnamese foods, lighting firecrackers, holding a Dragon Dance, and having a dance for the young people Saturday evening.

The New Year, or Tet Festival, is the most important and most exciting holiday of the year in Vietnam. Its celebration marks the arrival of spring, based on the Lunar calendar.

Father Dominic Trung Nguyen, C.Ss.R., personal pastor of the Vietnamese Apostolate at Assumption Chapel in Palacios, Father Bryan Heyer, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua in Palacios and a retired priest, Father Khoa Xuan Nguyen of Palacios, celebrated the Mass; they were assisted by Deacon Michael Vieira.

Chuc Mung Nam Mui! Happy New Year!

Betty takes final pilgrimage tour

“Medjugorje was the beginning. I truly never planned on being a tour operator. I call it pilgrims as leader through it. It was a mission that was given to me.”

Her travels have taken her to many religious sites, as well as secular places. The first time she went to Rome was for the canonization of Blessed Agnes, who was from Czechoslovakia. Agnes was a medi- eval Bohemian princess who chose a life of charity over a life of luxury. Betty’s group was there with 15,000 Czechoslovakians who came from behind the Iron Curtain to honor one of their own.

Betty has also been to Assisi and Loreto, Italy, both of which are known for their religious sites. Assisi is best known as the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of Italy and founder of the Franciscan order. Loreto is famously famous as the seat of the Basilica della Santa Casa, a popular Catholic pilgrimage site. “I have been to all the shrines in Italy at different times,” Urbanovsky said.

She has also been to France, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Austria, Mexico, Canada and sites in the United States.

Numerous times she told herself she was quitting as a leader of pilgrimages. “But when God asked me to do this, I said yes,” she said.

Her husband made many of the trips with her or leading some himself until his passing in 1991.

“Vic was a miracle,” she said. “Doctors did not think he would live an hour longer. He was a heart attack victim and having a dance for the young people. That’s how we honor one of their own. “Medjugorje was the beginning. I truly never planned on being a tour operator. I call it pilgrims as leader through it. It was a mission that was given to me.”

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“Vic was a miracle,” she said. “Doctors do not understand how this man with open heart surgeries and so much blockage, nine vascular implants and an aneurism can walk the streets where Jesus was born.”

Looking back, God has been gracious to Betty. He has allowed her to lead many individuals on pilgrimages, allowing each unique spiritual experience, like Ceci Triska.

“Betty has done many pilgrimages to many different places,” Ceci said. “It was so fitting that her last trip to travel would be to the Holy Land.”

“It’s a blessing to travel with Bet- ty’s pilgrims,” Ceci said. “The pil- grimages become one big family, and we stay in touch through the years.”

“Betty has an annual pilgrimage reunion, we stay in touch through the years.”

The next reunion is scheduled for March 6, 2011, at St. Philip the Apostle Parish Hall in El Campo. All are welcome to attend.

While Betty won’t be on foot for future pilgrimages, she continues to “build trips” with two set for Lourdes-Fatima October and the Holy Land in November.

Visiting From Our Lady of the Gulf Parish and its missions were the Vietnamese Dominican Sisters. Pictured from l. to r. are Sr. Kim Chau O.P., Sr. Immaculata, Thuere, O.P., Sr. Francesca, O.P.