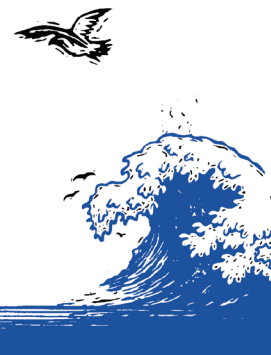


The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 23, NO. 1

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

May 2009

Swinging the club for vocations

By Cynthia Brewer

The 12th annual Bishop David Fellhauer Charity Golf Tournament, held for the diocese's youth and vocation offices, was one of the most successful ever, even with our nation's slow economy.

The tournament, which was held at the Colony Creek Country Club, Friday, April 24, 2009, is sponsored annually by the Knights of Columbus Holy Family Council 9088 of Victoria.

This year's tournament brought in over \$26,000, thanks to many generous sponsors and the participation of 31 teams. The proceeds were split between the diocesan offices of Vocations, directed by Father Dan Morales, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Port Lavaca, and the Youth and Young Adult Ministry, directed by Mrs. Debbie Vanelli.

Currently, the Diocese of Victoria has seven seminarians, with another in the application process. With God's blessings, the Diocese of Victoria may have at least seven new priests by 2017, beginning with its first ordination in 2012.

Current seminarians are Patrick Knippenberg (brother of Father Bob Knippenberg), Sts. Cyril & Methodius, Shiner; Philip Brune, Sts. Peter & Paul, Frelsburg; Scott Hill, St. Roch, Mentz; Sean Breeden and Jacob Koether, Holy Cross, Bay City; E.J. Gutierrez, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,

Wharton; and Kristopher Fuchs, St. Michael, Needville.

The seminarians recently made a "thank you" video in appreciation of the Knights' support. It can be viewed at http://www.victoriadiocese.org/vocation/vocation_main.htm.

As the diocesan director of vocations, Father Dan Morales has said, "People across the diocese contact me asking what they can do for vocations. The Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, Serra Club, Altar Societies and other Catholic organizations from El Campo, Edna, Weimar, Yoakum, Cuero, East Bernard, Shiner, Bay City, Victoria, Mentz, Frelsburg, Nada, Schulenburg, Wharton, Hallettsville and beyond, support the seminarians directly or the work of the Vocations Office."

He responds, saying, "The greatest work in the support of vocations is prayer. It is the foundation for all forms of service in the church. Never has the Lord refused to hear the prayers of His People."

"What can you do?" he asks. "Pray for generous hearts, hearts open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Pray for courage for those who are being called to lives of radical service as priests, religious sisters and brothers. Pray for those who have already said 'yes,' especially our bishop,

See Swinging the club, p. 4



Bishop David Fellhauer participates in the annual charity golf tournament at Colony Creek Country Club.

Continued jump in interest for religious vocations

CHICAGO – PRNewswire — Continued jump in interest for religious vocations attributed to desire for deeper spirituality and easier access to information via the Internet.

Nearly 70 percent of Catholic religious communities have seen a jump in vocation inquiries in the past year, according to a survey conducted by VocationMatch.

See Continued jump, p. 4

Pope's pilgrimage will take message of peace to land of conflict

By John Thavis

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI is set to begin a weeklong visit to the Holy Land, a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Christ and a journey through a political and interreligious minefield.

In many ways, the May 8-15 visit to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories is the most challenging of the pope's foreign visits to date, one that will test his skills of communication and bridge-building in a region of conflict and mistrust.

After recent communications missteps at the Vatican, the pope can expect to find his every word and gesture under scrutiny by the world's media -- especially when it comes to relations among Christians, Muslims and Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Although the world may measure the success of the visit in terms of international or interfaith diplomacy, Pope Benedict is going to the Holy Land first and foremost as a religious pilgrim.

"The priority is to witness to the truth of the Incarnation by visiting, as head of the church, the places where the events of our redemption took place. That's the point," Franciscan Father David Jaeger, an Israeli priest and adviser to the Vatican, told Catholic News Service.

The pilgrimage has a special focus on peace. The pope, in announcing the visit, said he would be going to the Holy Land

to pray for "the precious gift of unity and peace for the Middle East and all humanity."

Father Jaeger said that's extremely important at a time when hopes for peace among the population are the lowest in

See Pope's pilgrimage, p. 19

Bishop's Statement regarding "Swine Flu" and Mass

Memorandum to Deans and Priests from Bishop Fellhauer:

May 1, 2009

Because of concerns on the part of some people in the diocese, and for the sake of caution in this time of vigilance with respect to the "swine flu," I hereby issue the following directives regarding the celebration of Masses throughout the Diocese of Victoria:

Holy Communion should be given under the form of bread only, and in the hand rather than on the tongue.

At the exchange of the Sign of Peace, a nod or bow to the neighbor should be given, rather than a handshake.

Ministers of Holy Communion should be especially conscientious about washing their hands before distributing Communion.

In This Issue

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- Pages 20-21 — Social Issues of the Church
- Page 22 — When & Where / Events
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Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

May	
9	6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Anthony Church, Palacios
10	10:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Family Church, Wharton, including St. Joseph Church, Boling
	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Sweet Home
11	5:00 p.m., Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting, Chancery Office
17	10:30 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Agnes Church, Edna
	2:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass St. Patrick's Church, Bloomington
	6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Assumption Church, Ganado
20	7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake
23	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Flatonia
24	9:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Moulton
	2:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Loreto Chapel, Goliad
27	6:30 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Inez
28	6:30 p.m., Mass, celebrating 60th Anniversary of ordination of Monsignor Edward Bartsch, St. Mary's Church, Praha
30	11:00 a.m., Serra Club cookout for Religious Sisters, Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria
	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Philip Church, El Campo
31	8:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Peter Church, Blessing
	11:30 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Victoria
	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, including St. Michael Church, Cuero
June	
6	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Mary Church, Victoria
7	9:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. John Bosco Church, Vanderbilt
	3:00 p.m., Mass, 90th Anniversary celebration of CDA Court St. Ann, St. Mary Church, Victoria


2009 Diocesan Services Appeal

Thank you for your on-going support of the 2009 Diocesan Services Appeal (DSA). The total goal for the 2009 DSA is \$1,282,100. To date, 3,031 parishioners from 72 sites have pledged \$478,085.90 of which \$376,821.47 has been paid on those pledges.

The DSA is the yearly financial appeal to help support the daily operating expenses of the diocese. A pledge to the DSA may be a one-time gift or monthly payments which can be paid through a regularly scheduled Monthly Reminder Statement, automatic debit of your checking account or automatic debit of your credit card. The business office continues to monitor all pledge activity within the Diocese of Victoria. If you did not receive a 2009 DSA Pledge Card or would like to pay off your pledge, restructure your payment plan or create automatic payments (through your checking account or credit card), please contact Sue Ellen Galvan at the Diocese of Victoria (361-573-0828 ext. 20).

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

Sue Ellen Galvan, Coordinator
Diocesan Services Appeal



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The Catholic Lighthouse - P.O. Box 4070 - Victoria, Texas 77903



Emma Schmidt (center) prepares to enter through the doors at the future site of St. Rose's new Preschool Facility. She will be a 2010-2011 3k enrolled student. Committee members in photo include from left: Melissa Schmidt; Stacy Oeding, 3k teacher; Rosanne Gallia, principal; Linda Schmidt; Natalie Mechura and Father Tim Kosler, pastor. Other committee members not shown: Lucy Stanzel and Project Manager, Bob Stanzel.

BIG news for our smallest students!

SCHULENBURG—St. Rose of Lima Catholic School in Schulenburg is proud to announce plans to open its new preschool facility for the 2009-2010 school year. The Early Childhood Center will be home to the 3k and 4k programs at St. Rose School. In the coming months, renovations will begin on the Stanzel home at 1101 Kessler Ave. just across from the school on Black Street.

When completed, the Early Childhood Center will be home to five classrooms, each with their own bathroom and sink; three teacher workrooms; and a private teacher bathroom. There will also be a new playground installed, outdoor chapel and new perimeter fencing to enclose the area.

The new facility will allow class sizes to be kept small, meeting optimal student/teacher ratios, and rooms will also be completely self contained, allowing more time in the classroom and less time in transition.

Each classroom will be designed around a center-based plan that is focused on the child and provides for hands-on learning. The philosophy of the new Early Childhood Center is aligned with Diocese of Victoria curriculum and supplemental curriculums to support academic growth, as well as social/emotional growth and wellbeing. General components of the school's philosophy are listed as a belief set. We Believe:

- children come first
- young children learn best through play and meaningful work in a safe, fun and emotionally supportive environment
- in supporting children to become independent, self-confident and inquisitive learners
- in providing experiences for children to develop well-rounded skills
- each child is unique and part of a

family system

- creating partnerships with parents is critical to most effectively meeting children's needs

In November an Early Childhood Campus Committee was formed to review the feasibility of the project and gather data regarding cost, planning, etc. Members



Stanzel Home

include Rosanne Gallia, principal; Stacy Oeding, 3k teacher; Natalie Mechura, Melissa Schmidt, Linda Schmidt, and Lucy Stanzel. Bob Stanzel is now also serving as client contact and project manager for renovations.

The committee held its first fundraiser for the center's New Playground Fund on April 3 and 4. There was a garage sale and silent auction held at the future site of the new campus. The many home décor items, furniture, children's books, clothing and other items helped generate over \$2,000 in sales for the school's playground fund. Bidding in the silent auction was also opened for those items being salvaged from the home. This will help raise additional income for the fund. A generous contribution from the Schmidt Family Foundation has made funding for this worthwhile project possible. St. Rose of Lima is currently holding open registration for the 2009-2010 school year. There will be a limited enrollment number for the Early Childhood Center. If you would like more information on the Early Childhood program or to register your child, please contact the school office at (979) 743-3080.

Thank You Notes

Your Excellency,

With deep gratitude I wish to acknowledge receipt of the check in the amount of \$10,000, representing a contribution for the support of the Holy See from the Diocese of Victoria for the year 2009, in accordance with the provisions of Canon 1271.

While I can assure you that this sum will be sent to the Secretariat of State of His Holiness on your behalf, permit me to offer an initial word of thanks for this expression of generosity.

May God continue to bless you and the faithful you serve.

With prayerful regards, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,
†Pietro Sambì
Apostolic Nuncio
United States

Letter to the Editor

To whom it may concern:

I would like to extend my thanks for the *Lighthouse* and the wonderful puzzle contest provided in the family section.

My name is Sister Anita Rodriguez. I am a religious nun, 70 years of age, a Missionary Catechist of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary; in Dec. 27 of 2008 I had a stroke and was left paralyzed on my left side of my body, but through the grace of God I'm getting around with my wheelchair, but please pray for me and please continue to give us the family contest puzzle. It's a lot of fun and helps keep me motivated so to not give up in life's obstacles. Enclosed is the puzzle, which I had fun finding the hidden words.

I am at the time residing at Twin Pines nursing home and appreciate the staff and I continue serving the Lord by visiting with the other residents in Twin Pines and by encouraging and praying with them, and again may the staff of the *Lighthouse* be blessed and you pray for our blessings.

Peace In Christ,
Sister Anita Rodriguez

Dear Bishop Fellhauer:

Let me acknowledge with deepest appreciation your contribution of \$25,551.18 from your 2008 Catholic Home Missions Appeal. Your kind generosity is both welcomed and needed for our U.S. mission dioceses.

This appeal is an expression of the communion to which all U.S. bishops belong. Contributions to the Home Missions Appeal go directly to brother bishops who cannot offer their people even basic pastoral services without outside help. In these difficult days, small dioceses without significant reserves are in increasing danger and need a helping hand to evangelize, to catechize, and especially to train future priests who will provide Mass, sacraments, and religious education for their people. Currently the subcommittee on the Home Missions is assisting 90 mission bishops.

Please accept my personal thanks for anything you can do to support home mission dioceses.

Sincerely in Christ,
Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings
Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee
on Catholic Home Missions

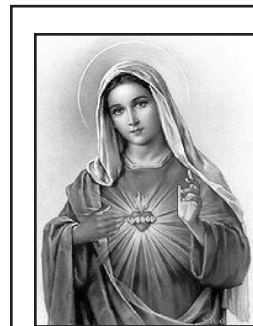
4/19/09

Dear Mrs. Brewer,

I received the coloring book and the reading book. Thank you so much. I will enjoy them

Love, Molly (age 7)

(Winner of Children's March Puzzle Contest – Sts. Peter & Paul, Frelsburg)



Happy
Mother's
Day
May
10

Dear Editor,

This September, a family in Victoria will enjoy a special experience by welcoming into their home a high school exchange student from Germany. This volunteer host family is participating in the SHARE! Student Exchange Program for the 2009-2010 school year. This international exchange student is eager to learn about how Americans live.

I am prompted to write an expression of enormous gratitude to the host family, the high school and community. As the regional director for this program, I have helped local coordinators find the host families and helped them select a student who best fits their family. Local coordinators and our regional office staff will supervise and monitor our families and exchange students throughout their stay.

There are still several outstanding candidates awaiting host families. If

anyone has thought about hosting, now is an excellent time to start. Please contact me as soon as possible. This is a great opportunity to SHARE! your heart and home with the rest of the world.

My thanks to the host family, the teachers and high school, and the members of the community for extending such a warm welcome to this exchange student who has chosen to travel thousands of miles away from family and friends to learn about our unique American culture. The student will always remember the welcome that was received from the people in Victoria.

Sincerely,
Yvette Coffman
SHARE! Southwest
Regional Director

Contact information: www.share-southwest.org or call (800) 941-3738

In Memory of ...

Bernie A. Bludau, father of Sister Mary Jean, IWBS



HALLETTSVILLE - Bernie A. Bludau, 86, of Hallettsville, passed away Sunday, April 5, 2009. Bernie was born on Jan. 12, 1923, in Hallettsville, to Ben and Emilia Woitaske Bludau. He married Edna Klesel Bludau on Oct. 11, 1946, at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Schulenburg. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hallettsville.

Bernie is survived by: his wife, Edna; 13 children, B.J. Bludau, Sister Mary Jean Bludau, Doris Chandler and husband, Dave; Loretta Carpenter and husband, Wayne; Mary Mathis and husband, Don; Theresa Hunt and husband, Johnny; Bernice Bludau, Debbie Wallace and husband, Wayne; Cindy Otten and husband, Lee; Gerrie Daly and husband, John; Stan Bludau and wife, Vanessa;

Scott Bludau, and Jennifer Esteves and husband, John; two sisters, Frieda Bludau and Mary Louise Staudt of San Antonio; brother, Fred Bludau of Needville; and 13 grandchildren.

Bernie was preceded in death by: his son, Stephen G. Bludau; parents; four brothers, Hilbert, Leo, Herbert and George Bludau; and three sisters, Adela Bludau, Lucille Friesenhahn and Anita Hajovsky Drabek.

The funeral service was held Wednesday, April 8, 2009, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the Rev. John Peters officiating. Burial followed at Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery.

Pallbearers: Brian Mathis, Justin Mathis, Phil Bludau, Alan Bludau, Mark Grahmann and Marty Bludau.

Memorials: Sacred Heart Catholic School, 313 S. Texana St., Hallettsville, Texas 77964.

Car accident victim's life saved by blood donations

Anita Hoff received blood transfusions for two days, saving her life!

SAN ANTONIO — Driving her usual route in Seguin, Texas, Anita Hoff suddenly found her car smashed into a telephone pole by a driver who ran a red light. The accident left her car crushed and Hoff suffering from life-threatening injuries.

Hoff suffered severe blood loss and received a steady flow of lifesaving blood for two days. She remained in a coma for a week and stayed hospitalized for three months.

"So many people donated for me when I needed it. They saved my life and have no idea that they did," said Hoff.

Hoff's presence today is a result of an adequate blood supply. Had blood not been available, her accident might have been fatal. Her life is one of thousands that have been saved by community blood donations.

"I'm not the only one who has received blood. Think about how many lives you could save. I'm a living example of what it can do," she said.

One in 20 Texans will receive blood at some point in their lives. The unit you donate could save a loved one's life. Please donate at one of the following area blood drives:

Victoria:

St Joseph High School – Friday, May 8; 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. in front parking lot on Red River; 110 Red River

Victoria Mall – Saturday, May 9; 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in Dillard's Court; 7802 N. Navarro

EZ Money – Saturday, May 16; 9:00 a.m. - Noon in front parking lot; 9006 N. Navarro, Ste. C

Memorial High School – Monday, May 18; 8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in gym parking

lot; 1110 Sam Houston Dr.

Trinity Lutheran Church – Sunday, May 24; 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in church gym; 106 N. DeLeon

HEB Plus Saturday, May 30; 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in the front parking lot in front of produce entrance; 6106 N. Navarro

HEB (Rio Grande) Saturday, May 30; 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in front parking lot by the car wash; 1505 E. Rio Grande

Bloomington:

Bloomington High School – Tuesday, May 19; 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. in new cafeteria; FM 616

Donors must present identification. It is recommended to eat and drink before and after donating. Anyone 16 years old weighing 120 pounds (with a parental consent form), or at least 17 years old weighing 110 pounds, and in good general health, can donate blood. You can learn more about blood, platelet, tissue, cord blood and marrow donation, or print a parental consent form at www.southtex-asblood.org.



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Seminary Burses

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

As of April 29, 2009

	TOTALS
— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann #369 Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,823.99
In memory of Rebecca Smiga by CDA Court St. Ann #369	20.00
In memory of Ervin Vrazel by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	<u>25.00</u>
Total	\$6,868.99

— Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas A. Grahmann Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$10,000.00
In memory of Charlie J. Novosad by: M/M Robert H. Henneke	20.00
F. J. Fischer Jr.	<u>25.00</u>
Total	\$10,045.00

— Knights of Columbus Ganado Council #3204 Rev. Joseph Hybner Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$1,926.00
In memory of SK Bernard A. Pustka by K of C Assembly #1128	<u>150.00</u>
Total	\$2,076.00

— Knights of Militia Immaculata, St. Anthony Village of Bay City Burse	
In memory of John Acosta by Militia of Immaculata	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total	\$100.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council #1329 Seminary Burse #3	
Previously reported	\$8,507.50
In memory of Oscar M. Becker by K of C #1329	<u>100.00</u>
Total	\$8,607.50

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #4	
Previously reported	\$4,209.00
In memory of Lillie K. Grahmann by KJZT Society #2	5.00
In honor of Fr. John Peters' 35th anniversary by Bill & Lillian Gohlke	35.00
Donation to burse in memory of Joe & Benita Pavlu	<u>3,000.00</u>
Total	\$7,249.00

— Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse #2	
Previously reported	\$1,148.77
Gift to burse by M/M Marvin Wagner	250.00
Gift to burse by Rudolph & Julia Janak	<u>100.00</u>
Total	\$1,498.77

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdame Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$8,977.89
In memory of Father Vincent Verdame by Mrs. Felicia Perrone	100.00
In memory of Lillian Polensky by Peggy Hermes	20.00
In memory of James Lehman by Peggy Hermes	20.00
In memory of Georgia Haun by Peggy Hermes	<u>20.00</u>
Total	\$9,197.89

— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,308.00
In memory of Margaret Bunge by Mrs. Curtis Lundquist	<u>10.00</u>
Total	\$6,318.00

— Rev. Msgr. Stanley Petru Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$590.00
To honor Msgr. Stanley Petru on his 60th anniversary by Edna and Henry J. Migl	<u>25.00</u>
Total	\$615.00

Additional Burses for donations:

Rev. Msgr. Werner Bockholt Burse #2
Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #2
Rev. Msgr. Albert Henkes
Rev. Joe Levya
Rev. Marcus Valenta
Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
Sophie Schmidt
Rev. Sean Donohue Burse #2
Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
St. Mary's Church – High Hill
Rev. Charles Kram
William L. Schmidt

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

SEMINARY BURSES
DIOCESE OF VICTORIA
P. O. BOX 4070
VICTORIA, TX 77903

Swinging the club for vocations

Continued from p. 1

priests, religious brothers and sisters who serve in our diocese. Take the words and example of St. Paul. 'Pray without ceasing.' The work of promoting vocations belongs to us all."

Father Dan Morales may be contacted at Our Lady of the Gulf Church, P.O. Box 87, Port Lavaca, TX 77979; (361) 552-6140; or 361-573-0828 ext. 28.

Heritage Center / Pathways with Patti

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October 2-10

Albuquerque Balloon Festival
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Motor Coach Tour

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Continued jump in interest for religious vocations

Continued from p. 1

com, the leading online religious vocation discernment Web site. Sixty-nine percent of the communities responding to the Web site's annual "Survey on Trends in Religious Vocations" reported increased inquiries into religious life.

Discerners - those interested in religious life - are primarily under 40 years old and say they are looking at religious life because of a desire for deeper spirituality. Most are quite serious about exploring religious life, and nearly 20 percent plan to enter religious formation in the next 12 months.

"This information is vital to the life of the Catholic Church and the future of religious life," commented Holy Cross Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, executive director the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) in Chicago.

The NRVC and its publishing partner TrueQuest Communications annually survey discerners who have completed profiles on VocationMatch.com, as well as vocation directors of religious communities featured in VISION Vocation Guide, an NRVC print and online publication.

An impressive 90 percent of discerners say their inquiries into religious life are made easier because of access to information about religious life on the Internet. "With the dawn of instant and anonymous information-gathering via the Internet, we've begun to see a steady increase in inquiries about religious life, which we expect will translate into more vocations over the next decade," said Patrice Tuohy, executive editor of VISION Vocation Guide and VocationMatch.com.

All in good faith

In addition to their desire for a deeper spirituality and a life of faithfulness to the church, discerners say they are most drawn to a particular religious community by its prayer life and community living. A significant 35 percent ranked justice and peace outreach as essential.

Men flip for habits

An interesting turn in trends: A higher percentage of men compared to women (68 to 61) ranked wearing a religious habit as important or essential to what attracts them to a religious community. This preference has flipped from a year ago when women outranked men in their interest in wearing religious garb.

Let's get personal

Not surprisingly, those discerning a call to religious life still consider personal contact with someone in religious life as the most essential resource for gathering information about vocations (53 percent). However, "Come and See" weekends ranked high on every age group's list (42 percent), as did working with a counselor or spiritual director (38 percent). A religious community's Web site ranked next, above vocation directors, parish priests, parents, and friends, and 58 percent rated vocation-related Web sites as either very important or essential to their information-

gathering.

Religious life is ageless

In a piece of very good news for religious communities with aging memberships, "living with someone not my age" is ranked as the least challenging aspect of religious life. Celibacy, a life of service, and living simply are all perceived as more challenging to this year's crop of discerners than last year's. Prayer and spiritual direction continue to rank as the most essential element in making a decision about religious life, and the discipline of prayer remains the greatest perceived challenge in living as a religious priest, sister, or brother.

Brothers gain ground

Religious brothers must be getting the word out because interest in their way of life has jumped nine percentage points in the past two years. The apostolic/evangelical way of life – living and working outside of a monastery or cloister – remains discerners' preferred religious lifestyle, with the exception of 50- to 59-year-olds, who feel most drawn to a semi-cloistered/active way of life.

Surprise! Religious life is alive and well

"That it still exists!" was the enthusiastic response of one young woman when asked what surprised her most about religious life. Other things that surprised both men and women were the number of different religious orders, the variety of ministries and age restrictions. One man felt overwhelmed by the "amount of joy I have at the idea of joining"; another "that it is everyday ordinary people who are called to religious life." One woman was surprised by the peace her choice for religious life affords her; another by the "freedom it brings."

Hopes and fears

As for fears, many women expressed a fear of not seeing friends and family enough if they entered religious life; men expressed a fear of the loss of personal freedom and being unfaithful to their vows. One man captured the sentiments of many: "My greatest fear is not of religious life itself, but of the process of getting there – the reordering of my life to make the religious life possible."

Half of all discerners going through VocationMatch.com are under 30 – good news for communities looking for an infusion of youth. A sizeable 16 percent of discerners are over 50, a fact, which invites religious communities to find new ways to associate with discerners of all ages.

Don't hide your light under a basket!

"What these 2009 VocationMatch.com survey results show is that communities with effective online representation and promotion strategies stand the best chance to benefit from the significant interest in vocations that is clearly out there," said VISION Executive Editor Patrice Tuohy.

Twenty Something

By Christina Capecchi



Grace for the graduate: a leap of faith, a new beginning

Dear Graduate,

I know how you're feeling: light headed and faint hearted.

You're trying to process the culmination of four long years that flew by, trying to smile pretty and keep it straight – left hand takes diploma, right hand shakes, tassel flips from right to left.

You've managed to master biochemistry and the sociology of the cafeteria, Professor Martin and two inexorable roommates, and yet, these simple instructions have you feeling criss-crossed.

The hard part ought to be behind you, but you suspect the greatest challenge awaits: how to properly punctuate your college career.

You're treading in the deep end of emotion, torn between a weep and a cheer. Each goodbye you extend feels sorely inadequate.

I couldn't imagine life beyond college. I hated to leave the close quarters and the strong, sustaining circle of friendship I'd been living in. I was sure I would never again experience anything like it.

And I was right.

But I can assure you that the end of one good thing makes room for the beginning of another. You'll come to love your post-college life, with its new blessings and different rewards.

It, too, is deeply satisfying – perhaps more so, because you become a contributing member of society, not just a college student. You make your mark on a broader canvas.

So here is my summons to you: Instead of dreading this change, embrace it. Invite and absorb the grace of a new beginning.

"When the heart is ready for a fresh beginning," wrote the late Irish poet John O'Donohue, "unforeseen things can emerge. And in a sense, this is exactly

what a beginning does. It is an opening for surprises."

Heart-stopping, soul-stirring, life-giving surprises.

They won't arrive immediately, though. You must be patient.

As you wait for your future to unfold, take heart in this month's scripture readings. "Beloved," St. John writes, "we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed."

It will be, he promises. "We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

That is what we do know, and it is enough for today: Every change that brings an uncomfortable waiting period will result in clearer vision to see and mimic God.

St. John offers additional solace later in the month. "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth."

What a stunning promise, to leap from childhood to adulthood, from being unready to unlocking "all truth."

As you prepare to graduate, remember St. Rita, whose feast day is this month. She is the patron of impossible causes, which your job search may feel like.

St. Rita faced a terrifying crossroads when her husband and sons died. The convent she yearned to enter refused her application. But she prayed fervently and its doors swung open.

Prayerful patience will open doors for you too.

Look beyond the obvious as you assess your current state: yes, you have a paper degree and deep debt to show for the last four years, but you've also developed a broader mind and a bigger heart, which the world desperately needs.

Keep your head up as you walk across that stage. You have so much to look forward to!

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christina@readchristina.com.

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

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

Catholic By Grace

By Denise E. Bossert



Wedding Planning 101

It's wedding season again.

Time for hair appointments and dress fittings. Flowers and tuxedos. Recently, I went through the whole wedding preparation process, beginning with a morning at the salon. It was not at all enjoyable.

A customer sat in a nearby chair and chatted with her stylist. They were commiserating about Catholic priests who have the audacity to insist on church weddings. They couldn't understand why any priest would refuse to officiate at a backyard nuptial or beachside ceremony. What's worse (according to these women) was the whole trend toward pre-marital counseling. Even Protestant pastors were beginning to require such nonsense. Who do they all think they are?

I would have preferred being almost anywhere else. Okay, I thought, it's time for a Catholic to take a stand. I took a deep breath and gave it my best shot.

"I get it."

I had been in the salon 30 minutes, minding my own business, but I had dared to open my mouth and challenge them on their position. They were shocked. These chatty women now sat in total silence. Undaunted, I went on. "If we really believe this is a sacrament, doesn't it make sense that it takes place in the Church? And if it's supposed to last forever, then pre-marital counseling can only be a good – perhaps even necessary – thing."

I think the ladies wanted to boot me from the salon. The young woman working on my hair couldn't stand the silence that ensued. "Well, I think it should be about the two people getting married. They are the only ones that matter." (Great, I thought, now she'll make sure I have green hair for all those wedding pictures.)

What I wanted to say was that I "got it" in a way they couldn't possibly appreciate. I've been there. I've been the starry-eyed young bride. I've wanted to get married and pushed it through regardless of how many red flags I saw. I had disregarded what my parents thought, what God thought, and even what my own spirit suspected.

I had embraced almost every phase of the slippery slope Pope Paul VI predicted. Premarital sex. Artificial contraception. Sterilization. Separation. Divorce.

And I have the scars to prove it.

But the pain that came after the dust settled cannot be overstated. I remember the day the whole thing imploded. I was living in my parents' basement. My three

half-grown children had just left to spend the summer with their dad. They called to say they had arrived safely, and my young daughter announced that their step-mom was pregnant.

I sat on my bed and tried to keep my emotions in check until the phone call ended.

Nothing prepares a woman's heart for things like this. Nothing prepares her for the news that her children have a step-mother, that her husband has a new wife, that they will share the delight of bringing a child into this world, especially when the rejected one is living in her parents' basement and her children are visiting their father for six long weeks. Nothing prepares a woman for the realization that she deliberately and irrevocably ended

her own chances of ever having another baby and yet the rest of her family will experience that joy with someone else. That's about as low as a woman can feel.

I sat on my bed for a very long time and felt the weight of my sin.

Yes, I get it. I get it all too well.

I get why this sacrament must begin in the heart of the Church. I get why the priest carefully takes the couple through the steps of setting the foundation. I completely get it.

I felt very sad for the women who disregarded what I said. "What does she know," they seemed to say with their silence. I'm sure there are readers who know what I'm talking about because they have been through the pain of a non-sacramental marriage. Here's the amazing thing. Even now, there is hope for healing. Mother Church is waiting for you. Go to your parish priest and ask about an annulment. (There are so many misconceptions about annulments. Let your parish priest walk beside you. He will guide you through the process and help you discover what really happened.) I thought the annulment process would be something like opening Pandora's Box. It turned out to be the most healing experience of my life. Mother Church helped me to begin again and live again – in a rightly-ordered way.

Sometimes I wonder how I survived the aftermath of a non-sacramental marriage. Mother Church is not on some power trip. She loves us and knows what will make us happy.

Oh yes, I get it. I understand it all too well.

For Denise Bossert's Blog, go to: www.catholicbygrace.blogspot.com

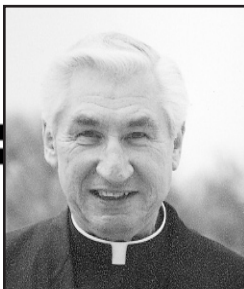


Youth Minister Position Available

The combined Catholic parishes of St. Anthony, Sts. Peter and Paul and St. Roch in the Columbus, Texas, area (70 miles west of Houston) are accepting applications for a youth minister. Responsibilities will include CCE and Confirmation trainings as well as various youth ministry activities. The primary focus at this time is young people in grades 9th through 12th. The salary for this full-time position is commensurate with applicant's training and experience. Interested applicants may request a job description and/or submit their resumes to kahlichd@catholic.org.

FAITH POINT

By Rev. Msgr. James C. Brunner
Vicar General, Diocese of Victoria
For past articles: www.stmaryvic.com/desk.htm



Condom-nation of the Pope

The purpose of this article is to expand and comment on a news item that appeared in The Catholic Lighthouse in April 2009. On the airplane to Africa for the pope's visit, a French reporter stated that the Catholic approach to combating AIDS—encouraging monogamy within marriage and abstinence before—was considered unrealistic and ineffective. The Pope replied that the AIDS epidemic in Africa “cannot be overcome by the distribution of [condoms]: on the contrary, they increase it.”

The Pope was pummeled for this comment. Here are some samples:

Professor Richard Dawkins, the strident atheist, said in a speech at the University of Valencia, “I wonder on what

basis anyone can say condoms make Aids worse. The Pope is either stupid, ignorant or dim. If people take his words seriously he will be responsible for the deaths of thousands, perhaps millions of people.”

The medical journal The Lancet called on the Pope to retract his statement and said his comments could be “devastating for the health of millions of people.”

Rebecca Hodes, head of policy, communications, and research for the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa, blasted the pope for not advocating a wider use of condoms to combat AIDS.

Syndicated columnist Roland Martin wrote that the pope's position demonstrated “ignorance of reality.”

An editorialist in The Guardian wrote: “Top of Pope Benedict XVI in-tray should be the question of condom use in the battle against Aids: here a shift of direction is urgently required, and all it would take is for the Pope to acknowledge the long-established teaching of the lesser evil, Death or condom use?”

Leftist Polly Toynbee (sometimes derisively called Polly Pot) wrote, “With its ban on condoms the church has caused the death of millions of Catholics and others in areas dominated by Catholic missionaries, in Africa and right across the world. In

Ironically, condoms are the least effective means of contraception, but our secular experts think they are the best barrier against transmission of HIV/AIDS.

countries where 50% are infected, millions of very young AIDS orphans are today's immediate victims of the curia.”

British pop music star Elton John has attacked the Catholic Church and its position on condom use. He claimed that it was the reason for the demise of 60 of his friends to the sexually-transmitted disease, AIDS.

It is rather easy to answer the sophomoric argument that the teaching of the Church is responsible for anyone's death. The teaching of the Church is that there should be no premarital sex and there should be fidelity within marriage. If that teaching were followed there would be no sexual transmission of AIDS. It is hard for me to imagine someone debating with himself and saying, “I won't pay attention to the pope's condemnation of adultery and fornication, but I absolutely cannot violate the papal ban on condom usage.”

Furthermore, these “realists” seem to have an infinite faith in the effectiveness of condoms. Some claim that condoms are 80-90% effective in preventing HIV transmission. This presupposes perfect condition, cor-

rect and consistent usage, an assumption that stretches credulity. Even accepting the rosy figures on condom effectiveness, condomistic sex with infected partners is very much like Russian roulette with a one-in-ten or one-in-eight chance of being infected. Compare this with premarital chastity and fidelity in marriage—100% effective. Ironically, condoms are the least effective means of contraception, but our secular experts think they are the best barrier against transmission of HIV/AIDS.

This ignores the reality of cumulative risk exposure. For example, with repeated exposures to an infected partner, such as a man visiting a sex worker in Nairobi or Johannesburg once a month, the man will likely be infected within five months, even with consistent condom use. Notice that prostitutes are now called sex workers as if their activity produces something useful for society. We do our best to keep up with the latest terminology.

The pope was ridiculed as being unrealistic for stating that condoms would not solve the epidemic of AIDS. The atheists and secularists should have a look at the real world on occasion instead of imposing their ideology on reality. In 2004, 150 AIDS experts signed a Comment in The Lancet calling for an evidence-based approach to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS with primary emphasis on changing behavior rather than promoting condoms to halt generalized epidemics. One co-author later testified to Congress: “No generalized HIV epidemic has ever been rolled back by a prevention strategy based primarily on condoms. Instead, the few successes ... were achieved not through condoms but by getting people to change their sexual behavior.” Harvard researcher Dr. Edward Green, director of the AIDS Prevention

Research Project, says that connecting condom use to lower HIV-infection rates is a myth. “The best and latest empirical evidence indeed show that reduction in multiple and concurrent sexual partners is the most important single behavior change associated with reduction in HIV-infection rates,” said Green.

What works in the real world is promotion of monogamy and teaching about AIDS as is done in Uganda. “Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is preventable if populations are mobilized to avoid risk,” states a report summary in Science magazine. “Despite limited resources, Uganda has shown a 70% decline in HIV prevalence since the early 1990s, linked to a 60% reduction in casual sex. The response in Uganda appears to be distinctively associated with communication about [AIDS] through social networks. Despite substantial condom use and promotion of biomedical approaches, other African countries have shown neither similar behavioral responses nor HIV prevalence declines on the same scale. The Ugandan success is equivalent to a vaccine of 80% effectiveness.”

Dr. Green defends the pope. “The pope is correct, or put it a better way, the best evidence we have supports the pope's statement.” He notes, “There is a consistent association shown by our best studies, including the U.S.-funded ‘Demographic Health Surveys,’ between greater availability and use of condoms and higher (not lower) HIV-infection rates.” In other words, the more condoms we distribute the more AIDS we get. He says this may be due to the tendency of those who feel protected by condoms to engage in more risky behavior and thus overcome what little protection condoms may offer.

It is not the banning of contraceptive sex that leads to deaths from AIDS but sexual immorality. It is not the pope or the curia who are responsible for millions of deaths from disease but the ones who tolerate as inevitable if not encourage immoral sexual behavior. It is not Catholic morality on sex that leads to deaths because, when followed, it is 100% effective in preventing AIDS by sexual transmission. It is instead the rotten secular ideology that dissuades persons from the one thing that works. Sexual morality is undesirable because it requires self-control. Secular researchers no more want to acknowledge the need for behavior modification as opposed to passing out latex than alcoholics want to hear that they must stop drinking to prevent further injury to their livers. To paraphrase Gilbert Keith Chesterton, it is not that papal teaching has been tried and found wanting; it has been found hard and not wanted.

So the pope is right—again. It turns out that his critics are the ones who are “stupid, ignorant, or dim.” What people need is not more latex but more steel in their characters. The Church's teaching brings life; secular immorality brings death. We would be safer in following the instructions of the Manufacturer and Designer of human nature on how to treat our bodies.

Once again, everybody repeat, “Sound morality leads to sound health.”

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Reporting Abuse

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

- Call the Chancery at (361) 573-0828 and ask to speak with the bishop or the chancellor;

or

- Call Rev. Gary Janak (979) 543-3770 or Sr. Emilie Eilers (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach;

or

- Write to: Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer
Diocese of Victoria
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
Mark your letter “Personal and Confidential”

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

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

Elementary Principal

St Pius X Catholic School, a Pre-K 3 through 8th grade school located in the northeast area of San Antonio, is seeking a candidate for Principal who is a practicing Catholic and a dynamic leader with a Master's degree and at least 3 years administrative experience for the 2009-2010 school year.

Applications may be downloaded from
www.sacatholicschools.org and mailed to:
Archdiocese of San Antonio, Dept. of Catholic Schools
Attention: Joann Gawlik, Associate Superintendent
2718 Woodlawn Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78228.
For more information, please contact Peter H. Wickersham
St. Pius X Principal Search Committee, at (210) 829-1551.

SHUTTIN' THE GATE

Editorial by Cynthia Brewer, editor



Combating accusations against pope's concern for the poor

On April 11, I received a press release from the U.S. African Chamber of Commerce (USACC). I was curious as to what it was promoting and thought it would be of interest to the growing number of Catholic African Americans in the Diocese of Victoria.

I was shocked when I read that the press release was a note of concern about comments made by Pope Benedict during his visit to Africa this past March.

From Washington, DC, Martin Mohammed, president of the USACC wrote: "The United States African Chamber of Commerce (USACC) has expressed concern recently following Pope Benedict's visit to Africa last month, a visit which has caused outrage among health agencies and others who are on the front line in the fight against AIDS. The African Continent has the largest number of AIDS patients on the planet. And while a great deal of education and effort is being dedicated to protect people who are affected, there is a dire need for affordable vaccines in Africa. Both the Gates and Clinton Foundations have offered world leadership in the global effort to combat AIDS and to ensure the availability of affordable vaccines. However, the Pope's visit to Africa last month seems to ignore the reality of facing and treating this dreadful disease and epidemic and focuses rather on the message of sex and abstinence, showing little interest in joining the efforts of world leaders, such as the Gates and Clinton Foundations."

He continues with his statement, "The Pope's interest rather was directed toward the massive recruitment and conversion of West African nations into Catholicism. He evinced a lesser regard for the situation of African children who

are dying due to lack of sanitation, clean water, education, and disease prevention and who are faced with being left orphaned by the loss of their parents to AIDS. It is not enough to face the African peoples and the victims of AIDS with a simple 'Don't have sex' slogan."

I promptly returned an e-mail message to Mr. Mohammed asking him, "Do you not realize that the Catholic Church (under the pope) is one of the largest contributors of sanitation, clean water, education, disease prevention and medical treatment services throughout Africa and the world?"

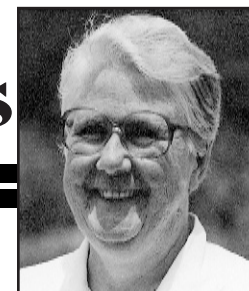
Let me continue with Mr. Mohammed's closing "The U.S. African Chamber of Commerce is asking Africans to continue the fight against AIDS and to employ education and modern medicine as essential components in the fight to save families and our children of the future. The health concern of the African people is a major crisis, and messages such as those that the Pope is propagating are not welcome in Africa. The USACC is the leading advocacy organization for U.S. African relations and emerging African markets. The USACC is the umbrella organization for African chambers of commerce and professional trade and business associations throughout the United States and abroad."

I went to Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Web site and learned through a video on that site that the Catholic Church is one of the largest and the most effective institutions working against AIDS, that 26 percent of the centers in the world that treat HIV/AIDS are connected to the

See *Shuttin' the Gate*, p. 20

SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Easter —Time of New Life

As I write this, I see the weather station's radar map showing large areas of rain — most of it by-passing Victoria. Fortunately, during the past few weeks we have had some showers — enough to give a green hue to the parched pastures and roadsides. The newly planted crops, the fully budded trees, the valiant attempt to bloom by the few wildflowers that managed to come up in spite of the dry winter are all signs of the renewing creative power of God. Yes, nature all about us is a reminder of the joy and hope of the Resurrection. So let us be human partners in this effort to reflect the glorious Risen Christ through our own expressions of beauty and hope.

Jesus told his disciples, "Peace to you" and "Do not be afraid." Are we ministers of Christ's peace in our families, our workplaces and our communities? Do our lives give witness to this peace? Sometimes something as simple as a gentle word or touch can calm a ruffled friend or family member and restore serenity. Sometimes we may have to take a moment and ask ourselves if what we are about to say is fair and charitable and peaceful. Sometimes we may have to provide a "listening ear" for an upset friend or family member in the interest of peace. Sometimes we may have to stand for reconciliation and nonviolence in our society. I'm sure that you can think of other ways that you can serve as a peacemaker and fulfill the Risen Christ's wish for peace.

Christ's other admonition to his disciples was, "Do not be afraid." We might ask ourselves if fear is keeping us from fully living out the Gospel call to love God and our neighbor? Do we let fear of being tied down keep us from making commitments? Do we allow the fear of what others may think or say prevent us from spending more time in prayer and spiritual enrichment or from reaching out to those about us who need us?

Let us then boldly radiate the effects of Christ's Resurrection by sharing the spiritual gifts and treasures of our faith with our fellow travelers through our earthly pilgrimage. And let us fearlessly promote peace through our efforts to assuage the suffering of those who hunger or thirst, those who are needy and homeless, those who are lonely and imprisoned, and those who are mourning the loss of loved ones.

May God's grace — and rain, as a sign of God's care — shower down on us as we join nature in proclaiming new life during this Easter Season through our rejoicing in the Resurrection. May the Earth and its new growth continue to remind us of our generous God who sent his own Son to bring us new life and hope. Let us remain in sync with the liturgical observance of the remainder of the Easter Season and the celebration of Christ's Ascension and his sending of the Holy Spirit to accompany and guide his Church!

St. Mary's Parish Picnic

St. Mary's Parish Hall
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Beer • Popcorn • Soda
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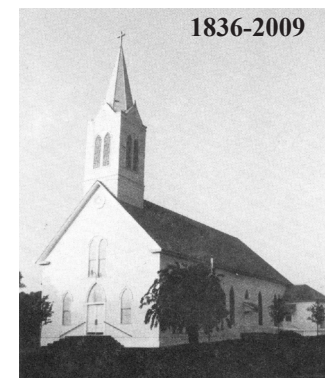


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Bingo • Ball Throw • Ring
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Music 10:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m.
Texas Sound Czech (10:30-2)
Tony Janak (2-5:30)
Red Ravens (5:30-9)

Sunday, June 14



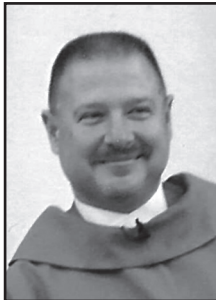
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Children: \$4 (dine-in only)
Dine-in or Drive-thru
Auction @ 1:00 p.m.

Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word

The XXII Annual Conference for Catechesis and Ministry will be held at Holy Family Parish in Victoria on Saturday, September 26, 2009. The Rev. Stanley DeBoe, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish and a member of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, will deliver the keynote address, "Do you know what I, your Lord, have done for you?" — Proclaiming the Word in Acts of Justice.

Prior to being named pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows, Father Stan had over 20 years of social justice ministry that focused on international human rights and social justice in the U.S. and around the world. He was special advisor for foreign affairs and human rights for Rep. Christopher H. Smith (NJ) and was instrumental in assisting Rep. Smith draft and sponsor legislation for many human rights issues, particularly issues dealing with human trafficking, immigration and refugees, and limiting the use of U.S. fund-



Rev. Stanley DeBoe

ing for population control in China and at the United Nations.

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

In addition to the many catechetical and liturgical workshops, there will also be various learning sessions that will focus on Catholic Social Teaching and other general topics. Catholic publishers and religious article vendors will have exhibits at the day-long conference for attendees to visit and shop. The Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer, the bishop of Victoria, will celebrate the closing Liturgy.



Travis Johnson, Brian Ramirez and Frank Gutierrez (l. to r.) were three of the Victoria College Catholic Student Association members who attended a talk by Christopher West at St. Mary's Catholic Center at Texas A&M over Spring Break.

Victoria College Catholic Student Association News

While the sun and the beach lured many students away on Spring Break, a group of students with the Victoria College Catholic Student Association went to Texas A&M for a different kind of break.

"Theology of The Body" speaker and faculty member, Christopher West, presented a break from cultural norms with his talk, "God, Sex and the Meaning of Life," at St. Mary's Catholic Center in College Station, Texas, March 18.

"West presented an excellent explanation of Pope John Paul II's 'The Theology of the Body,' VCCSA attendee Kathryn Wilson said.

"Christopher West helped to further the understanding of the gifts God has given his people — the gifts of the human body and sexuality. Bringing his unique speaking style, he provided a stirring explanation of the beauty of each person and our God given sexuality.

"The talk gave insight and illumination to our yearning for God's love and it's manifestation throughout our lives," she continued.

The event was kicked-off with a concert by recording artist, "Army of Me."

Those attending from the Catholic Student Association were CSA officers: Erica Ortiz, Stephen Alvarado, and Aaron Gonzales; CSA members: Kathryn Wilson, Frank Gutierrez, Brian Ramirez, Juan Escheveste, Anna Do, Travis Johnson, and Andrew Davis; and CSA advisors: Melanie Ledwig and Gail Janecka.

West is a research fellow and faculty member of the Theology of the Body Institute. He is also one of the most sought after speakers in the Church today, having delivered more than 1000 public lectures on four continents, in nine countries, and in over 150 American cities. Hundreds of thousands have heard him on national radio programs and even more have seen him defending the faith on programs such as Scarborough Country, Fox and Friends, and At Large with Geraldo Rivera. His books — "Good News About Sex & Marriage," "Theology of the Body Explained," and "Theology of the Body for Beginners" — have become Catholic best sellers.



Texas Veterans Leadership Program

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has launched a major initiative designed to assist veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. With the support of Gov. Perry, the Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) will lead the nation in welcoming veterans home the right way as they transition to civilian life.

The TVLP recruited 28 veterans as local Veterans Resource and Referral Specialists (VRRS) to provide veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with employment and training services. They are stationed in workforce centers in each Local Work-

force Development Board area while working closely with workforce center staff and the local staff of the Texas Veterans Commission.

Returning veterans, employers interested in hiring veterans, and organizations seeking to join our effort to assist returning service men and women should find their local Veterans Resource and Referral Specialist at vets.texasworkforce.org or by calling (888) VET-TEX1 or Victoria's VRRS, Valerie V. Romans, at (361) 578-0341, ext. 230.

Rome!

You are invited to a wonderful 10-day trip to Rome — a personal pilgrimage at a leisurely pace. Stay within walking distance to the Vatican, November 3 — 12 (Registration deadline is July 31 or while space lasts).

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May is a month for honoring Mary and our own mothers. It is also an exciting time for those receiving First Eucharist or being confirmed. Check out a video/DVD or book for your child or yourself during this special month.

New Books

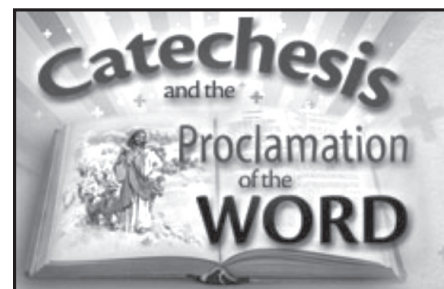
- Mom to Mom, Day to Day
- Pray with Me Still: Rosary Meditations and Spiritual Support for Persons with Alzheimer's, Their Caregivers, and Loved Ones
- Praying the Rosary
- Bringing Up GEEKS: Genuine, Enthusiastic, Empowered Kids
- The Perfect World Inside My Minivan — One Mom's Journey through the Streets of Suburbia

Videos/DVDs

- The Angel's First Communion Lesson
- Being Catholic
- Finding Mary
- The Rosary
- Christianity: The First Thousand Years
- Christianity: The Second Thousand Years

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

Changes made for receiving Catechetical Sunday materials



Each year the Office of Catechetical Ministry purchases Catechetical Sunday materials from the USCCB for parish catechetical leaders to use throughout the year. This year the USCCB has made some of the catechetical resources available as a download *free of charge* on their Web site www.usccb.org. Prayer cards and posters are available for purchase at the USCCB resource page. Under "search," type in Catechetical Sunday 2009, then click "go," or go to http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday/promote_web.shtml. Therefore, we recommend you visit this site as you prepare for the coming catechetical year.

Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

In preparation for Pope Benedict XVI's May 8-15, 2009, visit to the Holy Lands

Second Vatican Council
October 28, 1965

4. Sounding the depths of the mystery which is the Church, this sacred Council remembers the spiritual ties which link the people of the New Covenant to the stock of Abraham.

The Church of Christ acknowledges that in God's plan of salvation the beginnings of her faith and election are to be found in the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all Christ's faithful, who as men of faith are sons of Abraham (see Gal 3:7), are included in the same patriarch's call and that the salvation of the Church is mystically prefigured in the exodus of God's chosen people from the land of bondage. On this account the Church cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament by way of that people with whom God in his inexpressible mercy established the ancient covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws nourishment from that good olive tree onto which the wild olive branches of the Gentiles have been grafted (see Rom 11:17-24). The Church believes that Christ who is our peace has through his cross reconciled Jews and Gentiles and made them one in himself (see Eph 2:14, 16).

Likewise, the Church keeps ever before her mind the words of the apostle Paul about his kinsmen: "They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Rom 9:4-5), the son of the virgin Mary. She is mindful, moreover, that the apostles, the pillars on which the Church stands, are of Jewish descent, as are many of those early disciples who proclaimed the Gospel of Christ to the world.

As holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize God's moment when it came (see Lk 19:42). Jews for the most part did not accept the Gospel; on the contrary, many opposed the spreading of it (see Rom 11:28).

Even so, the apostle Paul maintains that the Jews remain very dear to God, for the sake of the patriarchs, since God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made (cf. Rom.

11:28-29, cf. Dogm. Const. Lumen Gentium, 20). Together with the prophets and that same apostle, the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, when all peoples will call on God with one voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph 3:9; see Is 66:23; Ps 65:4; Rom 11:11-32).

Since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage, this sacred Council wishes to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation. This can be achieved, especially, by way of biblical and theological enquiry and through friendly discussions.

Even though Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (see Jn 19:6), neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. It is true that the Church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture. Consequently, all must take care, lest in catechizing or in preaching the word of God, they teach anything which is not in accord with the truth of the Gospel message of the spirit of Christ.

Indeed, the Church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed. Remembering, then, her common heritage with the Jews and moved not by any political considerations, but solely by the religious motivation of Christian charity, she deplores all hatreds, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews (see D. 57).

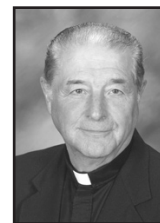
The Church always held and continues to hold that Christ out of infinite love freely underwent suffering and death because of the sins of all men, so that all might attain salvation. It is the duty of the church, therefore, in her preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's universal love and the source of all grace.

Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate, no. 4, edited by Austin Flannery, OP. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1975.

Bishop's Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, USCCB ©

Question Corner

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service



Can Jews and Muslims be saved?

Q. *What does the Catholic Church teach about whether Jews, Muslims and others who don't believe in Christ can be saved and go to heaven? Several friends claim only those who accept Christ and are baptized receive salvation. (Louisiana)*

A. Many Christians believe as your friends do. This is not, however, Catholic teaching, which is summarized concisely in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The catechism insists, as we would expect, on the essential place Jesus and baptism have in God's saving plan. It adds, however, a crucial sentence: "Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it" (No. 846, quoting the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 14).

If you read those words carefully, you can see that the restriction of salvation would not apply to billions of people on earth now and in the past, including most, if not all, people of the Hebrew tradition.

Pope John Paul II reflects this Catholic attitude in his moving and hopeful book, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope." God wants to save all mankind in Jesus Christ, he writes. We don't know how God does all this, but we know Christ came into the world for all people and "has his own ways of reaching them" (pp. 80-83). In other words, God has committed himself to work through baptism and the other sacraments, but he is not bound or limited by them.

The church is silent about this mystery, says the Holy Father, and this "silence" is the only appropriate position for Christian faith. Even for Judas, the words of Jesus (Mt 26:24) do not allude for certain to eternal damnation (p. 186). We just don't know enough about the mystery of God's saving plan to make such a judgment.

Furthermore, we pray constantly in our liturgy that all people will be saved. As just one of many instances, Eucharistic Prayer 2 asks, after the consecration, that our deceased brothers and sisters, and "all the departed," all those who have died, will come into the light of God's presence.

It is possible, therefore, and

something we hope for and desire.

Perhaps you know of Father Hans Urs von Balthasar, one of the major Catholic theologians of the 20th century, a friend and close consultant to Pope John Paul II. He wrote much about the possibility of universal redemption, including the book, "Dare We Hope: That All Men Be Saved," in which he maintains it is our Christian call to pray and hope that all are reconciled with God. He was named a cardinal but died before he could receive the red hat.

Father von Balthasar reports that before the book's final text came on the market, he received massive amounts of mail de-

nouncing his ideas as heretical. From my experience dealing with the subject several times through the years, I can empathize with his experience.

Some Catholics point to certain private revelations, such as the apparitions at Fatima, to "prove" that many people are in hell. That must be right, they claim, because the church has approved many such revelations.

When the church sanctions private revelations, it is simply saying that there is nothing heretical in them, and Catholics may believe these revelations and act on them if they wish. This does not, however, anoint the content of the revelations as Catholic teaching or doctrine.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61612.)

(Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address, or e-mail: jjdietzen@aol.com.)

Pope in Holy Land will promote interreligious cooperation

WASHINGTON (CNS) —Look for Pope Benedict XVI to emphasize interreligious cooperation when he visits the Holy Land, May 8-15, says Father James Massa, director of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. Father Massa noted themes to expect from the papal visit in Media Talk, a backgrounder found on the Media Relations site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/mr/mediatalk/index.shtml>. "In all that takes place in these days of pilgrimage, Pope Benedict XVI will invite the followers of all religions to 'stand together in defending and promoting life and religious freedom everywhere,'" Father Massa said, quoting the pope from his 2008 visit to Washington. He recalled Pope Benedict's meeting with Jewish and other non-Christian religious groups.

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Youth Calendar of Events

June 12-20 — Camp David

June 12-14 — Staff Formation

June 14-16 — Session I - Junior High Camp (spots are still available)

June 17 — Elementary Camp (spots are still available)

June 17-19 — Session II - Junior High Camp (Full)

June 22 - 25 — Discipleship Week at the Spiritual Renewal Center (spots still available)

July 4-12 — Rocky Mountain High, Pagosa Springs, Colorado (Full)

July 19-22 — Quo Vadis, Boys Vocation Camp at the Spiritual Renewal Center (spots still available)

July 26-29 — St. Theresa Vocation Camp at Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria (spots still available)

October 23-25 — Archdiocesan Conference for Catholic Youth Ministers in Houston

November 19-22 — National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City, Missouri

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

Debbie Vanelli or José Ortega at the Office of Youth Ministry
at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 / ext. 50 or e-mail at

dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org or jortega@victoriadiocese.org

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice



YOUTH GROUP DOES CRS FAST FOR LENT—St. Robert's Youth Group of El Campo held a CRS Food Fast during Lent (April 4). "It was our first one and I think it went really well," said Elisa Garcia, youth minister. "Some of the kids were a little scared, but a large number showed up to fast. Plus, they want to do it again next year." Full story to appear in next issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.

Remember who you are! A child of God

The diocesan offices of Youth Ministry and Child and Youth Protection recently presented a three-hour session on the "Theology of the Body" that included a session on "sexting" to Nazareth Academy students. The session was attended by all of the seventh and eighth graders of the school.

"Theology of the Body," a document written by Pope John Paul II looks at sexuality through the lens of human dignity. It presents God's plan for all of us and what our faith, verses what the secular world, tells us about the meaning of love.

The presentation included a talk on "sexting," the newest trend in social networking, which is a degradation of the dignity of people.

Many of the young people were shocked at the consequences of sexting, as well as the potential dangers that seemingly innocent information on their MySpace or Facebook pages could result in.

A few facts about "Sexting:"

- **"Sexting"** is when people use their cell phones to send sexually explicit pictures and messages to each other.

- **"Sexually suggestive pictures/video"**: semi-nude or nude personal pictures/video taken of oneself and not found on the Internet or received from a stranger (like spam), etc.

- **"Sexually suggestive messages"**: sexually suggestive written personal texts, e-mails, IMs, etc. and not those you might receive from a stranger (like spam), etc.

- **"Messages"** only refers to those written electronically (in emails, texts, IMs, etc.) — and "pictures/video" only refers to those captured electronically (on a cell-phone or digital camera/camcorder), etc.

A recently released study of teen and young adults' behavior online was conducted by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group. The online survey, taken by 1,280 people ages 13 to 26, shows about one in every five teens has sent or posted nude or seminude photos of themselves. The following are results of this survey:

How many teens say they have sent/

posted nude or seminude pictures or videos of themselves?

- Teens, 13-19: 20 percent
- Teen girls: 22 percent
- Teen boys: 18 percent
- Teen girls, 13-16: 11 percent

Why are teens sending or posting sexually suggestive content?

- 51 percent of teen girls say they feel pressure from a guy.

- 18 percent of teen boys say they do it because of pressure from girls.

- 23 percent of teen girls say friends pressured them.

Are there consequences for these "sexting" actions?

- Because texting allows for the transmission of images, unlike phone conversations, teens under the age of 18 are especially exposed to a number of legal consequences.

- When images taken on a cell phone involve the teen, or their friends, and the images involve some form of nudity, the images can automatically be defined by law to constitute child pornography. As a result, the taking, sending, receiving, or distribution of such images can, under the letter of the law, constitute varying degrees of child pornography offenses that are punished harshly.

- The consequences of sexting are unpredictable for teens and for the parents/adults who are primarily responsible for the cell phone. Laws vary from state to state.

- But getting caught can mean being kicked off sports teams, facing expulsion from school, or going to jail.

"It's become a troubling trend," said Marisa Nightingale, senior adviser for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, which conducted the study. "Since the beginning of time, teens have flirted with each other and pushed the envelope. But 10 to 15 years ago, it didn't go global in 30 seconds."

Although most teens and young adults who send sexually suggestive content are sending it to boyfriends/girlfriends, others say they are sending such material to those they want to hook up with or to someone they only know online.

Teens and young adults are conflicted

about sending/posting sexually suggestive content — they know it's potentially dangerous, yet many do it anyway.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy has composed a few tips for parents/adults:

5 TIPS TO HELP PARENTS TALK TO THEIR KIDS ABOUT SEX AND TECHNOLOGY

Talk to your kids about what they are doing in cyberspace.

Just as you need to talk openly and honestly with your kids about real-life sex and relationships, you also want to discuss online and cell phone activity. Make sure your kids fully understand that messages or pictures they send over the Internet or their cell phones are not truly private or anonymous. Also make sure they know that others might forward their pictures or messages to people they do not know or want to see them, and that school administrators and employers often look at online profiles to make judgments about potential students/employees. It's essential that your kids grasp the potential short-term and long-term consequences of their actions.

Know who your kids are communicating with.

Of course it's a given that you want to know who your children are spending time with when they leave the house. Also do your best to learn who your kids are spending time with online and on the phone. Many young people consider someone a "friend" even if they've only met online. What about your kids? Supervising and monitoring your kids' whereabouts in real life and in cyberspace doesn't make you a nag; it's just part of your job as a parent.

Consider limitations on electronic communication.

The days of having to talk on the phone in the kitchen in front of the whole family are long gone, but you can still limit the time your kids spend online and on the phone. Consider, for example, telling your teen to leave the phone on the kitchen counter when they're at home and to take the laptop out of their bedroom before they go to bed, so they won't be tempted to log on or talk to friends at 2 a.m.

Be aware of what your teens are posting publicly.

Check out your teen's MySpace, Facebook and other public online profiles from time to time. This isn't snooping—this is information your kids are making public. If everyone else can look at it, why can't you? Talk with them specifically about their own notions of what is public and what is private. Your views may differ but you won't know until you ask, listen and discuss.

Set expectations.

Make sure you are clear with your teen about what you consider appropriate "electronic" behavior. Just as certain clothing is probably off-limits or certain language unacceptable in your house, make sure you let your kids know what is and is not allowed online either. And give reminders of those expectations from time to time. It doesn't mean you don't trust your kids, it just reinforces that you care about them enough to be paying attention.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/>

<http://www.netsmartz.org/index.aspx>

If your child, or someone you know, is being solicited, please report to:
www.cybertipline.com or call 1-800-843-5678

Online Child Pornography can also be reported to 1-800-843-5678.



St. Rose of Lima students qualify for state PSIA

SCHULENBURG—St. Rose of Lima School participated in the Private Schools Interscholastic Association (PSIA) District 7A meet on Saturday, March 28 in Weimar.

Students had the opportunity to participate with their age group in contests covering 18 academic subjects. We are proud to announce that 67 entries placed in the top six in various events.

St. Rose of Lima students earned a total of 634 points to place 3rd overall in its district. Fourteen students had 25 entries qualify to participate in the State PSIA meet, which will take place May 2 at the TCU campus in Fort Worth. The students won 2nd place in 11 events and 1st place

in 14 events.

PSIA district winners were Dylan Goldberg, Andrew Fogleman, Allison Mican, Madeline Sommers, Rylie Lux, Justin Stang, Elizabeth Seyl, Jillian Ransom, Seth Patten, Savannah Flood, Dawson Dittrich, Savannah Jacobs, Erin Miksch, Wyatt Fogle, Sydney Thompson, Bryn Stryk, Allison Meyer, Kelsie Fietsam, Jade Bujnoch, Rebecca Pesl, Taylor Olsovsky, Seamus Bennett, Hannah Fogle, Haley Nidey, Rachel Sauliner, Megan Jurica, Sarah Walker, Scott Stoner, Caitlin Surman, Baylie Fietsam, Kirsten Heger, Dax Dittrich, Molly McCourt, Mary Kossa and Christopher Kunz.

St. Rose of Lima PSIA state qualifiers were, front row, from left: Madeline Sommers, Jillian Ransom, and Bryn Stryk; second row: Savannah Flood, Wyatt Fogle and Erin Miksch; third row: Jade Bujnoch, Rebecca Pesl, Taylor Olsovsky, and Seamus Bennett; and back row: Mary Kossa, Sarah Walker, Christopher Kunz and Scott Stoner. They will go to state competition in Fort Worth on May 2.



Three OLV students placed in the 13th Annual (2009) Adopt-A-Beach Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest. Only 40 pieces of artwork were chosen from over 5,000 entries. The winners from OLV, pictured above are from l. to r.: Gabrielle Wenske, Cole Rather and Kayla Matthews.

OLV Adopt-A-Beach Art Winners

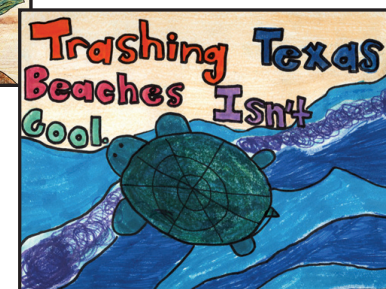
Second graders Kayla Matthews and Cole Rather, and third grader Gabrielle Wenske, from Our Lady of Victory School were winners in the 13th Annual Adopt-A-Beach Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest. The contest was open to all Texas students in grades K-6. This year's theme

Schlitterbahn, and a certificate of recognition from the Texas General Land Office.

All the winning artwork will be on display at the State Capitol in Austin May 16-21 and may be viewed on the General Land Office's Adopt-A-Beach Web site: <http://www.glo.state.tx.us/OC/aab/art-contest.html>. The works of art will also be featured in a 2010 calendar that will be distributed

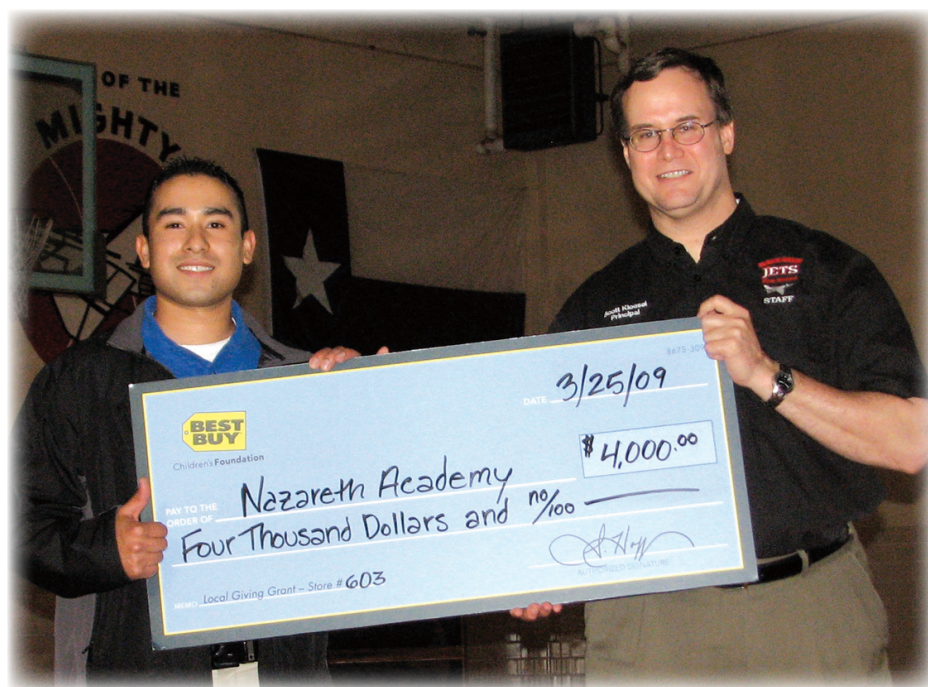


Art work by: (above) Cole Rather; (left) Gabrielle Wenske; and (below) Kayla Matthews



was "Trashing Texas Beaches Isn't Cool."

Forty winners were chosen from over 5,000 entries in the contest. The winners received a ticket to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, two all-day passes to Schlitterbahn, and a certificate of recognition from the Texas General Land Office.



NA WINS BEST BUY AWARD FOUR YEARS IN ROW—On March 25, 2009, Best Buy representatives presented Nazareth Academy with the "Teach Award." This award honors those schools who make learning fun by incorporating interactive technology into the curriculum. This is the fourth consecutive year Nazareth Academy has received this honor, having won the award in 2006, 2007, 2008, and now again in 2009. This year, Nazareth Academy received \$4,000. Pictured are Adrian Lopez, Best Buy Victoria sales manager, and Scott Kloesel, principal of Nazareth Academy Catholic School.



Holy Cross Catholic Church in Bay City Invites You to a Celebration

"They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

For the past twenty years, Sister Geraldine Paulik, FWS, has served hundreds of children and families in our community. She has helped them to live out the Mission of Holy Cross School: "To make a difference in the world by loving God, others and ourselves through learning as we build our Christian family."

Please join the community of Holy Cross in Bay City as we gather together to honor and thank Sister Geraldine for 20 years of love and service to Holy Cross School.

Sunday, May 17, 2009 — 10:00 a.m. Mass at Holy Cross
12:00 p.m. Meal at the Knights of Columbus Hall
(979) 245-6379



Kristin Brianne Popp of Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville and her principal, Mr. David Smolik, show a certificate honoring her artwork that took 1st place at the national "Try Prayer" Contest.

Sacred Heart School sixth grader wins national art contest

14th Annual "Try Prayer" Contest

EASTON, Mass.—Family Rosary has announced the winners of the 2009 "Try Prayer! It Works!" contest. The 14th annual national competition – which encourages students to express their faith through art, poetry and prose – attracted nearly 4,000 finalist entries from across the country.

Each year, approximately 40,000 children and teens from Catholic schools, parishes and other Catholic organizations utilize their creative skills to illustrate a different faith-based theme. This year the theme was One Spirit, Many Gifts. Students from kindergarten through 12th grade creatively depicted in various art forms the gifts they have received from the Holy Spirit, how the gifts have assisted them in helping others and how they share their gifts.

The sixth-grade, 1st place prize went to Kristin Brianne Popp of Sacred Heart Catholic School in Hallettsville, Texas. She is the daughter of Brian and Lori Popp.

Texas had several other winners from Pharr, Laredo, and Austin. Winners from throughout the country were from Indiana, Ohio, New York, Connecticut, Florida, New Hampshire, Louisiana, New Jersey, California, Kentucky and North Carolina.

This year's contest honors the memory of the founder of Family Rosary, Servant of God Father Patrick Peyton, CSC, in this the year of the 100th Anniversary of Father Peyton's birth.

"This year through our theme, One Spirit, Many Gifts, the contest challenged

the children to think deeply and creatively about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they use those gifts in their daily lives," said Father John Phalen, CSC, National Director. "While the gifts of the Holy Spirit were so apparent in the remarkable accomplishments of Father Peyton, they can be apparent in each of us in all we do. The children's entries clearly demonstrated their ability to

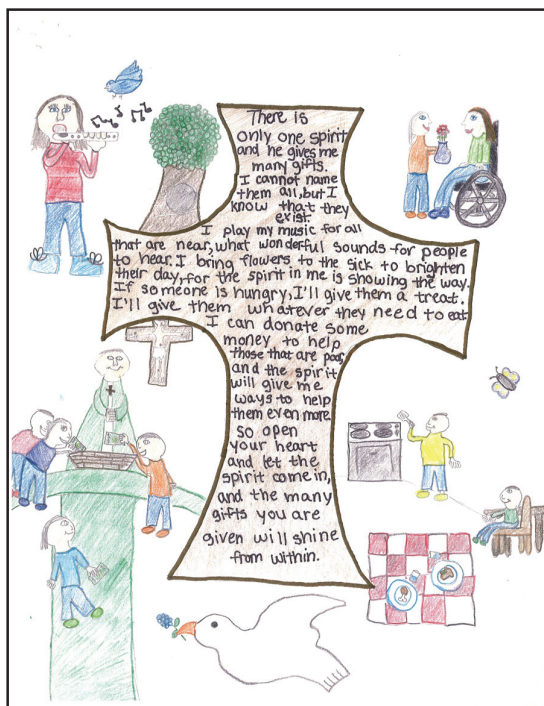
grasp the theme and express their personal experience of the Holy Spirit."

In the United States, up to three winners are chosen per grade: first-place winners are awarded \$100, while the sponsoring organization earns \$200. Runners-up win a product from Holy Cross Family Ministries on the Rosary.

Family Rosary was founded in 1942 by the late "Rosary Priest," Servant of God Father Peyton, CSC. The "Try Prayer!

It Works!" contest derives its name from an experience in the life of Father Peyton. While a seminarian, he was stricken with severe tuberculosis. At one point, a frustrated physician said, "Try prayer! We have done all we can for you." Father Peyton prayed his Rosary to the Blessed Mother and he made a miraculous recovery.

This experience – coupled with his spiritually rich family life as a youth in Ireland, where his family prayed the Rosary each night – inspired Father Peyton to devote his life to Mary, Mother of God, and to the spiritual well-being of the family. His famous slogan, "The Family That Prays Together Stays Together," still resonates today.



One Spirit, Many Gifts

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COME HOLY SPIRIT
FILL THE HEARTS
OF YOUR
FAITHFUL
AND KINDLE

IN THEM
THE FIRE OF
YOUR LOVE
SEND FORTH
YOUR SPIRIT AND

THEY SHALL
BE CREATED
AND YOU SHALL
RENEW THE FACE
OF THE EARTH

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Evelyn Schluter of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ganado has won the April Family Puzzle Contest drawing and will receive the book "The Fox, the Foetus and the Fatal Injection" by Rabbi Daniel Levy, of the United Hebrew Congregation in Leeds, Britain.

The Catholic Lighthouse has copies of "The Fox, the Foetus and the Fatal Injection" available for sale. Please contact the office at (361) 573-0828 ext. 31 if you'd like to purchase a copy.

The winner of the children's contest is Conner Schilhab, 7, of Our Lady of Victory Parish in Victoria. He will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number and parish name by May 27 for a chance to win The May Family Puzzle Contest prize of "Chicken Soup for the Soul – Living Catholic Faith" published by Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing, LLC.

Send to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

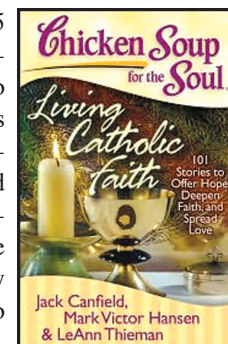
Chicken Soup for the Soul ~ Living Catholic Faith

With 100 babies strapped to the floor of an army cargo jet, and bombs falling to her left and right, LeAnn Thieman remembers thanking God as the jet steered them safely away from the war zone. A key participant in the 1975 "Operation Babylift," a combined military-civilian effort to evacuate Vietnamese orphans from war-ravaged zones, Thieman and her teammates helped to save more than 3,000 children. The experience brought the Thieman family more than they expected when they decided to adopt a baby boy she met during the evacuation. In 2000, she received official thanks from President Gerald Ford, who was in office during Operation Babylift. Her compassion and strong faith has fueled her passion for comforting others and led her to her newest endeavor, Chicken Soup for the Soul: Living Catholic Faith, (Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing, LLC, (December

2008, 978-1-935096-23-8, \$14.95).

In 2008, she was inducted into the Speaker Hall of Fame. When she is not on the speaking circuit, Thieman enjoys volunteering with Friends of Children of Vietnam and HALO (Helping and Loving Orphans). In addition to Chicken Soup for the Soul, Thieman has written three other books about her experiences with Operation Babylift. She has been featured in Newsweek Magazine's Voices of the Century issue, FOX News, CNN, PBS, BBC and Pax TV's "It's a Miracle" series.

Since 1993, books in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series have sold more than 112 million copies, with titles translated into more than 40 languages. In 2007, USA Today named Chicken Soup for the Soul one of the five most memorable and impacting books in the last quarter century. For more information visit: www.chickensoup.com.



And the winner is...



Father John Peters, left, and Father Michael Rother, right, held their final weigh-in Saturday morning, April 11, at the Lavaca Family Health Clinic. The final tally showed Father John losing 34 pounds and Father Michael 22 pounds. "Father John got a big jump on me in the first week and I could never catch up," Father Michael said. However, the true winner of the competition will be the Sacred Heart Youth Ministry, for the community may make per pound pledges to the youth ministry. As of May 1 they have raised \$10,000 that will go to the youth ministry. Someone from Ascension of the Lord Parish in Moravia pledged \$10 per pound not expecting the totals lost. All four parishes participated and they are still receiving donations. Photos by Chuck Grafe of *Hallettsville Tribune-Herald*

Thank God for Susan Boyle

By Father Peter J. Daly
Catholic News Service

Thank God for Susan Boyle. Just when we need it, she gives our spirits a lift with a taste of "resurrection joy" in this Easter season.

Unless you have been on retreat with the Trappists, you probably know about Susan Boyle. She is the 47-year-old spinster from Scotland. She is

figure of a woman whose exercise is household chores. Her hair has rarely, if ever, seen a stylist. She does not own a car or have a driver's license.

She walks everywhere in her village of Blackburn. In 10 minutes she can reach all the essentials of her world: the grocery store, the Happy Valley pub where she sings karaoke, and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, where she sings in the choir.

Susan lives alone with her cat, Pebbles.

Until her mother died two years ago, she was the caregiver for her elderly parents. The youngest of nine children, Boyle lives in the rented row-house where



Susan Boyle, above, performs at Britain's Got Talent.

she grew up. She told Scottish television that she has no boyfriend, had never been on a date and, sadly, has never even been kissed.

The children of the neighborhood admitted on television that they tease her when she walks out in the village. Maybe that is why she kept her dignity when she walked out on that stage in Glasgow before a mocking audi-

ence. The lions. They were ready to tear her apart.

The camera captured teenage girls in the audience rolling their eyes. The judges had smirks on their faces. Simon Cowell, the professional serpent on these shows, asked her why she had not achieved her dream of becoming a professional singer.

She said simply, "I've never been given the chance, really." He puffed. Then she sang. What a voice!

Boyle sang "I Dreamed a Dream" from "Les Miserables," a sad song about lost innocence and shattered optimism.

Cowell's eyebrow went up. He leaned back in shock. The same smartaleck teens who had rolled their eyes were suddenly on their feet, cheering.

Piers Morgan, one of the judges said, "When you walked out on that stage, everybody was laughing at you. Nobody is laughing now."

Amanda Holden, the third judge, said, "Everybody was against you. That was the biggest wakeup call ever."

I watched the tape over and over again. I cried each time. The whole world is cheering for Susan Boyle now.

But we aren't cheering just for her. We're cheering for all the girls who have never been kissed.

Sunday Readings from May 10 to June 7

May 10 — Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 9:26-31 Psalms 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 1 John 3:18-24 John 15:1-8
May 17 — Sixth Sunday of Easter	Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 Psalms 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 1 John 4:7-10 John 15:9-17
May 24 — Ascension of the Lord	Acts 1:1-11 Psalms 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 Ephesians 1:17-23 Mark 16:15-20
May 31 — Pentecost Sunday	Acts 2:1-11 Psalms 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25 John 20:19-23 or John 15:26-27; 16:12-15
June 7 — Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity	Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 Psalms 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18, 19-20, 22 Romans 8:14-17 Matthew 28:16-20

Pope's Intentions: May 2009 General: That the laity and the Christian communities may be responsible promoters of priestly and religious vocations. **Mission:** That the recently founded Catholic Churches, grateful to the Lord for the gift of faith, may be ready to share in the universal mission of the Church, offering their availability to preach the Gospel throughout the world.

Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi



For all the people who live alone with their cats.

For all the unemployed people who are "still looking."

For every child who gives up youth and dreams to take care of elderly parents.

For everyone who sings in church choirs for nothing more than the love of God.

We were cheering for all the lonely people around the world who have never "been given a

chance, really."

Boyle burst on the scene on Easter weekend. She gave us a little taste of resurrection joy when the impossible happens, when hope is renewed and dreams are realized.

When the Brits are surprised, they say they are "gob-smacked."

I think the whole world was really "God-smacked."

Thanks, Susan.



ST. ROSE 3RD GRADERS EXHIBIT ART TALENT—Eleven St. Rose of Lima (Schulenburg) 3rd graders tested their creativity by entering the Annual Youth Art Show at the invitation of the Victoria Art League and encouragement of their art teacher, Mrs. Georgia Pohl. Entries were received from Miles Marburger, Jase Hollas, Kate James, Lauren Mazoch, Bryn Stryk, Sarah Vecera, Seth Patten, Haley Olsovsky, April Brossmann, Sydney Thompson and Kristen Osina.



St. Philip the Apostle 3rd grade class in El Campo painted rolled cardboard to represent the hand-painted baptismal candles that Norma Cox makes for her parish each year. Norma Cox displays one of her candles (inset).

St. Philip religion class taught how to paint baptismal candles

EL CAMPO—Prior to Easter, Debbie Fiala's third-grade religious education class at St. Philip the Apostle Parish in El Campo was taught by Norma Cox (teacher's assistant) to make baptismal candles. Ms. Cox has painted the baptismal candles that are presented to the newly baptized parishioners of St. Philip Parish for the past 18 years.

The class used empty, paper towel rolls to represent the candles. Ms. Cox printed copies of the design she uses for the candles and taped a copy to each empty, paper towel roll. The students went step-by-step painting the different colors used for the baptismal candles, Ms. Cox said. To complete the project, each student initialed the bottom of his or her candle just as Ms. Cox

does to each of her candles.

Some of the children in the class who were baptized at St. Philip's brought the candles they received at their baptisms and proudly displayed Ms. Cox's initials, proof of her artistry.

"As you see by the picture," Ms. Cox said, "they all had a wonderful time pretending to paint these baptismal candles."

Pictured from left, back row: Debbie Fiala (CCE teacher); middle row: Tyler Williamson, Emilie Wood, Kinsey Priesmeyer, Megan Bustamante, Kierana Manis, Chelsey Ott, Tate Fuechec, Gerardo Hernandez; front row: Kaden Treybig, Reed McGuill and Albert Escamilla. Not pictured: Zachary Pasak.



Our Lady of Victory School in Victoria qualified 29 students, from 4th to 8th grade, for the 2009 PSIA Academic State Meet April 25 in Fort Worth.

OLV Students Qualify for State Academic Meet

Our Lady of Victory School qualified twenty-nine students to compete at the 2009 Private Schools Interscholastic Association (PSIA) Academic State Meet held April 25 at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

The state qualifiers were 4th graders: Jillian Hermann, Connor Velasco, Sarah Sabbagh, Amy Alcasabas, Kevin Nguyen; 5th graders: Emily Weaver, Isaac Leal, Hanna Novosad; 6th graders: Taylor Janak, Bryan Rodriguez, Braden Speer, Katelyn Nguyen, Julia Lambert, Madison Hoang; 7th graders: Luke Wenske, Olivia Creager,

Alex Ferrell, Johanna Hoang, Jade Hayes, Hannah Adams; 8th graders: Ahmad Sabagh, Andrew Stewart, Madison Kurtz, Taylor Anderson, Hannah Kolle, Katy Brown, Klaire Duff, Aaron Kovar, and Jillian Strauss. These students qualified for the state competition by placing first or second in their grade-level events at the PSIA District Meet in March.

Our Lady of Victory School placed first overall at the PSIA District. Eighty-eight students in grades 4-8 competed at the district event.

Christian Host Homes Needed: SHARE! needs volunteers - with or without children - who are able to share their home, love and understanding with young teens from over 30 countries like Germany, China, Brazil, Sweden. The teens have insurance, spending money and will attend the high school closest to their host home next school year. If you would like a REWARDING AND EDUCATIONAL experience next school year, please call Yvette Coffman for more information at 800-941-3738 or visit www.sharesouthwest.org.

Help SHARE! promote peace, ONE FRIENDSHIP AT A TIME and a \$100 donation will be given to the host's church for each member of the congregation that hosts a SHARE! exchange student.



ON TO PSIA STATE—Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic School attended the District 7A Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA) Academic Competition in Weimar March 28. The purpose of the PSIA academic program is to use competition to further develop students' higher order thinking skills. Approximately 35,000 privately-schooled students throughout Texas, including home-schooled children and public charter school students, are currently being served through membership in the PSIA program. The top winners from the 24 district tournaments will compete at the state level on May 2 at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth. Pictured are the OLG students who placed in the District meet this year in the following categories. An asterisk (*) denotes those students proceeding on to state. Front row: Lucia Hernandez*, Erin Dent, Benjamin Chen; second row: Jasmine Rendon*, John-Michael Sadleir, Sarah Armstrong, Hannah Estrada, Katherine Dent*, Dylan Morish; third row: Kaitlinn Smith*, Bianca Munoz, Kaylyn King*, Hannah Rose, Ciandra Smith*, Natalie Lyssy; and back row: Mrs. Theresa Dent, principal; Zane Herrera*, Dillon Janecka and Ashley Mutchler*.

Benedictine Monks Lead Retreat

The 12th annual interdenominational Dallas Benedictine Experience Retreat will take place at The Catholic Conference Center in Dallas from Wednesday, June 24, to Sunday, June 28, 2009. This retreat is presented by The Friends of St. Benedict, Washington, D.C. Participants will live at the conference center for five days, forming a temporary monastic community to experience the balanced way of life of the Rule of St. Benedict as it divides each day into private and group prayer, study, work, and leisure. Four Benedictine Offices (Lauds, Sext, Vespers, and Compline) will be sung each day in Gregorian chant. There will also be two classes each day on Benedictine spirituality.

The retreat will be led by two nationally-known religious figures. The Very Rev. Robert Hale, OSB Cam, is a Roman Catholic Camaldolese Benedictine monk. He was superior for twelve years of New Camaldoli Monastery in Big Sur, California, where he became a monk in 1959. He has a Ph.D. in theology from Fordham University. He has taught theology at Sant'Anselmo University in Rome, and at The Jesuit School of Theology of The Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He is the author of "Canterbury and Rome: Sister Churches;" "Christ

and the Universe" (a book on Teilhard de Chardin); and "Love on the Mountain: The Chronicle Journal of a Camaldolese Monk." This will be Father Robert's sixth time as a leader of the Dallas retreat.

Brother Abraham Newsom, OSB, a Texas native, is a monk at St. Gregory's Abbey (Episcopalian) in Three Rivers, Michigan. He was the co-editor of "Singing God's Praises: The First Sixty Years," a history of St. Gregory's Abbey and has had articles published in various media, including "Veil and Cowl: Writings from the World of Monks and Nuns" and "St. Gregory's own Abbey Letter." He has led various Benedictine quiet days, retreats, and classes in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the Midwest and New England, and is returning for the fourth time as a leader of the Dallas Benedictine Experience.

Both Father Robert and Brother Abraham will give presentations on Benedictine values and their applications to life today. They will also offer spiritual direction for those who wish it. This retreat is open to anyone interested in learning Benedictine spirituality.

Please call 214-339-8483 or e-mail dallasbenedictine@yahoo.com for more information.

HOME TONIGHT – a new book created from Henri Nouwen's lectures

Henri J. M. Nouwen, one of the most celebrated spiritual writers of the twentieth century, touched the lives of millions with his intimate and deeply empathetic writings. With an international and universal appeal, the beloved Catholic priest influenced those from a variety of religious, spiritual and cultural backgrounds.

In *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, Henri meditated on the parable of the prodigal son's return – a powerful drama of fatherhood, filial duty, rivalry and anger between brothers – and its enduring lessons for Christianity via the powerful painting by Rembrandt on the same subject. Over time, and after Nouwen's death in 1996, the book gathered more and more fans, and today is considered one of the religious classics of the twentieth century.

What was unknown to the public at the time of publication was that his writing of the book was preceded by an enormous personal breakdown that took him away, for a period of seven months, from the L'Arche Daybreak, a community that welcomes men and women with intellectual disabilities. He lived that time mostly in solitude and with the support of two friends in Manitoba. During his time away, he was having important reflective "encounters" with the people in Rembrandt's painting of the Prodigal Son. His thoughts were raw and deeply private. While the book

developed out of these early reflections, the text seemed less personal to friends and others who attended workshops he gave on the subject.

The material of those extremely personal talks has now been formed into a unique work. *HOME TONIGHT: Further Reflections on the Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Doubleday; March 2009; \$15.95/160 pages) brings to light Nouwen's previously unpublished lectures on the Prodigal Son in a powerful guide for spiritual reflection.

Providing exercises, suggestions for times of solitude, questions for pondering, simple prayers and pages for personal journaling, *HOME TONIGHT* leads readers

to commune with God through spiritual listening. A practical guide for the journey home, this important book will give those who adore Nouwen's works the chance to hear his voice anew on his most popular topic.

To purchase or to learn more about Henri Nouwen, please visit www.henrinouwen.org/.

Correction: The author of "Our Darkest Day," the Good Friday poem in the April issue of The Catholic Lighthouse was Derek Becher. His last name was misspelled in the byline with his poem. Our apologies to Mr. Becher and to our readers.

THE POPE SPEAKS

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

People can learn to see God in world, in others, pope says at audience

By Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — People can get a glimpse of God in the world and in other people, but they must learn how to recognize it, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"There is a certain visibility of God in the church and in the world, and we must learn how to see it," the pope said April 29 at his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Square.

"God created humankind in his image, but this image is covered with so much dirt from sin that it is almost impossible to see," the pope said.

Pope Benedict's reflection on images of God in the world flowed from his main audience talk about the writings of St. Germanus, an 8th-century patriarch of Constantinople.

While Emperor Leo III was leading a campaign against the use of icons and other sacred images out of fear that devotion was turning into idolatry, St. Germanus defended their use in popular piety.

The pope said St. Germanus was known for his insistence that everything involved in the liturgy be beautiful, the pope said.

For the saint, the pope said, the beauty of the words used for preaching, and especially for prayers, "is as important in the liturgy as the beauty of the sacred building in which it takes place."

"The beauty of words and language, the beauty of the building and of the music must all match," the pope said.

While St. Germanus lived more than 1,200 years ago, the pope said that Christians today still could learn from him.

His first lesson, the pope said, is that "in Christ, the true image of God, we can contemplate the face of God and we can learn to be truly human images of God. Christ calls us to imitate him, to be like him so that in every person the face of God would shine through again."

Pope Benedict said it is true that "against idolatry and all the temptations of paganism, in the Ten Commandments God forbade the making of images of him. However, in Christ he became visible, in all the saints his face appears, and sacred images teach us to see God in the face of Christ, in the face of the saints (and) in the faces of all people."

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

ROMANS 1:18-23 (NAB)

18) The wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19) For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. 20) Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; 21) for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22) While claiming to be wise, they became fools 23) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes.

...

ROMANS 2:1-11

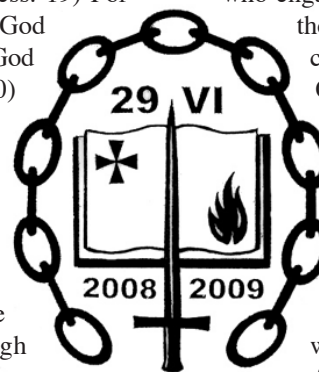
1) Therefore, you are without excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For by the standard by which you judge another you condemn yourself, since you,

the judge, do the very same things.

2) We know that the judgment of God on those who do such things is true. 3) Do you suppose, then, you who judge those who engage in such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4) Or do you hold his priceless kindness, forbearance, and patience in low esteem, unaware that the kindness of God would lead you to repentance? 5) By your stubbornness and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself for the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God, 6) who will

repay everyone according to his works: 7) eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works, 8) but wrath and fury to those who selfishly disobey the truth and obey wickedness. 9) Yes, affliction and distress will come upon every human being who does evil, Jew first and then Greek. 10) But there will be glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, Jew first and then Greek. 11) There is no partiality with God.

Year of St. Paul ends June 29, 2009





WWW.NCCHCA.ORG

El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos declaró hoy (Lunes 27 de Abril, 2009) a la nación de Estados Unidos en estado de alerta a la salud pública debido a la reciente infección humana de un virus llamado Influenza Porcina (o gripe porcina).

Datos Importantes sobre la influenza porcina (gripe porcina)

- La influenza porcina (gripe porcina tipo A) es una enfermedad respiratoria de los cerdos la cual provoca brotes comunes de influenza entre estos animales.
- La influenza porcina por lo general no infecta a los seres humanos. Sin embargo, se ha confirmado que este virus está siendo transmitido de humano a humano. México ha reportado el mayor número de casos seguido por Estados Unidos, Canadá y América Centra. En los Estados Unidos se han confirmado 40 casos del H1N1 en cinco estados hasta este momento.
- Actualmente no hay vacuna para proteger a seres humanos de la influenza porcina y las vacunas de la influenza estacional no protegen contra los virus de la influenza porcina H1N1.
- No hay riesgos de contraer los virus de la influenza porcina si se come la carne de cerdo siempre y cuando estén bien cocinados.
- El virus está respondiendo positivamente a medicamento antiviral si se trata a tiempo.
- Este virus NO es la gripe aviar.

Síntomas de la influenza porcina en los seres humanos:

- Fiebre
- Dolor de garganta
- Tos
- Congestión nasal
- Fatiga
- Algunas personas también padecen secreciones nasales, náuseas, vómitos y diarrea.

Medidas de prevención y propagación

- Evite el contacto con personas infectadas
- Cúbrase cuando tosa o destornude y deposite paños sucios en el recipiente de basura
- Lávese las manos frecuentemente con jabón y agua o desinfectante con base de alcohol
- Si cree estar enfermo con la gripe: Evite al máximo contacto con otras personas, no salga al trabajo o escuela y busque asistencia médica inmediata si sus síntomas incluyen dificultad respirando o fiebre repentina.

Medicamentos Disponibles para tratar La Influenza Porcina:

- Oseltamivir/Tamiflu o
- Zanamivir/Rellenza

En los Estados Unidos, los trabajadores del campo y sus familias tal vez estén a un mayor riesgo de la Influenza Porcina:

- Más del 80% de los trabajadores del campo en la nación inmigra de México y algunos de América Central y Haití.
- Un gran número de trabajadores del campo migran de estado a estado, mayormente de Texas, Florida, Georgia y el Medio Atlántico.
- Más del 90% de estos trabajadores no habla inglés y algunos hablan alguna lengua indígena que no es español.
- El índice de analfabetismo es también muy alto en esta población.
- Los trabajadores del campo y sus familias usualmente viven agrupados en pequeños cuartos cerrados como casas móviles, y casas provisionales.
- Las condiciones sanitarias en las comunidades de trabajadores del campo son usualmente limitadas, con poco acceso a drenaje, baños, regaderas y lavanderías.

Referencias y otros recursos:

http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/swine_espanol.htm

Guía para profesionales médicos: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Israel Garcia, MSSW

Mid-Atlantic Migrant Health Coordinator (garciai@ncchca.org)



Feliz Día de la Madres

10 de mayo

todas sus piezas integrantes. Ahora, él comparte su competencia con sus amigos y familiares. Es una persona vital e interesante porque trabaja.

El trabajo, sin embargo, es espada de doble filo; puede liberar y también esclavizar, impulsándonos a ignorar nuestras obligaciones familiares y comunitarias. También puede conducir a violencia increíble, como demuestra la triste y larga historia de la esclavitud.

Hasta hoy día en muchas partes del mundo un sinnúmero de gente, mucha de ellos niños, trabaja en condiciones intolerables inhumanas y peligrosas.

El Primero de Mayo, fiesta celebrada en casi todo el mundo, conmemora la lucha histórica por trabajo que concuerda con nuestra dignidad humana.

En esa fecha del año 1886, el movimiento laboral ganó día de trabajo de ocho horas para los roperos, zapateros, y trabajadores en empacadoras. Pero el día 3 de Mayo, la policía disparó contra los huelguistas en la fábrica McCormick de cosechadoras, matando cuatro e hiriendo a muchos.

En reacción hubo una reunión masiva en Haymarket Square donde una bomba mató a un policía e hirió a 70, resultando en ahorcamiento de los líderes del movimiento laboral. Cada paso adelante cuesta tremendo sacrificio.

Tiempos difíciles a menudo sacan lo mejor que tenemos. En algunas compañías, según las noticias, los empleados ofrecen trabajar menos horas diarias para que sus compañeros no sean despedidos.

¡Ojala que esta crisis también crié empatía por aquellos que ponen la vida en juego para cruzar fronteras buscando empleo para que sus familias no sufran hambre!

Centenares mueren cada año de sed, calor y frío en la frontera mejicana. Mejores leyes y pólizas pueden cambiar eso.

Y mientras rezamos por los desempleados, hay que dar gracias a Dios por todos los que aman su trabajo. Durante su día especial, pensaré de nuevo de mi Mamá, quien después de criar 10 hijos crió también a dos nietas. Siempre cantaba mientras desempeñaba sus quehaceres.

Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval
Servicio Noticiero Católico



Sobre cómo en tiempos difíciles valoramos más el trabajo

Por mi ventana delantera cada día veo uno de mis vecinos, miembro de mi parroquia, caminando con su pequeño perro. Es un cuadro triste porque indica que todavía no ha encontrado trabajo. Demasiado joven para jubilarse, él tenía un puesto prestigioso en una compañía de importación. Viajaba varias veces al año a Hong Kong en asuntos de negocio. Sin embargo, el año pasado su puesto se eliminó.

En cuanto aumentan los desempleados a millones en Estados Unidos y centenares de millones por el mundo, las palabras de Dios a Adán parecen no parecen tan severas: “Con el sudor de tu frente comerás el pan hasta que vuelvas a la tierra, de la que fuiste formado, porque eres polvo y al polvo volverás” (Génesis 3:19). La crisis económica nos conduce a ver el trabajo como bendición.

Es asombroso que, no importe que

tanto aburra nuestra rutina laboral, el trabajo define la vida. Yo me jubilé de mi empleo principal hace casi 10 años, pero todavía mi corazón palpa más rápido cada domingo por la noche al pensar que puedo hacer venga el lunes.

Para casi todo el mundo, trabajo significativo nutre la dignidad y auto estima además de proveer el pan diario. Nos mantiene vivos.

Jubilación nos desafía a evitar la pereza y mantenernos útiles, aprendiendo algo nuevo cada día. Mi primo José Aragón, quien trabajó muchos años en la línea de ensambla de General Motors y dirigiendo su propio negocio, dice: “Yo tengo que trabajar cada día”.

Le ayuda a sus vecinos a cortar leña, cultiva un grande jardín y regala mucho de lo que produce, mantiene varias colmenas cuya miel cambia por fruta.

Al interesarse en computadoras, consiguió varias maquinas desechadas, las desmontó y aprendió como reemplazar

Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center projects coming along

LA GRANGE — In historic Fayette County, the “Cradle of Czech Immigration to Texas,” is the site of the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, the Flagship of Czech heritage, preservation and promotion. This multifaceted facility is serving to preserve and promote the history, language, culture and heritage of Texans of Czech ethnicity that trace their ancestry to the Czechs who emigrated from the present-day Czech Republic or former Austria-Hungary (including Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia), to honor those immigrants, and to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes.

The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center (TCHCC) organized as a statewide Czech Center to promote and preserve the history and heritage of the early Texas Czech immigrants. Although situated in Fayette County, it is supported by donation and annual sustaining memberships from Czechs across Texas, the United States, Canada and the Czech Republic.

Development of the center started when the Kalich House, restored by volunteers, became the Visitors’ Center with a small library, display area, gift shop, and an office. The site now includes the Sanford Schmid Amphitheater and Concession area with a capacity to seat 400 and a large stage to accommodate a variety of entertainment groups. An authentic Wallachian Bell & Belfry from the Roznov area of the Czech Republic enhance the grounds with a reminder of the Czech lands. A living history

U.S. cardinals meet in Houston to benefit The Catholic University of America — award given to women’s ministry

HOUSTON (CNS) — A standing-room-only crowd greeted eight U.S. cardinals for the Mass April 24 at Houston’s Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart prior to the annual dinner benefiting The Catholic University of America. Proceeds from the dinner fund scholarships for students attending the school in Washington. In addition to Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, the Mass and dinner were attended by Cardinals Francis E. George of Chicago; Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles; Sean P. O’Malley of Boston; Justin Rigali of Philadelphia; William H. Keeler, retired archbishop of Baltimore; Adam J. Maida, retired archbishop of Detroit; and Edward M. Egan, retired archbishop of New York. During the gala, Angela House in Houston, a transitional housing facility for women after incarceration, was honored with the \$10,000 American Cardinals Encouragement Award, which recognizes “faith-based initiatives that reflect Christian values.” “When our women come to Angela House, most are alone or have minimal family support,” Dominican Sister Maureen O’Connell, director of Angela House, said. “And for the most part are feeling worthless and ashamed of what they have done. To experience the support and encouragement of such a university and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston encourages them to believe that they can change regardless of poor past choices.”

center, the Texas Czech Village, is being developed with the following buildings in place to date: Migl House, Hoelscher Haus, Bucek Store, Hluchanec-Salas House, and a log barn.

The central facility of the center will be the museum, library, and archives building with a genealogy library, a museum display area, a large meeting room, a gift shop and an archive vault. Near the main building will be an immigrants’ memorial wall, memorial paving stone patio and a memorial rose garden. A capital campaign is underway to raise funds for its construction.

The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc., is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. It is dependent upon annual sustaining gifts and memorial contributions from those individuals, families, businesses and organizations that are interested in preserving the rich heritage of Texas Czechs for future generations.

TCHCC holds two annual fundraisers (Slavnost/MayFest in May and Muziky, Muziky in October). On May 17 their annual Slavnost (MayFest) will take place on the grounds. The day begins by recognizing Texas Czechs whose ancestors came to America during the years 1881-1885.

The day will begin in the amphitheater at 10 a.m. with the immigrant recognition ceremony followed at 11 a.m. by a Polka Mass celebrated by Rev. Joseph Hybner. A chicken dinner with all the trimmings will be sold at noon. There will be tours throughout the afternoon of the various Czech Village houses as well as a tour of the soon-to-be completed library museum archives building. The day will conclude with a Polka Dance in the old dance hall

(Fair Pavilion) from 2-6 p.m. Music will be provided by the Texas Sound Checks. Special visitors this year will be three senators from Prague, Czech Republic. There is no admission fee, everyone is welcome.

The Center is located on land adjacent to the Fayette County Fairgrounds in La Grange, Texas on highway 77 north. More information can be obtained by viewing their Web site: www.czechtexas.org.



Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, Inc. broke ground for the library, museum and archives building on Saturday, June 14, 2008. The 10,000 square foot facility will contain an entry lobby, exhibit areas, genealogy research library, catering kitchen connected to a multi-purpose hall, meeting room, gift shop and office.

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NUNS ADDRESS CLERGY OUTSIDE IMMIGRANT DETENTION CENTER IN ILLINOIS—Mercy Sisters Pat Murphy and Jo Ann Persch address clergy and their supporters in front of the Broadview Immigrant Detention Center in Broadview, Ill., April 30. After two and a half years of weekly prayer vigils outside the facility, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has agreed to allow the clergy to pray with immigrant detainees on the deportation buses on Friday mornings during a month-long trial period. (CNS photo/Karen Callaway, *Catholic New World*)

Glendon declines to accept Notre Dame's prestigious Laetare Medal

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Citing concerns about plans to honor President Barack Obama “in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops,” former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Mary Ann Glendon has turned down the prestigious Laetare Medal from the University of Notre Dame. In an April 27 letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame's president, Glendon said she will not participate in May 17 commencement exercises during which the award is presented. The letter was posted on the blog of the magazine *First Things*. Glendon described Obama as “a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the

church's position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice” and said the decision to present him with an honorary degree violated the bishops' 2004 request that Catholic institutions not honor “those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles.” The Laetare Medal is presented annually to an American Catholic for outstanding service to the Catholic Church and society. A spokeswoman for the Indiana university confirmed April 27 that Glendon, who served as ambassador from 2007 until earlier this year, was the first person to accept and then later decline the award.

Million Rosary Campaign for Obama

The announcement that President Barack Obama is to be the commencement speaker at the University Of Notre Dame and the recipient of an honorary degree has created an outcry from Catholics who support life and the teachings of the Catholic Church. President Obama has lifted the ban on US foreign aide for abortions, worked to overturn conscience protections for health care workers, forcing them to cooperate in abortion or risk losing their jobs, appointed a pro-abortion and late term abortion advocate to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and dedicating federal funds to the harvest of embryonic stem cells for research.

Students at Notre Dame have responded by using the strongest weapon to fight public scandal – the power of prayer. They are asking us to join them in the “Million

Rosary Campaign” for the conversion of Barack Obama to a position of respect for human life from conception to natural death. The students will pray the rosary at 9:00 each evening in the Grotto of Our Lady on the campus from the Wednesday of Holy Week until the day of commencement, May 17, 2009. You are encouraged to visit the student website at www.ndresponse.com to report how many rosaries you have said for this intention. The students ask that we call to mind the words of the Blessed Mother at Fatima: “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

~ sent from a concerned diocesan parishioner. According to CNS, Bishop John M. D'Arcy of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said he was not opposed to “peaceful” demonstrations against the University of Notre Dame's invitation to President Obama.

Religious freedom commission recommends US monitor Venezuela, Cuba

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A U.S. government commission has recommended that President Barack Obama's administration place Venezuela and Cuba among the countries that should be monitored closely for their violations of religious freedom. In its annual report, released May 1 in Washington, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom also recommended that 13 countries -- including Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China and Pakistan -- be designated as “countries of particular concern.” This designation is reserved for countries with the most egregious violations of religious freedom and for governments that tolerate such abuses. The commission, an independent body, makes its recommendations to the president, secretary of state and Congress. During the press conference to release the report, Talal Eid, an imam from Boston and a member of the commission, said Venezuela has steadily increased its tolerance of abuses against Catholics, Jews and U.S.-based Protestant groups in the country. Although there are no official restrictions against religious freedom, he said, the Venezuelan government's “strong rhetoric” and impunity have created a “hostile environment” for Catholic and Jewish citizens.

Prague audience that he and his Russian counterpart agreed to seek a treaty by the end of the year that is “legally binding and sufficiently bold.” Bold indeed, and a positive step, said Ronald E. Powaski, a retired adjunct professor of history at Cleveland State University who has written on arms control topics for three decades. “It means he's serious about his goal about eliminating nuclear weapons,” Powaski told Catholic News Service. Obama's offer is being embraced by long-standing nuclear disarmament proponents, such as Pax Christi International and its affiliate, Pax Christi USA, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Obama says FOCA is not his 'highest legislative priority'

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama in his April 29 press conference said the Freedom of Choice Act was not his “highest legislative priority” and that he is instead focusing on reducing unwanted pregnancies. “I believe that women should have the right to choose,” he said, “but I think that the most important thing we can do to tamp down some of the anger surrounding this issue is to focus on those areas that we can agree on.” Some organizations that support legal abortion as well as some pro-life groups, including the Catholic Health Association and Democrats for Life, have said the Freedom of Choice Act, known by its initials as FOCA, was unlikely to move in Congress. Obama said at the press conference that he wants “to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies that result in women feeling compelled to get an abortion or at least (are) considering getting an abortion, particularly if we can reduce the number of teen pregnancies, which has started to spike up again.” Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a May 1 statement that he welcomed the president's words that “the Freedom of Choice Act is not his highest legislative priority.” The cardinal stressed that many people have been “working tirelessly to express their concerns about FOCA and FOCA-related legislation” and that “many people of different religious faiths or none will continue to work respectfully and insistently not only to reduce abortions, but to eliminate them.”

Hope for lasting peace grows with US proposal to reduce nuclear arms

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Barack Obama's recent move to open a new round of nuclear arms reduction talks this year represents the best opening since the presidency of Ronald Reagan to make meaningful cuts in the world's nuclear weapons stockpiles, according to faith-based disarmament advocates. Speaking in Prague, Czech Republic, April 5, Obama called for a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia to replace the 1990s-era START, which expires Dec. 5. A new treaty, the president said, would be a step toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The president said he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev broached the subject during the economic summit in London in early April. Obama told his

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Pope's pilgrimage will take message of peace to land of conflict

Continued from p. 1

many years.

"The worst thing that can happen is the loss of hope for peace. So for him to speak openly of the possibility and the necessity of peace and reconciliation should thrust those values into the fore," Father Jaeger said.

"It's not a political negotiation of course; he's not going to produce a peace treaty or try to. But the fact that he keeps the value of peace in front of the people of the region, that will be a tremendous contribution by the church," he said.

The first leg of the pope's trip will take him to Jordan for a series of carefully chosen liturgies and encounters, including a visit to a mosque in Amman. That event, and the fact that Pope Benedict is spending several days in Jordan, reflects his aim to reach a wide Muslim audience. In 2006, Pope Benedict prayed in a mosque in Turkey, a gesture that spoke volumes to the Islamic world. In Amman, the pope will deliver a speech outside the mosque to Muslim leaders, diplomats and rectors of the University of Jordan.

For Jordan's Catholic faithful, who number about 75,000 in a population of 6.2 million, the big event will be the papal Mass in an Amman soccer stadium May 10.

Two smaller papal events in Jordan should not go unnoticed. His first appointment in Amman is at the Regina Pacis center, a special needs facility that has inspired Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration. Here the pope is likely to emphasize the importance of the "dialogue of life" and social cooperation among followers of the Abrahamic faiths.

The pope also will lay the cornerstone of the University of Madaba, which is being built by the Latin patriarchate; blessing cornerstones is a common activity in papal visits, but establishing a Catholic-run university in a predominantly Muslim country makes this one special.

Much of the pope's itinerary follows in the footsteps of Pope John Paul II's Holy Land pilgrimage in 2000. Pope Benedict, for example, will pray at Mount Nebo in western Jordan, where Moses glimpsed the Promised Land before dying. And, like his predecessor, he will visit the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized in the setting of the opening chapter of Pope Benedict's book, "Jesus of Nazareth."

The pope travels to Jerusalem May 11 and later that day visits the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, in what Vatican aides

view as a central event of the trip. When Pope John Paul spoke at the memorial in 2000, Israelis reacted with warm appreciation; many considered it a turning point in his pilgrimage.

Pope Benedict has spoken eloquently about the Holocaust, and as a German has recalled growing up as a witness to the brutality of the regime that targeted Jews for extermination. Vatican sources said, however, that the pope will not be going to Yad Vashem to apologize as a German, but to invoke a wider lesson on the dangers of racism and anti-Semitism.

On May 12, his first full day in Jerusalem, the pope visits sites sacred to Islam, Judaism and Christianity. He begins at the Dome of the Rock, one of Islam's holiest shrines, and proceeds to the Western Wall, sacred to Jews. The two sites lie adjacent to each other and in the past have been the scene of bitter skirmishes between Palestinians and Israelis. The same day the pope will meet separately with the city's two chief rabbis and the grand mufti.

The pope will make a daylong visit May 13 to the West Bank city of Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and today a key administrative city of the Palestinian Authority, whose officials will welcome the pontiff at the presidential palace. The main religious event of the day is a Mass in Manger Square.

That afternoon, the pope will visit the Aida Refugee Camp, where some 5,000 Palestinians live. The visit is already politically charged. Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal of Jerusalem said recently that the camp, which has a giant key installed atop one of the camp's gates, symbolizes the "right to return," the principle that Palestinian refugees have a right to return to the homes in Israel that they have been forced to leave at various times since 1946, when the war for Israeli statehood began.

In addition, Israel has objected that the platform being built to host the Aida event is too close to the Israeli separation wall, which Israel has designed as a 400-mile-long security barrier through the West Bank and which Palestinians see as an instrument of repression.

The pope will celebrate Mass May 14 in Nazareth, the city where Jesus grew up, and later visit the Grotto of the Annunciation and hold a prayer service with Catholic leaders of Galilee. Like his Mass earlier in the week in the Josafat Valley near the Garden of Gethsemane, these liturgies are central to the pope's pilgrimage, offering moral support to the dwindling Christian population in the land where the church was born.

U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, said the pope's visit would underline the importance of maintaining the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

"He will do what Peter always does: encourage the faithful, recognize them, give them a renewed sense of worth and let them know how much the universal church appreciates them and the importance of their faith," the cardinal said.

CRS Life-Saving Food Aid Aboard Hijacked Vessel

BALTIMORE, MD—Life-saving food aid destined for Catholic Relief Services (CRS) programs in Rwanda was among the cargo of the Maersk Alabama, the ship hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia.

Forty-nine containers aboard the ship hold 860 metric tons of bulgur wheat that are to be used by CRS relief workers for some of the poorest populations in Rwanda.

The wheat will feed 8,000 of that country's neediest people through two programs. One targets 5,600 of those

considered most vulnerable — people living with AIDS, orphans and those identified as significantly malnourished — living in the southern district of Rwanda, one of its poorest areas.

The other program feeds 2,400 people throughout the country who receive food at safety-net centers, such as orphanages, old-age homes and homes for the handicapped.

The wheat on board the hijacked vessel is a six month supply for the programs. CRS had hoped that the ship would be able to make its way to its destination of Mombassa, Kenya, as any interruption of the

food supply for these vulnerable Rwandans would be critical to their health.

As a follow up, Cynthia Brewer, editor of *The Catholic Lighthouse*, contacted Michael Hill, CRS communications officer for Sub-Saharan Africa, asking about the conditions of the shipment since the Maersk Alabama had been freed. He



(CNS photo/family photo via Reuters)

responded, "The shipment was unloaded and delivered. It was late, but it got there in time, as it was a six month shipment to refill the warehouses."

Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic community. The agency provides assistance to people in more than 100 countries and territories based on need, regardless of race, nationality or creed. For more information, please visit www.crs.org or www.crsespanol.org.

See "Shuttin' the Gate" editorial on p. 7.

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The Department of Health and Human Services today (Monday, April 27, 2009) issued a nationwide public health emergency declaration in response to recent human infections with a newly discovered swine influenza A (swine flu) virus.

Quick Facts about the Swine Flu

- Swine Influenza (swine flu or influenza type A) is a respiratory disease of pigs that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza within swine populations.
- Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans however, it is confirmed that this virus is now being transmitted from human to human. In the United States there have been 40 confirmed cases of H1N1 in five states. Mexico is reporting the most cases followed by the U.S., Canada and Central America.
- There is no vaccine to protect humans from swine flu and the seasonal influenza vaccine does not protect against this virus.
- Swine influenza is not contracted from eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products are safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.
- The virus is responding to antibiral treatment when detected early.
- This is not the Avian Flu.

Symptoms of Swine flu in Humans:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Stuffy nose
- Chills
- Headache and body aches
- Fatigue
- Some people have reported nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Spread Prevention Tips:

- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with an antibacterial soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you think you are ill with flu: Avoid close contact with others as much possible, stay home from work or school and seek immediate medical care if your symptoms include difficulty breathing and sudden fever.

Interim CDC Recommended Treatment are the neurominidase inhibitors;

- Oseltamivir/Tamiflu or;
- Zanamivir /Rellenza
- The most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine.

Farmworkers and their families maybe at higher risk for Swine Influenza:

- Over 80% of farmworkers nationwide come from Mexico, with others coming from Central America and Haiti.
- Seasonal farmworkers from Texas, Florida, and Georgia also follow the migrate through the Mid-Atlantic's fields.
- Over 90% of these workers do not speak English and may speak an indigenous language
- Literacy among these workers is also low.
- Farmworkers and their families commonly live in very close quarters: in barrack style housing, trailers, and/or old farm houses.
- Sanitary conditions at migrant housing are often limited with limited access to inside plumbing, bathrooms, showers, and laundry facilities for hygienic purposes.

Sources and other links:

Guidance for clinicians: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Compiled by Israel Garcia, MSSW
Mid-Atlantic Migrant Health Coordinator (garciai@ncchca.org)

“Shuttin’ the Gate”

Continued from p. 7

Catholic Church, and that the Church cares for one in four people with HIV around the world.

I gave Mr. Mohammed this information and suggested that it would do him good to learn more about how concerned the Catholic Church is about the poor throughout the world. I advised him to go to the CRS Web sites at <http://www.crs.org/> and <http://www.crs.org/worldaids-day/> for more information. The video is at the second site. I asked him to please view the video and then send corrections to all those to whom he had sent his press release.

I also informed him that he might want to speak with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director of the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention, Kevin A. Fenton, MD, an African-Jamaican American, as he provided much information for the CRS video. You can learn about his credentials at: <http://www.cdc.gov/about/leadership/leaders/fenton.htm>.

I forgot to mention what I had printed in the April issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*, that the head of a Harvard University research center, Dr. Edward C. Green, director of the AIDS Prevention Research Project at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, had said in response to the pope's comments that condom use does not help to prevent the spread of AIDS. His statement was, “This is hard for a liberal like me to admit, but yes, [the criticism is] unfair because in

fact, the best evidence we have supports [the pope's] comments.”

I closed my note to him saying that because his last name was Mohammed, I thought he might be Muslim and that his comments might be in support of the pope's statements since the Islam faith is in agreement with Catholic teaching against sex outside of marriage, and I challenged him that I bet most of the Muslim clerics in Africa would agree with the pope's statements about chastity. I closed, saying that I was disappointed to see that his comments did not reflect the teachings of either the Christian or Muslim faiths.

Readers, you may wish to send a courteous, personal note to Mr. Martin Mohammed, president of USACC, 10 G Street NE, 7th Floor; Washington, DC 20002; or at (202) 465-0778; or by e-mail at www.usafricanchamber.com/ Contact USACC, explaining the truth about the physical, as well as the spiritual, saving power of the efforts of the Catholic Church.

(As a side note, life-saving food and aid destined for CRS programs in Rwanda for people living with AIDS, orphans and those identified as significantly malnourished was among the cargo of the Maersk Alabama, the ship hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia. It included commodities bound for 8,000 orphans and others in Rwanda. See page 19.)

My apologies; I had intended to give the explanation of the title, “Shuttin’ the Gate” in this issue. Hopefully, I’ll have



Here a borehole is being created, with the rig boring down to a depth of approximately 160 meters to the water table. Photo by Andrew McConnell/CRS

They Call Themselves “Catholics”

Lane Bunkers, CRS’ country representative for Ethiopia, shares a story about an older woman who now has access to clean, healthy water.

CRS donated several drilling rigs to the Ethiopian Catholic Church to tap deep groundwater. Our partner, the Hararghe Catholic Secretariat, used one of the rigs to drill a borehole in Dire Dawa, an arid eastern district in Ethiopia. The borehole now provides 2,400 households with access to clean water. Recently, the Secretary General of the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat Abba Hagos Hayish toured some of the communities benefiting from this work.

“What do you think of this water project?” asked Abba Hagos of a Muslim woman filling a five-gallon jug with water

from one of the system’s taps.

“It’s wonderful!” she exclaimed. “Look how clean this water is. Our life has changed.”

“Do you know who is responsible for this project?” Abba Hagos inquired. The woman put down her water jug and looked at him with a slightly puzzled expression.

“They call themselves Catholics,” she said, emphasizing the strange word at the end of her sentence. “I’m not sure exactly what that means, but we give thanks to God for their work.”

About 80 percent of Ethiopia’s nearly 80 million people live in rural areas. Of these, fewer than 15 percent have access to safe water.

Atomic bomb -vs- abortion

Sixty-four years ago the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Approximately 90,000 people died that day, and the world still remembers. In the U.S., over 40,000,000 (40 million) babies have been aborted since 1973. That’s the equivalent of a Hiroshima bombing every 22 days! And we remain silent! That all may follow God’s command to listen to Christ and follow his example of respect for all human life, we pray.

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Ongoing Events

Grief Group — Have you experienced the death of a loved one? Join us in this on-going grief group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room at Holy Family Church, 704 Mallette Drive, Victoria. For information, please call (361) 578-7572.

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

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

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

St. Padre Pio Prayer Group meets the 2nd Saturday of each month at St. Mary Church Annex in Victoria for a 7:30 a.m. Mass, followed by prayer and light refreshments.

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

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

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

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

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

Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene— A women’s ex-offender Catholic ministry meets at Our Lady of Lourdes rectory at 5:00 p.m., 1st and 3rd Mondays.

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

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

ACTS Retreats—For information on ACTS retreats, please go to ACTS Web site at www.actsmissions.org. For more information about the ACTS community movement in the El Campo Deanery, to download an upcoming ACTS retreat application, or to submit/view the prayer requests across the El Campo Deanery, please visit their site at <http://ecdeaneryacts.org/>.

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

Goliad—Presidio La Bahia Museum and Visitor Center —a

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

Picnics, Activities, etc.

May

San Antonio — Bishop Flanagan Habitat for Humanity Golf Classic, Monday, May 11, Hyatt Regency Hill Country Golf Club; Registration 7:00 a.m.; Tee Time 8:30 a.m. Cost: \$300 per golfer / Florida Scramble - Shotgun Start. For more information, please contact Rusty League at (210) 867-1533. Net Proceeds to benefit Habitat for Humanity.

Cuero—St. Michael Annual Parish Spring Festival May 17 on the parish grounds (302 E. Church St.). A roast-beef dinner including dessert will be served from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. with dine-in or drive-thru-line for plates-to-go available at \$7 p/p. Also, planned for the afternoon is a live auction, bingo, country store, raffle, cakewalk and a fun-filled assortment of game booths for all ages. The festival will benefit St. Michael Church and School. For more information contact the church office at (361) 275-3554.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser May 17 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1.50 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

La Grange—Slavnost (Mayfest) May 17 from 10:00 a.m. – 6 p.m. on the grounds of Texas Czech Heritage and Culture Center (TCHCC). There will be music, food, Sunday services, demonstration booths (sauerkraut making, noodle making, etc., Czech Village home tours and much more. The TCHCC is located at 300 W. Fairgrounds Road, which is located immediately at the entrance to the Fayette County Fairgrounds on Hwy. 77 North, one-quarter mile north of intersection of Highways 77 and 71 Bypass. For more information about TCHCC call (toll-free): (888) 785-4500 or e-mail at: czechtx@verizon.net. See story on page 17. Web site: www.czechtexas.org

Hallettsville—Sacred Heart Parish Spring Festival May 24 at the KC Hall. A fried-chicken and stew dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at \$7 p/p. with plates-to-go available. Music throughout the day and night. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be games, entertainment and a train ride for the children. Horseshoe pitching (2:00 p.m.) and washer pitching (5:00 p.m.) contests will be held. See page 19 for more information.

Shiner—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Spring Picnic May 24 at the American Legion Park. A stew, fried-chicken and sausage dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at \$7.50 p/p. The auction begins at 12:00 p.m. There will be a country store, cake wheel, plant wheel, kiddie rides and games. Music day and night. See page 21 for more information.

Upcoming Events

Victoria—Our Lady of Victory Fishing Tournament June 6 at Hurricane Junction in Port O’Connor. There will be an adult and kids tournament, followed by a fish fry, awards, auction and raffle. Proceeds to support the education of the students at OLV. For more information call (361) 575-5391 or www.olvfishing.org.

Flatonia—Sacred Heart Spring Picnic June 7 with a fried-chicken and stew dinner beginning at 11:00 a.m. Music throughout the day. There will be an auction, country store and more.

Port Lavaca — CDA Court Our Lady of the Gulf #2267 will host its 10th annual games party on June 7 at St. Jude’s Parish Hall, 415 W. Austin Street, from 2:00-5:30 p.m. Entry fee is \$6.00 p/p. Refreshments, door prizes, silent auction and raffle drawing will be held. For table reservations, please call 552-6844, 987-2387 or 552-3233.

East Bernard—Annual Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival June 13 from 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Riverside Hall sponsored by KJT Society #40. Admission is \$7 p/p and children 12 and under free. There will be entertainment indoors and under pavillion with water-fan cooled comfort. Starting at 11:00 a.m. there will be sausage/barbecue plate lunches available with food available throughout the day; and arts/crafts, kiddie games, cakewalk and much more family fun. For more information go to www.kkfest.com or call (979) 335-7907. See page 18 for ad.

St. Mary—St. Mary Parish Picnic June 14 at the parish hall. Mass will be celebrated at the church beginning at 9:15 a.m. A stew and sausage dinner begins at 10:30 a.m. at \$7 p/p with dine-in or drive-thru available. There will be games, plants, cakewalk, train ride and country store. Hamburgers will be sold in the afternoon. Auction begins at 1:00 p.m. Dance to

live music from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with Texas Sound Czech, Tony Janak and Red Ravens. See page 7 for more information.

Schulenburg—St. Rose of Lima will hold its annual parish picnic on June 14 at KC Hall. Masses will be held Sunday at 7:30 and 10 a.m. A meal featuring fried-chicken, sausage and all the trimmings will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the KC Hall. Adult plates \$7 p/p, children under 12, \$3.50 p/p. Drive-through adult plates will be available. Hamburgers, iced tea and other food and refreshments will be served all afternoon and evening. The biergarten will open at noon. The Shiner Hobo Band will be featured from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Mark Halata and Texavia will play from 4-8 p.m. One of the highlights of the picnic will be the big auction starting at 1 p.m. featuring cattle, quilts, antiques and much more. Other activities at this year’s picnic will include bingo in the hall, as well as amusements and games, including a country store, cakewalk, country walk, rides for children, and pull tab bingo. The sweepstakes drawing will be at 8 p.m.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser June 21 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1.50 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

St. John—St. John Annual Parish 4th of July Picnic on the parish grounds (7026 FM 957 - 6 miles SW of Schulenburg). Mass at 9:30 a.m. followed by flag raising ceremonies at 10:30 a.m. A stew and fried-chicken dinner begins at 11:00 a.m. More information to come.

Dubina—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish Picnic July 5

Moravia—Ascension of Our Lord Parish Picnic July 12

Victoria—St. Mary’s Vacation Bible School will be held July 13-17 using “Cat Chat’s Marvelous Mystery – The Mass Comes Alive.” Need volunteers! Please call Marie Immenhauser at 572-3863.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser July 19 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1.50 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council’s projects.

Frelsburg—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival Aug. 2

Yoakum—St. Joseph Parish Picnic Aug. 2

Palacios—St. Anthony Shrimporee Aug. 2

Weimar—St. Michael Harvest Feast Aug. 9

Praha—St. Mary Parish Picnic Aug. 15

High Hill—St. Mary Parish Picnic Sept. 6

Shiner—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Picnic Sept. 6

Hallettsville—Sacred Heart Festival Sept. 6

Nada—St. Mary Picnic Sept. 6

San Antonio—3rd Annual Pilgrim Center of Hope Golf Tournament, Friday, Sept. 25, at Olympia Hills Golf & Conference Center (Universal City); Time: Registration at 11:00 a.m.; Tee Time at noon; Shotgun Start - 4 Person Scramble. Cost is \$80 per golfer. For more information, contact Rudy Sotelo at (210) 699-9795 or Rene Farias at (210) 493-1913.

Bloomington—St. Patrick Turkey Dinner Sept. 27

Meyersville—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival Sept. 27

Retreats • Conferences

Winter Park, FL.—Are you or a loved one experiencing same-sex attractions and looking for answers? “Courage,” an apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church and endorsed by the Pontifical Council for the Family, ministers to those with same-sex attractions. They also have an outreach called Encourage, which ministers to relatives and friends of persons with same-sex attractions. Upcoming events sponsored by Courage include: A Courage/Encourage Conference to be held July 9 - 12 at Villanova University in Villanova, Pa. Learn more about Courage and Encourage at their Web site: www.couragerc.net/.

Victoria—Spirit Wind Ministry is pleased to present *Sabbath - Finding God and A Sabbath Space in our Lives*, a weekend retreat led by lecturer, columnist, and author Father Ronald Rolheiser, August 14-16, at the Spiritual Renewal Center outside of Victoria. Rev. Rolheiser is currently serving as president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. The retreat cost is \$170 p/p (\$190 for single occupancy cabin – limited availability). Retreat begins Friday evening and ends with lunch on Sunday. Space is limited and will be reserved in the order of deposits (\$50/non-refundable). Balance due July 1. Refunds (minus the deposit) until July 15; no refunds of any fees after that date. Make checks payable to Spirit Wind Ministry and mail to: Susan Oakley, 103 Woodmere, Victoria, TX 77904. Please include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address with your deposit. For additional information contact Susan Oakley at (361) 576-1515 / (361)649-6391 or e-mail smoak53@msn.com.

Houston—Coming Events at Holocaust Museum Houston – Education Center and Memorial: www.hmh.org/pc_home.asp.

Nazareth Academy wins national award

By Cynthia Brewer, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, and Rubi Reyes of *The Victoria Advocate*

Nazareth Academy of Victoria was one of 12 schools in the nation to be awarded the “2009 Catholic School for Tomorrow Award” by *Today's Catholic Teacher*, a monthly teacher's magazine.

Nazareth Academy was the only Catholic school in Texas to earn the honor for 2009.

The winning schools were honored during an awards' presentation banquet at this spring's National Catholic Education Association Convention in Anaheim, Calif., and were featured in a special section in the March issue of *Today's Catholic Teacher*.

Scott Kloesel, principal of Nazareth Academy, received the award during the banquet at the convention. In attendance with him were Dana Howard, NA junior-high journalism teacher, and Sherry Kainer, NA 3rd-grade teacher.

On April 23 the school commemorated its accomplishments with a school rally and the celebration of a school Mass by Bishop David E. Fellhauer, assisted by Father Stan DeBoe, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows. Jackie Gloor, Congressman Ron Paul's representative, presented the school with a U.S. flag; and former principal, C.R. “Duke” Alicardi; Superintendent of Schools for Victoria Diocese John Quarry;

and Sister Evelyn Korenek and the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament congratulated the students, faculty, staff and parents.

Today's Catholic Teacher proudly presents the “Catholic Schools for Tomorrow Award” to honor Catholic schools that have led the way by implementing exemplary innovative programs to improve the teaching and learning of their students, faculty, and staff.

Nazareth Academy received the award for innovative projects in marketing.

“The Nazareth Academy Show has benefited me because this is an opportunity I would not receive at another school,” said Neil Zamora. “The skills I have learned will help me in my career, as most jobs now have something to do with technology.”

“The Nazareth Academy Show has benefited me by making me feel more comfortable talking on camera. It has made me a more outgoing person,” said Mary Gower. “The skills I have learned will also be helpful to me in my future career path.”

Congratulations Nazareth Academy Catholic School, a 2009 national Catholic School for Tomorrow award winner. Nazareth Academy has also been named a Best Buy Teach Award winner four consecutive years (2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009).



The 2009 Multi-district CDA Lenten retreat was held in Rosenberg April 4. Local officers and clergy attending were (from l. to r.) Rev. Bill Bartniski, pastor of Holy Rosary, Rosenberg; Henriette Jalowy, Court Saint Bernadette Regent, East Bernard; Patricia Michulka, Court #1108 treasurer, East Bernard; Reverend Donald Ruppert, court chaplain #1108, pastor of Holy Cross, East Bernard, Texas state chaplain and national clergy consultant; Olga Samaniego, state spiritual enhancement chairman, El Paso; and Terrie Vacek, state public relations and Scrapbook chairman, Wallis, Texas.

Catholic Daughters hold Lenten Retreat

By Terrie Vacek

ROSENBERG—Catholic Daughters of the Americas from District 10, 28, 35, and 37 attended the 2009 Multi-District Lenten retreat in Joerger-Lindsey Hall, Holy Rosary, Rosenberg, April 4, 2009. Olga Samaniego, immediate past state regent and state spiritual enhancement chairman, led the retreat titled “Seeking the Face of God.” The retreat was broken down into six sessions: “Created and Loved,” “Surrendered and Joyful,” “Seeking God's Hand in the Power of Prayer,” “Seeking God's Face with the Power of Transforming Prayer,” “Called and Gifted” and “Sisterhood and Teamwork.” With song, reverence, humor and several 20-minute prayer and reflection sessions, Olga emphasized that a relationship with Jesus begins by saying yes to an invitation. Olga also stressed the unconditional love of our Heavenly Father and the blessings of “Surrendering to his Will.” When we embrace his plan for our lives, our transformation leads us to live in trust and peace.

Like Moses, when talking to God, Olga became radiant with her delivery of the Word and with one-on-one prayer petitions. This transformation before our eyes

is a reminder to us that a deep and intimate relationship with our Lord is very doable! Rev. Bill Bartniski, pastor of Holy Rosary, welcomed retreat attendees as the first group to use the new Joerger-Lindsey Hall. Rev. Donald Ruppert of East Bernard, state chaplain and national clergy consultant, attended a session and presented remarks about CDA, adding greetings from the national board. Hosts were CDA District Deputies 10-Alma Slawinski of Rosenberg, 28 – Carolyn Rapsilver of Sealy, 35, and 37. Rosenberg court members served as hostesses with Alma Slawinski as retreat coordinator.

Retreatants were CDA members from the following courts: Holy Rosary 1476, Rosenberg; Saint Isidore 2340, Needville; Sister Mary Walter 2401, Rosenberg; Sacred Heart of Divine Mercy 2469, Pattison; Saint Bernadette 1108, East Bernard; Queen of Angels 1538, Wallis; St. Elizabeth 1616, Sealy; Our Lady of Faith 2607, Frydek; Immaculate Mary 2134, Angleton; Our Lady Queen of Hope 2289, Brazoria; Father Chromcik 1440, Fayetteville; Mary Queen of the Snows 1588, Columbus; Our Lady of the Rosary 1595, Nada; St. Roch of Mentz 2328, Al-leyton; and Our Lady of the Fields 2465, Eagle Lake.

To learn more about the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, please visit the National Web site at www.catholicdaughters.org or Texas at www.texascd.org. See the June issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse* for coverage of the 2009 Texas State Convention.



Dana Howard, Principal Scott Kloesel, Sherry Kainer and Victoria Catholic Schools Superintendent John Quarry pose with the Catholic School for Tomorrow award at the NCEA convention in Anaheim, Calif. Photo courtesy of Joel Austell Studios.

BISHOP BLESSES STATUES FOR HOSTYN PARISH—Bishop David E. Fellhauer came to Queen of the Holy Rosary Parish in Hostyn on March 22, 2009, to bless the statues in the new narthex. Bishop Fellhauer presided at the concelebrated morning Mass with Msgr. Stanley J. Petru and Deacon John McCourt. After Mass, everyone congregated in the narthex for the blessing of the statues. The statues blessed were of Pope John Paul II, Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Francis, Divine Mercy, and Queen of the Holy Rosary. When the bishop blessed the Adoration Chapel last November, the statues had not yet arrived. In addition to these five statues, the parish also has St. Katherine Drexel and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. The statues, donated by the parish families, have been placed in the new Adoration Chapel and narthex.



The
Chancery
Office
will be
closed
May 25 for
Memorial
Day.

Holy Cross student receives Webcam visit from her Navy dad

By Cynthia Brewer

Kindergartener Jolee Garcia of Mrs. Cook's class at Holy Cross Elementary in Bay City received a surprise visit from her father who is deployed overseas in the U.S. Navy. The surprise visit happened through a Skype video call to the Holy Cross School office Tuesday, April 21, 2009.

"Jolee's father, Chief Warrant Officer Joe Garcia, is deployed for months at a time and is always in harms way," said Linda Torrez, the school's computer teacher. He last left in March and won't return until October or November.

Jolee was totally surprised when she was called to Mrs. Torrez's computer classroom and saw her daddy in Mrs. Torrez's computer via the Webcam.

"Her daddy asked her, 'Jolee can you see me?' and she said 'Yes, but how did you get in there?'"

"She just kept staring at the monitor and Sister (Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS, principal) kept telling her to talk," said Mrs. Torrez. "I think she just couldn't figure out how her daddy was in my computer."

Jolee received four calls from her dad between April 21 and 28. They all come through Mrs. Torrez's computer. She told him to call as often as he is able, even if it's only for a few minutes.

"Jolee's dad asked her how she was

doing in school, was she cleaning her room, was she listening to her mom," Mrs. Torrez said.

"She threw him a kiss and he threw one back at her.

"He asked her about Sister Geraldine's chicken (Chicken LaLa) who hatched some chicks here at school and she was excited to tell him all about the babies," she said.



Jolee likes to watch Mrs. Torrez play "Bookworm" on her computer during daycare after everyone leaves.

"She'll pull her chair up behind me," she said, "but this time I told her, 'You can sit in my chair so you can see the surprise because I beat the game.'"

"I had the monitor turned off and then when she sat down I turned it on and there was her daddy.

"It was heart breaking and at the same time wonderful to see her face when she saw her daddy," Mrs. Torrez said. "There was not a dry eye in the room. Just a few minutes with her daddy makes a big difference in her life as well as her mom's."

"Her dad called his wife, Charlene, who works for the U.S. Postal Service, after he visited with Jolee, crying because he was able to see and talk to his little girl."

Skype can be downloaded free and used on any computer equipped with a fast Internet connection and a Web cam.

Sister Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS, assists Jolee Garcia while visiting with her father, Chief Warrant Officer Joe Garcia, in Holy Cross' computer classroom. (Inset) Close-up of Jolee and her dad.

Catholic women's prison ministry awarded governor's service award

By Cynthia Brewer

We're just a handful of Catholic women helping a smaller handful of Catholic women who have experienced incarceration in jail or prison.

The Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene (SMM) received the "Susan Cranford" Volunteer Award for female offender programs at the 14th Annual Governor's

award on behalf of all the SMM Program Chapter volunteers within the state of Texas.

The Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene is a ministry originally developed by Deacon Bob Leicht Jr., a chaplain with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice at the Wayne Scott Unit in Angleton, Texas, to minister to Catholic female offenders as

an in-prison ministry. He also developed the very successful Brothers of St. Dismas for male offenders. Both ministries were originally approved by, now retired, Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza of the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese "for the hope it offers our Catholic incarcerated." The director of corrections ministry for the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese, Father Ron Cloutier, has affirmed this effort.

The SMM is a successful volunteer program, which aims at establishing a 'sorority' of Catholic female offenders through an in-prison crusade event called the St. Mary Magdalene Metanoia Retreat.

After the crusade, volunteers follow-up with continued in-prison support through

Bible study focused on life applications, re-entry goal setting, restorative justice and a 12-step Christian program, all of which are supported by the Catholic sacraments. There are approximately 700 SMM members.

Volunteers continue helping post-release women with re-entry assistance by connecting sorority sisters with local "free-world" SMM Chapters and resource entities that help with temporary housing, transportation, gift packages, mentoring and job leads.

The SMM Chapters provide support and healing within the Catholic community for women who are returning to the "free-world," or for any woman who is recovering from addictions of any sort, for anyone suffering from an addiction is in her own personal prison.

Susan Majors, an ex-offender who came to Perpetual Help Home from the Plane State Jail, worked with Emily Yeary and myself to organize the Victoria SMM in 2005 with approval of Bishop David E. Fellhauer and the assistance of Father Celestino Say, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Other Victoria SMM volunteers are Barbara McCain and Patsy Whitaker.

If readers know of any Catholic woman who has been released from jail or prison, or who seriously wants to change a life marred by addictions, please send them our way. Meetings are 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 5 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes' rectory at 105 N. William Street, Victoria.

To learn more about SMM and BSD, please go to: http://dismag.org/Ministry_Profile.html.

Cheryl Miller, executive director of Perpetual Help Home in Victoria, also received the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award, the "Pathfinder" Award, for her work as a volunteer mediator for TDCJ Victim Services Division, conducting numerous face-to-face mediations between offenders and their victims for the past nine years. Because of her efforts, crime victims have been able to gain personal insight, empowerment and creative structure for their grieving and healing.



Minnie Moraida, Leigh Ann Soliz, Deacon Bob Leicht Jr. and Cynthia Brewer accept the "Susan Cranford" Volunteer Award on behalf of SMM Women's prison ministry.

Criminal justice Volunteer Service Awards in Austin, April 3, 2009.

Cynthia Brewer of the Victoria SMM Chapter, Minnie Moraida of the Corpus Christi Chapter, and Leigh Ann Soliz on behalf of Kathy Ward of the Houston Chapter, received the governor's volunteer

SPIRIT OF LIFE ~ For Seniors & Caregivers

The Web site, <http://www.spirit-oflife.com/>, was developed with the sole purpose of serving senior citizens and their caregivers by Pat Rico, a Catholic schoolteacher and music minister at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Lomita, Calif. The site includes the following categories, which may provide the information that seniors and caregivers are seeking: Drugs, Emotional Support, Funeral planning, Health Insurance, Hospice, Medical Directives, Preparing for Death, Rehabilitation & Skilled Nursing Facilities, Social Security & Medicare, Day Programs and Wills & Living Trusts. *This information is not necessarily recommended by the staff at The Catholic Lighthouse, it is provided only as an FYI.*