

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 19, NO. 9

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

January 2006

2005

TOP NEWS

STORIES

1. DEATH OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
The Polish-born pontiff died April 2. More than 2 million people waited outside St. Peter's Square to pay their respects at a public viewing.
2. ELECTION OF POPE BENEDICT XVI
3. HURRICANE KATRINA
4. TSUNAMI AID
5. CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE AND HOMOSEXUALITY & PRIESTS

NEWSMAKERS

1. POPE JOHN PAUL II
He had a significant impact on the secular world as well as a profound influence on the entire religious world.
2. POPE BENEDICT XVI
3. HURRICANE EVACUEES
4. TERRI SCHIAVO
5. CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN G. ROBERTS



Candlelight March for Life

Life and Family Advocates will sponsor its twentieth annual Candlelight March for Life on Thursday, February 2. The march will begin at 7 p.m. at the parking lot of College Church of Christ, 3200 Ben

Jordan Street. Sent by prayer, the participants will walk, carrying lighted candles or flashlights, to Our Lady of Victory Cathedral, where a program will be presented.

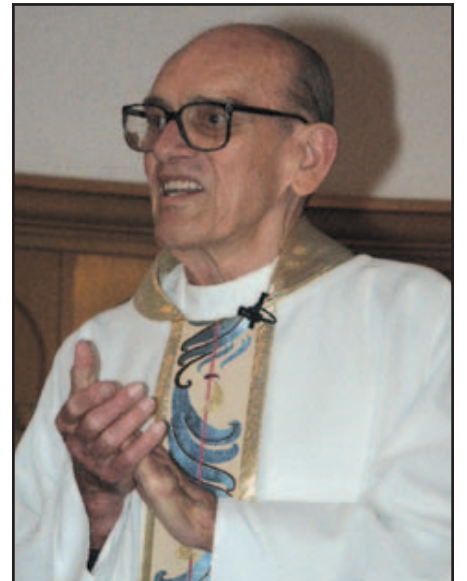
The principal speaker will be Patti Tuttle, a member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Helotes, near San Antonio, who with her husband has fostered nearly 200 children, one of whom she adopted. There is more: Patti "had a dark secret in her teenage past and now shares it to help other young girls."

The march is held each year near the anniversary date of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal under any circumstances. This is an opportunity to protest the decision and to demonstrate respect for life.

Candles will be available for those who do not bring their own light. Transportation will be provided for those who need a ride back to the starting place. For information, call (361) 578-2506.



Patti Tuttle (r.) will be the speaker at the 20th annual Candlelight March for Life on Thursday, Feb. 2. She and her husband, Dave, have fostered nearly 200 children, and adopted Kallie (l.) who was found in a paper bag leaning against a step near Lackland AFB. The march will begin at 7 p.m. at the parking lot of College Church of Christ, 3200 Ben Jordan St., and end at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral, where Mrs. Tuttle will speak.



Rev. Joseph A. Koebel

Father Koebel dies after auto accident

NADA—Reverend Joseph Anthony Koebel, age 78 of Nada, died December 12, 2005, from injuries sustained in an auto accident. He was the pastor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Nada and administrator of St. John Nepomucene Parish in New Taiton.

Father Joe was born December 19, 1926, in New Orleans, La., to the late Alphonse D. and Alice Marie Riche Koebel. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Alphonse, August, and Michael, and sisters Marie Koebel, Anna Kramer, Caroline Hemelt, and Veronica Koebel. He is survived by his nephew, John Kramer, of Louisiana, and many dear friends.

He attended St. Joseph Seminary in St. Benedict, La., and St. Mary Seminary in La Porte, Texas. He was ordained a priest on May 29, 1954, at St. Mary Seminary Chapel in La Porte. He celebrated his golden Jubilee Mass on June 6, 2004, at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Nada.

Father Koebel served as parochial vicar at St. Mary's in Port Arthur in 1954, St. Anthony in Beaumont from 1954 to 1960, St. Vincent De Paul in Houston from 1960 to 1964, and Blessed Sacrament in Houston from 1964 to 1967. He served as pastor for St. Mary's in La Porte from 1967 to 1979, Holy Family in Wharton and St. Joseph Mission in Boling from 1979 to 1988, and St. Philip the Apostle in El Campo from 1988 to 1996. He had been serving as pastor at St. Mary in Nada since September 1996 and as parochial administrator of St. John in New Taiton, since September 2001.

Visitation was held Thursday, Dec. 15, at St. John Catholic Church in New Taiton; a parish rosary followed in the evening.

Visitation was held at Triska Funeral Home during the day on Friday, Dec. 16, and then in the evening at St. Mary's in Nada, followed by a wake service at 7 p.m.

The funeral Mass was held Saturday, Dec. 17, at St. Mary in Nada with Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer officiating with numerous priests and deacons from

See Father Koebel, p. 2

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Intelligent Design or Chance?
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(2003 CNS photo from Reuters)

COLOMBIANS HOLD PEACEFUL PROTEST FOR KIDNAP VICTIM

The Suffering Church series continues on Colombia
pg. 16



In preparation for its many travels to parishes for publicity, Bishop David E. Fellhauer blesses the 2006 Toyota Tacoma pickup that will be used as a fund-raiser for the youth activity/multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.

Diocese to give away pickup as fund-raiser

By Debbie Vanelli, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office

A diocesan fund-raising steering committee has been formed to coordinate efforts for the youth activity/multi-purpose building planned for the Spiritual Renewal Center. The steering committee consists of Monroe Rieger, Ken Adams, George Wenzel, Mike Brown, Debbie Vanelli, JoAnn Martinez, Tim Mikalski, Hal Redmon, and Hardy McCullough.

The newest fund-raiser for the youth activity/multi-purpose building is the drawing for a 2006 Toyota Tacoma Pickup truck from Blackwood Toyota in Victoria. The truck is a 4 x 2 access cab with a V6 engine. Power windows, door locks and mirrors; remote keyless entry, cruise

control and CD player are among its numerous amenities. Tickets for the drawing are \$20.00 each, 3 for \$50.00 or 6 for \$100.00 and are being distributed for sale throughout the diocese.

The building, with over 20,000-square-feet of space, will include meeting facilities, a dining area, commercial kitchen facility, offices and reception area, restrooms with showers, and multiple storage areas. The building will sport a covered drive large enough to accommodate a bus.

The building committee is looking at plans to make the facility aesthetically pleasing to the tranquil surroundings at the renewal center. With a projected cost hovering around one million dollars, multiple fund-raisers are in the works.



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

January

- 8** 10:00 a.m., Mass, Celebrate 75th Anniversary of Holy Family Church, and blessing of new addition, Wharton
- 8-12** First week of Diocesan Priests' retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 13** Lunch; Blessing of Adoration Chapel, addition to Day Care Center, Youth House, and school bus at Sacred Heart Church, Hallettsville
- 6:00 p.m., Mass, 10th anniversary celebration of Serra Club Northwest, Sacred Heart Church, Hallettsville
- 15-19** Second week of Diocesan Priests' retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 21** 7:00 a.m., Mass, Our Lady of the Gulf Church Spanish ACTS retreat for men, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 25** 10:00 a.m., Presbyteral Council meeting, Chancery Office
- 3:30 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
- 29** 9:00 a.m., Mass, opening Catholic Schools Week, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral

February

- 1** 10:00 a.m., Mass, Catholic Schools Week, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 3** 7:00 p.m., Reconciliation Service, Holy Family Church ACTS retreat for men, Spiritual Renewal Center
- 4** 5:00 p.m., Mass, Boy Scout retreat, Camp Mauritz, Ganado
- 5** 8:00 a.m., Mass (Spanish), Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake
- 10:00 a.m., Mass (English), Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake
- 6-7** Pontifical College Josephinum Board of Trustees meeting, Columbus, Ohio

Sister Alfreda Leopold, IWBS, dies

Sister M. Alfreda Leopold, IWBS, 81, of Victoria, died Thursday, December 15, 2005.

She was born July 8, 1924, in Nada, Texas, to the late Leo J. and Ottilia Gerbermann Leopold.

Sister Alfreda completed her grade school education in Nada Public School. She attended Nada Public High School and Nazareth Academy from which she graduated. She received a BS degree with a major in elementary education and a minor in social science from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. She was also awarded an M. Ed. with a major in administration and a minor in supervision from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She held a teacher's permanent first class elementary state certificate.

Sister Alfreda was received into the Novitiate of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament on July 27, 1942. She made first profession of vows on July 28, 1943, and pronounced her final vows on September 1, 1946.

During her years of active ministry, Sister Alfreda taught at St. Ludmila Acad-

Official Appointments By Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

The following have been re-appointed or newly appointed to the Diocesan Finance Council effective December 21, 2005: **Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin; Rev. Msgr. James C. Brunner; Rev. Donald R. Ruppert; The Honorable Beatriz Gonzalez; Mr. John Hall; Mr. Otto Kalischko; Mr. Roman Shimek; Mr. John Stevenson; Mr. Glenn Villafranca; Mr. Mark Westerman; Mr. Hardy J. McCullough; and Mr. John E. Zacek**

Effective December 31, 2005, the **Rev. Gary W. Janak**, pastor of St. Philip Church, El Campo, is appointed to the additional office of Temporary Parochial Administrator of St. Mary Church, Nada, and St. John Church, New Taiton.

Effective January 18, 2006, the **Rev. Robert Guerra** is relieved of his assignment as Parochial Vicar at St. Philip Church, El Campo, and appointed Parochial Administrator of the Parish of the Nativity, Eagle Lake.

Obituaries

Father Koebel dies after auto accident

Continued from p. 1

throughout the Victoria, Galveston-Houston, and Beaumont dioceses.

Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston also concelebrated at the funeral Mass as well as Father Joe's seminary classmates Msgr. Glen F. Wearden (retired in New Caney) and Msgr. William M. Pickard (retired in Houston).

Bishop Fellhauer said the homily at the funeral Mass and close friend, Father Timothy P. Bucek of Bellville, Texas, said the homily at the wake service.

Speaking at the wake were long-time friends Dr. Gerard and Mrs. Gail Boyton of Corpus Christi and Mr. David Le Compte Jr. Mrs. Boyton thanked everyone for loving Father Joe so much and coming to his wake. David Le Compte is the oldest of the Le Compte children whose family Father Joe "adopted" after the death of Mr. David Le Compte Sr. 29 years earlier. Father Joe had the auto accident upon returning from one of his regular Monday visits to the Le Compte home. It was at the Le Compte home that Father Joe would go to rest, said St. Mary's secretary, Kelly Korenek, and would go to eat Mrs. Mary Le Compte's good cooking, said Father Bucek.

The driver of the truck that Father Joe hit, Mr. Douglas Folkens of Damon, also spoke with tears saying he was so sorry and wished there was something he could have done to avoid the wreck. "I got to talk to him when they got him out of the car. He was more worried about me than himself," said Mr. Folkens. "I wish I had known him more."

"We all loved him, whether we're from out of town, parishioners of his from Taiton, whether we're parishioners from Nada, whether we remember him when he was pastor at El Campo, or when he was in Wharton, or La Porte, or wherever he was, he was always humble," said Father Bucek in his homily. "And we're most grateful to God for having given us this very special gift, Joseph Anthony Koebel."

Father Joe Koebel was buried at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Dickinson Saturday, Dec. 17.

Memorial donations may be made to the Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Seminary Bursary or to the Rev. Joseph A. Koebel - St. Philip School Scholarship Fund.

Thank You Notes

Diocese of Victoria

The owners, management and staff here at the Quality Inn would like to send a heartfelt "Thank You." We so appreciated the wonderful donations, meals, and services that you provided to the hurricane evacuees in their time of need. Your thoughtful gestures not only nourished them but also showed them just how special Victoria is.

We truly could not have done our job without you.

Sincerely
Jo Ann Dreves
Sales Director
Quality Inn

Dear Bishop Fellhauer:

Thank you very much for your donation of \$25,000. I deeply appreciate your generosity and the generosity of the priests and people of the Diocese of Victoria. Your kindness is the light of God's love shining in our moment of need.

With God's help and the help of others, I know we will go forward. The faith of our people remains strong.

Sincerely in the Lord,
Most Rev. Thomas J. Rodi
Bishop of Biloxi

Dear Bishop Fellhauer:

While Hurricane Rita was not the greatest disaster for our country, it has been our greatest disaster in Southwest Louisiana. Thank you for your most generous donation of \$25,000 to aid the Diocese of Lake Charles in our time of extreme need.

Gratefully yours in Christ,
Rev. Msgr. Harry D. Greig
Diocesan Administrator

2005 DIOCESAN SERVICES APPEAL

The 2005 Diocesan Services Appeal will officially close on January 13, 2006. Final totals will be printed in the February issue. To date we've received \$722,500, which is 59 percent of our \$1,228,800 goal for 2005.

Project start-up for the 2006 Diocesan Services Appeal is scheduled for next month. Pledge cards will be mailed out during the last week of February.

Have a Blessed and
Happy New Year,
Jeri Joseph
DSA Coordinator

Stewardship Thought

It's important to measure our generosity not by what we give, but by what we have left.



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Seminary Burses

Seminary burse is 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 burse is in memory of, or in honor of an individual priest, or lay persons, living or deceased. Publication of the burse will appear periodically when new contributions are received.

As of January 3, 2006

	TOTALS
— Catholic Daughters of America Court Our Lady Queen of Peace No. 1374 Burse	
Previously reported	\$1,972.72
In memory of Gaynelle Staha by CDA Queen of Peace No. 1374	100.00
In memory of Tillie Massingill by CDA Queen of Peace No. 1374	100.00
In memory of Alvin Bartos by CDA Queen of Peace No. 1374	100.00
In memory of James J. Bacak by CDA Queen of Peace No. 1374	125.00
In memory of Louis Dornak by CDA Queen of Peace No. 1374	75.00
Total	\$2,472.72

— St. John the Baptist Church, St. John Burse No. 2 — In Memory of Rev. Brian Crookes	
Previously reported	\$4,116.00
In memory of Madeline Vaculik	10.00
Total	\$4,126.00

— Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,569.50
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy during the Christmas season by Ken and Betty Woodring	25.00
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy for a Blessed and Healthy 2006 by Alice Tlucek	100.00
Total	\$6,694.50

— Rev. John C. Peters Burse #3	
Previously reported	\$7,921.00
In memory of John P. Peters Jr. and Tillie Peters by Deacon Joey and Mary Targac	25.00
Total	\$7,946.00

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Burse	
Previously reported	\$9,332.50
In memory of Frank and Stazie Stryk by Andrew and Pauline Stryk	100.00
In memory of Frank and Stazie Stryk by Daniel Stryk	100.00
Total	\$9,532.50

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik and Rev. Vincent Verdame Burse	
Previously reported	\$6,550.00
In memory of Rev. Theophil Okruhlik and Rev. Vincent Verdame by anonymous donor	100.00
In memory of Rev. Theophil Okruhlik and Rev. Vincent Verdame by anonymous donor	100.00
Total	\$6,750.00

— Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse No. 2 St. John Nepomuceno-New Taiton	
Previously reported	\$9,675.00
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru by Leroy and Annie Supak	100.00
Total	\$9,775.00

— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Burse	
Previously reported	\$2,251.00
In honor of Rev. Joseph Koebel's birthday celebration by M/M Ervin Buchta	10.00
In memory of Rev. Joseph Koebel by:	
M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
Edwin Petering	20.00
John and Hattie Drozd	50.00
Ervin and Cathy Buchta	40.00
Greg and Sherrie Witcher	25.00
Lucian Kainer Family	50.00
Michael and Kelly Korenek	50.00
Karen Kahanek and Edwin Zapalac	40.00
St. John's Altar Society	200.00
M/M Walter Taylor	10.00
Donald and Cindy Priesmeyer	25.00
Jerome and Georgia Dorotik	100.00
Dorothy Kubala; Andy and Diann Sruhar and family; Pat and Becky Kubala and family; Wayne and Darlene Kubala and family	1,000.00
Alan and Lillian Lockley	15.00
Michael and Johnnie Sue Bucek	100.00

Mrs. Carrie Bucek	75.00
Mrs. Carolyn Bucek	25.00
Joe and Irene Seifert	10.00
M/M Ben Hyek	20.00
Jerry and Ann Bilicek	50.00
Bill and Alene Hubanek	25.00
M/M Frank Zboril	20.00
Clinton and Edith Poncik	20.00
M/M Stanley Blaha	20.00
Lydia Cooper	5.00
Vlasta Boehm	5.00
Joe and Bernice Popp	10.00
M/M Edward L. Schneider	50.00
Charlie and Virginia Pavlovsky	10.00
M/M Gary Crane and Family	10.00
Gertrude Wied	5.00
Ben and Mackie Pavlu	10.00
Lawrence B. Hains	50.00
Alphonse and LaDell Janda	25.00
M/M Jodie Socha	30.00
M/M Lenhart Swoboda	10.00
J. D. Wied	10.00
Madeline Popp	10.00
Ethelyn Popp	10.00
Joe and Leona Korenek	20.00
Bridget Popp	10.00
Mary Ann Schoellmann	20.00
Edmund Zbranc	20.00
Clarence and Joyce Zbranc	20.00
Evelyn Korenek	10.00
Melvin and Lorraine Rasmussen	50.00
M/M Marvin Swoboda	10.00
Frank & Marilyn Popp	50.00
M/M N. J. Schneider	10.00
John Lee and Virginia Korenek	50.00
Mrs. Adela Popp	5.00
Ronnie Gold family	10.00
M/M Leroy P. Supak	50.00
Patricia Sanders	20.00
M/M A. W. Mazoch	20.00
Bea Yockey	5.00
Wilbert Hundl	40.00
M/M August Soht	100.00
Donald and Rosemary Nohavitz	100.00
Larry and Delores Dornak	20.00
Annie and Mary Ann Henneke	5.00
M/M John J. Bubela	10.00
Alvin and Anna Marie Cada	20.00
Mrs. Alvin Kahanek	25.00
Anonymous Donation	7.00
Anonymous Donation	10.00
Anonymous Donation	20.00
Total	\$5,263.00

— Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS Burse	
Previously reported	\$1,520.00
In memory of Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes by Anonymous Donor	100.00
Total	\$1,620.00

Additional Burses for donations:

— Nicholas and Annie Grahmann Burse No. 2
— Bishop David E. Fellhauer/Catholic Life Insurance Nada, Moulton, Hallettsville, Edna-Ganado and El Campo Branches Burse No. 2
— Rev. Joe Levya
— Rev. Marcus Valenta
— Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
— Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
— Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas KJZT Burse No. 5
— Sophie Schmidt
— Rev. Sean Donohue Burse No. 2
— Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
— Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
— St. Mary Church – Praha
— St. Mary Church – High Hill
— Holy Rosary Church – Hostyn Burse No. 2
— Rev. Charles Kram
— Eddie and Olga Juroske; Floran and Laura Frnka
— William L. Schmidt
— Willamena and Herman Grahmann, Sr.

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 Burse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903



Five men from the Diocese of Victoria were accepted as candidates for the permanent diaconate program by Bishop David E. Fellhauer Dec. 11 at St. Joseph Parish in Moulton. The candidates, pictured from left to right, are Larry Hoelscher, El Campo; Joe Ramos, Bay City; Bishop Fellhauer; Patrick Kubala, New Taiton; Milburn Kram, Moulton; and Joe Machacek, Shiner.

Candidates accepted for permanent diaconate program

By Dennis Kutach

MOULTON—Five men were accepted as candidates for ordination as permanent deacons in a ceremony with Bishop David E. Fellhauer at St. Joseph Parish in Moulton on December 11. In this rite those seeking ordination as permanent deacons show publicly their willingness to offer themselves to God and the church for ser-

vice in sacred orders. This rite is the first official recognition of the positive signs of the vocation to the diaconate, which must be confirmed in the subsequent years of formation.

The five men accepted as candidates are Larry Hoelscher (spouse-Patricia) of St. Philip, El Campo; Milburn Kram (spouse-Marian) of St. Joseph, Moulton; Patrick Kubala (spouse-Rebecca) of St. John, New Taiton; Joe Machacek (spouse-Mary) of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Shiner; and Joe Ramos (spouse-Letisia) of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bay City.

These men, along with their wives, will spend the next four years being formed both spiritually and academically. Father Gabriel Maison of St. Joseph Parish in Moulton is the director of the permanent diaconate office and will guide the candidates in their journey as they answer the call to be of service to God, the church, and to their parish community.

Fifth graders to attend Vocation Awareness Days

On January 10 and 11, the fifth graders from the Catholic Schools in the diocese will attend Church Vocation Awareness Days at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria.

The students will hear a number of religious and priests talk about their own experience of religious life and the priesthood. The students will compete in a "Meet the Religious" game and visit the Gift Shop and the Hall of Memories at the convent. The day will culminate in a Prayer Service that highlights the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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

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Vocation art contest winner announced

Students from all corners of the Victoria Diocese entered the Art Contest sponsored by the Victoria Diocese Vocation Office for students in Catholic Schools and Religious Education programs.

The winner of the \$25 gift certificate is Amy Klimitchek of Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville. The runner-up is Kaitlyn Sestak of St. Michael School in Weimar. Congratulations to them and to all the other artists who displayed their talents and who are making us aware of the possibility that God might be calling some of the young men and women of our diocese to serve their brothers and sisters through a church vocation. Some of the entries will be featured in *The Catholic Lighthouse* throughout the year so be on the alert for them and continue to pray for church vocations.

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.



Art work by Seth Machicek,
Grade 9
Sacred Heart School,
Hallettsville

Consider the Religious Life!
Office of Vocations • Diocese of Victoria in Texas •
P.O. Box 4070 •
Victoria, Texas 77903 • (361) 573-0828;
vocations@victoriadiocese.org
or Incarnate Word Convent at
(361) 575-7300;
iwbsvoc@yahoo.com



The Church

By Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin
Diocese of Victoria Vicar General



Come Back to Sunday Mass

“The Lord, your God, shall you adore, him only shall you serve” (Matt 4:10).

“I am the Lord, your God, you shall not have strange gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3).

“Here God solemnly declares to us that he is our Lord God from whom we have all that we possess, on whom we depend absolutely and to whom we altogether belong. From this, our essential relationship with God our creator is derived immediately our duty to worship him as our first beginning and last end” (Slater).

Catholics who have stopped attending Mass on Sunday are doing so for their own reasons. Irrespective of how justified they feel that these reasons are good, are simply not acceptable. Only serious illness or impossibility can excuse one from attending Mass.

We must remember as Catholics that we have a serious obligation to worship almighty God. He not only expects this, he demands this. People are not relieved of this duty by their own excuses. Those who do not attend Sunday Mass are still obligated to worship God and will be held accountable for not doing so. They cannot invent ways of their own to supply for Sunday Mass attendance. God wants us to worship him the way he decides we worship, not as we decide.

Those Catholics who no longer attend Mass on Sunday may feel that they are justified in abandoning the faith they once loved and cherished. Their reasons, no matter what they are, when examined and analyzed, can with the grace of God be very easily remedied. It may only be a question of discussing the matter with a priest or other family member or friend. It may require a new review and instruc-

tion on the teaching of the church about this subject. Their negligence may be due to lack of knowledge or ignorance.

Prayer is essential in resolving this matter. The person who has become inactive should pray for the grace of reconciliation. Families and individuals who worry about their friends should pray for and encourage these people.

Parishes have a very special obligation to “leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the one who is lost.” Programs should be organized in parishes and in Catholic organizations to seek out and bring back those who no longer practice the faith.

In every prayer of the faithful the following intention should be prayed, “For those members of this parish, who no longer attend Sunday Mass ... Let us

pray to the Lord.”

“The Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the church’s Life,” (Pope John Paul II).

Canon 1246 of the Code of Canon Law states: “Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the Universal Church.”

“Always full of courage then, and knowing that while we are in the body, we are exiled from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight. We even have the courage to prefer to be exiled from the body and be at home with the Lord. And, therefore, we strive, whether in the body or out of it, to be pleasing to him. For all of us must be made manifest before the tribunal of Christ, so that each may receive what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil” (2 Cor 5:6-10).

Programs should be organized in parishes and in Catholic organizations to seek out and bring back those who no longer practice the faith.



Photo by Cindy Brewer

David E. Fellhauer, Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria in Texas, looks over the *Disciples on the Journey* Lenten project developed by the diocese’s Catechetical Ministry director Sister Digna Vela, IWBS, (l.). She is assisted by her editing team, Christella Alvarez (r.) and Laurie Dufilho Bautista (c.). *Disciples on the Journey* is a Lenten faith-sharing program in its third year of printing and is available in English and Spanish.

Small Texas diocese sells Lenten program in U.S., Canada, Europe

By Cindy Brewer

VICTORIA, Texas (CNS) — It is said, “Good things come in small packages.” It may also be said that good Lenten programs come from small enterprises.

Disciples on the Journey, the faith-sharing booklet developed by the Catechetical Ministry Office of the Diocese of Victoria, is in the final stages of preparation for use as a Lenten resource in 2006.

This is the third year in a row the diocese has printed its own resource and marketed it throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

With a total of 50 parishes and 19 missions interspersed among crop fields and cattle and horse pastures, the Victoria Dio-

cese is considered very small and rural.

But its Catechetical Ministry Office, directed by Sister Digna Vela, a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, is on the cutting edge when it comes to its diocesanwide Lenten program.

The Texas diocese finished the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association’s three-year *Disciples in Mission* Lenten program in 2003 and didn’t want to lose the momentum the program had created.

In the summer of 2003, the office formed a diocesan committee and began production of its own Lenten program that

See *Small Texas diocese*, p. 5

Catechism contest plans finalized

Dates have been set for the Catechism Contest at Holy Family Church in Victoria, which is being sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 9088. All students will participate in the preliminary in-class rounds on Sunday, February 19, and Wednesday, February 22. The winner from each class will then proceed to the semi-finals and finals on Saturday, March 4.

Jerry Hajek, a member of the Knights, has designed and built an impressive “Jeopardy-style” contest board to be used

in the finals. A \$100 prize will be awarded to the winner of each of the four divisions: Primary Division – Grades 1 and 2; Intermediate Division – Grades 3, 4, and 5; Junior Division – Grades 6, 7 and 8; and High School Division – Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Question and answer booklets have already been sent home with the students and the Knights are hoping that CCD parents and their children are excited about the contest and have already begun preparing.



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Victoria Center

Chancery Office
1505 E. Mesquite Lane
Tuesdays: Jan. 17 - Feb. 21
Thursdays: Jan. 19 - Feb. 23

Classes are \$15.00 per six-weeks. Call the catechetical office at 361-573-0828 or e-mail calvarez@victoriadiocese.org to register. You can also register the first night of class. All classes are from 7:00-9:15 p.m.

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

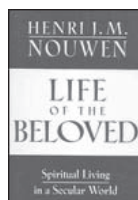
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Diocese of Victoria Library & Media Center



Book of the Month



Life of the Beloved - Spiritual Living in a Secular World by Henri Nouwen is a spiritual classic. Nouwen explains spiritual life in terms that are easy to understand, avoiding technical language. Nouwen is considered one of the great spiritual writers of our day.

Other Books by Henri Nouwen

- *Here and Now - Living in the Spirit*
- *In the Name of Jesus - Reflections on Christian Leadership*
- *The Heart of Henri Nouwen: His Words of Blessing*
- *Making All Things New*

Video of the Month

What is Spirituality? by Fr. Michael Himes is an inspiring and educational introduction to what Bill Moyers calls “the most important issue of our time.” Father Himes describes what spirituality is and how it touches every facet of daily living. Below are other videos by Himes which continue on the same topic of spirituality and prayer. All the videos are approximately 30 minutes in length.

Other Videos

- *What is Prayer?*
- *What is Spiritual Discipline?*
- *What Can Suffering Teach Us?*
- *Do I Really Need a Community?*

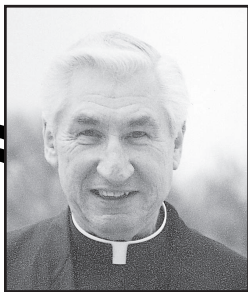
The Library and Media Center is open to all persons in the Diocese of Victoria. It houses over 5,000 books and 1,400 videos. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday, or visit us on line at www.victoriadiocese.org



Faith Point

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

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



The Emperor's clothes or a cheap tuxedo

Eighty years ago in Dayton, Tennessee, the famous "Scopes monkey trial" took place. The trial was about the legitimacy of teaching evolution in the public schools. Scopes, a teacher who had violated the town ban on teaching evolution was found guilty but the national publicity of the trial soon brought about elimination of such bans. Since the law was backed by fundamentalists, Christians and others who interpreted the first chapter of Genesis literally, fundamentalism fell out of favor. Once that battle was won by the evolutionists scarcely anyone suspected that the teaching of evolution would again be the topic of hot debate in our day.

It is fair to say that Darwinian evolution has been the form taught in public schools for eight decades. Darwin held that the emergence of new species in the world was the result of natural selection in which certain organisms that developed chance advantages such as sight were able to win the competition for limited resources and therefore were able to survive to pass on the newly acquired advantage to their offspring, whereas the disadvantaged lost in the battle for resources and did not survive to give rise to offspring.

Lately another sort of evolutionist has arisen to challenge the Darwinian orthodoxy. The new group maintains that life could not have begun by chance and that purposive organs such as eyes and wings are too complex to be accounted for by mere chance variations and their development required the intervention of intelligence; hence the movement is named Intelligent Design (ID).

Entrenched Darwinians do not take kindly to the new interloper in biology instruction. They say that ID is really discredited fundamentalism in a "cheap tuxedo." In Dover, Pennsylvania, school board members who supported instruction in ID were voted out of office. Recently U.S. Pennsylvania District Judge John E. Jones III handed down a decision that ID may not be mentioned in public school biology classes because it is really religion passing itself off as science. Former University of Kansas Professor Paul Mirecki stated as a goal in an e-mail he thought was private, to teach ID under the category of mythology to "slap" the "big fat face" of "fundies," his name for fundamentalists. Vatican astronomer Rev. George Coyne has consistently argued against considering ID as scientific. Professor Carolyn Tilghman at Oxford University defended Darwinism against the challenges of ID. Pope Benedict XVI waded indirectly into the debate by stating that the universe was made by an "intelligent project" and criticized those who say creation was without direction or order.

What should we think of ID? At the outset we must state that evolution is a fact. Present day species descended from others that existed in other ages but may now be extinct. This is clear from the fossil evidence. The only alternative to evolution is a special creation by God of new species in successive ages. So, while the fact of evolution is clear, its methodology

is not.

There are two points that we need to keep in mind on this subject. The church has no problem with evolution as a scientific hypothesis any more than it has with any other scientific teaching such as the atomic structure of matter. What it may have trouble with is the external ideological baggage placed atop the scientific theory. The ideology is separable from the theory and can and sometimes must be rejected. The second point is that there are significant problems with evolution according to the Darwinian model of natural selection.

That matter is made up of atoms is a clearly established scientific fact. But scientists, who become stealth philosophers while pretending to do science, have laid three different ideologies on this fact. The first of these is materialism. If all things are made of atoms, then there is nothing but matter. It would be equally valid for a tadpole to say that there is nothing but water because that is all he has experienced. The second ideological burden laid on the atomic structure of matter is atheism. Certain thinkers arbitrarily invested atoms with eternity and concluded that there was no need for a God to make them. Since all atoms are contingent beings, that do not contain within themselves the source of their existence, there was a need for someone or something to lend them existence. The third ideology placed on the atomic structure of matter is determinism. Since we are made of atoms which follow rigid mechanical laws, then our activity is also determined and do not really have freedom or responsibility with respect to our acts. This contradicts the common sense of humanity which often urges persons to make changes and always holds them accountable for their rational acts.

The fact of evolution is also made to bear certain ideological burdens, which strictly speaking, are not scientific. There are four scientifically unprovable notions underlying Darwinian evolution: (1) the universe had no beginning; (2) the only influences on life are blind, random, physical conditions, to which life forms react spontaneously and unpredictably; (3) life was not created by God but "happened" spontaneously when the right physical conditions came together by chance; and (4) every plant and animal life form now existing came from that single original accidental life form. One of the things that

endeared Darwinism to secularists is that it served as an attempted explanation of apparent design without reference to a Designer whom some identified as God.

Other problems with Darwinian natural selection include difficulties with filiation, connecting a new group with an ancient one, and the process of change. Some say it was by an accumulation of small mutations (microevolution); others say there were large scale jumps (macroevolution). The mechanism of natural selection is essentially negative and passive. It cannot account for the existence of the new adaptive forms. Natural selection accounts for the survival of the fittest but the fittest are the same life form. Darwinists say that intermediate forms or missing links are not preserved in the fossil record because they were of short duration. It is amusing to hear hard-headed scientists, supposedly swayed only by evidence, argue for the existence of something on the grounds that the evidence for its existence is lacking. How can a brain that functions that way be the product of Intelligent Design? Darwinists who accuse proponents of ID of being fundamentalists in a "cheap tuxedo" should be aware that like Andersen's fairy tale emperor they themselves have only an imaginary suit of clothes.

Small Texas diocese sells Lenten program in U.S., Canada, Europe

Continued from p. 4

could easily utilize the small faith-sharing groups formed for *Disciples in Mission*.

Disciples on the Journey is now in its third year as a Lectionary-based, all-in-one book for adults, young people, and families. The 56-page booklet is available in English and Spanish for Cycle B and Cycle A readings.

To prepare for each week of Lent, the booklet includes opening prayers, commentaries on the Sunday readings, a "saint of the week," faith-sharing questions, practical ways to "live as disciples" and closing prayers and rituals. Also included

is a leader's guide and suggestions for successful small groups.

"The program is appropriate for small Christian communities, total parish catechesis, youth ministry, Catholic schools, family catechesis, RCIA groups, as well as any faith-sharing-based group," said Sister Digna.

Sandy Vartorella, a parishioner from St. Thomas More in Chapel Hill, N.C., said in her evaluation of the program, "*Disciples on the Journey*" was GREAT — the faith-sharing questions were a wonderful catalyst for better understanding the Scriptures and living a life as a disciple."

"*Disciples on the Journey* is an ideal resource for nurturing the faith of the whole parish community during Lent," said John Roberto, founder of the Center for Ministry Development and project coordinator for the *Generations of Faith* project. "With its variety of activities, it can easily be used with parish programs for all ages, especially intergenerational learning programs focusing on Lent."

During its second year of publication, *Disciples on the Journey* sold 12,000 English and 2,500 Spanish copies to more than 200 parishes in 34 states. The diocese expects to print 15,000 booklets for Lent 2006.

Annual meeting slated for the Texas Czech Genealogical Society

CALDWELL—The Texas Czech Genealogical Society will hold its annual membership and luncheon on Saturday, January 21, at the Caldwell Civic/Visitor's Center (103 Hwy. 21 West) in Caldwell.

The theme of this year's meeting and genealogical celebration is *Tracking Our Footprints* and will include a brief business meeting, live music by recording artist Chris Rybak, genealogical related presentations, a roast-pork lunch in the Czech tradition, door prizes, and lots of genealogical exchanges.

The day will start at 8:00 a.m. with the opening of the book room, consisting of 100's of Czech research books, copier, and experienced Czech genealogist, as well as a "general social hour." The primary genealogical presentation will be given by Dale Fulenche. The discussion is about research methods, resource locations, truth and fiction of family stories, and "the egg-shell approach" that should be taken with information in data base sources.

The public is invited. Registration is \$15 per person. Send your reservations to: Sallie Wendt, 361 N. Post Oak Lane, No. 145, Houston, TX 77024-5902. For additional information call Sallie at (713) 682-6262 or contact her at swmw@hal-pc.org.

Texas CDA State Court invites members to a retreat

The Texas State Court of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas is inviting its members to a Texas State Retreat at the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan Del Valle Retreat Center in San Juan, Texas, January 27-29, 2006.

The theme of the retreat is *Staying Attached to the Vine: Life in the Eucharist*. The presenter will be Sister Ninfa Garza of the Missionaries of Jesus.

Registration is limited to 225 people and information can be obtained from each court regent.

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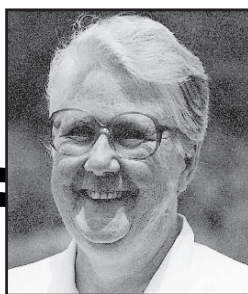
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Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Happy New Year! remember Jesus has saved us!

New Year's resolutions seem to be an important part of celebrating the arrival of a fresh slate each January. Normally these resolutions are not especially difficult to make; often we are aware of changes we need to make in our lives and this New Year's custom gives us the motivation to verbalize our intentions. However, carrying out these resolutions day after day is another story. After a few days or weeks, we have a tendency to slip back into our old routines and habits.

This temporary period of good intentions reminds me of some of the large evangelization events that I see on television. A dynamic speaker gets everyone all fired up. Then the speaker asks those who wish to be saved to come forward. Now, if he has done his job well, everyone moves forward and feels that he or she is "saved."

I have been asked by some of these

people if I have been saved. I have responded that Jesus has saved all of us. By his passion, death, and resurrection, he has redeemed all humanity. All we need to do is believe and respond in love. However, this is not a one-time event; it's a life-long process which needs constant reinforcement. The many supports which our Church offers strengthen our faith and provide the means and encouragement for our continued response to God.

This response is expressed through our love and service of God and of our neighbor as Jesus has bidden us to do in his two great commandments to love God and our neighbor. Let us persevere in this response so that we are ready for the Second Coming of Christ, whenever that is!

Yes, we are saved! Let our lives be a day after day reflection of that reality!

As for our New Year's resolutions ...

New faith-based ministry to help at-risk youth

On August 4, 2005, a faith-based ministry called Lighthouse 2911 was started in order to continue the Positive Attitudes and Life Skills (PALS) program for youth which the DeWitt County Juvenile Probation department had run for eight years, but had to close due to a change in state funding.

The program is a service for at-risk youth and their families in the Golden Crescent. Many of the youth the program works with are on probation, truants, or in trouble with the law. They often come from dysfunctional homes and really need to know unconditional love and tough love.

Lighthouse 2911's main services are the Positive Attitudes and Life Skills (PALS) program for youth, PALS Tutoring, People in Crisis (PIC) program for parents and guardians, and STEPS to FREEDOM (a 12-step group for youth).

The name Lighthouse 2911 refers to Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

"Often the youth we deal with have no hope and no future, but God has a plan for them and that plan is Jeremiah 29:11. We often get to see kids with no plans and no

future turn into lighthouses with a light as bright as the noonday sun and plans and hopes for the future," said Rev. Paul Beard, a Methodist minister from Yoakum and executive director of the ministry. "Kids who would be high school dropouts graduate and go to college because of the PALS program."

The organizers of Lighthouse 2911 had already heard God's call to start a faith based non-profit to expand the services of the PALS and PIC programs. The state's funding changes made it crucial to continue a program of service that, with God's help, really helps.

Lighthouse 2911 asks interested readers to pray for the success of its mission. It's a new program and is in need of resources for growth. They have a youth sponsor program which helps youth with school supplies, camp, and other necessities throughout the school year. In the near future the program will need volunteers and mentors.

To learn more about Lighthouse 2911 write or call Rev. Paul Beard at 202 Willis St., Yoakum, TX 77995, (361) 293 1350; e-mail lighthouse2911@msn.com; or call program assistant and board member Rev. Wanda Ritchea at (361) 649-2904.

Retreat to be held for bereaved parents in March

Spirit Wind Retreat Ministry is pleased to announce a very special retreat opportunity for bereaved parents this spring. Two professionals of state and national renown will be at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Victoria for three days in late March to lead parents through a healing grief retreat. This ecumenical retreat is open to couples as well as single mothers and fathers, regardless of when the loss of their child was experienced. The retreat will consist of group activities for both parents, as well as specific sessions for mothers and for fathers only. Additionally, parents will have an opportunity to participate in the landscaping of four beds that will be blessed and dedicated to their deceased children following a special Mass of healing that will conclude the retreat.

Khris Ford, M.A., is currently in private practice in Austin where she is also an adjunct faculty member at UT-Austin in the Graduate School of Social Work, teaching courses related to grief, loss, and trauma. A bereaved mother herself, Khris also serves as a grief consultant to the State of Texas, Adult Protective Services. Prior to moving to Austin, Khris' extensive background included serving as director of programs at Bo's Place: Family and Children's Grief Center in Houston, and presenting numerous grief retreats and seminars at churches, schools, and non-profit organizations in Texas. Khris is also a certified spiritual director.

Ken Druck, Ph.D., specializes in men's grief, and has conducted numerous grief retreats, including ones for the families of Columbine and 9/11 victims. Subsequent to his daughter's death, Ken founded the Jenna Druck Foundation in California, which has developed two programs including *Families Helping Families*, a grief facilitation approach used by hundreds of

people as a first step on their individual grief journeys. Dr. Druck has also authored several books and produced an audio guide titled *Healing Your Life after the Loss of a Loved One*. His innovative work has been featured in major magazines and newspapers, on *Oprah*, and numerous PBS specials.

The retreat will begin on Friday evening, March 24, and conclude after lunch on Sunday, March 26. The cost for the retreat is \$200 for single parents and \$350 for couples, which covers speakers, food, and lodging for three days. Reservations will be accepted in the order in which deposits are received. Cabins will be reserved for couples on a first-come, first-served basis; single parents will be housed in separate male and female dormitories. After February 1st, this retreat will be open to parents residing outside of the Victoria Diocese area.

If you are interested in attending, please send your non-refundable deposit of \$100 for each parent, made payable to Spirit Wind Ministry, as soon as possible to: Susan Oakley, 103 Woodmere, Victoria, Texas, 77904. Please include your name (for name tag), mailing address, phone number(s), gender (for room assignments) and email address(es) with your deposit. Your cancelled check will confirm your reservation. Retreat balance due by March 1. A small number of grants are available. Please contact one of the below organizers if further information is desired. Retreat schedules, packing lists, and travel directions will be mailed at a later date.

Retreat organizers: Mary Cox, (361) 576-3003; Madeline Dodson, (361) 573-2583; Father Kirby Hlavaty, (361) 277-9062; or Susan Oakley, (361) 576-1515, smoak53@msn.com.

Mexican American Cultural Center offers classes

SAN ANTONIO—The Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC), a National Catholic Institute for Pastoral Leadership and Language Studies located in San Antonio is now registering for the Spring 2006 semester.

The Mini Pastoral is offered May 28 – June 16. An intense three-week introduction course to Hispanic ministry offers an orientation to the culture, history, and faith expressions of Mexican-Americans. The course provides a comprehensive framework not exclusive to the Mexican-American experience, but rather used as a pattern to better understand other cultures. The Mini Pastoral course deepens the appreciation of the multicultural diversity in society and guides both Hispanics and non-Hispanics through a process of understanding the complexities in Hispanic communities today.

Fostering Latino Leadership for Church and Society is offered March 27 – 31. The workshop provides intensive training in the use of the curriculum, *Power To Serve: Latino Leadership in Church and Society*, developed by the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry. The goal is to nurture Hispanic leaders within their faith-based cultural context. Proven adult-learning methodologies are used to teach valuable skills for pastoral and civic leadership, organizational development, and community organizing. The course is designed for teams (3-7 people) from dioceses, community

organizations, or parishes seeking to develop Latino leadership. Participants will receive the curriculum manual for their own training of teachers.

RESPETO Program: A Curriculum for Latino Youth Leadership Formation is offered April 3 – 7. The RESPETO (Spanish for respect) program is a new curriculum-based program that trains youth ministry leaders who are serving ages 14–18. RESPETO offers a unique approach. Participants will undergo a bilingual formation process providing them with the strategies for implementing the program in a parish setting in order to foster spiritual growth for Latino youth. Participants will receive curriculum materials for using in their ministry.

Celebrating Liturgy with Hispanics will be offered April 10-15. The essence of celebrating the liturgy is universal in the Roman Catholic Church. The workshop will examine the ways that Hispanics, mainly Mexican-Americans, express their faith during liturgical celebrations, bringing something from their heritage and creating something new for the entire church in the U.S.

MACC's Pastoral Formation Program is accredited by the USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation. For a more complete list of courses visit www.maccsa.org. To register or apply for a scholarship, contact the registrar at (210) 732-2156, ext. 7102, or e-mail register@maccsa.org.

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"Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who don't even have a bowl of soup to eat."

A Souper Idea

Over 15 years ago, this single prayer led a senior high youth group to a simple, yet powerful idea to fight hunger and poverty in their community. This grass roots effort, called the Souper Bowl of Caring, began in South Carolina, in 1990, and has grown to a national movement of caring generating more than \$28 million for the world's hungry and hurting people.

The Souper Bowl of Caring encourages young people to use Super Bowl weekend to collect donations or canned goods, or both, to help fight hunger and poverty in their community. "The vision God has put on our hearts is to see Super Bowl weekend become the largest time of giving and serving in this country," says founder and executive director, Rev. Dr. Brad Smith.

The Diocese of Victoria youth will be very involved in the Souper Bowl of Caring. On Feb. 5 at participating parishes,

youth will be collecting canned and non-perishable foods and donations into soup pots after the Masses. All donations will be distributed locally.

Participating groups are provided free materials and educational resources and every dollar collected is donated directly to the charity selected by the participant. Organizers ask only that groups report their collection amount so a national total can be determined. In 2005, \$4 million was generated by 11,000 groups across the country.

The Souper Bowl of Caring calls youth to action — individuals, youth groups, civic organizations, and schools are making a difference in the lives of others through this simple movement of caring. To learn more about Souper Bowl of Caring visit www.souperbowl.org.

Join the Souper Bowl of Caring team on Feb 5, 2006.



The diocesan youth leadership team brought Christmas cheer, as well as muscles for work projects, to help many organizations this past Christmas season. Above, Griffin Brown and Alanah Volkmer, both of Holy Family Parish in Victoria, greet Sister Elaine Braden of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

Pontifical council says Holy Spirit is theme of next three youth days

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While choosing themes for the next three celebrations of World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI asked young Catholics to reflect on how the Holy Spirit leads people to encounter Christ, to love others, and to go out to the world to spread the Gospel, said the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The council, which coordinates the local annual celebration of World Youth Day and organizes the international gatherings of young people with the pope, published the list of themes for 2006-2008. The next international gathering, the council said Jan. 3, will be held July 15-20, 2008, in Sydney, Australia. The theme for the 2008 event is "You Will Receive Power When the Holy Spirit Has Come Upon You; and You Will Be My Witnesses." The quotation is taken from the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. "Your Word Is a Lamp to My Feet and a Light to My Path" is the theme chosen by Pope Benedict for the 2006 celebrations, which will be held on the diocesan level, the council said. In 2007, also on the diocesan level, young people will focus on the theme "Just as I Have Loved You, You Also Should Love One Another."

YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 21-22 — Youth Ministry Certificate Program — Evangelization and Catechesis for all adults interested in a nationally recognized certificate in youth ministry studies

February 1-16 — NET Team will be in our diocese

February 2 — Jr. High - Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria

February 3 — Open

February 4 — St. Joseph, Moulton

February 5 — Sts. Peter and Paul, Frelsburg

February 7-10 — Sacred Heart, Hallettsville

February 11 — Holy Family, Wharton

February 12 — Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca

February 14 — High School - Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria

February 15 — Our Lady of Victory, Victoria

February 5 — High School Spectacular planning - 1-5 p.m. at the Chancery Office, Victoria

February 19 — High School Spectacular, Holy Family in Victoria. Registration deadline is February 15.

February 20-24 — Region 10 directors meeting, in Amarillo

March 19 — Confirmation Retreat

March 25-26 — Youth Ministry Certificate Program — Justice and Service - for all adults interested in a nationally recognized certificate in youth ministry studies

March 26 — Confirmation Retreat

May 7 — Youth Leadership Training — Camp David Planning

June 9-10 — Camp David Planning

June 11-16 — Camp David

June 26-29 — Discipleship Week

July 8-July 16 — Rocky Mountain High — Pagosa Springs, Colorado

July 31-August 4 — Region X Directors Meeting, Laredo

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

Debbie Vanelli at the Office of Youth Ministry

at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 or e-mail at dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org

or JoAnn Martinez at ext. 50 or e-mail at jmartinez@victoriadiocese.org

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

Diocesan youth leadership team puts Catholic social teaching into action

By Debbie Vanelli, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office

Over 70 members of the youth leadership team had the opportunity recently to make a difference in the lives of people in our community, and their lives were touched as well.

These young people participated in a day of service that included several opportunities to put into practice our Catholic social teaching. They began by inviting the young people from Crossroads Youth and Family Services to come for games and lunch. The thirty young people from Crossroads were a lively group that bonded well with the team. The team was amazed at how joyful these young people were, considering some had come from some pretty dire circumstances in their home life.

After lunch the team split up and went to play bingo with the residents at Hearthstone and Homewood Assisted Living apartments, and to sing Christmas Carols on the children's floor at De Tar Hospital. The residents at the assisted living facilities regaled the young people with stories of their youth, as they showed their competitive side during several rousing games of bingo. The young patients at De Tar brightened as the spirit-filled leadership team serenaded them loudly.

While this was taking place, another group of young people were cleaning the Holy Family Activity Center and religious education building. The Catechetical Conference was held at Holy Family the day before and there was much sweeping, mopping, and trash removal to be done. They made fast work of this project by adding a competitive component to the tasks.

All of the youth leadership team members re-gathered before embarking on the next activities. Some of the groups left for Incarnate Word Convent to visit the sisters and sing carols, while others boarded the bus for a Scavenger Hunt

Food Drive that benefited many families in our diocese. The group, donning cards and goodies for the sisters, was welcomed to the convent amid smiles and laughter. The Scavenger Hunt Food Drive produced hundreds of pounds of food that was distributed to families in need through the Giving Tree Project.

After a little processing, the day ended by praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet together in memory of two young people from our diocese who were killed in a car accident recently.

I think the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson sums the day up the best, "It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp

Applications are now being evaluated for The Ten Star All Star Summer Basketball Camp. The camp is by invitation only. Boys and girls ages 10-19 are eligible to apply.

Past participants include: Michael Jordan, Tim Duncan, Vince Carter, Jerry Stackhouse, Grant Hill, and Antawn Jamison. Players from 50 states and 18 foreign countries attended the 2005 camp.

College basketball scholarships are possible for players selected to the All-American Team.

Camp locations include: Commerce, TX; Prescott, AZ; Thousand Oaks, CA; Sterling, CO; Bridgeport, CT; Babson Park, FL; Gainesville, GA; Champaign, IL; North Manchester, IN; Townson, MD; Ypsilanti, MI; Glassboro, NJ; Schenectady, NY; Hickory, NC; Lebanon, TN; Blacksburg, VA; Lyndonville, VT; and Beloit, WI. For a free brochure, call (704) 373-0873 anytime.



Keynote Address at annual conference about re-imagining the Eucharistic Prayer through the arts

By Rick Navarro, Our Lady of Sorrows

The Diocese of Victoria came together in the season of Advent to host its annual Conference for Catechists and Ministry. The conference was a joyous reason to celebrate since it had been re-scheduled due to the mandatory evacuation caused by Hurricane Rita.

The conference was held on December 3, 2005, at Holy Family Parish in Victoria with the theme, "Life is Christ."

Bishop David E. Fellhauer opened the conference welcoming all in attendance.

He impressed upon those attending that the season of Advent, from a liturgical standpoint, was the most satisfying of all the church's season.

"For me it is the most beautiful liturgical season, a season of hope and consolation," said Bishop Fellhauer.

Special tribute was given to Lydia Silva at the conference in recognition of her service to God and the diocese. Mrs. Silva passed

away in 2005. The Diocese of Victoria established the Lydia Silva Conference Scholarship Fund in her memory to help defray expenses that might prevent catechists or ministers from attending the conference. Bishop Fellhauer acknowledged her contributions and awarded a plaque to her husband, Dion Silva, in memory of her life of contribution to the diocese.



Photos by Regina Matus-Janak



Participants look over exhibitor's religious education resources.

Father Paul Colloton (l.) and Kathy Coffey (r.) present the Life is Christ keynote.



Sister Beatrice Cruz teaches two workshops in Spanish: *Being Eucharist for Others* and *Giving Life to the Liturgical Year*.

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The diocese's annual conference featured the Rev. Paul Colloton and Kathy Coffey as co-presenters. Each of the co-presenters brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with the diocesan members.

"The re-imagining of the

Father Colloton said.

"Our formation as Catholic Christians, our spiritual formation, comes primarily from the liturgy of the church," he continued.

Colloton recalled a quote from a Benedictine priest from St. John's University by the name of Father Virgil Michael, "Liturgy is the common spiritual director for all Catholic Christians in all states of life."

The liturgy is the spiritual director for the whole body of Christ," said Father Colloton. "All ages are formed by our worship."

He went on to add that we must fully familiarize ourselves with the Eucharistic Prayer and become knowledgeable about it before we can expect others to benefit from our experience.

"We must experience it as our prayer, then others can share that experience with you," he said. This relationship creates a new experience for all involved, he added.

Both Father Colloton and Kathy Coffey went on to emphasize that the re-imagining of the Eucharistic

Prayer is not to change anything that takes place during the Mass but to do it in other areas outside of the celebration of the Mass. Places like the classrooms, RCIA programs, and parish meetings.

"The purpose of the Eucharistic Prayer is to unite ourselves with the offering of Christ," Father Colloton said.

Ms. Coffey emphasized the importance of being focused during the Eucharistic Prayer.

What are some of the things we are thinking about while we are in the middle of the Eucharistic Prayer in Mass?" she asked.

Ms. Coffey made reference to the following quote during her presentation and also informed catechists that it was in their conference folders. The quote from Ruben Alvarez says, "We can use the symbols of worship to illuminate, or to blind, to make one soar or to paralyze, to give courage or to make afraid, to liberate or to enslave."

"The Eucharistic Prayer is a love story and should be a template for my life," Coffey added.

Ms. Coffey and Father Colloton both agreed on the importance of the Eucharistic Prayer, that it is part of God's saving love affair with us.

The church can use such things as drama, music, art, poetry, and gesture to creatively share the Eucharistic Prayer outside the church and inside the realm of people's everyday life," said Ms. Coffey.

"We cannot change the text of the Eucharistic Prayer but the text of the prayer can change us," added Father Colloton.

Following the keynote address, conference participants attended two workshops from a choice of 28 and browsed exhibits of 14 publishers, organizations, and gift shops.

The 19th Annual Catechetical Conference has been scheduled for September 30, 2006. Sister Rose Pacatte will be a keynote speaker.



Victor Colonna (l.) of Smithville, a member of the Raphael's Refuge Board, and Sanford Schmid, trustee for the Sanford Schmid Charitable Trust, stand at the entrance to Raphael's Refuge.

Raphael's Refuge receives major donation from trust

FLATONIA — Raphael's Refuge is pleased to announce the organization has received a matching fund from the Sanford Schmid Charitable Trust in LaGrange, Texas. For any donation received towards the construction of the Chapel of the Holy Innocents, the Schmid Trust will match that amount up to \$125,000. This offer will run from the present to April 1, 2006. In addition to the matching fund, Mr. Schmid has agreed to help fund the drilling of a well, roadway construction, the extension of electrical lines, and the drilling and completion of foundation piers.

"We are very blessed to receive such a generous contribution from the Schmid Trust," said Midge Elam, director of

Raphael's Refuge. "This is a big step towards fulfilling our mission, which is to build a monument to the unborn and stillborn, while providing peer counseling and spiritual direction for issues related to miscarriage, stillbirth, and abortion."

Raphael's Refuge is located at 2715 W. US Hwy 90, about two miles west of Flatonia and is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, established to serve people of all faiths. For more information or to donate funds, labor, and or services, please contact Midge at (361) 865-3021, P.O. Box 341, Flatonia, TX 78941. State Bank locations are accepting direct donations for Raphael's Refuge, Inc.



CHRISTMAS AT HOLY CROSS IN EAST BERNARD—Mary Ann Kramr, a parishioner of Holy Cross Parish in East Bernard, sent this picture to *The Catholic Lighthouse* of the church decorated with Poinsettias during Christmas 2005. She wondered if any other church in the diocese is decorated with so many poinsettias. Thanks to the ladies of the parish who decorated the church so beautifully.



KJZT MAKES DONATION—The KJZT Society No. 100, Our Lady of Snows, from Bay City presented a \$600 check to Sister Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS, principal, to benefit Holy Cross School. Society No. 100 conducted a Phantom Bake Sale during Oct. 2005, to raise funds for the school. Pictured are President Dorothy Saha, Sister Geraldine; Treasurer Milada Babik, and Secretary Karen Owens.



Sts. Cyril and Methodius' youth made and distributed hand-painted, wooden signs with Christian messages to homes in and around Shiner. Youth also show a few of the 500 star ornaments they gave to Shiner residents.



Shiner youth remind community to keep Christ in Christmas

By Sharon Patek and Lori Raabe

SHINER—Sts. Cyril and Methodius high school youth participated in keeping Christ in Christmas this holiday season. The junior and senior high students made signs out of wood and wrote Scripture verses on them. Then, starting on the first day of Advent and continuing daily, the students began from the west end of Shiner to put the signs in yards. The signs led to Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. The last sign was a seven-foot star placed on the church lawn depicting the “Star” that the Magi followed.

Next the freshman and sophomore students cut out 500 stars with a picture of the nativity scene on the front and on the back a prayer composed by Father Robert Knippenberg, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish. This prayer was to be said daily in appreciation for our God coming down to Earth. These stars were distributed to the students of Shiner Catholic School and the students of the church’s CCD program. The stars reached approximately 400 homes in and around the Shiner area. There were extra stars that decorated a Christmas tree in the foyer of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church for all to take home who did not receive one from a student.

By this time, the students were getting really excited about “Keeping Christ in Christmas,” so they decided to get lavender shirts that said “God” in the middle of a star on the front of the left chest and on the back in red and white letters “Keep CHRIST in CHRISTmas.”

This project was entirely done by our youth. It was refreshing to see the enthusiasm that radiated from them, and from this it has reached out to our community of Shiner.



SINGING FOR CHRIST—The three-year-old at Our Lady of Victory Early Childhood Center sing at their Christmas program for family and friends.

(right) Those that were promoted in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre are, l-r, Sir Aaron A. Wieland, KGCHS; Lady Irene Nohavitza, LGCHS; and Lady Jo Ann Jalufka, LCHS; they stand with Bishop David Fellhauer. Not pictured, Lady Benita Pavlu, Hallettsville, LGCHS, awarded the Silver Palm of Jerusalem.



(left) Bishop David Fellhauer stands with the new investees for the Equestrian Order from the Diocese of Victoria: Lady Jo Ann McCullough, LHS; Lady Jo Ann C. Bleier, LHS, and Sir Otto N. Bleier, KHS, all of Victoria.

Equestrian Order holds annual meeting and investiture

By Joyce Morris

The Southwestern Lieutenantcy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem held its annual meeting and investiture in the Dallas-Fort Worth area October 21-24, 2005.

A memorial Mass, promotion ceremony, and vigil service were held Oct. 22 at St. Ann Church in Coppell, Texas. His Excellency, the Most Reverend Charles V. Grahmann, KCStarHS, bishop of Dallas was the principal celebrant and homilist. Concelebrants were the Most Reverend Eusebius Beltran, KCStarHS, archbishop of Oklahoma City; the Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza, KCStarHS, archbishop of Galveston-Houston with other archbishops, bishops and priests of the order. The altar servers were seminarians from Holy Trinity Seminary in Irving, Texas.

During the promotion ceremony, Lady Jo Ann Jalufka of Victoria was promoted to Lady Commander—Holy Sepulchre (LCHS); Lady Irene Nohavitza, El Campo, was promoted to Lady Grand Cross HS, and Sir Aaron A. Wieland, Victoria, was promoted to Knight Grand Cross

HS. Lady Benita Pavlu, Hallettsville, LGCHS, was awarded the Silver Palm of Jerusalem.

A black-tie banquet was held that evening, followed by benediction and adoration throughout the night until morning.

The SW Lieutenantcy annual meeting and report was held Sunday morning. Brother Austin David Carroll, FSC, Ph. D., KCStarHS, a member of the Brothers of Christian Schools, gave a presentation for the new investees and members.

The processions, eucharistic celebration, and investiture of the EOHSJ were held Sunday at St. Ann Church. The principal celebrant and homilist was the coadjutor archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Most Reverend Daniel N. DiNardo, KCStarHS, and new Grand Prior of the Southwestern Lieutenantcy, USA (replacing the Most Reverend Rene H. Gracida, retired bishop of the Diocese of Corpus Christi); Michael R. Earthman, KGCHS, Lieutenant, SW Lieutenantcy, USA, was master of ceremonies.

From the Diocese of Victoria, the new investees were Lady Jo Ann McCullough, LHS; Lady Jo Ann C. Bleier, LHS, and Sir Otto N. Bleier, KHS, all of Victoria.

A formal banquet was held Sunday evening for members and spouses. Msgr. Robert L. Stern, KCStarHS, president of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine was the banquet’s speaker.

From the Diocese of Victoria, the Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer, KCStarHS; Rev. John C. Peters, KCHS, Hallettsville; and Rev. Msgr. Michael A. O’Shaughnessy, KCHS, Edna, attended with 17 members and/or spouses.

The EOHSJ relives, in a modern manner, the spirit and ideal of the Crusades, with the arms of faith, the apostolate, and Christian charity. The fundamental purpose of the order is the preservation of the faith in the Holy Land. To this end, it must provide spiritual, moral, and material support to the Christians who still live there. It contributes to the maintenance of 44 parish schools of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, which are attended by about 15,000 children of various faiths.

Catholic Schools Week
Jan. 29 to Feb. 4



FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

Congratulation to Bernadette Kresta of St. Joseph Parish in Moulton; she is the winner of the December family puzzle contest and will receive *Three Minutes a Day* vol. 40 published by The Christophers, \$8, ISBN: 0-939055-41-4.

The winner of the child's contest is Melanie Janssen (13) of Holy Family Catholic Church in Victoria. She will receive a copy of the book *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*.

There were many contestants in this month's contest. Thank you for playing; please try again to win this month.

The January contest prize will be *Spirituality of Sport — Balancing Body & Soul* by Susan Saint Sing, Ph.D., published by St. Anthony Messenger Press. "Drawing on her own experience and that of her peers, nationally renowned athlete Susan Saint Sing explores the mind-body-soul connection that is at the heart of all sport, play, dance and competition. With examples ranging from the ancient Greek concept of *arête* and the first

Olympics to modern-day sports heroes like Michael Jordan, she offers deep spiritual insights on the ideal of a balanced person, ethical values for Christians engaged in sports, visualization techniques in the form of prayer and reinforcement of a positive

image.

"Susan Saint Sing, Ph. D., is a member of the U.S. World Rowing team and holds a doctorate in sport history and philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania." (Quote taken from the book jacket.)

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

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F Q W J Q I Y B M X X D B A K
D M U T E E N T R O X P J L F
L B G P K N G X I F D B B I R
F O R M I V X Z E T L E D D W
C A N Y W F R U I T S E S B Y
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CHARITY
CHASTITY
CONTINENCE
FAITHFULNESS
FIDELITY

GENTLENESS
GOODNESS
HUMILITY
JOY
KINDNESS

LONG-SUFFERING
LOVE
MODESTY
PATIENCE
PEACE

NBC's *The Book of Daniel*

By David DiCerto

NEW YORK (CNS) — Religious-minded television viewers hoping for another "Joan of Arcadia" or "7th Heaven" — both recently canceled by CBS and the WB, respectively — won't necessarily find the answer to their prayers in "The Book of Daniel," a controversial faith-flavored series which premiered on Friday, Jan. 6, from 9-11 p.m. EST on NBC.

Aidan Quinn stars as the Rev. Daniel Webster, an unconventional Episcopal priest trying to navigate personal and parish problems. Like Stephen Collins' patriarch in "7th Heaven," Rev. Webster must juggle pastoral and parenting duties while struggling to be a good father, husband and minister. And like Amber Tamblyn's teenage visionary in "Joan of Arcadia," he finds himself involved in an ongoing dialogue with God, in the person of a laid-back Jesus.

Shows like the short-lived "Nothing Sacred" — in addition to the two aforementioned canceled series — plumbed similarly sensitive and controversial waters in a thoughtful manner which (based on early episodes) "The Book of Daniel" unfortunately — despite nods to Christian sensibilities — fails to do sufficiently.

More soap opera than spiritual in tone, this edgier series has less in common with those family-friendly shows than it does with racier fare like "Six Feet Under" and "Desperate Housewives," complete with adulterous affairs. The series contains sexual situations, drug content, ethnic stereotypes, a permissive view of homosexuality and scattered crude language and humor, making it adult fare.

The Bottom Line

By Antoinette Bosco
Catholic News Service



Still touched by last year's painful memories

I find as each new year begins that I remember not only the good things that happened in the past months, but also those that brought me tears.

This past fall my daughter Mary and her family were coming to visit, and she called to ask me if it was all right if she brought a friend, Pat. She said her friend was hurting terribly because her 12-year-old nephew recently died in a tragic way. I said, "Of course!"

When Pat arrived, it didn't take long for her to tell me her tragic story.

The death of her nephew was extraordinarily sad because it extraordinarily happened by his own hand and was listed a suicide. But

Pat said it was an accidental death. She explained as I listened with a broken heart:

Apparently, a new "game" young teens are playing is called "The Choking Game." What they do in order to get a "high" is to cut off oxygen, usually by putting rope around their necks. Apparently, too, they get a tingling sensation that puts them on this "high," and they're supposed to stop the choking just before they pass out. It is said that getting a "high" this way appeals to youngsters who would never use drugs or alcohol.

There is a problem, of course. As Pat explained, very often the "choking game" goes on too long, and youngsters like her

nephew accidentally kill themselves. She is now on a mission to get parents to know about this "game" and to talk to their children about how dangerous it is.

Pat hopes she can alert parents to watch for "clues," like unusual marks around the neck, bloodshot eyes and complaints of headaches. Parents also should note if their young teenagers have ropes and plastic bags in their rooms. If so, ask questions — and remove them.

I still see the pain in Pat's eyes and hear it in her voice. What a tragedy she and her family have lived through! She tells their story in hopes of saving even one youngster's life.

Another memory that stays with me was a conversation I had with the parents of a soldier who served in Iraq. A friend called to ask if I would talk with them, and when he told me of their pain it renewed my own.

Their son, back from Iraq, in deep pain from confused memories of this war, had committed suicide. My son Peter had committed suicide in March 1991,

profoundly disturbed because of the U.S. launching of the first Gulf War. Peter was distressed that people were being killed, as he would say, "this time for oil."

Peter took to quoting Pope John Paul II, who had made a plea to the first President Bush before the Gulf War was launched, saying: "Save humanity the tragic experience of a new war. A war would not resolve the problems, only aggravate them."

As the dead soldiers came home in body bags, the tragedy worked on Peter's brilliant, moral, fragile brain, and he killed himself, leaving a long tape and notes telling us, "It's time to go home."

I shared my story with these parents, now permanently suffering people as I am. My hope is that they will come to believe, as I have about Peter, that their son had a tragically fragile and wounded brain, now healed by our loving Father in heaven.

These memories stay with me as we begin a new year. They make me ever more a lover of the gift of life.

Ash Wednesday — March 1 Marks the Beginning of Lent

Sunday readings from Jan. 15 to Feb. 26

January 15 —
Second Sunday
in Ordinary Time

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19
Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10
1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
John 1:35-42

January 22 —
Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

January 29 —
Fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9
1 Corinthians 7:32-35
Mark 1:21-28

February 5 —
Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39

February 12 —
Sixth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11
1 Corinthians 10:31 —11:1
Mark 1:40-45

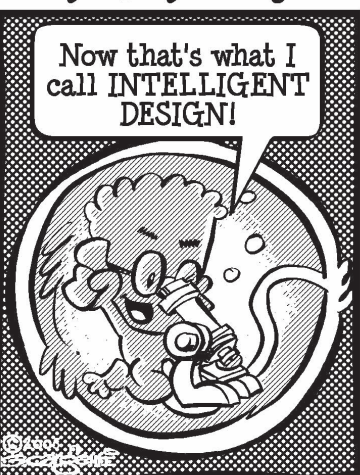
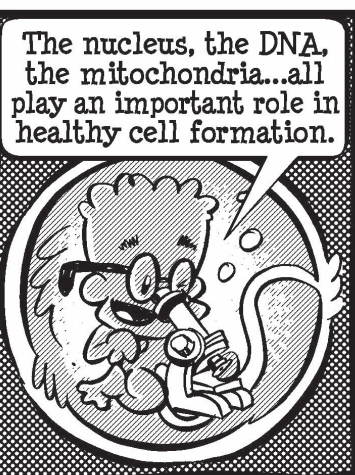
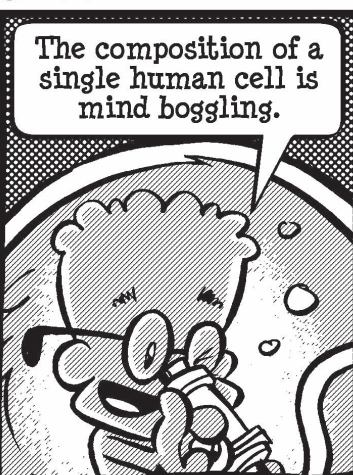
February 19 —
Seventh Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24b-25
Psalm 41:2-3, 4-5, 13-14
2 Corinthians 1:18-22
Mark 2:1-12

February 26 —
Eighth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Hosea 2:16b, 17b, 21-22
Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13
2 Corinthians 3:1b-6
Mark 2:18-22

Umbert the Unborn



www.umberttheunborn.com

by Gary Cangemi



From The Pews

By Jason Zinzilieta

Ordinary Charity

Over the past year, we have been witness to some of the most devastating disasters in recent memory, from the tsunami in Southeast Asia, to the destruction of New Orleans and the surrounding area by hurricanes, to the Pakistan earthquake in October and beyond.

None of this is new, of course; disasters of all kinds, both natural and man-made, have been occurring since time immemorial. It is with the relatively recent advances in technology, particularly television, that we have become a more active part of the entire world than ever before. We bear nightly witness to the pain, the suffering, the agony of others, even if they are half a world away.

However, just because we are caught up in the destructive forces of nature or man all over the world and the consequences of these actions, we must not ignore the disasters that are occurring daily on our home front as well.

"How can this be?" you may ask. "My community is intact, my family safe; we were spared the hurricanes, the earthquakes and the wars. What disasters?"

I speak of the daily disasters that occur in every community, usually treated with little more than a blind eye by most of us.

Every abortion of an unwanted, unloved soul is a disaster. Every empty stomach, every abused child, every sickness untreated, every entreaty for help turned away, every soul passing on without knowing the love of Christ is a disaster, because even the smallest of offenses such as these are a disaster in the eyes of God, who loves each of us individually and uniquely.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 25 that the King shall one day separate the righteous from the unrighteous, "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me."

Even in the toughest of economic times — something we Americans are far from, though it may not feel that way sometimes — we have so much more than others: more resources, more money, more time. Knowing this, when our time comes, can we in good conscience count ourselves among the righteous? Did we truly do all we could do? If not, maybe now is the time to do just that.

We are now in Ordinary Time in the church, a time between Christmas and Lent when it seems we are able to take a breath, step back from the usual mayhem that seems to surround holiday seasons and get on with what we consider normal lives.

However, think about this: while we are called to be generous, and usually are — in the month between Thanksgiving and Christmas and again around Easter — what about now? What about the summer and early fall? How much do we give of our re-

sources and ourselves during these times when all it seems we can think about is getting on with our normal routines?

Perhaps it is time, at the beginning of a new year, to take stock of our thoughts and actions and make a few changes in our lives in order to help others, not just during the holidays, but year round.

Did you give to Catholic Charities USA, the Salvation Army, or other agencies when the hurricanes hit? If so, call them back and ask if they need anything else, now that the disaster is no longer headline news.

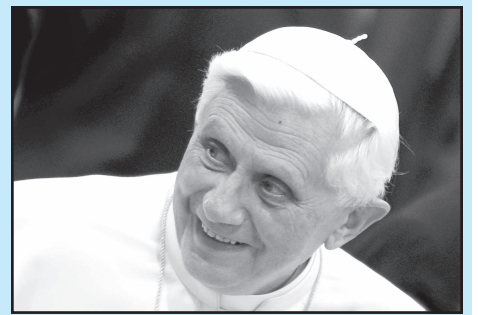
Contact the local charities you might normally give to a few times a year, such as the food banks, the shelters or other organizations, and ask a few questions. When is the time of year you receive the least but need more? When do you run short of volunteers the most? Assess what they may need, then volunteer it when it's needed most, which is generally all the time.

Finally, think about your own personal life recently. How often do you pray with others or help guide others to faith in Christ? How often have you turned a blind eye or a deaf ear to someone in need, for whatever reason? How often have you failed to visit or contact a relative or friend in need of nothing more than a friendly voice or ear? Suffering is still suffering, no matter on how large or small a scale.

Keep this in mind throughout the year, and you may be surprised how your quiet example may inspire others to similar deeds, all doing the work Christ has called us to.

The Pope Speaks

Pope Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Christians believe history marked by progress in holiness, says pope

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians believe history is marked by progress, not toward greater wealth or ease, but in individual holiness and in the unity of the human family, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Christians are called to live with a constant attitude of giving thanks to God, but it is an especially important attitude at the beginning of a new year, the pope said at his Jan. 4 general audience.

In his main audience talk, Pope Benedict spoke about the hymn to Christ in St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians. The hymn offers thanks to God for the gift of Christ, the firstborn of all creation and the image of the invisible God, the pope said.

The hymn's profession that everything was created in Christ and for Christ "shows us something very important — history has a goal, a direction. History is moving toward a humanity united in Christ," Pope Benedict said, setting aside his prepared text.

"In that way, it is moving toward the advent of perfect man, perfect humanity," he said. Christ gives humanity his grace and the fullness of life, the pope said.

"With this vital presence, we are made participants in his divinity," transformed and reconciled in Christ, creating harmony throughout creation, he said.

"St. Paul tells us, yes, there is progress in history, there is — if you want — evolution in history," he said. "Progress is all that draws us close to Christ and, therefore, draws us closer to a united humanity."

Christians are called to contribute to progress by conforming themselves to Christ and by bringing others close to him, he said.

Meeting the pilgrims in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope offered brief New Year's greetings in Italian, French, English, German and Spanish.

In English, he encouraged the pilgrims to offer God everything that will happen in 2006, and he prayed that God would give them abundant blessings in the new year.

Meditation

Love is a word that is often abused. Love is easy to say. To practice a love that forgives is another thing altogether.

© Peace of Heart in All Things / Br. Roger of Taizé

Light One Candle

By Dennis Heaney, President
The Christophers



A Lesson in Compassion

It was one of those news stories that seemed made to order for the New York tabloids: young people out joy-riding; one of them throws a frozen turkey from the window and it strikes an oncoming car. Funny? Hardly. The turkey broke the windshield of the car it struck and then landed full force in the face of the driver, a 44-year-old Long Island woman named Victoria Ruvolo. She was injured so badly that had she been alone she probably would have died. But her passenger was able to get medical attention for her quickly and she pulled through — but still needed to have her face rebuilt, and to endure months of painful therapy.

The story was painful, too, even though the tabloids couldn't resist working the word "turkey" into the headline over each story about the long-running case. The original incident took place in November of 2004, and the story played out for nearly a year. But when it finally came to an end last October, it did so in a way

that was startlingly spiritual. That was because the victim, Ms. Ruvolo, provided all those following the story with a lesson in compassion they are not likely to forget.

The admitted assailant was Ryan Cushing, 19. Last August he and Ms. Ruvolo met face-to-face for the first time, when, in Suffolk County Court, he pleaded guilty to assault. He might have been sentenced to as much as 25 years in prison, but as a *New York Times* story put it, Ms. Ruvolo was there "not for retribution but for his redemption." She had previously asked prosecutors about his background and made it clear that she wanted him to have a lenient sentence. "God gave me a second chance at life," she would later explain to the *Times*, "and I passed it on."

When Cushing first spoke to her after entering his plea he began to sob, and as she embraced him, he said over and over "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry." Even veteran court observers choked

back tears as she said in return "It's O.K., it's O.K. I just want you to make your life the best it can be."

Reading reports of what had taken place led many to believe that Ms. Ruvolo had completely forgiven Cushing and his companions, an understanding she insisted on correcting. At the young man's sentencing last October (to six months in jail and five years' probation), she spoke directly to him when she said that "I have not absolved you. I expect you to take the consequences of your actions."

But where others might look for revenge, Ms. Ruvolo managed to find compassion. "I sincerely hope you have learned from this awful experience, Ryan," she said. "There is no room for vengeance in my life. I know you are remorseful."

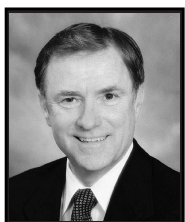
A *New York Times* editorial called her actions "startling and luminous," and said she had brought about "the dissipation of anger and the restoration of hope."

What a powerful lesson Victoria Ruvolo was able to teach in the aftermath of a terrible tragedy, one that could have been even worse. She said that by demonstrating compassion she hoped to encourage her assailant to seek an honorable life.

The lesson was one intended for Ryan Cushing alone. But somehow it resounded in the hearts of many others as well.

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West Virginia mourns loss of miners; bishop asks for prayers

WHEELING, W.Va. (CNS) — What was thought to be a happy ending to the explosion at the Sago Coal Mine in Upshur County took a sad turn with the announcement Jan. 4 that 11 of the 12 miners thought to have been found alive late Jan. 3 had been instead found dead, with one clinging to life. The sole survivor, 27-year-old Randal McCloy of Simpson, was taken to West Virginia University's Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown for treatment. "Last night our hearts grieved to hear that one miner had died and rejoiced to hear that 12 miners had been found alive. Now our joy is diminished. We rejoice that one miner has survived and we grieve that 12 have died," said Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. "Our faith is in Jesus Christ. I ask all West Virginians to join me in praying that love, memories, belief in God, and the support of their families and communities will help the families of these miners through this tragic time. We continue to pray for the recovery of Randal McCloy."

When people recognize truth, they become peacemakers, says pope

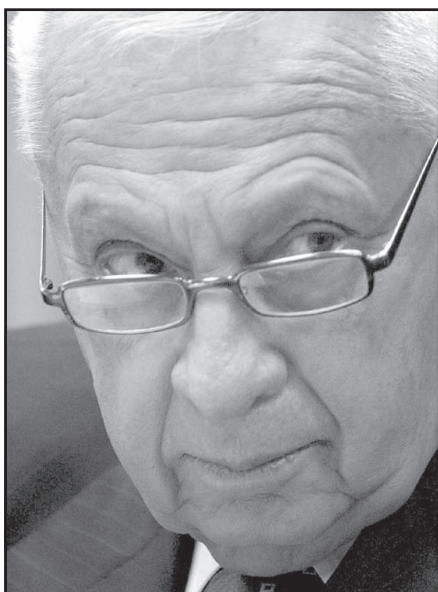
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When people recognize the truth that they are all children of God and that moral law exists for the benefit of all, they become peacemakers, Pope Benedict XVI said. "Peace — this great aspiration in the heart of every man and woman — is built day by day with the support of everyone," the pope said Jan. 1 as he celebrated Mass for the feast of Mary, Mother of God and for World Peace Day. The Mass in St. Peter's Basilica and the recitation of the Angelus afterward in St. Peter's Square featured people from around the world dressed in their native costumes. Many carried peace banners. During the Mass, the offertory gifts were given to Pope Benedict by two boys and a girl from Germany dressed as the Magi and participants from Mexico, Peru, Pakistan, Vietnam and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Vatican news agency reports 26 missionaries murdered in 2005

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Although many of them were killed during robbery attempts, the 26 Catholic missionaries murdered in 2005 each died spreading the Gospel and serving the poor and victims of violence, a Vatican news agency said. Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, published its annual list of murdered church personnel Dec. 30. The agency said its tally, twice as many as were killed in 2004, showed that one bishop, 20 priests, two religious brothers, two nuns and one lay missionary died violently in 2005. In the 2005 list, Fides included a priest killed in Russia and one killed in Belgium. Although they were not working in mission territories, the Belgian, Father Robert De Leener, was included because of his work with immigrants; Slovakian Father Jan Hermanovski was included because of his work with the homeless in Russia. "The list includes not only missionaries in the strict sense, but all church personnel killed in a violent way or who sacrificed their lives aware of the risks they ran by not abandoning their commitment," the agency said.

Up to 28 more U.S. bishops could retire for age reasons in 2006

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Following the Jan. 3 retirement of Ukrainian Bishop Basil H. Losten of Stamford, Conn., up to



CNS photo/Ronen Zvulun, Reuters
FILE PHOTO OF ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER ARIEL SHARON—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon attends a Likud party meeting in the Knesset in Jerusalem in this Jan. 12, 2004, file photo. Sharon, a dominant figure for decades in shaping the Middle East, was rushed to the hospital Jan. 4 for surgery after suffering a massive brain hemorrhage. Surgeons battled to keep Sharon alive after a massive brain hemorrhage felled him in the midst of his fight for re-election on a promise to end conflict with the Palestinians. Chances of peace are up in the air as both Palestinian and Israeli elections are slated in the coming months.

28 other U.S. bishops, including five cardinals, could retire because of age this year. There are 14 still-active U.S. bishops, including three cardinals, who have already turned 75. Fourteen more, including two cardinals, will celebrate their 75th birthday in 2006. At age 75 bishops are requested to submit their resignation to the pope. Bishop Losten turned 75 last May 11. Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka, 78, who has been in Vatican service since 1990, has been the oldest active U.S. cardinal since July 2003. The former bishop of Gaylord, Mich., and former archbishop of Detroit turned 75 Sept. 14, 2002. In Vatican service since 1990, he is president of the Pontifical Commission for Vatican City State. In 2005 Cardinals Adam J. Maida of Detroit and Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington turned 75. Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore will be 75 March 4, 2006. Cardinal Bernard F. Law, archpriest of St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome, will be 75 Nov. 4, 2006.

Advertisements, ringtones, programs help to attract vocations

GREEN BAY, Wis. (CNS) — Although religious habits aren't seen too often on television, Wisconsin viewers saw them on advertisements this past fall during the "7th Heaven" and "Gilmore Girls" series on the WB network. A marketing study by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in Manitowoc showed that television programming with religious or moral messages reaches their target group of college-age women who are open to the call to religious life. The study confirmed what Sister Julie Ann Sheahan of the order's vocations office had already suspected. "Young women in contact with our vocation office have told me how decisive and selective they try to be when deciding which programs to watch or Web sites to visit," said Sister Julie Ann. "Most do make TV viewing choices based on their faith beliefs." So the sisters developed a series of six television advertisements — to complement current radio and print advertising — built around the community's signature line: "The world needs you. God calls you. We invite you."

\$25 million donation given to St. Mary's University

SAN ANTONIO — St. Mary's University officials and Valero Energy Corporation Chairman and CEO Bill Greehey announced Dec. 21, 2005, the creation of the Bill Greehey School of Business, endowed with a \$25 million donation to St. Mary's University.

Greehey's cash donation is the largest single gift in St. Mary's 153-year history and the biggest ever given to any San Antonio-area college or university. It will expand the university's recruitment of top business students from around the country and attract internationally known business professors, allowing the school to achieve national stature in an increasingly competitive environment.

"This endowment will put St. Mary's business school on the path to becoming one of the top schools in the country," Greehey said. "But more importantly, it will help us develop future business leaders who are committed to excellence, to doing what's right and to giving back to their communities — all of the qualities that have created Valero's special corporate culture."

The endowment will help the school attract and retain top faculty by creating research stipends for collaborations with companies on business projects, and by tripling annual professional development funding. It will help recruit the country's best business students by aggressively

seeking them out locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

"Bill Greehey's leadership and vision will help the business school immediately achieve national premier status and inspire future generations of students to lead by example," said St. Mary's University President Charles L. Cotrell.

Greehey has a long history of giving to St. Mary's, his alma mater.

Texas Mission Council conference — Jan. 27-29

The Texas Mission Council of the Texas Catholic Conference will celebrate its annual conference for 2006 in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Best Western Inn and Suites on January 27-29, 2006.

The conference will feature Father Roger Schroeder, SVD, professor of theology at the Catholic Theological Union, who will offer the keynote address and direct a dialogue for the participants on themes relating to our baptismal commitment to the Global Mission of the Church in the 21st century.

Father Schroeder is co-author of the recently completed volume: *Constants in Mission*, on the Mission of the Church in the 21st century.

The conference and its activities are open to the public and more information can be had at the Texas Mission Council secretary, Awanda Whitworth, mklawandaw@aol.com or (713) 688-1060.

Catholic Schools Week Jan. 29 to Feb. 4

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Anuncios para los talleres de Pastoral en MACC

(San Antonio, Texas) El Centro de Cultura Mexico Americana (MACC) Instituto Nacional de Liderazgo Pastoral y Estudios de Idioma localizado en San Antonio, Texas esté recibiendo registraciones para el semestre de Primavera del 2006.

Marzo 22 al 25, El Poder de la Palabra: Implicaciones Culturales para Comunicadores. Este taller es excelente para comunicadores o profesionales de los medios de comunicación que buscan reflejar en sus publicaciones un mensaje que cruza la cultura como un apoyo a la misión y a los valores de las organizaciones a las que pertenecen. Los participantes examinarán sus propios esquemas mentales en cuanto a la cultura, las percepciones de poder, y estilos de comunicación. Los participantes explorarán cómo el lenguaje y los medios de comunicación tienen el poder de reenforzar prejuicios culturales así como de perpetuar estereotipos culturales.

El Programa de Formación Pastoral de MACC está acreditado por la Comisión de Certificación y Acreditación de la Conferencia Nacional de Obispos Católicos (USCCB). Los participantes que deseen alcanzar acreditación para alguna universidad o seminario deben primeramente obtener el permiso de su decano antes de aplicar al programa. MACC no da crédito académico; sin embargo, el Registrador de MACC le proveerá de un escrito al completar el trabajo del curso para que pueda obtener crédito de la Institución a la que atiende. Para mayor información de los cursos visite www.maccsa.org Para registrarse o aplicar para becas, contacte al Registrador al 210 – 732 – 2156 ext. 7102, e mail register@maccsa.org

Priests For Life

Por Father Frank Pavone
National Director



Convergencia

Hay tres recordaciones que convergen en enero y se refuerzan mutuamente, llamando al mundo cristiano a unir fuerzas contra la injusticia. El 15 de enero es el nacimiento del Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., y en ese día o alrededor de él celebramos un feriado nacional en su honor. Una semana después, el 22 de enero, recordamos la trágica decisión de la Corte Suprema en Roe vs. Wade, que en 1973 desató una política de aborto ilimitado. Grandes manifestaciones y marchas por la vida se desarrollan de un extremo a otro del país cada 22 de enero o en fechas próximas a él. Del 15 al 18 de enero de cada año se conmemora la semana de oración por la unidad de los cristianos.

Estos tres grandes movimientos están profundamente entrelazados.

Jesucristo rezó para que sus seguidores fuéramos uno, como El y el Padre son uno. La auténtica unidad cristiana no significa pretender que no hay serias divergencias doctrinales entre las distintas confesiones. Más bien, significa trabajar para llegar a un entendimiento más profundo de lo que son y no son desavenencias, como así también reconocer y construir sobre la unidad real que existe sobre nuestra afirmación común de Cristo y su Señorío sobre nuestras vidas y sobre el mundo.

Esa afirmación de Cristo requiere que

luchemos contra la injusticia. En su encíclica de 1995 sobre la unidad de los cristianos, el papa Juan Pablo II dijo: “Numerosos cristianos de todas las Comunidades, movidos por su fe, participan juntos en proyectos audaces que pretenden cambiar el mundo para que triunfe el respeto de los derechos y de las necesidades de todos, especialmente de los pobres, los marginados y los indefensos. ... En efecto, los cristianos que tiempo atrás actuaban de modo independiente, ahora están comprometidos juntos al servicio de esta causa para que la benevolencia de Dios pueda triunfar.” (n. 43)

Tanto el movimiento de derechos civiles como el movimiento pro-vida son evidencia de este compromiso común. A pesar de sus apariencias, ambos movimientos buscan asegurar la igualdad de derechos para seres humanos marginados, y aplicar las promesas del Evangelio a las leyes y a la cultura. Ambos movimientos han hallado un “lugar de

encuentro” y una “plataforma de lanzamiento” en las iglesias, de acuerdo con estas declaraciones del Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Siempre me alegro cuando veo un ministerio relevante. Está muy bien que hablemos de “largos mantos blancos allá lejos,” y todo su simbolismo. Sin embargo, en última instancia la gente quiere trajes y vestidos y zapatos para usar aquí abajo. Está muy bien que hablemos de “calles manando leche y miel,” pero Dios nos ha mandado ocuparnos de los barrios marginales aquí abajo, y de sus hijos que no pueden comer tres buenas comidas por día. Está muy bien que hablemos de la nueva Jerusalén, pero algún día, el predicador de Dios debe hablar también de la nueva Nueva York, la nueva Atlanta, la nueva Filadelfia, la nueva Los Angeles, la nueva Memphis, Tennessee. Esto es lo que tenemos que hacer.”

Defender la igualdad de dignidad de cada ser humano después de su nacimiento refuerza nuestro testimonio a favor de los derechos de aquellos en peligro antes de nacer y viceversa. En efecto, el testimonio es en definitiva uno: el testimonio del único Cristo, que restaura la dignidad de cada vida humana.

Esta columna se puede encontrar en la p-gina de Internet

www.priestsforlife.org/spanish/06-01-02span.htm. Por favor, recuerde que necesitamos su apoyo, para ayudar visite www.priestsforlife.org/donation.html

Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval
Servicio Noticiero Católico



Confiar en extranjeros

Mientras soplabla una brisa fría por la férrea en Las Vegas, N.M., conversaba con una mujer Anglo alta de edad media con pelo café y una sonrisa atractiva. Esperábamos un tren que para ambos llegaría demasiado tarde. Íbamos a Albuquerque para abordar aviones, ella para Phoenix y yo para Nueva York. En los pocos momentos que hablamos, ella decidió que yo era persona de confianza, porque cuando nos avisaron que el tren se había dilatado cinco horas, me dijo: “Yo soy Sher Martínez; voy a mi casa por un auto. Lo puedo llevar a Albuquerque.” Durante el viaje de dos horas, 120 millas, hablamos de nuestros hijos y nietos, de un

libro que su esposo, un maestro, escribió, y de nuestra preferencia de vivir en pueblos pequeños en lugar de ciudades grandes. El tiempo pasó rápidamente. Casi diariamente en nuestra sociedad móvil, decidimos si podemos confiar en extranjeros. El proceso requiere buen discernimiento y prudencia. Decir sí implica riesgo o recompensa y requiere fe en la bondad esencial de la humanidad. Yo raramente he sido disilusionado. Tal confianza es rara porque en nuestra cultura mucho de lo que vemos, leemos y oímos nos advierte confiar menos. Nos amenazan terroristas, corruptos mecánicos y artesanos, malos vecinos, perversos

sexuales, carteristas, ladrones de identidad, y hasta sacerdotes que cometen abusos sexuales. Desafortunadamente, nuestro temor tiende a paralizarnos, como a una amiga viuda que no utiliza su tarjeta de crédito por el miedo de que le roben su identidad. Más, legislación sobre armas no ayuda. Leyes promulgadas en 31 estados permiten a individuos a portar armas ocultas. Los dueños de armas han aumentado del 26 por ciento al 39 por ciento de la población, incrementando la inseguridad vertiginosamente. La premisa a la base de esas leyes es que hay sólo dos categorías fijas de gente, los criminales y los que obedecen las leyes. Pero cualquier incidente de rabia puede resultar en que una persona ostensiblemente observante de la ley dispare y mate a un ser humano. Además, algunos de los que portan armas relegan a todos los africanos, hispanos y asiáticos a la categoría criminal. El cuadro no es tan oscuro como se pinta. Hay un sin número de mecánicos y artesanos honestos, vecinos buenos, personas que devuelven nuestra cartera con todo nuestro dinero cuando la perdemos en el aeropuerto, caridades que utilizan nuestras donaciones bien, intermediarios de negocio que salvaguardan nuestras

inversiones, y sacerdotes que buscan la santidad y se sacrifican por sus feligreses. Y esta buena gente, mucho más numerosa que los que nos harían daño, constantemente enriquece nuestra vida. Este año nuevo, debemos resolver a confiar más, suponer inocencia antes que culpabilidad, y agrandar nuestra red de personas en cuales confiamos. Y la confianza que construimos entre nuestros semejantes, vecinos y, también, extranjeros, debe reflexionar la fe que tenemos en Dios. En esto también, desafortunadamente, somos de poca fe, fallando en tener confianza plena que Dios proveer: en tiempos de crisis. Los primeros discípulos nos dan el ejemplo: “Paseando junto al lago de Galilea, (Jesús) vio a dos hermanos: Simón, llamado Pedro, y su hermano Andrés, que estaban echando la red en el lago, pues eran pescadores. Les dijo: ‘Vengan conmigo y los haré pescadores de hombres.’ Ellos dejando inmediatamente las redes, lo siguieron” (Mateo 4:18-20). No se preocuparon por lo que iban a comer o donde iban a dormir. Confiar totalmente en la providencia de Dios debe ser otro de nuestros propósitos para el Año Nuevo.

Como reportar un abuso.

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- Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770 o a la Hna. Emilie Eilers al (361)575-7111, que son los coordinadores del Pastoral Care and Outreach;
- También puede comunicarse por escrito enviando su carta a:
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Diocese of Victoria
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Victoria, TX 77903
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También podemos ayudarle a comunicar su queja a cualquier otra diócesis donde haya ocurrido el abuso si ahora usted se encuentra viviendo en la nuestra.

Si no se encuentra seguro de proceder con la queja o necesita más información, por favor comuníquese con el Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770.

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Attorney at Law

For the General Practice of Law



Priests For Life

By Father Frank Pavone
National Director



Convergence

Each January, three observances converge that reinforce each other and summon the Christian world to work together against injustice. January 15 is the birthday of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and on or around that day we observe a national holiday in his honor. A week later, on January 22, we recall the tragic decision made that day in 1973 by the Supreme Court in *Roe vs. Wade*, unleashing a policy of abortion on demand. On or around January 22, large rallies and marches for life are held from coast to coast. And from January 18 to 25 each year, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed.

These three great movements are deeply intertwined.

Jesus Christ prayed that his followers would be one, as he and the Father are one. Authentic Christian unity does not mean pretending there are no serious doctrinal disagreements between denominations. It does mean working to come to a deeper understanding of what those differences are and are not, as well as recognizing and building on the real unity that does exist in our common affirmation of Christ and his Lordship in our lives and in the world.

More than 800 million children are exploited, says Vatican report

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — More than 800 million children around the world are victims of malnutrition, disease, trafficking and other forms of economic and social exploitation, an annual Vatican report said. Among the more worrisome trends are the more than 200 million child laborers between 5 and 14 years of age and the increase in street children on several continents, it said. Millions more children are forced into armed conflict or prostitution. In many countries, births are unregistered, leaving those children open to a lifetime of exploitation, it said. "They are the scandal of our time. For 860 million children of the world, the future is an unknown and the present is a nightmare that lies on the consciences of adults," said the report, issued Jan. 5 by Fides, the Vatican missionary news agency. The annual report, first prepared in 2004, seeks to draw attention to the plight of young people on the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, which the church marks as the world missionary day for children.



CNS photo/Stephano Rellandini, Reuters

EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS DWELL IN CAMP IN PAKISTAN — A general view shows the Kashtra camp in Ghari Habibulla village, northwest of the earthquake-devastated city of Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, Jan. 4. It is now winter in Pakistan and survivors were battling recent heavy snow and cold. Some 3 million people were left homeless by the Oct. 8 earthquake.

That affirmation of Christ requires that we work to fight injustice. In his encyclical letter on Christian Unity, issued in 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote, "Many Christians from all Communities, by reason of their faith, are jointly involved in bold projects aimed at changing the world by inculcating respect for the rights and needs of everyone, especially the poor, the lowly, and the defenseless. ... Christians who once acted independently are now engaged together in the service of this cause, so that God's mercy may triumph" (n. 43).

Both the civil rights movement and the pro-life movement are evidence of this common engagement. Both movements seek to secure equal rights for marginalized human beings, despite their appearances, and to apply to law and culture the promises of the Gospel.

Both movements have found their "meeting place" and their "launching pad" in the churches, manifesting this declaration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"I'm always happy to see a relevant ministry. It's alright to talk about 'long white robes over yonder,' in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here. It's alright to talk about 'streets flowing with milk and honey,' but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day. It's alright to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do."

Defending the equal dignity of every human being after birth strengthens our witness to the rights of those in danger before birth, and vice-versa. The witness, in fact, is ultimately one: the witness to the one Christ, who restores dignity to every human life.

This column can be found online at www.priestsforlife.org/columns/columns2006/06-01-02convergence.htm

This column can be listened to online in MP3 format at

www.priestsforlife.org/columns/columns2006/index.htm

Foundation named for Virginia girl aims to build school in Africa

ARLINGTON, Va. (CNS) — The name of Elizabeth Warchot, a Virginia girl who died from leukemia at the age of 6, will not be forgotten. The Because of Elizabeth Foundation, established in her name, is raising money to start a school for girls in western Kenya.

The connection between Elizabeth's family and the African school stems from the hospital visits made by Father Cosmas K'Otienoh, a priest from Kenya who was staying at St. John's Parish in McLean, before the child's death in 2001. He was "insistent on coming to the hospital" to visit and pray with Elizabeth, said the girl's mother, Mary. "He prayed so intently over her and prayed for her verbally at every Mass he celebrated. He was so kind."

When Father K'Otienoh was asked to return to his ministry in Kenya, Mary and her husband, Lou, wanted to do something to thank him, and asked what he needed. After praying about it, Father K'Otienoh told the family, "What we need most is a school for girls."

More information on the Because of Elizabeth Foundation is available online at: www.becauseofelizabeth.org.

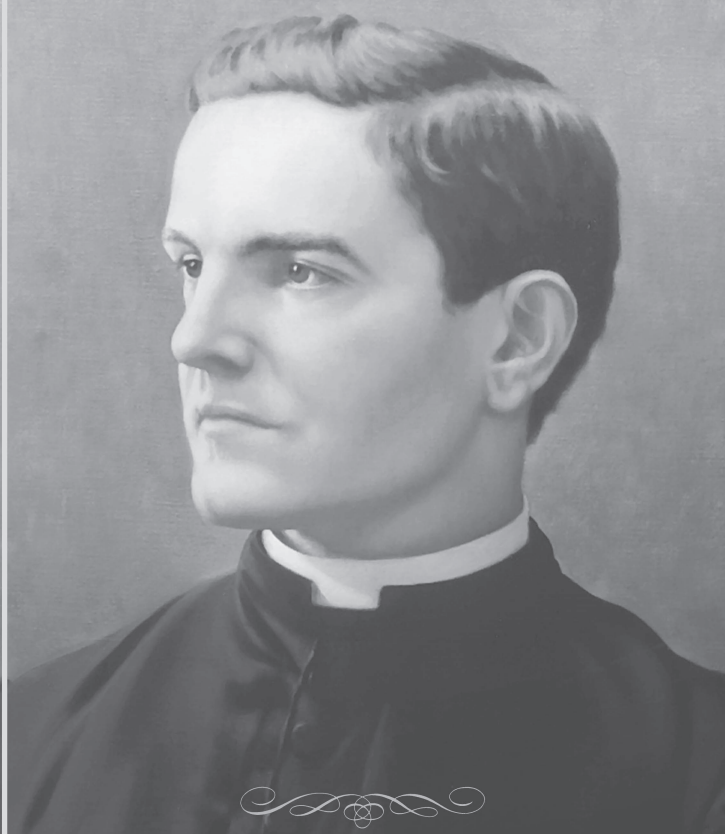


CNS photo/courtesy of the Warchot Family

Elizabeth Warchot

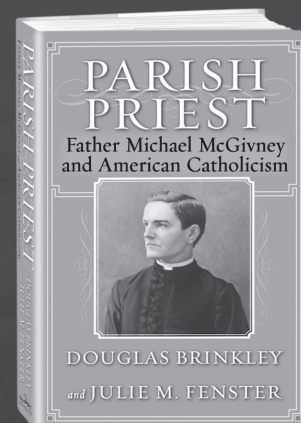
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Movie Review

“Munich” (Universal)

By David DiCerto
Catholic News Service

Riveting but morally fuzzy political thriller inspired by real events about a team of Israeli assassins (led by Eric Bana) assigned to hunt down and assassinate 11 Palestinians who supposedly had a hand in the slaughter of Jewish athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Pre-eminently problematic from a Catholic perspective is the film's theme of revenge. Though government-sanctioned “the tit-for-tat” retribution equates to little more than vigilante justice.

With its problematic revenge theme, director Steven Spielberg's well-acted film

walks a thin line between condemning violence and exploiting it for titillating effect by wrapping it in the pulse-pounding excitement of an espionage-action movie that belies its stated serious intent.

Extremely graphic violence, including shooting and bomb-related gore, full-frontal nudity, two sexual encounters between husband and wife with partial nudity, as well as recurring rough and crude language and profanity.

The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is L — limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.



Catholic organization takes on *The Da Vinci Code*

The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) is campaigning to stop *The Da Vinci Code* from becoming a major Hollywood movie.

TFP plans to distribute millions of postcards to Columbia Pictures, the producer of the movie, voicing protest against making the book into a movie.

The card states: “Before you go any further with this project you should consider that millions of Catholics will see this as Christ-bashing and insulting to the Catholic Church.”

In its ongoing efforts against Dan Brown's blasphemous book, *The Da Vinci*

Code, the American TFP received a welcome note of encouragement from Raymond L. Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis.

The American TFP sent the archbishop their recent book, *Rejecting The Da Vinci Code*, asking for his comments. Besides thanking the American TFP, Archbishop Burke sent the following words:

“In a society marked by confusion and error about the most fundamental truths, *Rejecting The Da Vinci Code* is a light in the darkness. This timely volume helps those who may be deceived by the falsehoods in Dan Brown's book to adhere to the truth. It is a great gift for our time.”

To learn more about TFP's efforts to persuade Columbia Pictures from producing the film, go to www.tfp.org.

Catholic radio programming for Columbus starts Jan. 14

COLUMBUS—Beginning Sunday, January 14, KULM Radio, 98.3 FM in Columbus, Texas, will be featuring *American Catholic Radio*, a weekly Catholic radio program in the popular style of the Franciscans, featuring Saint of the Day, Living Faith, Ask a Franciscan, Minute Meditations, Liturgy Corner, and Exploring Our Faith. The radio program is brought to you by the Catholic Communications Campaign for which donations are collected each summer. Please tune in to listen to the new program Sunday at 8:00 a.m. and please thank the station for offering the slot to the Catholic Diocese.



SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish Shiner, Texas

CATHOLIC ITALY JOURNEY

With Father Bob Knippenberg

October 1-10, 2006

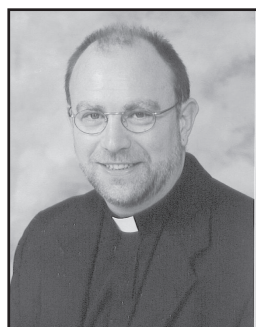
\$2599 from Houston

\$50 Discount if booked by May 1, 2006

- Rome/Vatican City
- Orvieto
- Assisi
- Loreto



- Montesilvano
- Lanciano
- San Giovanni Rotondo
- Subiaco



For information and reservations, contact Fr. Bob Knippenberg, SS. Cyril & Methodius Parish, 306 South Avenue F, Shiner, Texas 77984—Telephone 361-594-3836, Email frbobknip@hotmail.com or check www.Unitours.com/client/FrKnippenbergItaly.



Seminarian
Philip Brune
January 24

College I
Holy Trinity Seminary
P.O. Box 140309
Irving, Texas 75014-0309
*Philip is from Sts. Peter and Paul
Parish, Frelsburg*

The Movie Review Line — (800) 311-4CCC
www.catholicnews.com/movies

Special Collections

Church in Latin America — Jan. 21 and 22

Ongoing Events

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.

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

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

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

Tridentine Mass (Latin)—is held the first and third Sunday of each month at St. Mary Church, St. Mary (outside of Hallettsville on FM 340) at 11:00 a.m. For more info. call (361) 594-3024.

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 2006 are: Jan. 27-29, March 3-5, May 5-7, June 23-25, Sept. 15-17 and Nov. 17-19. For more info. call (361) 573-0828 ext. 56. A date cannot be reserved for any couple unless a cashiers check or money order is sent in the amount of \$190 for weddings being held within the Diocese of Victoria or \$245 for weddings being held outside the Diocese of Victoria.

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

Retrouvaille—For troubled marriages—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. The next Retrouvaille weekend will be held Sept. 1, 2006, in Victoria. To register, please call Gerd and

Linda Conner at (979) 648-2276. For more information or for other dates in Texas, please go to www.retrouvaille.org.

Cursillo News—Ultreya: Witnessing to God's working in our everyday lives — song and prayers, Fridays, 7:45 p.m.; **Sabatina:** Rosary and devotion to Mary, Saturdays, 8:00 a.m.; **Holy Hour:** Every 1st Tuesday, 7:45 p.m. Events held at Our Lady of Sorrows Church and Trinity Hall.

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 Sue at (361) 578-3106 or Eleanor at (361) 575-5314 or Jean at (361) 578-8760.

Singles—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 Laura (361) 579-6516.

ACTS Retreats—For more information and a full list of 2006 retreat dates see the ACTS Web site at www.actsmissions.org.

When & Where

Natural Family Planning—For bilingual (Spanish or English) sessions of the **Sympto-Thermal Method (S-TM)** in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. 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. For information about the Creighton Model in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Stella DeLosSantos (361) 573-2624. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

Goliad—Presidio La Bahia Museum and Visitor Center — a National Historic Landmark — is the only Spanish fort remaining in 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. **For upcoming events see the Web site at: www.presidiolabahia.org**

Picnics, Activities, etc.

January

Beasley—Annual Chicken Fried Chicken Dinner at St. Wenclaus will be held at the CCD building on the church grounds on Jan. 15 beginning at 10:30 a.m. Drive-thru plates to go and pastry available. There will also be a silent auction.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Jan. 15 at the KC Hall. The price is \$5 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

East Bernard—CDA Court St. Bernadette No. 1108 chicken noodle soup supper and raffle on Wed., Jan. 25, at the American Legion Hall (Hwy. 60). Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. Soup is \$2 a bowl, chicken salad sandwiches are \$2 each. Eat in or bring your own container and enjoy at home. A large variety of pastries will be available whole or by the slice. Prizes will be given at 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

Denver, Colorado—2nd National Catholic Singles Conference Feb. 10-12, 2006, in Denver, Colorado. More than 500 singles and dynamic international speakers on the single life. Register at www.TheologyoftheBody.net or call 307-635-4233. Sponsored by the Theology of the Body International Alliance (TOBIA), CatholicMatch.com, Ave Maria Singles, and CatholicSingles.com.

Victoria—St. Mary Festival Feb. 12 at the community center from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Feb. 19 at the KC Hall. The price is \$5 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Corpus Christi—2nd Annual Fullness of Truth Catholic Family Evangelization Conference is slated for March 31-April 2, 2006, at the American Bank Center and Selena Auditorium. Confirmed speakers include Father Corapi, Tim Staples, Rosalind Moss, Carl Olson, Father Mitch Pacwa, Dr. David Marzak, and Christopher West. Bishop Carmody, Father Eduardo Montemayor, and Msgr. Michael Heras are expected to be on hand as well. A simultaneous Spanish tract will be anchored by Father Pablo Straub, Jesse Romero and others, while the youth tract will feature RADIX's Doug Barry and Eric Genus. For early bird tickets and hotel information, call 1-877-21TRUTH(218-7884) or visit www.fullnessoftruth.org.



Colombia

‘Long history of extreme inequality’

Second of a series of five on the Suffering Church

By Susan Brinkmann, CS&T Correspondent
(Originally printed in CS&T Oct. 2004 issue)

She's only 20 years old — and already a widow.

I'm six months pregnant, yet I feel none of the joy of a newlywed woman and expectant mum," the unidentified woman told a worker for the International Committee of the Red Cross. "I haven't smiled since the day a group of men came to the house asking for my husband ..."

The soldiers said they wanted to talk to him and took him outside. They shot him twice and left him laying dead on the ground.

I cry a lot," said the woman, who has since returned to her parents house to live, "and I think about my baby and how he'll never know his father ..."

Colombia is experiencing one of the gravest human rights crisis in the world. It holds the world's record for violence, with one death occurring every 24 minutes for a total of 59 murders per day. More than one million people are displaced, a number exceeded only by the crisis-riven Sudan.

The trouble in this civil-war-torn nation is described in a February 2004 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' report as being "rooted in a long history of extreme inequality and political exclusion, though it has intensified dramatically in recent years due in part to the infusion of drug-related profits that many of the armed actors currently receive."

The principal armed actors are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), the People's Liberation Army (EPL), and various paramilitary groups. They are responsible for an average of 6,000 non-combat related deaths per year.

The problematic behavior of the Colombian government has only exacerbated the situation. As Robin Kirk wrote in the March 2004 issue of *The World Today*, "...Paramilitaries continue to maintain a clandestine alliance with units of the security forces — particularly the Colombian army — and some economic elites, like ranchers and local politicians. Yet the government does little to suppress this source of terror, cut these links, or root-out the corrupt government officials who work with known human rights abusers."

President Alvaro Uribe Velez recently proposed a bill that would grant light or trivial sentences to paramilitary leaders in exchange for a cash payment, and their promise to reform and to remain in a certain region for five years. In an April 2004 speech to the Colombian Congress, José Miguel Vivanco, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Americas Division, blasted the government for even considering such a bill, saying it would grant virtual amnesty to paramilitary leaders "who have committed serious crimes, among them massacres, targeted killings, torture, and forced displacement. Meanwhile, the bill fails to take into account the need for victims of their attacks to see that justice is done and reparations made."

The USCCB report describes Colombia as one of the most dangerous places in the world for human rights workers, journalists, and church workers. "In the last decade,



plainly provides for religious freedom for its citizens. Unfortunately, FARC, ELN and other groups "regularly target representatives and members of the Roman Catholic Church and evangelical Christian churches, generally for political reasons. Guerillas have killed, kidnapped and extorted money from members of these groups, as well as inhibiting religious freedom."

For instance, members of the EPL killed Father Pedro Leon Camacho in Cachira, Norte de Santander, in 1999 after he criticized the guerilla group's abuses of the civilian population.

Father Alcides Jimenez of Putumayo was shot 18 times while giving a sermon at Mass after leading a public rally for peace.

Archbishop Isis Duarte Cancino of Cali, Colombia, was assassinated in March 2002 by unknown gunmen. He was an outspoken critic of the years-old civil war in Colombia.

Associated Press reporter, Kim Housego, writing from Bogota, Colombia, in June 2004 described the danger that hundreds of priests in Colombia face as they try to bring peace to their troubled nation. "Going beyond their normal duties of baptizing babies, celebrating Mass and hearing confession, they intervene to secure freedom for hostages, escort civilians through combat zones, and broker temporary truces."

Just like Christ once intervened to spare Mary Magdalene the death sentence, priests and religious throughout the country frequently find themselves standing between civilians and guerilla or paramilitary gun barrels.

Housego cites the case of Father Leonel Narvaez of Caqueta who met with a paramilitary group in an effort to promote peace. On his way home, he noticed a rattling noise coming from the engine. "Pulling over to investigate, he popped the hood and discovered two hand grenades on the verge of exploding, their safety pins nearly jiggled loose," described Housego.

The church is working in an environment where anyone who is working for peace makes enemies," said Carlos Sanchez, the U.S. Coordinator for Catholic Relief Service's "In Solidarity with Colombia" program. "When people talk about peace, they become targets for violence."

Sanchez was born in Bogota and raised in Philadel-

phia. Many of his family members are still living in Colombia and although they have not been personally affected by the violence, they have certainly experienced the negative impact the violence has had on the nation's economy.

If you look at Colombia's poverty indicators in the last couple of years, we're seeing a downward trend in what used to be a strong economy," Sanchez said. "There is a growing gap between rich and poor largely because of the violence. It's hard to do business in a place as violent as Colombia."

It's also hard to live the Gospel amid so much random violence.

Speaking up for human rights makes one a target for violence," Sanchez said. "When the church uses that voice it becomes vulnerable. That's what is so exciting about our partners in Colombia. They're living the Gospel. If

Colombian paramilitaries stand in line in front of an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe during a ceremony where they surrendered their weapons in Remedios, Colombia, Dec. 12, 2005.



Colombian family members leave their home after being displaced by fighting between paramilitaries and leftist rebel groups in Putumayo province.

you're really looking for a vision of peace or restorative justice in a way that is in keeping with our faith, then you're at odds with the trend. To me, it's almost like our priests, nuns, and lay people are experiencing what it

would be like to be a Christian in the early Roman empire."

The analogy becomes even more appropriate when one considers Colombia's long list of martyrs.

But the church is not backing down," Sanchez said. "In the last couple years, it has been increasingly emphatic in saying there is no military solution to this conflict. Only through dialogue can this conflict ultimately be resolved."

CNS photos from Reuters
Map provided by: www.worldatlas.com

There is hope on the horizon.

Caritas International has just released a new three-year program titled "Peace is Possible," that calls on the international community to engage in and support political negotiations in Colombia between the armed parties. The program includes working to raise awareness of the ongoing humanitarian crisis as well as to alleviate it.

The Colombian state is also being asked to establish coherent national policies that lead to peace negotiations and to implement national programs to resolve its humanitarian crisis.

Mary de Lorey, Strategic Issues Advisor at Catholic Relief Services, described an aggressive ecumenical ef-

fort by more than 700 individuals and organizations calling on both political campaigns to reassess current U.S. policy in Colombia.

Basically, it's a call from the ecumenical community calling for a negotiated political path toward peace as opposed to a military solution," de Lorey said. "It calls for a greater proportion of U.S. aid to Colombia for sustainable development, humanitarian aid and the defense of human rights, and it calls for increased drug treatment programs to reduce drug abuse here in the U.S."

These efforts can only enhance what the church is already doing in the heart of this troubled nation as it con-

tinues to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"We're talking about the sanctity of life and Catholic social teaching principals," Sanchez said. "This is the core of what's being violated in Colombia."

For more information on how to help the suffering church, contact The Society for the Propagation of the Faith at (215) 587-3944, Aid to Church in Need (800) 628-6333, or Pontifical Mission Societies in the U.S. (212) 563-8706.

Please remember the Church in Latin America Collection January 22