

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 20, NO. 3

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

July 2006

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U.S. dioceses facing financial squeeze, foundation leader says

By Catholic News Service

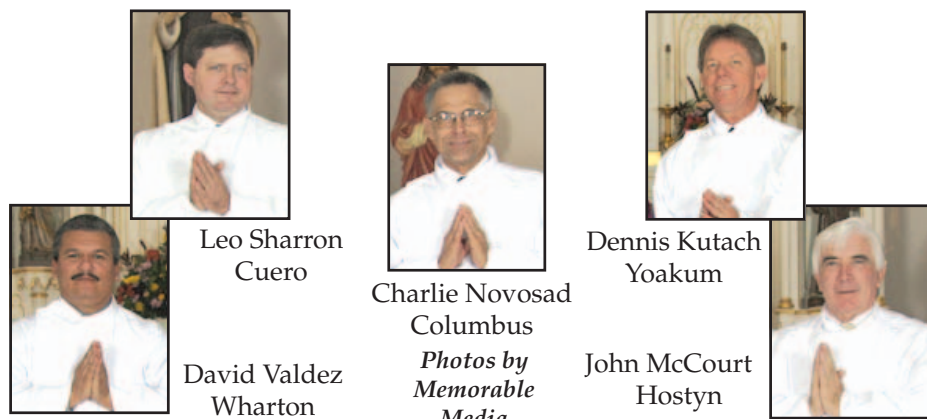
PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Catholic dioceses in the United States “appear to be running through their reserves at an alarming rate,” Francis J. Butler, president of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, told the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management June 29.

The round table, a gathering of more than 200 top Catholic executives in business, finance, law, philanthropy, academia, nonprofits and church institutions, including a dozen bishops, met in Philadelphia to discuss ways to improve the church’s fundraising and financial management and reporting practices.

Butler said he recently interviewed financial officers of several dioceses he considered “fairly typical and well-managed.” “The findings are striking,” he said.

“In the past eight years one archdiocese experienced a 47 percent decline in

See U.S. dioceses, p. 17



Leo Sharron Cuero

Charlie Novosad Columbus

Dennis Kutach Yoakum

David Valdez Wharton

Photos by Memorable Media

John McCourt Hostyn

Five to be ordained to the diaconate in July

The culmination of the five-year educational and spiritual journey of five men from the Diocese of Victoria towards the permanent diaconate will take place at their ordination Saturday, July 29, 2006, at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral at 10 a.m. All of the faithful are invited to attend the ordinations.

Those called by God to serve as deacons are John McCourt, Holy Rosary, Hostyn; Charlie Novosad, St. Anthony, Columbus; Leo Sharron, St. Michael, Cuero; David Valdez, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wharton; and Dennis Kutach, St.

Joseph, Yoakum.

After a year of discernment, they began their four-year academic program attending college classes in Columbus, Texas, through St. Thomas University in Houston. With the addition of these five, the total number of permanent deacons in the Diocese of Victoria stands at 30.

Their wives are to be congratulated as well, as they have gone through the same educational and spiritual process as their spouses; they are Eileen McCourt, Lorraine Novosad, Anne Sharron, Debra Valdez, and Georgia Kutach.

U.S. Catholic population up, most other church data down

By Jerry Filteau

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Catholic population rose by more than a million last year, but the church registered declines in Catholic school enrollments and in sacramental practice, according to figures in the 2006 Official Catholic Directory.

The 2,043-page tome, also known as the Kenedy Directory after its New Jersey publishers’ imprint, came out at the end of June.

It lists all ordained U.S. Catholic clergy, parishes, missions, schools, hospitals and other institutions. It also gives statistical data on the church by diocese and nationally. Its national figures include data from Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth, and U.S. territories overseas such as the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Guam.

Based on annual reports submitted by each diocese, the directory is supposed to be a snapshot of what the church looked like on Jan. 1, 2006.

The Catholic population rose about 1.3 million last year, to 69,135,254, the directory said.

However, the number of students in Catholic high schools dropped to just under 680,000, a decline of 13,000. Elementary schools enrolled 1.76 million children, almost 84,000 fewer than the year before.

The number of teachers in Catholic schools dropped by nearly 8,000, to just under 173,000.

There were some 729,000 high school students enrolled in parish religious education programs, 26,000 fewer than the previous year. Elementary students in religious education numbered nearly 3.5

million, but the total was 81,000 below the previous year’s figure.

In all, the number of Catholic children receiving faith formation in Catholic schools or religious education programs last year was 204,000 lower than the year before.

Catholic colleges and universities reported 764,000 students, about 9,000 fewer than the year before.

In key sacramental moments, according to the directory:

— There were only about 212,000 church-recognized marriages last year, 11,000 fewer than the year before.

— Confirmations numbered more than 630,000, down 15,000 from the year before.

fore.

— First Communions numbered nearly 833,000, a drop of almost 40,000.

— Infant baptisms totaled 943,000, down by 34,000.

— Adult baptisms and receptions into full communion totaled more than 154,000, about the same as the year before.

— There were 438 priestly ordinations, 29 fewer than the year before.

The total number of priests in U.S. dioceses and religious orders was 42,271. This was 1,151 fewer than the year before. The number of women religious declined more than 2,000, to 67,773. There

See U.S. Catholic, p. 16

Help is available for damaged marriages

By Linda Conner

Retrouvaille resources

When a marriage becomes less than it was meant to be, the whole world changes for a couple and it doesn’t take long for the changes to spread to the whole family.

Where laughter used to ring out, there is a sad silence. Perhaps angry, hurtful outbursts become too common. Home is no longer a safe harbor. Children watch their world come to pieces and shatter around them.

When infidelity, alcohol abuse, or drug dependency is involved, the situation may seem even more hopeless. It happens all the time in our society. In fact it has become the norm.

Couples of all ages and all backgrounds become disillusioned in their marriages and they separate and divorce. What else is there to do? Their friends and co-workers and sometimes even their families, are more likely to urge them to

divorce than to reconcile. They have tried everything to hold their marriage together, but the rift between them seems to take on a life of its own and it is determined to stand between them and tear their relationship apart until there is no more love and no more hope. But by the grace of God, when you think there is no hope, there is still hope, through Retrouvaille.

Retrouvaille is helping couples put the pieces back together and rebuild loving relationships. Retrouvaille, pronounced re-tro-vi, is a French word meaning “re-discovery.”

The Retrouvaille experience begins with a weekend in which husbands and wives are helped to re-establish communication and to gain new insights into themselves as individuals and as a couple.

This part of the program is presented by three married couples and a priest. The

See Help is available, p. 6



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

July	
8	5:00 p.m., Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Flatoria
9	2:00 p.m., Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters' Jubilee, Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria
13	1:00 p.m., Reconciliation service, ACTS retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria 6:30 p.m., Bishop's Charity Banquet, Victoria Country Club
15	5:30 p.m., Installation of Father Dominic Antwi-Boasiako as Pastor, Holy Family Church, Wharton
16	8:30 a.m., Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Flatoria 10:30 a.m., Mass, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Cistern 2:00 p.m., Mass, 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood of Father Dominic Antwi-Boasiako, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
19	4:00 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
21	7:00 p.m., Reconciliation service, Spanish ACTS retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
22	5:00 p.m., Mass, Blessing of new organ, St. Theresa Church, La Salle
29	10:00 a.m., Mass, Ordination of Permanent Deacons, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral 6:00 p.m., Mass, installation of Father Ty Bazar as Pastor, St. Patrick Church, Bloomington
August	
3	6:00 p.m., Mass, Serra Club cookout for seminarians, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria

Thank You Note

Dear Bishop Fellhauer,

Listed are the summary totals of the generosity of your faithful in support of the mission *ad gentes* for the year ending December 2005. As I share this information with you, I offer my profound thanks and the appreciation of millions of people around the world for this vitally needed assistance. The donations for 2005 from your diocesan family include: \$21,572 for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and \$599 for the Holy Childhood Association.

Despite the dramatic and tragic events of disasters in our own Gulf Region and abroad, Catholics in this country distinguished themselves again as the most generous mission supporting people in the world. With the realization that tsunamis, hurricanes, wars and other disasters are an everyday reality in the mission world, they renewed their commitment to respond generously to the universal mission needs of the Church.

I am grateful to you for your personal leadership in teaching your faithful that the Church is always larger than our own local Church and that we benefit greatly through our mission animation, prayers and offerings. I am also thankful that you have appointed a mission director who can work in collaboration with our national office in supporting the missionary efforts of the Church around the world.

Thanking you for your support of the mission *ad gentes* and asking God to bless you in your many responsibilities as shepherd to your flock, I remain

Gratefully in our Lord
Rev. Msgr. John E. Kozar
National Director
Pontifical Mission Societies
in the United States

CORRECTION:

In the June issue,

The Catholic Lighthouse inadvertently stated that a photo of Father David Berger's family included his grandmother, Annie Etzler. This was incorrect. His grandmother was present, but not in the photo. The picture was of him, his father, mother and Aunt Helen Etzler.

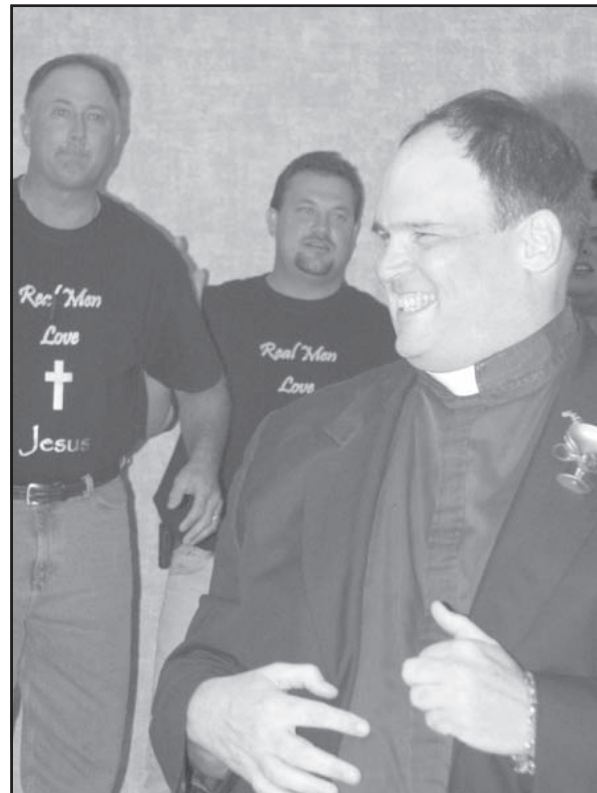


MSGR. EUSTACE HERMES CELEBRATES 65 YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD—

At a celebration held at Holy Family Parish in Victoria on June 11, 2006, Msgr. Eustace Hermes celebrated his 65th anniversary to the priesthood. Msgr. Hermes concelebrated the Mass of Thanksgiving with Bishop David E. Fellhauer and priests of the Diocese of Victoria in the presence of a large group of well-wishers, as well as the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. Gregory, and the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre. Members of the Serra Club, of which Msgr. Hermes has been the chaplain for 45 years, provided a beautiful reception following Mass. Pictured above are Msgr. Hermes, his brother, Frank Hermes (on Msgr.'s left), and his many nieces and nephews.

FATHER MICHAEL LYONS CELEBRATES 10th ANNIVERSARY TO PRIESTHOOD—

Father Michael Lyons celebrated his 10th anniversary to the priesthood June 7, 2006, with his family, friends from parishes he'd previously pastored, and friends from his current parish home, Assumption Parish in Ganado. Following a Mass concelebrated with Bishop David E. Fellhauer, priests of the Diocese of Victoria, and homilist, Father Gary Janak, his parish family provided a reception with joyous and humorous skits. Pictured behind Father Michael are Pat Petrash and Clinton Tegeler, part of Assumption's Youth Ministry Music group, which sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in honor of Father's love of sports. Besides Assumption Parish, Father Michael has pastored St. Michael and Our Lady of Guadalupe parishes in Cuero, St. John Bosco in Vanderbilt, and St. Theresa in LaSalle. He has been parochial vicar at St. Philip the Apostle in El Campo and Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca.



2006 DSA Monthly Report

The hustle and bustle of summer activities has not stopped the faithful from remembering to practice stewardship. Our records indicate a total of \$33,494 has been pledged for the month of June, which brings our total pledged amount to \$608,862 and the total paid amount to \$529,437.

"Thank you" for your response to the Diocesan Services Appeal. To those who have been unable to contribute, we appreciate your prayers for our success in reaching our goal.

Enjoy the remaining months of summer.

Jeri Joseph
Chancery Business Office

Stewardship Thought

"Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind (Heb. 13:16).

DSA Goal
\$1,238,378

Half way
marker

Pledged
Amount
\$608,862



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DEADLINE IS THE THIRD TUESDAY OF THE PRECEDING MONTH.

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Seminary Burses

Seminary burse are a permanent fund used for the education of future priests for the Diocese of Victoria. The goal of each burse is \$15,000. The interest from this amount is applied yearly to the education of seminarians. The burse are 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 June 26, 2006

— General Seminary Burse
Previously reported \$73,959.00
In honor of Rev. Msgr. James Henke
(Diocese of San Antonio)
on his 40th ordination anniversary by
Joseph and Debra Neskora 100.00
Total \$74,059.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Burse #3
Previously reported \$6,072.50
In memory of William C. Hamm, Sr. by
KofC Victoria Council 1329 100.00
Total \$6,172.50

— Catholic Daughters of America Court Our Lady Queen of Peace #1374 Burse
Previously reported \$2,877.72
In memory of Dorothy Brandl by
Leslie and Dorothy Bacak & family 10.00
In memory of Hugo Kaiser by
CDA Court 1374 50.00
In memory of Hugo and Marcella Kaiser by
The Hattie Buxkemper Family 10.00
In memory of Hugo Kaiser by:
Jim Drostata 5.00
Lloyd & Virginia Klatt 10.00
Catherine Drapela 25.00
M/M Jack Mills 20.00
Mary Triska 20.00
Georgia Wendt 20.00
Total \$3,047.72

— Catholic Life Insurance Victoria Branch 51— Rev. Msgr Eustace Hermes and Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi Burse #2
Previously reported from Burse #1 \$560.47
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Eustace Hermes' 65th ordination anniversary by:
M/M Alvin Ray Schoener 25.00
M/M Bob Bochat 25.00
Mike and Kathy Seale 25.00
Mary Dean Maresh 20.00
Imogene Klare 25.00
Total \$680.47

— Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin Burse
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin's 50th ordination anniversary by:
Alvin Ray and Claudia Schoener 100.00
Emily Yearly 200.00
M/M. Bob Bochat 25.00
Dorris Raska 25.00
Total \$350.00

— Rev. Msgr. Edward F. Bily Burse
The family of Msgr. Edard F. Bily, who passed away on April 20, 2006, and who was a priest of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, gives a completed seminary burse in his memory to the Diocese of Victoria for the future education of priests. 15,000.00
Total \$15,000.00

— Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy Burse
Previously reported \$7,319.50
In appreciation of Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy by CDA Court
St. Theresa the Little Flower 1350 300.00
Total \$7,619.50

— St. Mary Church — Praha Burse
Previously reported \$4,060.00
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Edward Bartsch's 57th ordination anniversary by
Joseph and Debra Neskora 100.00
Total \$4,160.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Burse #3
Previously reported \$10,846.00
From Sacred Heart Catholic School faculty, staff and students for National Day of Appreciation for Catholic School Pastors 325.00
Total \$11,171.00

— Josephat R. Janak Burse
Previously reported \$14,503.77
In honor of Rev. Gary Janak's 18th ordination anniversary by:
Margaret Kutac 25.00
Frank Fikac Family 20.00
Total \$14,548.77

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Burse
Previously reported \$9,867.50
In memory of Rev. Jerome Stryk by the descendants of Josef and Theresa Stryk. 200.00
Total \$10,067.50

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdame Burse
Previously reported \$7,085.00
In honor of Edwin and Julie Stryk's 50th wedding anniversary by Agnes Machicek 25.00
Total \$7,110.00

— Rev. Joseph A. Koebel Burse
Previously reported \$5,483.00
In memory of Rev. Joseph Koebel by KJZT Lodge No. 17 25.00
Total \$5,508.00

— Knights of Columbus Council 3204 — Ganado Rev. Joseph Hybner Burse
Previously reported \$1,886.00
In memory of Alois A. Bujnoch, brother of Anton A. Bujnoch Sr. by Arnold and Rosemary Riske 10.00
In memory of Larry Mangum by Arnold, Rosemary, Jennifer and Barbara Riske 10.00
Total \$1,906.00

Additional Burses for donations:

- Nicholas and Annie Grahmann Burse #2
- St. John the Baptist Church, St. John Burse 2 — In Honor of Rev. Brian Crookes
- Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #2
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
- Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas KJZT Burse #5
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Sean Donohue Burse #2
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
- St. Mary Church — High Hill
- Holy Rosary Church — Hostyn Burse #2
- Rev. Charles Kram
- Eddie & Olga Juroske and Florian & Laura Frnka
- William L. Schmidt Seminary Burse
- Willamena and Herman Grahmann Sr.
- Deceased Priests of Praha
- Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS
- Jim Vacek

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**



SERRA CLUBS HOST SISTERS PICNIC AND PRIESTS' DINNER

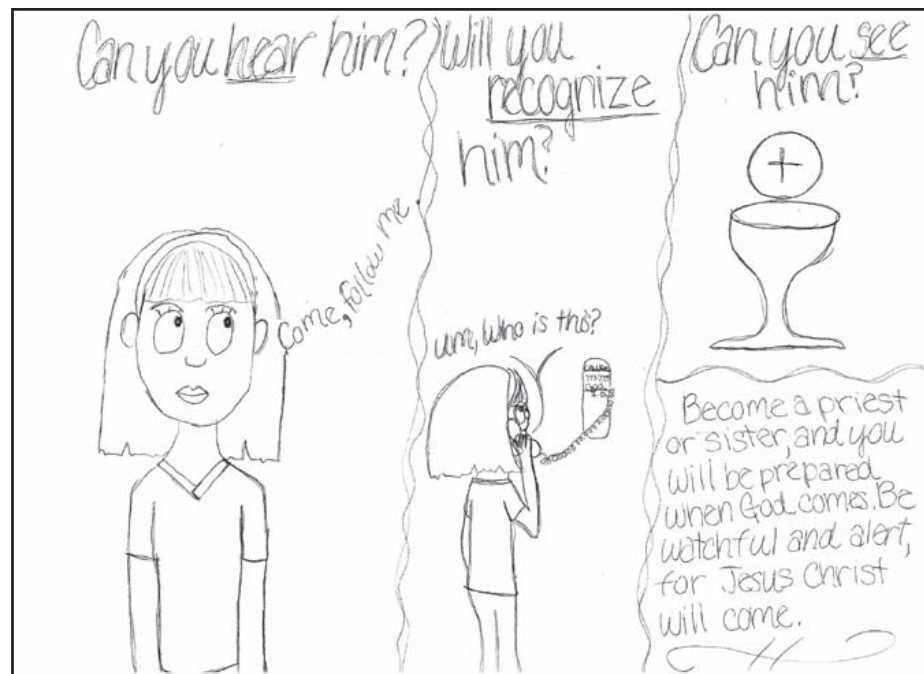
The Victoria Serrans hosted the Religious Sisters' 2nd annual picnic Saturday, May 27, 2006, at the Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria, while the Serra Club Northwest sponsored the appreciation dinner for the priests of the Diocese of Victoria Thursday evening, June 8, at St. Mary's Parish hall in Lavaca County. Members from both clubs attended each other's celebrations. The 57 sisters and about 65 Serrans who attended the sisters' picnic enjoyed the afternoon of food, fun and games. In the company of 116 diners at the priests' dinner, Bishop Fellhauer thanked the priests for their dedicated service to the diocese and thanked the Serrans for their efforts in the promotion and preservation of vocations. Pictured at bottom, Father Joseph Vrana of Holy Family in Wharton visits with Serran Alfred Ramirez.



Seminary Gift given in honor of Msgr. Bily

The family of Msgr. Edward F. Bily, who passed away on April 20, 2006, and who was a priest of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, gives a Seminary Burse (\$15,000) in his memory to the Diocese of Victoria for the future education of priests.

Sincerely,
Rev. John C. Bily



Vocation Art

Artwork by Adrieme Klimitchek • 6th Grade
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

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.



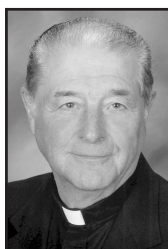
PARISH HONORS SISTER CAROLA HAJDIK—Sister Carola Hajdik, director of Religious Education at Holy Cross, East Bernard, recently attained fifty years as being a sister of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Religious Order. She retired from parish ministry at the end of May and now resides at the Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria. Holy Cross Parish celebrated with Sister Carola by having a covered-dish dinner following an eleven o'clock Sunday Mass in May. Sister Carola enjoys fishing and has been very successful. The parish appropriately remembered her with a rod and reel as well as a Food-Saver Sealer and multiple refill bags. Her donated cross-stitched quilts and linens to the annual auction are heirlooms. Holy Cross extends a special thanks to Sister Carola.





Question Corner

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service



Can a Catholic be a baptismal witness for a Protestant child?

Q. We have close friends of many years who are expecting a baby this fall. They are Methodists, devoted to their faith as we are to our Catholic faith. We've been asked to be sponsors or witnesses at their child's baptism. We consider it an honor, but what is the Catholic Church's policy? We know Protestants can be witnesses at Catholic baptisms. How about the other way around? (New York)

A. It is possible for Catholics to participate in Protestant baptisms as you suggest.

It is Catholic policy that normally godparents at baptism should be members of the church or ecclesial community in which the baptism is being celebrated. One reason is that sponsors serve not only as relatives and friends; they also normally commit themselves to support that child

as it matures in faith and commitment to the Christian life.

It is also Catholic belief, however, that a valid baptism in any Christian faith makes one part of the larger community of believers in Christ. This is one reason a baptized person of another denomination may serve as a witness at a Catholic baptism, along with a Catholic godparent.

For the same reason, and because there may be other ties of friendship and family, a Catholic may serve as a Christian witness at a Protestant baptism, if of course the other church allows this participation.

These guidelines are found in the 1993 Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, approved by Pope John Paul II and issued by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Nos. 96-98).

Christians enrich faith through the Jewish tradition of *Midrash*

Judith M. Kunst began her exploration of Jewish Midrash when her writing teacher suggested that there was another way to read the Hebrew Bible – with Hebrew eyes. In her quest to explore what it might mean to read the Bible in the Jewish way, Kunst discovered the rich tradition of Midrash. Kunst invites her fellow Christians to experience this ancient, vibrant approach to reading scripture in *The Burning Word: A Christian Encounter with Jewish Midrash* (Paraclete Press / ISBN: 1-55725-426-5 / 151 pp. / \$15.95).

"Midrash asks: What happens when, for hundreds of years we turn the yes of our imagination again and again upon a single holy text?" writes Kunst. "One answer is intimacy – intimacy with a God who in some sense has given us the Bible for the same reason anyone shares a book with a friend: to start a conversation, to start something new." Midrash, which is

Hebrew meaning simply "to search out," searches the Bible for what is unfamiliar and unclear, and wrestles with the text, passionately, playfully, and reverently. Midrash views the Bible as one side of a conversation, started by God, containing an implicit invitation to keep the conversation going.

Judith Kunst spent many years wrestling with the ways and implications of applying Midrash to her understanding of the Bible and herself. Her autobiographical reflections form the backbone of this fascinating look at an ancient

tradition.

Judith Kunst is an award-winning christian poet and teacher. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *Mars Hill Review*, and other publications. She teaches at The Stony Brook School in New York, where she lives with her husband and two sons.

For more information and reviews, please go to www.paracletepress.com or call (508) 255-4685.



The Diocese of Victoria announces ...

The XIX Annual Conference for Catechesis and Ministry

Saturday, September 30, 2006

Holy Family Church, 704 Mallette, Victoria, Texas

Who do you say that I am?

Morning Keynote "Meeting Jesus at the Movies"



Sr. Rose Pacatte, FSP

Conference Workshops

- Re-Imagine Jr. High Faith & Holiness
- Why Do We Keep Choosing the Wrong Tree? Taking Another Look at Making Good Moral Decisions
- The Vision and the Role of the Charismatic Prayer Groups, a new way of Meeting Jesus
- La Renovación Carismática, una oportunidad para la Iglesia de nuestros días
- Music for Retreats workshop
- Cyber Safety and many more...

Conference Day Includes

- Two Keynote Presentations
- 18 Workshops per round
- 12 Catholic Publisher & Vendor Exhibits
- Door Prizes
- Eucharistic Liturgy

Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer

Afternoon Keynote "God Walks Among the Pots & Pans"



Charles O. Balsam

Pastoral Institute Short-Term Summer Classes

Class	Date	Time	Place
Catechesis: Passing on the Light...	July 25-27 & Aug 1-3	6:30 - 8:30 pm	St. Philip, El Campo
Roles of the Catechist	July 05	6:00 - 8:00 pm	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt
Person of the Catechist	July 12	6:00 - 8:00 pm	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt
Church Part I & II	July 12 & 19	6:00 - 9:00 pm	St. Joseph, Inez
Intro to the Scriptures Part I & II	July 19 & 26	6:30 - 9:30 pm	Holy Rosary, Hostyn
Person of the Catechist	July 21	6:00 - 8:00 pm	St. Michael, Weimar
Getting Started as a Catechist	July 22	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 pm	St. Procopius, Louise
Roles of the Catechist	July 22	12:30-2:30 pm	St. Procopius, Louise
Person of the Catechist	July 22	2:30 - 4:30 pm	St. Procopius, Louise
Intro to the Learner	July 22	9:00 a.m. - 3:30 pm	Assumption of the BVM, Ganado
Intro to the Scriptures Part I & II	July 25 & 27	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 pm	Our Lady of Victory, Victoria
Liturgy Part I & II	July 31 & Aug 3	7:00 - 10:00 pm	Holy Cross, East Bernard
Methods 7 & 8	July 28	6:00 - 8:00 pm	St. Michael, Weimar
Sacraments Part I & II	July 29	9:00 a.m. - 3:30 pm	Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wharton
Liturgy Part I & II	Aug 1 & 2	6:30 - 9:30 pm	Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wharton
Church	Aug 19	9:00 a.m. - 3:30 pm	Immaculate Conception, Goliad

Everyone is invited to attend the summer short-term classes being offered around the diocese this summer. Catechists, lectors, ministers of communion, music ministers, and RCIA team members are especially encouraged. For more information or to register, call the Catechetical office at (361) 573-0828 or e-mail calvarez@victoriadiocese.org.

Texas Catholic corrections minister conference Oct. 20-21

SAN ANTONIO—The Texas Catholic Correctional Ministers will sponsor the 2006 Criminal Justice Conference at the ATT Center at San Fernando Cathedral October 20 – 21.

Topics to be discussed include *Theological Underpinnings of Criminal Justice Ministry* by Bishop Edmond Carmody, Bishop of Corpus Christi; *Who is in Prison? How did they get there? What needs to be done?* by Deacon Doots Dufour, director of Criminal Justice Ministry, Diocese of Austin; *Incarcerated Women – Status, Problems, Special Needs* by Bonnie Bell Rucker and Nancy Bodkin, wardens of Gatesville Women's Unit; *County Jails – Status in Texas – Particular Problems and Needs* by Bexar County Sheriff; *Texas State Action Plan for Criminal Justice*; and *Overcoming Fear of Working with Offenders and Ex-offenders – Safety*, followed by parish activity development: what can the parish do for adult inmates or parolees, what can the church do from the state or diocesan level, and how to recruit volunteers.

For more information, please contact Beverly Lincke, director of Catholic Outreach Prison Ministry in the Diocese of Victoria, at (361) 277-5828.

More information will be presented in *The Catholic Lighthouse* in the coming months.

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.

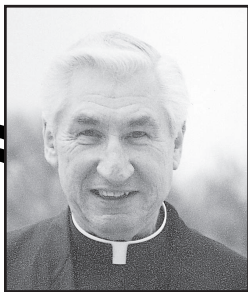
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Faith Point

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

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



The incredible ever-expanding dead end

Proponents of embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) say that adult stem cell research (ASCR) is at a dead end. ESCR is not a dead end for the simple reason its beginning is dead. There have been zero therapies using ESCs while the dead end ASCR is enjoying absolutely frenetic activity and boasts 65 therapies with more on the way.

The list of therapies is far too long to reprint here and so I recommend clicking on the Web site, www.stemcellresearch.org for a complete list. While there you can educate yourselves on the basics of stem cells. Adult stem cells now offer 23 therapies for cancer including brain, ovarian, and breast cancer. There are 14 ASC therapies for auto-immune diseases like multiple sclerosis and Crohn's disease. ASCs have helped to repair heart damage and been used for corneal regeneration. Three therapies are available for immunodeficiencies. Three more for neural-degenerative diseases/injuries. Ten therapies are available for anemias/blood conditions including sickle cell anemia. ASCs help in wounds/injuries including jawbone replacement and skull bone repair. Finally there are six therapies for metabolic disorders.

Transplanted ASCs can improve vision in eyes that have been damaged by retinal disease. This holds great promise for potential treatments for people suffering from macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other retinal diseases.

Texas researchers believe they have perfected a way to deliver cancer treatment directly to tumors. While the initial experiments have been done on mice, human trials could begin soon. The researchers used ASCs which move like guided missiles, targeting tumor cells.

In a Virginia study ASCs taken from human fat have been used to improve the functioning of damaged hearts. ASCs therapy has been found good for the heart in a study by John Hopkins. Among the many benefits of ASCs is their ready availability, meaning they can be extracted from the patient, no donor is required, and the cells can be simply reproduced if more are needed.

Scientists in Vancouver, Canada, have isolated stem cells from the breast tissue of mice that can regenerate an entire milk-producing mammary gland. The discovery is a landmark achievement for adult stem cell research because adult stem cells have been purified from an adult tissue other than bone marrow or blood. If the research can be duplicated on humans, the discovery could enhance the usefulness of adult stem cells continuing to make them superior to embryonic stem cells.

Cord blood, which is one of the easiest sources from which to obtain stem cells, have the potential to be like embryonic stem cells. "We think cord blood is

the next best thing to embryonic stem cells," David Harris, University of Arizona microbiology professor, said. "These cells are versatile and robust. Neonatal stem cells are fairly equivalent to fetal stem cells, without all the controversy and hindrance." Harris expects that heart attack and Type 1 diabetes patients will routinely be treated with stem cells within the next

five years. Within 10 years, stem-cell applications will include treatments of cancer and viral infections. Arizona is focusing on neonatal and ASCs and excluding ESCs.

"We've cured almost every single disease there is in mice," Stuart Williams, University of Arizona professor and chairman of biomedical engineering, said. "Now it's translating it

from mice to humans. Fifteen years from now, I foresee patients not needing heart transplants. We'll replace tissue that has become damaged with healthy tissue."

Williams said he settled on fat cells because they're a sufficient source for everybody.

In a single operation, stem cells are harvested, prepared and reimplanted in a patient. Once extracted, the stem cells are ready within 30 to 90 minutes. The patient's new organ is undergoing its development right there in the operating room.

Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital have used adult cells from the spleen to regenerate insulin-producing cells and show "permanent reversal of diabetes" in mice. Essentially the spleen cells "retrain" the body's immune system to stop attacking its own islet cells, and new cells then naturally regenerate from the spleen cells and the body's own cells, eliminating the need for any further cell transplant. The Harvard team, headed by Dr. Denise Faustman, now has FDA approval for clinical trials in human juvenile diabetes patients. These and other advances promise new approaches to treating diabetes that require no destruction of human embryos, and offer real hope to diabetic patients.

A South Korean woman paralyzed for 20 years is now walking again after scientists repaired her damaged spine using stem cells derived from umbilical cord

blood. Thirty-seven-year-old Hwang Mi-Soon told the media she considered her ability to walk nothing short of a miracle.

"I never dreamed of getting to my feet again," she said. Ironically this occurred while John Edwards, former Democratic candidate for vice-president, promised that once the federal government funded ESCR Christopher Reeve would rise from his wheel chair. No English-language publication thought that such an incredible breakthrough as allowing a paraplegic to walk again was newsworthy—probably because it involved the politically incorrect kind of stem cell.

There is a widening gulf between the promise of ESCs and the reality of therapy from ASCs—those already in our bodies and umbilical cord blood. ESCs get publicity; ASCs get results. Therapeutic progress with adult stem cells will continue to come fast and furious. Just when the public will be allowed to hear about it is another thing entirely.

Is it possible that the difficulties of ESCR can be overcome and that ESCs offer unique therapeutic qualities that will never be supplied by ASCs? Most assuredly, but I hope that we will never learn the answer to that question. Scientific progress should not come at the cost of killing fellow human beings. During World War II the Nazi scientists possibly advanced scientific knowledge by their freezing/hypothermia experiments. The object was to discover how to prepare troops for surviving the Russian winters and for pilots to survive after being shot

down at sea. Men were placed into ice vats or exposed naked in sub-zero temperatures to see how fast they would die. Some were

exposed for a shorter time to test revival methods. Dr. Sigmund Rascher reported the findings of the experiments at a 1942 medical conference entitled "Medical Problems Arising from Sea and Winter." The experiments may have advanced scientific knowledge but it was at the cost of killing human beings. The prevailing attitude was that those killed in the experiments, Jewish and Russian prisoners, were slated for death anyhow. So, "Why not profit from them?" Using human embryos, very young human persons, for medical experiments or as raw material for cures is essentially identical with the Nazi attitude:

"These embryos are going to die anyhow. So why not profit from them?"

Now that ASCs have done everything that ESCs promised but failed to deliver, are superior in culture, do not cause tumors and teratomas, have proven their value in an ever-growing list of therapies, do not present rejection problems, are abundant and readily available without dependence on donors, and above all, do not require killing of anyone and so are not burdened with ethical problems, there is simply no excuse for a continuation of ESCR — unless one is eager to make a contribution to the culture of death.

Thanks to ASCs, regenerative medicine will be an exciting field for years to come. If ASCs are at a dead end I hope that all my dead ends prove to be equally expansive.

Scientific progress should not come at the cost of killing fellow human beings. During World War II the Nazi scientists possibly advanced scientific knowledge by their freezing/hypothermia experiments. ... Using human embryos, very young human persons, for medical experiments or as raw material for cures is essentially identical with the Nazi attitude: "These embryos are going to die anyhow. So why not profit from them?"

KC COUNCIL 9088 RECEIVES TWO STATE AWARDS—At the 2006 annual Texas State Knights of Columbus conference, the Holy Family Knights of Columbus Council 9088 received two state awards: The Texas State Charities Fast Start Award and the Texas State Family Activity Award. The Fast Start Award was earned by submitting the council's charity funds to the state prior to its due date and the Family Activity Award was earned for the council's 3rd annual Readin' - Writin' - and Reelin' 3 R's Fishing Tournament which raised \$40,000 and was presented to Nazareth Academy Catholic School in September of 2005. KC Council 9088 Grand Knight Bob Leach holds the two awards. For information on the 4th annual fishing tournament, please see ad on pg. 17.



OLV Boy Scout Troop 364 to celebrate 50 years

Our Lady of Victory Boy Scout Troop 364 will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Sunday, March 4, 2007, at the Victoria Knights of Columbus Hall. As plans are being made for this event, we ask that former scouts of this troop give us your names and updated addresses to be included. You may contact Loren Hackbarth, (361) 576-3341 or Brigid Sonntag, (361) 578-9454.

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Victoria Catholic women form local evangelization group for female ex-offenders. Pictured above, discussing Scripture, are Cindy Brewer, Emily Yeary, Susan Major and Barbara McCain.

The Magdalene Project, Inc. — “Changing the Hearts, Minds and Lives of Our Incarcerated Catholics”

There is a new program in the Diocese of Victoria for women coming out of prison or jail. It is the Mary Magdalene Sorority Chapter, a Catholic evangelistic outreach to formerly incarcerated women in the Diocese of Victoria.

Women who join the sorority are known as the Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene (SSMM). The SSMM began as a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Life Changes Academy activity, founded by Deacon (Chaplain) Bob Leicht Jr. in the Diocese of Galveston-Houston. The project is authorized by now retired Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston; Bishop Anthony Boscoe, D.D., Greensburgh-Pittsburgh; Archbishop Albert Hughes of Louisiana, and most recently by Bishop David E. Fellhauer of Victoria.

The purpose of the Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene is two-fold:

To provide a serious, structured, *Post-Prison Catholic Sorority* through faith-community-building, re-entry goal setting, and restorative justice for those who are baptized Catholics and for those who sincerely wish to become Catholic; and to locate immediate faith-based, post-release assistance, specifically from Catholic entities for outside needs and services. The Diocese of Victoria chapter is limited to giving information of available local assistance to releasees.

There are four membership progressions in the SSMM: First Degree – to be a baptized Catholic by some letter of proof, or have the full intent of becoming Catholic. Continue learning and training about the Catholic faith, buddy-up with one or two degreed *Sisters* for spiritual support, and guidance through a Magdalene Plan of Action.

Second Degree – Sacramentally confirmed Catholic: satisfactory growth as a Catholic, and attendance at all Catholic activities of SSMM, plus initiate sessions on restorative justice efforts for one's

crime(s) before and after reception of this degree and continue the Magdalene Plan of Action.

Third Degree: Start a local Magdalene Chapter at one's Catholic Church of attendance, join a Sisterhood Community and hold an office for six months and continue efforts of restorative justice toward resolution.

Fourth Degree: become a mentor, advisor, promoter, visit prisons with state approval status, community awareness spokesperson and look for callings to Catholic Religious life.

Susan Major, a former inmate and current Third Degree SSMM member, began the Victoria chapter of the SSMM while a resident at Perpetual Help Home. She has met with a group of volunteers, Emily Yeary, Barbara McCain and Cindy Brewer, for the past 12 months at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The chapter has recently received approval to further develop SSMM in the Diocese of Victoria from Bishop Fellhauer. Meetings are currently being held at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish rectory at 5:00 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of the month. For further information, please call Cindy Brewer at the Diocese of Victoria (361) 573-0828, ext. 31, or Emily Yeary at Our Lady of Lourdes (361) 575-3813.

Religious Sisters assigned to Shiner Catholic schools

By Cindy Brewer

SHINER—Father Bob Knippenberg, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Shiner, announced that the Shiner Catholic schools, St. Ludmila Academy and St. Paul High School, will once again have religious sisters teaching their students.

The Vietnamese Dominican Sisters will be moving three religious sisters from their motherhouse in Houston to their new convent at 515 S. St. Ludmila Street in Shiner prior to the beginning of the 2006-07 school year. They have named their convent St. Rose of Lima Convent.

Sister Maria Raphael Thu Tram Tran,

O.P., has a masters in theology and will be teaching most of the middle and high school religion classes; Sister Catherine Yen Tran, O.P., will teach fifth through eighth grades; and Sister Christine Thu Hoang, O.P., will teach kindergarten through fourth grade.

On February 24, 1897, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament (IWBS) founded Shiner's Incarnate Word Academy, which later became known as St. Ludmila Academy. IWBS sisters taught at the school for 107 years, until the three remaining sisters closed the Shiner convent in June 2004.



PLAY DAYS ENJOYED BY ALL—Our Lady of Victory Cathedral offers play days, twice a week each summer, in the school gym which is enjoyed by the youth. It is a safe place for children to come and play. This year they enjoyed playing basketball with Father David Berger.

Help is available for damaged marriages

Continued from p. 1

team couples, who have experienced disillusionment, pain, anger and conflict, offer hope as they share their personal stories of struggle, reconciliation and healing. Couples find courage and strength in the realization that they are not alone in their struggle.

The weekend is not a spiritual retreat, not a sensitivity group, not a seminar, not a social gathering, nor is it counseling. Couples who attend are not asked to share

their problems with anyone else. However, they are encouraged to put the past in the past and to look beyond the hurt and pain in order to rediscover each other in a new and positive way.

The Retrouvaille Weekend offers a very different message from the current secular themes of self-gratification and self-reliance. The weekend helps couples to discover how listening, forgiveness, communication and the dialogue process are powerful aids for building a loving and lasting relationship.

A follow-up series of presentations, which provide a time and place for couples to work on their relationship, is an important phase of the Retrouvaille healing process. The hurt and the pain of falling out of love cannot be healed in a single weekend experience. This phase of the Retrouvaille program offers a more relaxed setting to explore other subjects relating to marriage and love, to renew commitments and to develop new insights and skills.

All ages of couples come to Retrouvaille from many walks of life and ethnic backgrounds. Some have already separated or divorced, but want to try again. Many are struggling to stay together.

A Retrouvaille Weekend will be held September 1-3, 2006, at the Victoria Diocese Spiritual Renewal Center. Please call 1-800-470-2230 or email lbconner@sbcglobal.net for more information and to register for the weekend.

Adoption information meeting – July 18

Marywood Children and Family Services in Austin will hold an adoption information meeting Tuesday, July 18. The meeting will be held at 510 W. 26th Street in Austin, Texas, at 6:30 p.m. Free parking is available off Guadalupe Street.

The agency, originally named the Home of the Holy Infancy and founded by the Ladies of Charity, has been finding families for waiting children since 1921. Marywood Children and Family Services assists with domestic adoption, international adoption, adoption of infants, toddlers, older children, and brothers and sisters.

For more information, please go to: www.marywood.org or call (512) 472-9251.

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Sunday, July 16

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DINNER 11:00 a.m.

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& Trimmings

Admission: Adults \$6.50 - Children \$3.50

Drive-thru Plates To Go From 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. \$6.50

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Cake Walk
12:00 Noon
BINGO
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1:30-5:30 p.m.

AUCTION SALE AT 1:00 P.M.

Hamburgers, Refreshments and Entertainment on the Moravia Parish Picnic Grounds

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www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

FEMA Web site www.Ready.gov or www.redcross.org

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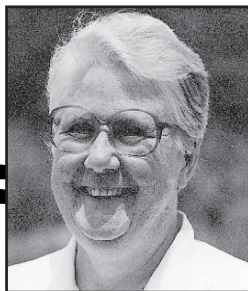
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Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Back to the Ordinary, Thank God!

Many of us are breathing a sigh of relief! The big family celebrations - weddings, ordinations, anniversaries, first Holy Communions, confirmations, graduations and class reunions - are over and now we can finally get back to ordinary living! However, we may not be fully aware of the value and challenge of day-to-day living, which makes these celebrations possible. It is the fidelity and love lived out through the years that make special events and anniversaries such significant milestones in one's life.

It is the sometimes tedious plugging toward spiritual, moral, social and mental development coupled with the desire to continue to strive toward the fulfillment of our baptismal call to discipleship and holiness that give meaning to First Holy Communions, confirmation, graduations and even matrimony, holy orders and religious profession for sisters and brothers. Considering this, we can appreciate the

value of this day-by-day living which is highlighted through celebrations.

This concept of time is reflected in the Church's liturgical year. We have completed the annual celebration of Jesus' redemptive actions of giving us his presence in the Eucharist, of his dying and rising and of his sending of the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen all of us in his Church. Now we are observing "Ordinary Time," a time for us to reflect on Jesus and his message as it is presented in the readings each Sunday. The green of the vestments worn by the priest during this time is symbolic of the hope and spiritual growth which is the focus of this liturgical season. So, let us use this ordinary time to allow God to work quietly in us to strengthen and develop us into the faithful persons that we have been called to become. Let the memories and hopes of celebrations serve as graces to encourage us during this "Ordinary Time."



Msgr. James Brunner and Father Gary Janak assist Bishop David E. Fellhauer in unveiling the official Texas Historical Marker placed at St. Philip the Apostle Church, El Campo, for its 75th anniversary.

Official Texas Historical Marker dedicated at St. Philips 75th anniversary

EL CAMPO, Texas—St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in El Campo celebrated its 75th anniversary of the dedication of its current church building with the unveiling of an Official Texas Historical Marker.

In a celebration held on the afternoon of June 4, 2006, Father Gary W. Janak, pastor of St. Philip, and Anthony Collins, Master of Ceremonies, welcomed Bishop David E. Fellhauer and all participants to the celebration. The parish's "Early Families" were announced, including those who had Mass held in their homes from 1898 to 1902: Joe Burger, John Holcak, and Gus Carville.

Following the reading of the marker's inscription by Sister Rosalie Karstedt, which recognized the history of the Catholic parish in El Campo, Bishop Fellhauer unveiled and blessed the marker. Father Gary Janak, and former pastor (1976 – 1988) Msgr. James C. Brunner assisted the bishop in the unveiling.

The celebration was very patriotic with

the recitation of the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags followed by the singing of "Texas, Our Texas." The Retiring of Colors was performed by Boy Scout Troop #368 and Cub Scout Pack #196.

The first church was built in 1902 and placed under the patronage of Sts. Peter and Paul. It was destroyed in a storm in 1909. The next church building was named for St. Philip the Apostle. By 1929, the parish had grown to 300 families, and a larger building was needed. The current church was built from December 7, 1930, with the laying of the cornerstone, to the blessing and dedication on June 14, 1931.

Copies of the 29-page documented history of St. Philip the Apostle Parish, which was written as part of the application for the historical marker, may be purchased for \$5 plus shipping fees through the church office: 304 W. Church St., El Campo, TX 77437, (979) 543-3770. A short history can be found in the May issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.



The Bronze Pelican and St. George adult emblems and religious scout awards were presented at the Catholic Committee on Scouting awards banquet in Victoria May 21, 2006. Bishop David E. Fellhauer stands with the recipients of the 2005/06 adult awards. The Bronze Pelican was awarded to Jeremy Martin (l.) of Troop 110 in Victoria and Michelle and Paul Polasek (r.) of Troop 364 in Victoria. The St. George was awarded to Nancy Hartley (second from left) of Troop 123 in Wharton.

Catholic Committee on Scouting holds awards banquet

By Gary Rangnow

The Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Victoria Diocese held its annual awards banquet at St. Mary Catholic Church in Victoria, Texas, Sunday, May 21, 2006.

The afternoon began with Mass at the church for all deceased scouts of the Diocese of Victoria. The Mass was celebrated with Bishop David E. Fellhauer and Rev. Gabriel Oduro Tawiah. Scouts presented the colors, proclaimed the readings, and served at the Mass. The Men's ACTS Choir sang all of the songs for the Mass and made the Mass very special for all those attending.

The banquet started with Bill Briscoe, chairperson of the Catholic Committee on Scouting, giving the welcome and greeting. Bishop David E. Fellhauer said the grace and gave the invocation.

Bill Briscoe introduced the officers of the committee and all of the special guests attending, including the Knights Of Columbus guests of Victoria Councils 1329, 8388 and 9088.

Scoutmaster Gerd Conner and the Scouts of Troop 33 of El Campo led the opening ceremony.

Nancy Hartley of Wharton recognized the Agnus Dei, Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei recipients of 2005/2006.

The Agnus Dei recipients were: Pack 196, El Campo – Hunter Merta; Pack 231, Shiner – Reagan Beal, Brandon Cerny, Eudocio Garza IV, Kameron Knesek, Kristofer Knesek, Ryan Paul Malinovsky and Greg Max Patek; and Pack 364, Victoria – Kenneth Michael Hathaway.

Light of Christ recipients were: Pack 135, Ganado – Cyle Bacak, Ross Fowler, Lukas Herring and Coulton Tegeler; Pack 231, Shiner – Reagan Beal, Jed Janecek, Derek Kapavik, Craig Kneifel, Laddie Patek and Anthony Sciba; and Pack 364, Victoria – Travis Bigham, Diego Garza, Kenneth Michael Hathaway, Kyle Polasek and Darien Louis Weber.

Parvuli Dei recipients were: Pack 118, Victoria – Matthew Alvarez; Pack 135, Ganado – Clinton Bacak Jr., Brian Wayne Bubela, Cory Marroquin and Logan Petrash; Pack 196, El Campo – Blaine Tyler Allgayer; 231, Shiner – Cole Isaac Hybner, Ryan Kapavik, Craig Kneifel, Kolten Knesek, Laddie Patek and Justin Siegel; Pack 312, Columbus – Jonathan Streckfuss; Pack 364, Victoria – Baxter Bradicich, Nicolas Garza, Robert Gonzales and Roman Vasquez; Pack 392, Port Lavaca – Nathan Edward Gonzales; and Pack 785, East Bernard – Daniel Garza, Blake Hlavinka, Jonathan Hlavinka

and Barrett Janecek.

Bill Briscoe recognized the counselors who had Ad Altare Dei classes in 2005 and 2006 as Gerd Conner of El Campo and Tim Greaud of Bay City. They each recognized the scouts in their respective classes: Troop 33, El Campo – Eli Wood and R. J. Wood; Troop 226, El Campo – Zackery Edwards, Kris Escobar and Lee Drapela; Troop 326, Wharton – Colten Frankum; and Troop 45, Bay City – Andrew Allgeyer, Christopher Branson and Ryan Trochta.

Allen Collens of El Campo presented a short program about the Eagle Scout program and the responsibilities that this prestigious emblem carries with it. David Kouba of Victoria recognized the following Eagles of 2005 and 2006: T0033, El Campo – Phillip Amiri; T0045, Bay City – Christopher Paul Allgeyer, Mark A. Isaacson, Collin Tatro and Garrett Tatro; T0045, Van Vleck – Matthew Evans Jones; T0060, Goliad – Thomas Fulencheck and Shadrach H. Elrod; T0101, Victoria – Evan Conner Wedig; T0108, Victoria – Richard H. Mosby and Julian Ross Kuykendall; T0109, Point Comfort – Taylor E. Baker and Dustin R. Lambden; T0110, Victoria – Jeremy K. Martin; T0123, Wharton – Nicholas Alan Castro; T0137, Edna – Michael J. Orzabal; T0219, Cedar Lane – Robert Garrett Griffin; T0228, Weimer – Ryan C. Bittner, Travis Kocurek, Trevor Roger Meysembourg, Jeremy Dusek and Jeffery Long; T0242, Victoria – Martin E. Aguilar; T0243, Port Lavaca – Armand R. Gonzalez; T0245, Port Lavaca – Israel Samayoa; T0245, Cuero – Corey Clark; T0312, Columbus – Mason Karl Kovar, Preston Garrett Neuendorff, Christopher Bolton, Larry Mcgrath Jr. and William Semora Jr.; T0363, Victoria – Andrew Dietzel, Brandon A. Fiew and Zachary T. Ryan; T0364, Victoria – Robert C. Adams, John David Campian, Mike P. Fitzgerald, Benjamin Arthur Gifford, Travis R. McConnell, Jonathan Lee McDonald, Derek Pavlicek, Christopher G. Sudheimer, Mark Thornsburg, Zane Yarbrough and Matthew B. Huante; T0368, El Campo – Clint Dennis Bacak and John Tolson; T0368, Hungerford – Andrew Allen Rothbauer; T0368, Victoria – Brian J. Durham and Steven S. Satava; T0421, Victoria – Bradley Ripa; T0499, East Bernard – Lukas D. Smith; T0785, East Bernard – Matthew King; T0902, Hempstead – Brandon Mcgee; T1073, Bay City – Daniel Ethan Heilveil, Cody Cheyne Stanley; and

See Catholic Committee, p. 8



Eighth annual D-Week “Puts out in the Deep”

By Debbie Vanelli, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Discipleship Week (D-week) 2006 was an incredible faith-building experience for the seventy-six high school youth and twenty staff and adults who participated in this four-day retreat experience.

The theme of the retreat, “Put out into the deep” permeated every aspect of these amazing four days. The young people were taught and then challenged to take their faith to a deeper level and live their faith in ways that were probably not even thought of before this retreat.

Often described as an “extremely Catholic retreat,” the retreatants spent much of the week learning about such topics as dignity and chastity, spiritual war-

fare, gifts of the Holy Spirit and vocation discernment. This retreat definitely does not “water down” Catholicism; it tells the young people exactly what our faith

with society’s ideas of materialism and self-gratification that retreats like this are an important venue for teaching the true tenets of our faith.

The Diocese of Victoria has had many of its young people serve on both NET

was sent out and in 1982, the name “NET,” or National Evangelization Teams, was officially adopted. The name was inspired by the Scriptures- “Come after me, I will make you fishers of me” (Mark 1:17) and “Put out into deep water and lower your



Steven Johnson and Becky Irroboli join in the lively worship at D-week.



teaches and how they are called to live. Young people today are so bombarded



Father Bob Knippenberg prepares the young people for adoration.

USA and NET Canada, and is one of only seven sites across the nation that have been asked to host a summer D-week retreat. D-week 2006 marks the eighth summer that the Diocese of Victoria has sponsored this retreat.

Discipleship Week is facilitated by young adults from NET Ministries, a ministry that began in 1981 as an outreach of the retreat program of the St. Paul Catholic Youth Center (CYC). The CYC was a center of spiritual renewal for thousands of young people in the 1970’s and 1980’s. In September 1981, the first yearlong team

nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4).

In 1984, the first team member from another country (Canada) served with NET. Since then, young adults from every continent have served on a NET team. In 1985, the first NET team to serve internationally crossed the border into Canada. In 1988, NET began working in Australia, leading the establishment of NET Ministries of Australia in 1989. In 1994, NET Ministries of Canada was established and the first full time Canadian team was dispatched. In addition, NET has served in Guam, Honduras, Mexico, Germany, Malaysia and New Zealand.

Roles change for former Victoria youth ministers

Matthew and Lupe Schaefer, former Life Teen ministers at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria, will change their roles at Life Teen’s Covecrest in Tiger, Ga., in order to implement Project Cove. Matthew, who is currently employed as guest relations/marketing coordinator, will give up his salary at the end of the summer and will take on directing Project Cove, along with his wife, Lupe.

Project Cove is a unique opportunity for young adults to serve as Catholic missionaries.

Matthew and Lupe will be taking it upon themselves to live as a “missionary” family. By “missionary,” it is meant that they will seek to live a simpler lifestyle and trust in the Lord’s providence for their financial needs. They will pursue friends, family and other donors who will sponsor them a year at a time. In this way, others will also be assisting in the mission of Project Cove.

Interested future missionaries may look into Project Cove: mission possible — Community-Outreach-Vocation-Evan-

gelization by going to:

http://camps.lifeteen.com/covecrest_mission.asp. They will live and pray in Catholic community, receive training in outreach and evangelization, while seeking to embrace one’s primary vocation. Project Cove’s goal is to help young people fall in love with Jesus and grow into passionate missionaries for God, whether overseas or in one’s own backyard.

Both Matthew and Lupe have served with NET (National Evangelization Teams) for two years each and have 12 years of full-time youth ministry experience. Before moving to Covecrest, Matthew was the LIFE TEEN youth minister at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria, Texas. While at OLS, several components of LIFE TEEN were put into action under Matthew’s leadership. In addition to the regular LIFE TEEN program, Edge, Parents For LIFE, monthly XLT and a peer ministry team was begun and is currently being continued under the direction of José Ortega.

Local student receives scholarship

SAN ANTONIO - Catholic Life Insurance is pleased to announce that Brittany Faas of El Campo, Texas, was one of 25 graduating high school senior students selected to receive Catholic Life’s All American Scholar Award.

The program offsets tuition costs for Catholic Life members attending any accredited college or university and recognizes students whose community service, leadership skills and academic achievement set them apart from others.

Faas, who will be attending Galveston Junior College, is the daughter of Steve and Terese Faas. Her accomplishments include: National Honor Society Secretary,



Brittany Faas

Student Council, Anchor Club, Science Club, Spanish Club, Yearbook Staff Manager, Varsity Softball Captain, Varsity Volleyball Captain, Powderpuff Football Captain.

To apply for the award, applicants were required to submit an application including a letter of recommendation and an essay describing their favorite volunteer activity. The scholarship was open to Catholic Life members who were graduating seniors. Scholarship winners were selected on the basis of community service, demonstration of leadership qualities and scholastic achievement.

Founded in 1901 by a Catholic priest, Catholic Life Insurance offers life insurance, IRAs, retirement annuities and fraternal benefits to individuals, families and businesses.

Catholic Committee on Scouting holds awards banquet

Continued from p. 7

T1527, Bay City – Dennis Grebe.

Bill Briscoe also presented the Bronze Pelican and St. George Adult Emblems. The first Bronze Pelican was presented to Jeremy Martin. Jeremy is very active with Troop 110 and is involved with the committee’s retreats, banquets, and other activities. He is deputy grand knight and very active in Knights of Columbus Council 1329. He is also chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Health-Arama, a member of the Health Committee, and a member of the Crossroads of Texas Living History Assoc., having held the position of treasurer for about 20 years.

The next two Bronze Pelicans were presented to a couple who are very involved in scouting, Paul and Michelle Polasek. Paul is an assistant scoutmaster of Troop 364 and a pack leader for Pack 364 of Our Lady of Victory Parish and is always promoting and helping the scouts with their religious emblems. He has received the Scouting District Award of Merit. He is very active in Knights of Columbus Council 1329 helping in many projects, including the Relay for Life and Free Throw. He is also a member of the Victoria Parks & Recreation Committee, the Victoria Planning Commission, the Victoria Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Young Republicans Club. He has also been on the Our Lady of Victory School Board for 2 years and the Our Lady of Victory PTC. He was just recently elected to the Victoria City Council District 3 seat.

Michelle is also very involved in scout-

ing. She is active in Pack 364 of Our Lady of Victory Parish and always promoting and helping the scouts with their religious emblems. She received a Den Leader Recognition award at the last Blue and Gold Banquet for Pack 364. She is also a member of the Our Lady of Victory PTC. She was involved in the development of the Our Lady of Victory Early Childhood Center. She recently rode in the Multiple Sclerosis Bike Ride from Houston to Austin. She is also a member of the Young Republicans Club.

The St. George Adult Emblem was presented to Nancy Hartley. Nancy received the Bronze Pelican Award in October 2004. She is very active in Troop 123. She is always promoting and helping the scouts with their religious emblems and is an Ad Altare Dei Emblem councilor. She is very active in the Catholic Committee on Scouting and holds the position of secretary. She devotes a lot of time in helping with the CCS Scout Retreats at Camp Mauritz, the awards banquet and the other activities of the CCS.

Bishop David Fellhauer gave his remarks, explaining the background and meaning of the scouting religious emblems. He thanked the CCS and all the adults who work so hard and put so much time into the religious side of scouting. He then gave the benediction and final blessing.

The Knights of Columbus Council 1329 of Victoria prepared a fantastic meal and the desserts and garlic bread were donated by HEB of El Campo.



Catholic Church Extension Society unveils replica model of one of nation's early chapel cars

CHICAGO, IL - To commemorate more than 100 years of serving Catholic missions in America's remote mission areas, Catholic Church Extension Society President Bishop William R. Houck unveiled a scale model of one of the nation's first railroad chapel cars at DePaul Center, DePaul University, in Chicago May 2.

Plano, Illinois, model maker Robert Marson was invited to build the scale model of the Chapel Car St. Paul, a Pullman-style railroad car that was converted into a chapel to serve the South and American West from 1915 to the 1960's, bringing the Catholic Church on rails to the nation's remote outposts of faith.

Since thousands of American Catholics lived where there was no church at the turn of the century, Catholic Extension Founder Father Francis Clement Kelley decided to take the church to them. Needing to fill a space in the December 1906 issue of Extension Magazine, he wrote about a novel idea he had just seen at the St. Louis World's Fair — a railroad car converted into a Baptist chapel-on-wheels.

The idea caught the imagination of Detroit ad salesman Ambrose Petry, who donated America's first Catholic railroad "chapel car," the St. Anthony. The Pullman-style railroad car, retrofitted with pews, an altar, confessional and an office and sleeping room for a chaplain, traversed the country, towed by railroad companies free of charge.

So successful was the St. Anthony that Ohio businessman Peter Kuntz donated two more rolling chapels - the St. Peter, which first traveled the West in 1912, and the St. Paul, which began touring the South in 1915. The small fleet provided a place for priests to celebrate Mass, hear confessions, baptize babies, and marry couples in remote towns with no Catholic parish.

At every stop, the chapel cars drew crowds. People lined up for blocks to tour the innovative vehicles. More importantly, the chapel cars planted seeds, where dozens of churches soon sprang up, often with the aid of Catholic Extension grants.

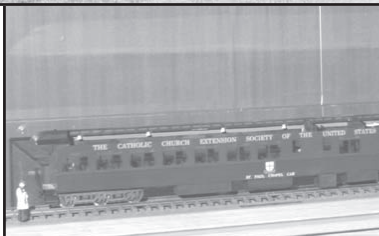
"We're grateful to DePaul University for the opportunity to share with more people the story of our country's early chapel cars," Bishop Houck said. "In many ways, Father Kelley's goal of spreading our Catholic Faith has remained unchanged, especially when you consider the mission circuit of priests in Alaska today

to serve America's missions. For example, in East St. Louis, Illinois, the Catholic Urban Program converted a bus into a mobile soup kitchen. In the Appalachian hills and mountains of western Virginia, a large Winnebago serves as a health clinic on wheels for patients of Medical Missionary Sister Bernadette Kenny, MMM, a nurse practitioner.

The new model unveiled at DePaul is not the first scale model of a chapel car commissioned by



One of the original Chapel Car St. Paul, a Pullman-style railroad car that was converted into a chapel to serve the South and American West.



Catholic Extension President Bishop William R. Houck unveils the chapel car model at DePaul University.

who travel by plane, boat and snowmobile to isolated parishes to bring the sacraments. We're pleased to help support the missionaries who work so hard to ensure the growth of the faith in our country's underserved areas."

The model railroad chapel car will be on display at the Extension Society, 150 S. Wacker Drive (on the 20th floor) in Chicago, except when on occasion it is also displayed as part of the traveling "Mission America" exhibit, which will run concurrently at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C., and the Cathedral Heritage Foundation in Louisville, Kentucky, from July 15 through August 31. Families might want to visit the model during their summer travels. Please contact Mark Andel at (312) 795-6074 for location of the model car.

In addition to the three railroad chapel cars, Catholic Extension created two motor coach chapels built for mission work beyond railroad lines. A chapel boat was also added to the fleet to ply the rivers of some of the country's most remote areas.

Like the early chapel cars, vehicles today are often adapted in creative ways



A look inside the chapel car model of the altar: authentic reproductions of furnishings throughout.

Catholic Extension. A scale model twice the size of the one Marson created was commissioned in 1925 for the Vatican's International Jubilee Year celebration, and is now a part of the permanent Vatican Museum collection.

For more than 100 years, the Chicago-based Catholic Church Extension Society has supported Catholic missions in the U.S. by funding church construction, religious education and seminary formation, outreach ministries, evangelization, salaries and operating expenses. Catholic Extension is the leading supporter of Catholic missions in the U.S. and has distributed more than \$400 million over its history. For more information about Catholic Extension, or to sign up for 12 months of Extension Magazine free of charge, call 1-800-842-7804 or visit www.catholicextension.org.

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Invitation to Catholic Daughters' state retreat – Sept. 22-24

The Texas State Court of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas is inviting its members to a Texas State Retreat at Christ the King Retreat Center in San Angelo, Texas, September 22-24. The retreat will begin on Friday at 5:00 p.m. and end with Mass on Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

The theme for the state retreat is *Staying Attached to the Vine: Life in the Eucharist*. The presenter will be Father Chuck Gunti, OFM, of the San Jose Mission Friar Community, San Antonio.

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

ST. AGNES PARISH HONORS GRADUATES—

St. Agnes Parish in Edna, Texas, celebrated its Senior Graduation Mass May 21, 2006. Pictured with Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy, pastor of St. Agnes, is Dustin Durham, Kyle Muschalek and Ross Koklar. These boys, and Rashard Porche (not pictured), have faithfully served St. Agnes Parish for the past nine years as altar servers. Congratulations graduates!



HOLY ROSARY YOUTH GIVE TO RESIDENTS—Members of the Holy Rosary Youth group of Hostyn gather to make cards for the residents of the Monument Hill Nursing Home in La Grange. Recently the youth group held a bake sale and then spent a Sunday morning delivering the cards to the residents. Pictured (back row) are Sterling Behrens, Kadie Rackley, Audrey Cernoch, Caitlin Surman, Sheridan Templin and Brook Rauch; front row: Avery Behrens, Amy Rackley, Mary Cernoch, and Jodi Kozelsky.

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“Camp David was INCREDIBLE!”

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

“I saw God everywhere!” gushed one of the junior high campers at the end of Camp David 2006. After a year of training and planning, members of the Diocesan Youth Leadership Team and a host of adult volunteers worked together to create a memorable Catholic experience for over 200 young people from throughout the diocese. The youth staff and adults assembled on Friday to begin transforming the Spiritual Renewal Center into a camp for the week. The first task at hand was to complete the teams’ course and create a 50-foot slip and slide and pool. The group made fast work of this task with the promise of cooling down on the slip and slide enticing their efforts. The teams’ course is comprised of several obstacles of which groups of young people must work together to complete. Twenty obstacles that comprised this year’s teams’ course included: an eight-foot wall, a tri-platform obstacle, the trust-fall platform, spider web, log shuffle, mud pit, rope swing, Noah’s ark, whale watch and the newest obstacle, the meat grinder. The group was also tasked with creating a dodge ball court – the newest and one of the most favored outdoor games that was added this year.

After all the outside work was finished, the team began perfecting the prayer experiences and sessions for this ninth annual summer camp themed *Faith Factor*.

They worked diligently through the weekend in anticipation of the many people with whom they were charged to share their faith.

The first group arrived Sunday afternoon for the first of two, three-day, two-night sessions with junior-high young people. After two days of non-stop activities, the first group reluctantly headed for home. After this first session, the staffers had only an evening to prepare for the arrival of 70 elementary students who arrived on Wednesday morning. These young people had a wonderful day complete with prayer services, Bible stories, arts and crafts, outside water activities and lots of songs. After this group of young



Photos by Regina Matus-Janak

Elementary cool off on a hot day, playing on the slip and slide.

people left, the staff had only two hours to prepare for the arrival of the second group of junior-high young people for the next three-day, two-night session. The camp was filled to capacity at all three sessions.



The primary difference in comparing Camp David to other summer camps is the Catholic element. Everything from the community building activities, to the sessions, to the outside team-building activities, to the nightly prayer services and Masses focus on the young people’s Catholic identity and their relationship with Jesus Christ. As one first-year staffer put it –

Camp David has a much more retreat element than any other camp he has ever attended. God is definitely the focus. This year’s theme was Faith Factor, with sessions covering faith, image and service. A service/evangelization opportunity was also held during the camp as young people made over one-hundred snack bags that included crackers, cookies, candy, drinks, prayer cards and scripture booklets, for hospital waiting rooms in our area.

Elementary children use teamwork by working the teams’ challenge course.



After everyone reluctantly bid the last of our campers good-bye, the staffers began the task of dismantling Camp David. A lot of work goes into making this camp/retreat opportunity possible, special thanks to James Wearden, Director of Camp David 2006, Judy and Richard Seiler, Mariah Adamek, Michael Vanelli, Joe and Julia Ortega, JoAnn Martinez, Regina Janak, The Life-Teen Band at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria; Jose Ortega and his band, Bobby Kneifel, Kevin Majewski, Father Michael Lyons and Father Greg Korenek and of course everyone at the Spiritual Renewal Center.

The staff attends a yearlong Youth Leadership Training program. These sessions focus on the elements needed to be a good leader and help them to be comfortable with passing their faith on to these

See Camp David, p. 11



GROTTO REDEDICATED AT WHARTON MANOR CENTER—A lonely, small grotto with the statue of Our Blessed Mother is situated in a courtyard at Wharton Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. It had looked sad because the grass and yard had not been kept. With the month of Mary coming up soon, Liliana Johse, who recently began working at the center, immediately started thinking and working towards a restoration and a re-dedication. Catholic friends and the Catholic Daughters Court Our Lady Queen of The Clergy 1990 in Wharton began the restoration process, working on their hands and knees in order to plant a garden for Our Lady. Roses, ferns, assorted flowers, and two benches were added to the courtyard. A re-dedication and blessing was held May 11. Angelina Klekar, a resident who is also a member of the CDA of East Bernard, said it is a peaceful place to pray her rosary under the shade of trees and enjoy the “Garden of Prayer,” which is now also being used by non-Catholics. Our Lady of Mount Carmel priests, Father Raymond Jackson (above) and Father Charles Lynch, say Mass at the center on Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.

RAPHAEL’S REFUGE CHAPEL GETS FOUNDATION—TMR Construction of Weimar, Texas, lays the foundation for the Chapel of the Holy Innocents in Flatonia. The foundation is expected to be completed by June. Raphael’s Refuge, a small, non-profit organization, will be available to the general public as a place to honor and grieve babies who have died, unborn and born. The chapel will be available for private and public prayer. For a \$50 donation, one may have their deceased baby’s name engraved on a glass block, which will be used to form glass walls radiating from the chapel. To donate a glass block, time, work or dollars, please contact Raphael’s Refuge at P.O. Box 341, Flatonia, Texas 78941 or go to www.raphaelrefuge.org.



ST. MICHAEL’S RECEIVES DONATION—St. Michael’s School in Cuero recently received a donation of \$500 from the Knights of Columbus Council 2480 of Yorktown. Presenting the check to Principal Judy Roeder are Lawrence Jendrzej, chancellor, and Joseph Jendrzej, treasurer. Students in attendance for the presentation were: front (l-r), Sean Kainer, Cee Cee Yeretsky, Jessica Abbott, Aimsley Blank, Kyle Perez-Stanley, back (l-r), James Alvarez, Austin Traynham, DeLayne Styra, and Abigail Kainer.



Los Carmelitos folk dancers from Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Wharton.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel forms young dance group

By Liliana Johse

WHARTON—A group of young children from Our Lady of Mount Carmel trained by Faustina Amaro has been getting lots of attention lately performing Mexican Folk dances.

Faustina never danced before, but was a bilingual and elementary school teacher in California. She found a record with directions for simple Mexican Folk dancing for children. She volunteered to help the children who were interested in learning to dance.

Their first performance was on Dec. 12, 2005, at the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration. All of a sudden their popularity has mushroomed. They performed at

Wharton Manor Nursing Center on Cinco de Mayo, at other places, and at the church bazaar. La Raspa, La Bamba, La Cucaracha and Jesusita en Chihuahua were some of the dances.

“Los Carmelitos” are pictured in the newly renovated prayer garden at Wharton Manor Nursing Center: Leslie and Maria Gonzales, Christian Castro, Lorena C. Perez, Maria E. Plaza, Yolanda Perez, Gabrielle Gomez, Giselle Munoz, Brandon Galabeas, Veronica Muniz, Yajaira Valdez and Jose Lopez. Other volunteers are Santos Munoz, Mary Montalvo, Sister Maria de Jesus Becerril, Sister Ana Maria Lozano and Sister Isabel De Loya.



ST. MARY, HALLETTSVILLE, GIVES SCHOLARSHIPS—Four St. Mary's (Hallettsville) high school graduates each received a \$500 scholarship from the parish. Scholarships were awarded based on the graduate's commitment, dedication and service to church and community. Scholarships were made available with funds generated from the parish's annual picnic. Pictured (l. to r.): Stratton Hrcir – Sacred Heart; Hillary Pustka – Shiner High School; Father John Peters; Kassh Kocian and Bryan Klekar – Hallettsville High School.



COURT ST. ANN PRESENTS SCHOLARSHIPS—Nine local scholarships given by Court St. Ann 369, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, were awarded recently. Grace Rigamonti, scholarship chairman, announced highlights of each recipient's high school activities and read excerpts from their application essay as she presented their names. Scholarships were presented by Donna Wesley, immediate past-regent to, l-r, Megan Coffey, Mallory Stocker, Christine Culberson, Sarah Mackay, Jacob Alvarez, Janis Etzler, Erin Drozd, Amanda Cooke and Aubrie Pfeil (not pictured). Following the awards ceremonies, a reception was held for the recipients, families and guests.



ST. MICHAEL ESTABLISHES TRAVELING BLESSING ANGEL—St. Michael Church in Cuero has recently acquired a traveling "Blessing Angel" to be awarded to an outstanding member each year. Pictured with the angel and pastor of St. Michael's, Father Kirby Hlavaty, are the 2006 honored recipients, Mertes and Agnes Koenig, long-time dedicated parishioners.



NEW WAY TO WALK—St. Mary's, outside of Hallettsville, just completed a sidewalk from its parish hall to the cemetery. Instead of walking on the road to the cemetery at a funeral, the sidewalk can now be used for safety purposes. People can then walk to the hall for lunch. Tony and Joyce Bludau donated \$10,000 to fund the project. Bludau Fabrication donated the iron for the handrail and fencing.

"Camp David was INCREDIBLE!" — Continued from p. 10

young people. Many of the adults, who also attended with groups of junior-high students, marveled at the way the staff was able to share their faith through word and action. The incredible high school/college staff this year included: Jesse Barber, Christopher Bednorz, Brittany Bongers, Ethan Chamberlain, Clarissa Christensen,

Katie Dawson, Robby Drapela, Keith Epley, Brittany Faas, Paul Garza, Rebekah Garza, Darren Hickl, Courtney Janak, Dustin Janak, Andrea Johnson, Jessica Kallus, Hannah Kozelsky, Jay Sulak, Tiffany Tran, Sarah Vincent, Lizzie Williams and Chelsea Winkenwerder.

CDA STATE SCHOLARSHIP—Janis Etzler (center) of Kingsville was awarded an \$800 State Memorial Scholarship by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, State Court of Texas, at a recent awards ceremony conducted by Court St. Ann 369. Janis is the daughter of Susan and Tim Etzler of Kingsville. She is the granddaughter of Virginia Etzler and the late Al Etzler and the late June and Lawrence Ohrt. She is also the grandniece of Lillian and Dalton Thurk, all of Victoria. Janis will be studying pharmacy at A&M-Kingsville and U of H, Houston. Pictured with Janis is Libby Ramirez (left), CDA National Third Vice-Regent, and Donna Wesley (right), immediate past-regent for Court St. Ann.



HOSTYN AND PLUM CELEBRATE CONFIRMATION—The rite of confirmation was celebrated for fourteen young people from the parishes in Hostyn and Plum on Sunday, June 4, 2006, at the Queen of the Holy Rosary Church in Hostyn. Mass was concelebrated by the Most Reverend David E. Fellhauer, bishop of the Diocese of Victoria, along with Rev. Msgr. Stanley J. Petru, pastor of Holy Rosary, and Rev. Raja Kommarreddy of Sts. Peter and Paul in Plum. The candidates participated in the Mass by serving as lectors, ushers, and presenters of the offertory gifts. After Mass, each candidate received a confirmation certificate, a gift from the parish, and a gift from the Catholic Daughters. The celebration continued with a reception in the parish hall for the newly confirmed along with their sponsors, parents, family and parish friends. The confirmation team consisted of Msgr. Petru, Father Raja, John and Eileen McCourt, Donna Benham, Peggine Cruezbaur, Bernadette Janda, Doug Janda, Ed Kozel, Thomas Kozel, and Gina Kozelsky. Pictured in front row from left: Juan Guajardo, Jessica Montez, Kevin Templin, Wyatt Watson, Bishop Fellhauer, Alyson Svec, Morgan Benham, Sinead McCourt, and Julia Koudelka; back row: Jay Taylor, Ryan Henneke, Aaron Dittrich, Reagan Heger, Erick Raab, and Brendan Mueller.



OLV YOUTH TRIP—Our Lady of Victory Youth Ministry went to Corpus Christi June 10, to the beach at Padre Island and then attended Mass at St. Andrew by the Sea Catholic Church, which is an open-air church. They were welcomed at the Mass by Father Tom McGettrick, pastor. Following Mass they attended a Corpus Christi Hooks baseball game. The final play of the game was a pop-up fly ball to right fielder Hunter Pence and as he was leaving the field he threw the ball to the OLV group. The ball was caught by Paul Vincent. After the game Hunter stayed around for autographs. He said he heard the group rooting for him and appreciated their enthusiasm and support. There were photographers and camera crews who informed them that they were the most spirit-filled (loudest) group there that evening. They all had a great time and are looking forward to it again next year. Those attending were: Corey Hillyer, Elizabeth Vahalik, John Wilson, Kathryn Wilson, Keith Hanslik, Kendra Hanslik, Lauren Alexander, Madelyne Adams, Marett Hanes, Megan Hillyer, Michelle Olsovsky, Patrick Rodenkirch, Rachel Grahmann, Reno Bradicich, Paul Vincent and Teresa Vincent. Adults attending were: Shirley Hillyer, OLV youth director; Robert Hillyer, Sarah Hillyer, Jenny Vincent, Rob and Mary Wilson, Denise Hanslik and Linda Munoz, bus driver.



A Culture of Life



By Father Eric Nielsen

Mimicking your parents

Have you ever noticed just how easily young people are influenced by the example of adults? While spending a year working in Germany at the age of 25, a young boy approached a friend and me while we played catch in a small park. Naturally, the boy wanted to play as well. After a few misguided tosses, it became obvious that he had never held a baseball glove before, so I happily decided to provide him with a basic lesson. "Stand with the glove like this," I told him as I demonstrated the proper technique. I was amazed at what I saw, for not only did he mimic my glove hand rather well, but he was also perfectly mimicking my ungloved hand, which I had raised to scratch my nose!

How naturally children mimic the people around them, and how awesome, therefore, is the responsibility of parents to provide good examples to their children! Rare are the parents who do not realize that their children follow their example; however, few recognize that this example extends even to their most intimate behaviors.

The perfection of love is a *supernatural* virtue that requires a gift of the Holy Spirit, but love is first acquired within the family as a *natural* virtue. Love requires self-discipline and purity, and both of these virtues are first learned in the family where they should exist and be demonstrated within the bond of husband and wife. The more pure and wholesome the love between the parents, the more readily love will be reflected in their children.

How important it is then, that marital relationships perfectly reflect the true gift of self that love requires in all aspects of the couples' lives, including in the realm of sexual relations. A couple's marital relations are not isolated events, but affect the whole marriage and thus permeate the lives of their children.

We can now begin to see an important distinction between Natural Family Planning (NFP) and artificial means of contraception. NFP, if done correctly, requires self-discipline, sacrifice, patience and a wholesome affection for one's spouse. Artificial contraception requires none of these virtues; rather, it promotes the seeking of pleasure as a primary end and overrides the delicate balance of a couple's spiritual and emotional well-being.

Just like all of us, children have free will, and evidence supports the fact that they—and not their parents—primarily determine who they will become by their own choices. Even Adam and Eve, who were created in human perfection and given the perfect environment, still freely chose to disobey God. Thus not even par-

ents bear complete responsibility for the vices and virtues their children adopt. Yet parents' influence and example play a huge role in the development of their children's character. It makes sense, then, that the virtues learned and practiced by couples using NFP will be passed on more easily to their children.

Children who grow up with parents practicing NFP will find it easier to bring their feelings under control in order to sacrifice themselves for a higher good. They will tend to have a greater respect for their bodies, avoiding the notion that their bodies are simply tools for pleasure. They will find it easier to love other people for who they are, rather than using others as objects of pleasure. Thus, these children will be better prepared to save the gift of their bodies for marriage, and experience the fuller measure of marital joy God has intended for them from all eternity.

There is no such thing as a private sin, or an insignificant act of virtue. Our character influences everyone we meet. How much more do the acts that define the character of parents influence their children's character!

Puzzle contest book review

If you asked the average Catholic to list 10 tips to build a better marriage, chances are Natural Family Planning (NFP) would not make the cut. Most Catholics, if they think of NFP at all, think only of those three troubling words, "Not tonight, dear." But more than a means of regulating birth, NFP is first a means of building communication, affection, respect and a sense of joyful freedom in a couple's sexual relationship.

As the 19 couples in *Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage* make clear, NFP not only helped them plan their families, it improved their marriages. Many speak of a renewed grace in their lives when they made the switch from contraceptives to NFP. All agree that the benefits outweigh the occasional challenges, and none long for the days when they used artificial means of regulating birth.

If you're interested in strengthening your marriage, forget the magazine articles and self-help books. Discover NFP and see that when it comes to sex and marriage, the Church has found a better way to keep the home fires burning.

Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage – 19 True Stories is written by Fletcher Doyle and published by Servant Books; paperback, 155 pgs.; ISBN 0-86716-760-2.

One copy will be given away as the Family Puzzle Contest prize.

Natural Family Planning courses to be presented July 9

Has anyone ever clearly explained WHY the Catholic Church prohibits unnatural forms of birth control? For most of us the answer is NO!

Learn about your faith and discover a natural method of family planning that goes beyond the physical.

Beginning Sunday, July 9, a four-course series on Natural Family Planning will be presented at Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall in Victoria from 2 – 5 p.m. For information, please call Rudy and Estella De Los Santos at (361) 573-2624.

Natural Family Planning Awareness

Week will be celebrated this year July 23-29. NFP AW is an event that was begun by the American Academy of NFP (now American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals) and is promoted by the Diocesan Development Program for NFP (DDP/NFP), Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The NFP AW dates highlight the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25) and mark the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26).

FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

JOHN 14:15-16

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IF YOU
LOVE ME
YOU WILL
KEEP MY
COMMANDMENTS

AND I WILL
ASK THE
FATHER
AND HE WILL
GIVE YOU

ANOTHER
ADVOCATE
TO BE
WITH YOU
ALWAYS

Winner of July contest receives *Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage*

Congratulations to Carolyn Okruhlik of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Schulenberg; she is the winner of the June Family Puzzle Contest and will receive *Stay With Me Still – Rosary Meditations and Spiritual Support for Persons with Alzheimer's, Their Caregivers and Loved Ones* by Beth Mahoney and Holy Cross Family Ministries. The book may be purchased from Ave Maria Press at www.avemariapress.com.

The winners of the children's contest were Melanie Mamerow (12) of St. Andrew in Hillje and Stacie Garcia (14) of Victoria. They will each receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift

Shop.

The winner of the July Family Puzzle Contest will receive *Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage* by Fletcher Doyle and published by Servant Books. Its review is featured on this page.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number, and parish name by July 25 to: Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age. Please

don't forget your phone number and parish name.



Don't miss these terrific shows!

"The Word of the World" — Father Mike Manning & Guests
TBN Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. CDT or stream view at www.wordnetproductions.com

- July**
- 12 **From Vampires to Christ, Part II** ~ Anne Rice, Author
...The conversion continued.
 - 19 **Holy Land Christians** ~ Mary Farrell & Virginia Zamboni, Order of Holy Sepulchre
Protecting the Land where Jesus lived and died.
 - 26 **Church & Youth Today** ~ Patty Islas, Parish Youth/Music Leader
Faith, hope, and creativity hard at work in guiding youth.
- August**
- 2 **A Catholic Actor** ~ David Brickman, Actor
Can acting be a ministry to the People of God? to the world?
 - 9 **Jesus in Jail** ~ Mother Antonia Brenner, Religious Order Founder
A Tijuana prison becomes a ministry to "eleventh hour" Christians.
 - 16 **Gang War** ~ Sheriff Robert Balderama, San Bernardino County
Bringing hope and self-esteem to former gang members.
 - 23 **Small Faith Community** ~ Karen Grozak, SFC Office, SB Diocese
Solving the problem of numbers in the need to share faith.



The Word of the World Mission: Embracing the transforming power of the Gospel, we communicate the Word of God to all people through the media in the spirit of the Society of the Divine Word.



Light One Candle

By Dennis Heaney, President
The Christophers



Risking It All

The Fourth of July. Independence Day. America's Birthday. It has been called by different names over the last 230 years. But the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the members of the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, is at the heart of our celebration, even as it reminds us of all the heroic efforts of patriots over three centuries to build a nation of ideas and ideals.

Near the beginning of the Declaration are these stirring words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. — That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ..."

I suspect that most of us haven't read or otherwise paid attention to the Declaration for quite a while. We probably know that it was largely written by Thomas Jefferson who, like another signer, John Adams, went on to become a president of the United States. But 56 men put their names on the document that would change this land and the world forever. And most of them are not that well known. And that's a shame because all of

them risked everything to create this country. Here's how the document ends: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Those are not just noble sentiments. Every signer was considered guilty of treason to Britain. Their lives and property and the welfare of their families were at stake. When John Hancock urged the delegates to sign unanimously, it was probably gallows humor that made Benjamin Franklin reply, "Yes, we must indeed hang together or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

And they paid for their stand. Nine fought in the war and died from wounds or hardships. Five were captured and tortured. Two lost their sons in the war. Others saw their wives and children imprisoned. At least a dozen had their homes and land burned. Though they were hunted down as traitors, they were also offered immunity, if they would break their pledge. None did.

One signer, Abraham Clark of New Jersey, had two sons captured and held on a prison ship where they were brutalized. The British offered to release his sons if Clark would desert the Ameri-

can cause. He refused. Only when George Washington intervened did the maltreatment stop.

Thomas Nelson of Virginia had his house commandeered by Gen. Cornwallis at the Battle of Yorktown. Nelson urged Washington to open fire on his home. The house was completely destroyed and Nelson eventually died bankrupt.

Robert Morris of Pennsylvania was a wealthy merchant who raised money and provisions for the American army. When funds were low, he loaned money to the Continental Congress to support troops at Valley Forge and Trenton. Later, he founded the National Bank, but never recovered his own wealth and died in poverty.

It takes courage to stand up for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Defending what is right over what is easy always demands risk. May God grant each one of us the courage to stand up for the welfare of His people, to stand up for peace, justice and truth today — whatever the cost.

For a free copy of the *Christopher News Note: LEARNING TO LEAD*, write: *The Christophers*, 12 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017; or e-mail: mail@christophers.org.

Sunday readings from July 9 to August 15

July 9 — Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Ezekiel 2:2-5 Psalm 123:1-2, 2, 3-4 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Mark 6:1-6
July 16 — Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Amos 7:12-15 Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14 Ephesians 1:3-14 Mark 6:7-13
July 23 — Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6 Ephesians 2:13-18 Mark 6:30-34
July 30 — Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	2 Kings 4:42-44 Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18 Ephesians 4:1-6 John 6:1-15
August 6 — The Transfiguration of the Lord	Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9 2 Peter 1:16-19 Mark 9:2-10
August 13 — Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time	1 Kings 19:4-8 Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 Ephesians 4:30 — 5:2 John 6:41-51
August 15 — The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab Psalm 45:10, 11, 12, 16 1 Corinthians 15:20-27 Luke 1:39-56

Our Turn

By Therese J. Borchard
Catholic News Service



Returning to church for the children's sake

A friend of mine who doesn't go to religious services said that she and her husband intend to go back to Mass. The reason? Their 2-year-old son.

"We want him to have a structure, a tradition, to grow up with," they said.

Their decision reflects the trend of nonreligious parents seeking some form of faith enrichment for their children. In 2002 the percentage of fathers who attended church at least once a month was nearly twice that of men who had no children.

Among the various reasons parents seek out religion for their children is the sense of community a belief system offers. With extended families no longer living in the same city or state, parents crave a community with which to share milestones, eat, celebrate and pray together. If it

takes a village to raise a child, and I think it does, churches do their part in bringing parents together with fish fries, bingo and festivals.

Religion also provides a kind of consolation. I have agnostic friends who will have a harder time explaining the death of Grandpa and Grandma to their children. The idea of a Creator who is omniscient and benevolent, and has his hand in all the works of creation, is extremely comforting. I remember singing the words of "Be Not Afraid" to myself as a child when I was fearful about something.

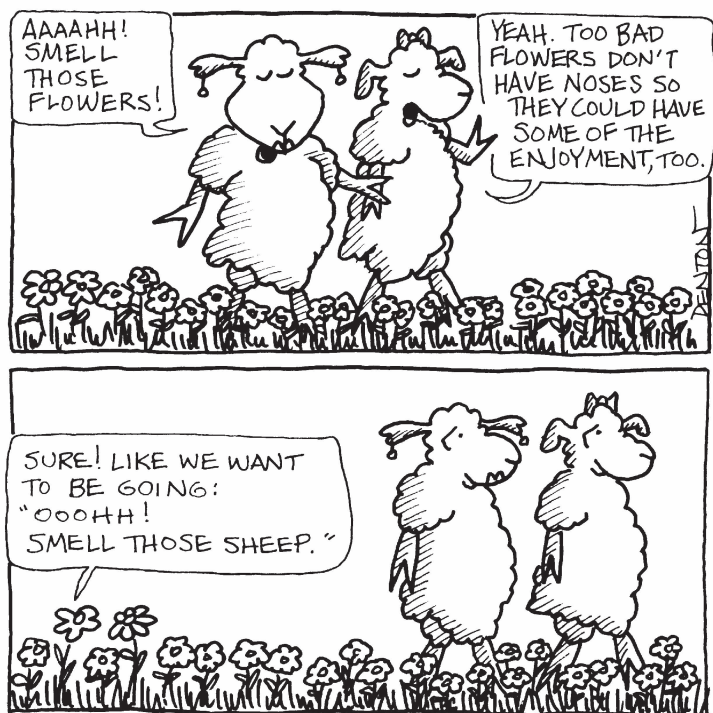
Faith gives children a sense of identity. They belong to a culture. This sense of belonging is crucial as they experience life's pitfalls and challenges. When other children ask them "What are you?" they will have an an-

swer, even if they challenge their beliefs later in life. Religion provides a meaningful context or backdrop to all the randomness of life.

Religion offers traditions and rituals that solidify family life and that get passed on to the next generation. Books such as "Your Catholic Family: Simple Ways to Share the Faith at Home," by Jim Merhaut, list ways parents can teach their children about Scripture, creed and doctrine, liturgy, sacraments and prayer.

Finally faith offers a set of morals and values to abide by. A few studies indicate that religion plays a role in preventing teen suicide, depression and risky behaviors. Children who go to church or are raised in religious homes are more likely to make smart decisions, especially if the parents model good values.

If nothing else, church provides more family time, a weekly opportunity to be quiet together and think about how we can become better parents or children. Mealtime prayers are reminders to be thankful for all of our gifts. Scripture provides a kind of history of where we came from and a set of texts to turn to for meaning.





The Bottom Line

By Antoinette Bosco
Catholic News Service



Help for teens after parents divorce

When parents divorce, families, with rare exceptions, are in turmoil. Households are disrupted in every possible way, from physical living arrangements to the entire strange new atmosphere the shattered family confronts. As a mother once told me after her husband announced he had fallen in love with another woman, "We now breathe poisoned air."

I have studied the impact of divorce on families for the past 40 years, ever since my husband got a divorce and I became a single parent of six, four of them already teenagers. I started working with other mothers like myself, thrust suddenly into a new, unfamiliar world of single parenting. We soon learned that divorce was particularly hard on teenage children, who were grown enough to feel so many new emotions — from confusion and sadness to anger and rebellion — erupting from the breakup of their family. This happened even when the divorce brought relief from family disruption.

I remember a friend who came to ask my help with her 15-year-old son. He had borrowed a friend's motorcycle, went speeding on it and had an accident. Fortunately, he was not badly hurt. When his mother scolded him for going out on his own this way, he simply responded in what seemed a tone of disgust, "You and dad can't solve your problems, so you won't be able to solve mine."

He was only expressing what many teens feel when their parents' marriage breaks up. These youths are dealing with pain, confusion, worries about the fu-

ture — their parents and their own — and are grappling with many emotions never experienced before. They desperately need to relate to adults who can help them understand what they are feeling, and why.

My experience tells me that no one can fill this need better than an adult who has been through it. Lynn Cassella-Kapusinski fits that role in a very honest way. She was 11 when her parents divorced, and she went through so many emotions — anger, fear, frustration and guilt. She sometimes believed the breakup was her fault and would wonder if she was a "bad person."

As she grew older, she grew wiser as she "allowed God to help me." And when she found God's help, she wanted to share what she learned with other young people shaken by the breakup of their parents' mar-

riage. She founded Faith Journeys Foundation Inc. to carry out this work. She's also written a guide to help teenagers who are troubled by their parents' separation or divorce titled "Now What Do I Do?" (Acta Publications).

The guide, written as a workbook to help teens put the spotlight on their very personal situation, rings with authenticity and truth. It deals with all the feelings young people will encounter: blame, grief, loss of self-esteem, communication problems, anger and shaken faith in God. The author is honest in underscoring that these are problems that cannot be "sent underground — for they will always find a way to resurface."

I especially commend her for pointing out that all of us are "human and imperfect." She doesn't gloss over the need to forgive those who hurt us, including parents.

"Forgiveness is the ultimate connection — with parents who have hurt you, with yourself and with God," she writes.

But most important, from her own experience she helps young people see that they can learn much and emerge stronger from this walk through such a tough time.

A Prayer for our National Elections

O God, we acknowledge you today as Lord, not only of individuals, but of nations and governments.

We thank you for the privilege of being able to organize ourselves politically and of knowing that political loyalty does not have to mean disloyalty to you.

We thank you for your law, which our Founding Fathers acknowledged and recognized as higher than any human law.

We thank you for the oppor-

tunity that this election year puts before us, to exercise our solemn duty not only to vote, but to influence countless others to vote, and to vote correctly.

Lord, we pray that your people may be awakened. Let them realize that while politics is not their salvation, their response to you requires that they be politically active.

Awaken your people to know that they are not called to be a sect fleeing the world but rather a community of faith renewing the world.

Awaken them that the same hands lifted up to you in prayer are the hands that pull the lever in the voting booth; that the same eyes that read your Word are the eyes that read the names on the ballot, and that they do not cease to be Christians when they enter the voting booth.

Awaken your people to a commitment to justice, to the sanctity of marriage and the family, to the dignity of each individual human life, and to the truth that human rights begin when human lives begin, and not one moment later.

Lord, we rejoice today that we are citizens of your kingdom. May that make us all the more committed to being faithful citizens on earth.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Priests for Life request this prayer be said daily until Election Day, Nov. 7, 2006. Remember to support their work at www.priestsforlife.org.



The Pope Speaks

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pope says being Christian includes living out faith through charity

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — To be a Christian is more than just identifying oneself as a believer in the faith; it entails living out the Gospel through concrete works of charity, especially for the poor and those in need, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Faith in Christ "must come to fruition in one's life, above all in one's love for the other and in particular in caring for the poor," he said during his weekly general audience June 28.

The pope continued a series of talks on the church's apostolic ministry by focusing his catechesis on St. James the Less. He concentrated on the important legacy St. James left today's Christians in his teachings in the New Testament Letter of James.

This apostle showed people "a Christianity (that is) very concrete and practical," the pope said.

His epistle insists that faith in Christ must not be "reduced to a plain verbal or abstract declaration," but that it must be "expressed concretely in doing good works," said the pope.

St. James also invites people to joyously accept one's trials, he said, and serenely abandon oneself to the will of God, "who knows the true good for us."

Through prayer, God will give the gift of wisdom that leads one to discover that what has true value in life is not the "fleeting riches" on earth but is the awareness that people are meant to share their "means with the poor and needy," the pope said.

While St. Paul said a person will be known as just by his faith in Jesus and not by performing "works of the law," the pope said this seemingly contradictory teaching, in fact, complements what St. James teaches.

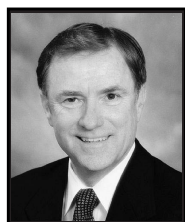
St. Paul was speaking out against pride and self-righteousness that tempt a person into thinking God's grace is not a gift that only God can give, but that it can be earned through performing rituals or good deeds, he said.

Good works, instead, follow from true faith in Jesus, the pope said, because just as a body without the spirit is dead, faith without good works is dead.

At the end of the audience, the pope called on young people to take advantage of these summer months of vacation with useful social and religious activities.

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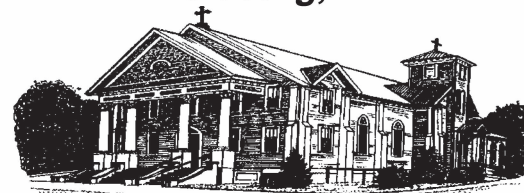


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Served at 11 a.m.

w/ buttered Potatoes, Hush Puppies,
Cole Slaw, Pinto Beans, Bread, Pickles & Tea

Meal Tickets: Lg. \$7.50 • Sm. \$4.50

Drive Thru Line — Plates to go \$7.50

(Hamburgers, Nachos & Snacks after 3 p.m.)

AUCTION at 1:00 p.m.

BINGO 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

COUNTRY STORE • SILENT AUCTION • CAKE WALK • GROCERY WALK • CHILDREN'S GAMES • BOUNCIN' BUDDIES • HORSESHOES • SNOW CONES • DUNKING STAND • PLANT WALK

Music during the day by DOUGLAS POLASEK

FREE DANCE

RED RAVENS — 4-8 p.m.



Religiosa Mexico-Americana pide a los Hispanos no perder su patrimonio cultural

FAIRFIELD, Pa.(CNS) —Una religiosa Mexico-Americana pidió a los jóvenes Hispanos no perder su identidad cultural mientras que se van integrando cada vez más en la Iglesia y Sociedad de los Estados Unidos.

Los Hispanos debemos mantener nuestra herencia cultural si deseamos poseer una buena estima personal y ser líderes en un mundo de culturas encontradas, dijo la Hermana María Elena González, religiosa de la Misericordia, presidente del Centro Cultural Mexico-Americano en San Antonio.

Los Hispanos también debemos estar preparados para asumir roles de liderazgo en la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos ya que nuestro creciente número pronto hará de nosotros la mayoría, dice la

Hermana González. El centro cultural que ella dirige entrena a la gente para servir en el ministerio Hispano y multicultural.

La meta del liderazgo Hispano en la Iglesia debe ser la de “Cosntruir Unidad en la Diversidad”, dijo el 9 de Junio durante su presentación como principal presentadora en el Encuentro Nacional para Jóvenes Hispanos y el Ministerio de Jóvenes Adultos en la Universidad de Notre Dame.

El “Encuentro” del 8 al 11 de Junio, fue el primero en su género a nivel nacional. Su tema fue “Tejiendo Juntos el Futuro”.

Este evento bilingüe fue organizado por la Red de Trabajo Católica Nacional de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (del Ministerio Juvenil Hispano). Fue patrocinado por el Comité de Asuntos Hispanos de la Conferencia de Obispos de los Estados Unidos, el Subcomité de Jóvenes y Adultos Jóvenes de la misma Conferencia y la Universidad de Notre Dame. Participó en el evento un número aproximado de 2,000 jóvenes Hispanos y adultos involucrados en el ministerio juvenil Hispano.

En las reuniones regionales que se tuvieron como preparación para el encuentro nacional, varios jóvenes apuntaron como retos importantes que retomó la Hermana González “La necesidad de elevar la autoestima en la población juvenil Hispana y confrontar la

discriminación que muchos de ustedes enfrentan en sus escuelas, vecindarios, y si ... aún en sus familias, dijo.

Es una triste realidad que aún ahora, en el año 2006, el racismo esta vivo y fuerte”, dijo a Hermana.



Foto del CNS/Karen Callaway

El Arzobispo Jose H. Gómez de San Antonio saluda a participantes del encuentro en la liturgia de clausura del primer Encuentro Nacional de Ministerio Juvenil Hispano y el Ministerio de Jóvenes Adultos en la universidad de Notre Dame en Indiana. El tema de la reunión del 8 al 11 de Junio fue “Tejiendo Juntos el Futuro.”

Pero el racismo no se supera abandonando su herencia cultural en un esfuerzo por ser aceptado, dijo.

Muchos de nuestros jóvenes hispanos tratan de ajustarse y ser aceptados en la cultura dominante, no solo dejando su idioma y cultura detrás de sí, sino hasta rechazándola, ridiculizándola e incluso cambiando su propia apariencia, dijo.

La Hermana criticó a los Hispanos “quienes tratan de hacer blanca su piel, alisar su cabello y usar lentes de contacto de color azul.”

Estos esfuerzos los llevan “a una profunda pérdida de su identidad y en último caso a la pérdida de sí mismos”, dijo.

La Hermana González dijo ser hija de padres Inmigrantes, y haber pasado por el mismo síndrome de rechazo al tratar de adaptarse a los Estados Unidos.

“Yo me avergonzaba de mis propios padres porque ellos nos sabían nada de Inglés, porque fueron pobres y sin educación”, dijo.

Pero “la cultura es el alma de la gente,” dijo.

La identidad de la persona “viene del centro de su ser”, dijo la Hermana González.

En relación con el rápido crecimiento de los Hispanos en los Estados Unidos, dijo que pronto “nosotros vamos a ser la mayoría de los Católicos en los Estados Unidos. En muchas diócesis este cambio demográfico ya se está dando.”

Esto significa que los Católicos Hispanos necesitamos estar preparados para asumir roles de liderazgo, dijo.

“Para ser verdaderamente ministros efectivos en la Iglesia de hoy, ustedes deben ser por lo menos bilingües y más importante aún, ser conscientes y sensibles de su propia identidad cultural y de la identidad cultural de otros”, dijo.

“Esto nos llama a salir de nuestra zonas de seguridad y pasar a lo desconocido”, dijo.

Rechacen la tentación “de construir una Iglesia paralela” únicamente para Hispanos, dijo la Hermana González.

“Es más fácil tener dos grupos de jóvenes – uno para los que hablan Inglés y otro para los que hablan Español— es más seguro y confortable ser líder en mi propio grupo.” Dijo, “Pero el llamado de Dios y el de nuestro Obispo, no es al camino fácil.”

El arzobispo de San Antonio, Jose H. Gómez, en su en su charla del 8 de Junio, dijo a los jóvenes Hispanos que deben convertirse en “una nueva generación de discípulos”.

Los Hispanos deben volver sus ojos a los Mártires Cristianos de México y de otros países Latino Americanos, dijo, como una fuente de inspiración en el deseo de compartir la fe católica a los demás.

“Nos damos cuenta de que muchos jóvenes están perdiendo su fe. Ustedes saben de muchachos que deberían estar aquí y tal vez estén en alguna situación difícil por las drogas. Debemos ser apóstoles para aquellos que nos rodean”, dijo el Arzobispo.

El Arzobispo Gómez describió el reñido debate nacional sobre la inmigración como “un asunto complicado” pero que llama a los Hispanos a ser líderes que levanten su voz por la justicia.

“Aún muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas Católicos con frecuencia se olvidan de dar la bienvenida al extraño. Tenemos que recordarles que todos somos Hijos de Dios. Necesitamos luchar para que haya leyes que respeten la dignidad de los seres humanos” dijo.

Obispo guatemalteco dice que el libre comercio hace más grande la brecha entre los ricos, pobres

TORONTO (CNS)—El libre comercio con sus reglas económicas actuales solamente puede ensanchar la brecha entre ricos y pobres en América Latina, dijo el dijo el Presindete de la Conferencia de los Obispos Guatemaltecos.

“No estoy en contra del libre comercio en su sentido verdadero,” dijo el Obispo Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri de San Marcos, Guatemala. “Pero el libre comercio tiene que estar basado iguales para todos los jugadores.”

El Obispo Ramazzini, quién también encabeza una comisión formada el año pasado con el fin de negociar la reforma de la minería, dió un mensaje en la reunión pública en la universidad de Ryerson en Toronto.

El obispo dijo temer que bajo los términos del Acuerdo Central de Libre Comercio de América, los productos y alimentos de los Estados inundarán los mercados globales, sofocando la producción doméstica de Guatemala.

“El granjero campesino Guatemalteco no tiene ninguna Seguridad Social, ni seguridad en el empleo; tampoco tiene acceso a subsidios gubernamentales, a diferencia del granjero Norteamericano quién tiene equipo de cultivo, sistemas de irrigación, y quién por tanto e inevitablemente producirá más,” dijo.

Por una parte, dijo el obispo, los países industrializados están promoviendo la circulación más libre de mercancías a través de las Américas, haciendo más grande la brecha entre los ricos y la gente pobre incitándolo así para que emigren al Norte buscando nuevas oportunidades. Pero al mismo tiempo, dijo el gobierno de los Estados Unidos está restringiendo el libre movimiento de la gente.

“Hay una contradicción en esta situación,” dijo el obispo.

Obispo Ramazzini también habló sobre el contexto en el cual CAFTA fue firmado el pasado mes de agosto — apresuradamente y sin consulta a la sociedad civil. Desde su firma, el Parlamento Guatemalteco no ha aprobado ninguna legislación para poner el acuerdo en ejecución, y un grupo de abogados apeló a la Corte Constitucional, argumentando que las provisiones de CAFTA son contrarias a la Constitución Guatemalteca.

Obispo Ramazzini dijo él esperaba que la Corte Constitucional Guatemalteca de su fallo declarando al Acuerdo de Libre Comercio como Anticonstitucional. Si se pone en ejecución CAFTA, el Estado Guatemalteco abandonará aún más su derecho de regular la inversión extranjera, ya que los conflictos no serán tratados en cortes guatemaltecas, agregó él.

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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.



Bishops adopt new Mass texts, study reorganization

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — Meeting June 15-17 in Los Angeles, the U.S. Catholic bishops approved a new translation of the Order of Mass and studied a proposal to downsize the committee structure, and eventually the staffing, of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

They approved an extension of the annual national collection for retired religious until 2017 and approved a 2007 assessment on dioceses, equal to the 2006 assessment, to help fund USCCB operations.

The bishops agreed to a proposal that their Committee on Stewardship draft brochures on stewardship for teenagers, one in English and a separate one in Spanish adapted to differences in the relationship many Hispanic youths have with the church.

During their public sessions the first morning and afternoon, they heard a brief report on the work of CRS and lengthier reports on post-hurricane relief in the South; the relationship of Catholic bishops and Catholic politicians; and the rationale behind new Vatican rules for translating Latin liturgical texts into modern languages.

The day before the meeting several leading officials of the USCCB held a press conference urging comprehensive, humanitarian reform of U.S. immigration law, an issue currently being hotly contested in Congress.

For Catholics in the pew, the most important event of the meeting was the debate and vote on a new English translation of the Order of Mass — the exchanges between priest and people and the prayers such as the penitential rite, Gloria, creed, eucharistic prayers and Lord's Prayer that are used regularly in daily or Sunday Masses.

Bishop Donald W. Trautman of Erie, Pa., chairman of the bishops' Committee on Liturgy, said the new Order of Mass transla-

tion still has to be approved by the Vatican and probably will not take effect until the rest of the English translation of the Roman Missal is completed and approved. He thought that could take up to two years.

In his address to the bishops, Bishop Arthur Roche of Leeds, England, president of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, told them that one thing often lost in the freer translations encouraged by the Vatican after the Second Vatican

Council was the richness of scriptural references with which the prayers of the liturgy are filled. In 2001 the Vatican adopted stricter translation rules for all new liturgical translations from the Latin.

The bishops approved the Order of Mass by a vote of 173-29. They also adopted some American adaptations, mainly extra prayers not found in the Latin edition of the Roman Missal, by a vote of 184-8.

New nuncio lauds U.S. church, stresses evangelization

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — In his first address to the U.S. bishops, the new papal nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Pietro Sambi, stressed the importance of evangelization and urged the bishops not to be disheartened by the clergy sexual abuse scandals that have plagued them in media headlines for the past four years. Archbishop Sambi's brief remarks June 15, on the first day of the bishops' three-day spring meeting in Los Angeles, displayed flashes of self-deprecating humor, insight and a focus on current issues in the U.S. church rarely seen in similar addresses by the previous two nuncios to the United States. The Vatican representative to Israel and the Palestinian territories before taking up his U.S. post in February, Archbishop Sambi described the U.S. bishops as "a people of great experience, great holiness and also great suffering."

Nation's first Mexican-American bishop marks 50 years of priesthood

SAN ANTONIO (CNS) — While always loyal to his Hispanic roots, the first Mexican-American bishop in the United States, now-retired Archbishop Patrick F. Flores, was a welcome part of celebrations by "every race, nationality and culture that

make up the church in San Antonio." Msgr. Lawrence Stuebben, vicar general of the San Antonio Archdiocese, made the comment at ceremonies in May marking the archbishop's 50th anniversary as a priest. Referring to him as "a shepherd to the people he loved," Msgr. Stuebben said Archbishop Flores was a true pastor of his flock, helping the poor, the needy, the elderly, prisoners, abused women and children, the forgotten, the homeless, the hungry, the sorrowing and the sick. "People gave him money and things and he gave it away as quickly as he received it," the priest said. "His own personal agenda never got in the way because he didn't have one."

Education summit looks at school closings, future

BOSTON (CNS) — Catholic school educators and administrators took a close look at the challenges facing Catholic schools today, particularly school closings, during a June 23-25 summit at Boston College. The three-day session, co-sponsored by the college, the National Catholic Educational Association and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, focused on new initiatives to improve Catholic schools such as restructuring school systems to meet changing demographics and finding new

U.S. Catholic population up, most other church data down

Continued from p. 1

were 5,252 religious brothers, 265 fewer than the year before.

For the first time since the permanent diaconate was revived after the Second Vatican Council, the total number of permanent deacons in the United States — 14,995 — showed a decline, but it was very slight at 32 below the previous year's total.

Although 46 new parishes

were opened across the country last year, they did not offset parish closings or mergers. The 18,992 parishes listed represent a net loss of 305 parishes last year and mark the first time since 1983 that there were fewer than 19,000 Catholic parishes in the United States and its possessions.

The 1983 directory, which listed 18,839 parishes, reported a Catholic population of almost 52.1 million, or one parish per 2,765 Catholics. The figures in the 2006 directory indicate the ratio has now grown to one parish per 3,640 Catholics.

The 573 Catholic hospitals listed in the new directory are eight fewer than the year before, but in 2005 they served 84.7 million patients, 2.5 million more than the year before.

One anomaly in the 2006 edition's statistical summary was the apparent quadrupling of facilities for residential care of children, or orphanages, from 235 last year to 1,023 this year. The Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., was listed as having 800 orphanages this year, 794 more than it listed last year.

Barbara Conley, Brooklyn diocesan director of child care and planning, told Catholic News Service that the diocese has six agencies whose services include residential care for children. Using that figure would give a national total of such agencies as 229.

A similar anomaly occurred in the 2001 directory when a typist keyed in 244, the number of students in a private Catholic high school in Guam, on the line that should have had the number of schools, which was one, making the national total 243 higher than it really was.

NEW WORDING

Notable changes in Mass prayers and responses approved by the U.S. bishops

PRESENT FORM	CHANGE	OCCURRENCE
"And also with you"	"And with your spirit"	Response whenever the priest says, "The Lord be with you."
"I have sinned through my own fault."	"I have sinned greatly ... through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."	First form of the penitential rite
"We believe ..."	"I believe ..."	Beginning of the Nicene Creed
"Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might."	"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts."	Start of the Sanctus
"It is right to give him thanks and praise."	"It is right and just."	Response when the priest says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."

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NEW WORDING—The new Order of Mass approved by the U.S. bishops will be implemented after Vatican approval. (CNS graphic/Nancy Wiehce)



We at Catholic Charities USA extend our deepest appreciation to everyone who gave to our 2005 hurricane relief effort. It is because of your generosity that Catholic Charities were able to touch over 800,000 victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many more will benefit through our ongoing recovery work.

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Cardinal Bertone named to state; foreign minister to run Vatican City

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI reached outside the Vatican diplomatic corps and appointed Italian Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone of Genoa as his new secretary of state. The Vatican's June 22 announcement said Cardinal Bertone, 71, will succeed Cardinal Angelo Sodano, 78, on Sept. 15 when the pope will hold a special audience with the staff of the Secretariat of State to publicly thank Cardinal Sodano for his 15 years "of generous service to the Holy See." Also June 22, the Vatican announced that Pope Benedict has accepted the resignation of 78-year-old U.S. Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka as president of the commission governing Vatican City State. However, the Vatican said, the pope also asked him to remain until Sept. 15, when he will be succeeded by 71-year-old Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, currently the Vatican's foreign minister.

Pope tells new archbishops that evil will never defeat Christ, church

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The powers of evil and death will never triumph over Christ and the church he built on the rock of Peter and continues to fortify with his successors, Pope Benedict XVI told new archbishops from 18 countries. Though the church and Christ are continually walking toward their cross, suffering and being tossed to and fro like a small boat on a sea whipped up "by the winds of ideologies, ... in the suffering church, Christ is victorious," the pope said during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul June 29. During the Mass, the pope gave the archbishops

named within the previous year a pallium, a circular band of white wool marked with six black crosses. The pallium symbolizes an archbishop's authority and unity with the pope. The pope and archbishops were dressed in brilliant red vestments, but the pope wore a longer, more traditional style of the pallium. Among the 27 archbishops receiving palliums were U.S. Archbishops Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, George H. Niederauer of San Francisco and Donald W. Wuerl of Washington.

Soldier's death should not lead to 'unholy rage,' bishop says

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (CNS) — The death of Army Pfc. Kristian Menchaca, the U.S. soldier captured and brutalized in Iraq, should not lead people to feel "unholy rage and anger," said Bishop Raymundo J. Pena of Brownsville during the June 28 funeral Mass for the soldier. During the bilingual Mass at the Brownsville Event Center, the bishop told hundreds of mourners that reacting with anger "would only dishonor Kristian's very name and Kristian himself." He said, "At this moment, we must, as he did, reach for the ideal: to work for peace and an end to conflict wherever we may find it — at home, on the streets or even in a foreign land." The 23-year-old soldier, the son of a Mexican immigrant, was one of three U.S. Army soldiers who died after a June 16 insurgent attack at the checkpoint they were guarding. Menchaca and another soldier, Pfc. Thomas Tucker from Madras, Ore., were missing for three days before their mutilated bodies were found booby-trapped with explosives. The third soldier, Spc. David J. Babineau from Springfield, Mass., died in the initial attack.

Pakistani archbishop says bias against Christians has increased

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Discrimination against Christians and the desecration of church buildings in Pakistan have increased in the past year, said Archbishop Lawrence Saldanha of Lahore, Pakistan. Archbishop Saldanha told Catholic News Service June 27 that the "common people" are biased against Christians, who are often the poorest and least-educated people in Pakistan. Christians have become "quite

unpopular with the radical Muslims" since the strategic partnership of Pakistan and the United States to fight terrorism, the archbishop said. "We thought we would be good, get some sort of aid" from the partnership, but "it certainly has made it worse" when the increased anti-Christian sentiment is taken into account, said the archbishop. Pakistani church leaders often have said that many Muslims equate Christianity with Western societies.

U.S. dioceses facing financial squeeze, foundation leader says

Continued from p. 1

unrestricted net assets, whose value is probably the best barometer of financial health," he said. "This amounts to (a) decline of a whopping \$16 million a year."

He said the financial officer of "another large, well-run archdiocese" told him that most of its deficit is due to subsidies for parishes with schools. "Impressive efforts to establish scholarship foundations as well as special diocesan campaigns to benefit inner-city schools are not sufficient" to stanch the flow of red ink, he said.

"To keep parish-run schools afloat, the archdiocese is still forced to channel millions of dollars away from other essential ministries," he added. "What's more, operating costs are rising faster than tuition levels and are projected to grow even more dramatically in the years ahead."

He said the financial officer of a third archdiocese he contacted told him that the parish assessment for archdiocesan programs was rising more slowly than expenses.

"Income from special archdiocesan appeals is diverted to help fund clergy pension funds, school scholarships, Catholic charities and the running of the seminary," he said. "And still many needs go unaddressed, including a huge backlist of repairs and maintenance of parish facilities."

The archdioceses he was talking about "would be generally considered healthy and well-managed," he said. "They are not bogged down in courtrooms nor liquidating assets to meet legal settlements. ... While their investments generally have seen better days, they have avoided great losses and can claim balanced financial portfolios."

Butler said another archdiocese he checked out has doubled its revenues in the past eight years but has been forced to make budget cuts each of the past four years because of depleted reserves, growing costs for retired priests and necessary subsidies to parishes serving the poor.

"The time has come to engage the wider community of faith in an urgent discussion of the church's financial plight," he said.

"Financial worries and desperate mea-

sures are crowding out a more evangelical and growth-oriented outlook," he added.

"It need not be this way," Butler said. "I can say this confidently because there is the example of those dioceses and parishes that have wholeheartedly embraced stewardship practices and policies."

He cited the Diocese of Wichita, Kan., as an example, noting that there parish collections are triple the national average and no child attending Catholic school has to pay tuition. He said the St. Paul-Minneapolis Archdiocese, where 2,000 donors built up a \$150 million fund to provide ongoing subsidies to parishes and schools with long-term needs, is another example.

Butler said the wealth of Catholics and their capacity to give have grown enormously in the past generation or two "but with few exceptions the growing superwealth and social position of Catholics have not meant a commensurate gain in funding Catholic institutional life."

He said the church needs to present "a vibrant theology and practice of stewardship," make its goals known in a clear, compelling way that includes open accountability for its use of its resources, and get out the message that each person's gifts and personal involvement in the church's mission are not just welcome but needed.

He said the Boston Archdiocese, which has faced major economic setbacks in the past several years — in part because of the clergy sexual abuse crisis and action on long-overdue parish closings — took a big step forward this spring with its detailed, audited financial report. "The local church's more open policy is already making huge strides toward reuniting the community and rebuilding trust," he said.

At a dinner that evening the Boston Archdiocese received the round table's first "Best Practices Award" for its financial reporting.

The June 29 meeting focused especially on diocesan finances, planning and financial reporting. A luncheon session was devoted to exploring the extraordinary challenges the New Orleans Archdiocese has been facing in its efforts to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina.

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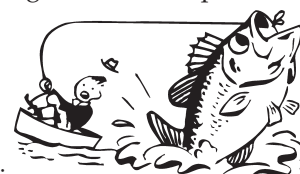
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CNS photo/Paul Haring

CONGRESSMAN SPEAKS AT RALLY AGAINST POVERTY—Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., a civil rights leader, speaks at a rally in Washington June 27 against poverty. Lewis told several hundred people that “you must get in trouble, necessary trouble” to bring about the kingdom of God. Representatives of faith-based groups and several hundred people marched from the National City Christian Church to the U.S. Capitol to call on Congress to eliminate poverty.

Making A Difference

By Tony Magliano
Catholic News Service



Mature patriotism

July 4, more than any other holiday, brings out the spirit of American patriotism. Amid the parades, cookouts and fireworks, we feel proud to be part of a country that enshrines so many freedoms and offers so many opportunities.

Taking pride in our nation's goodness is healthy, as long as it is balanced with an honest view of America's weaknesses and sins. There are countless Americans who are quick to boast that our country is the greatest — as if we have no flaws.

Yes, in many ways America continues to be a great source of light for the world. But mature patriotism acknowledges the darkness that also dwells in the nation's soul. And it accepts responsibility for bringing light into that darkness.

We pride ourselves on being a democracy, yet many are willing to hand over monarchical powers to our political leaders.

Electing people to political office does not mean that we give them absolute power. Responsible citizens closely oversee the actions of their government leaders and demand change when their decisions harm the general welfare.

Our leaders are human. They are certainly capable of making serious blunders. In fact, their actions and inaction frequently ignore the common good.

Why do most Americans sheepishly allow the president and Congress to launch immoral pre-emptive military attacks that start “preventive wars”? Why do follow-

ers of the Prince of Peace permit our leaders to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on the military, while 37 million Americans — 13 million of them children — live in poverty?

Why do millions of citizens living in the richest country in the world allow our government leaders to appropriate only about 0.2 percent of the federal budget for global poverty reduction programs?

Why do most Americans do little to stop the holocaust of abortion? Why aren't they demanding that the Congress and state legislatures pass a constitutional amendment ensuring the protection of all human life from conception to natural death?

Why do so many Americans remain silent as “entertainment” industry leaders flood our society with images and sounds of violence and sex?

And why do the majority of the middle-class and rich support the many American corporations that profit from the suffering of sweatshop workers?

Mature patriotism does not turn a blind eye to these American ills or the many others infecting our nation. Mature patriotism courageously applies the healing ointment of justice, peace and love.

And mature patriotism — for Catholic Americans — works hard to ensure that the principles of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching become the objective standards by which all public policy and corporate decisions are measured.

— **Mature patriotism courageously applies the healing ointment of justice, peace and love.** —

Refugee children play World Cup soccer tournament in East Timor

By Catholic News Service

DILI, East Timor (CNS) — There was no satellite TV feed of the World Cup for the 13,000 refugees crammed into the Don Bosco center outside Dili, but spectators cheered on Brazil and Portugal all the same.

The players wore the shirts of the national clubs, but a bit smaller, since each 20-person team was made of boys in the 10-13 age range, reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency based in Thailand. Brazil and Portugal were so popular when the teams were drawn up that each had an A and B squad, identified by different color shorts. England, Germany, Italy and Spain rounded out the field.

“We are One” was the theme, as Kirsty Sword-Gusmao, East Timor's first lady, told the crowd at the start of the three-day tournament. The friendly competition is good for the children, and it is good to create a strong team, working together, she

said.

“This shows that all children playing football here are one, not ‘lorosae’ or ‘loromonu,’” she said, referring to the local terms for “east” and “west.”

Unrest in Dili in May and June has driven more than 50,000 people into makeshift refugee camps in and around the capital, leaving its streets to gangs claiming to represent easterners or westerners. Numerous houses and other properties have been looted or burned.

Trouble started in April following the government's decision to fire more than a third of the 1,400-member army. Nearly 600 soldiers were dismissed after they went on strike claiming discrimination and a lack of promotion, most of them from the west. The remaining 800 soldiers were mainly from the east.

The June 10-12 soccer tournament was conducted by the Don Bosco center so the children could have fun and be able to focus on something besides the current crisis in the country. The skills-training center six miles west of Dili is the largest of the refugee centers, and approximately half its 13,000 temporary residents are children.

In the final match June 12, Brazil B emerged the champion with a 5-4 victory over Portugal A.

“We want the children to have time to play even though they are refugees,” said 26-year-old Jeronimo Hendrique Bastista, the coordinator of the tournament.

The tournament was created in collaboration with the U.S. bishops' Catholic Relief Services, the local church's Caritas organization for relief and development, UNICEF, and the first lady.

In a recent homily, Bishop Robert Lynch of St. Petersburg, Fla., said to the priests of his diocese, “If I have a fear for the church in this moment of history, it is that we may just have lost a portion of our soul. ... Is it not possible that the church, and perhaps even we ordained, have become too comfortable, too rich in a way, that we are no longer either the voice or stewards of the church for the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the vulnerable, the naked and the imprisoned? ... Are we afraid to speak, as Pope John Paul did, against the war in Iraq?”

Important questions for all of us to ponder as we strive to achieve mature patriotism.

Guatemalan bishop says free trade widens gap between rich, poor

By Catholic News Service

TORONTO (CNS) — Free trade under the current economic rules can only widen the gap between rich and poor in the Americas, said the head of the Guatemalan bishops' conference.

“I am not against free trade in its true sense,” said Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri of San Marcos, Guatemala. “But free trade has to be based on equal rules for all players.”

Bishop Ramazzini, who also heads a commission formed last year to negotiate mining reform, spoke June 8 at a public meeting at Ryerson University in Toronto.

The bishop said he is afraid that under terms of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, U.S. food products will flood global markets, stifling domestic production for Guatemala.

“The Guatemalan peasant farmer has no social security, no job security; neither does he have access to subsidies, (unlike) the U.S. farmer, who has farming equipment, irrigation systems, and who will inevitably produce more,” he said.

On the one hand, the bishop said, industrialized countries are promoting the freer movement of goods throughout the Americas, widening the gap between rich and poor and inciting people to go North for new opportunities. But at the same time, he said, the U.S. government is restricting the free movement of people.

“There is a contradiction in this situation,” the bishop said.

Bishop Ramazzini also spoke about the context in which CAFTA was signed last August — hurriedly and without consultation with civil society. Since its signing,

the Guatemalan Parliament has not passed legislation to implement the accord, and a group of lawyers petitioned the Constitutional Court, arguing that CAFTA's provisions are contrary to the Guatemalan Constitution.

Bishop Ramazzini said he hoped the Guatemalan Constitutional Court will rule the accord unconstitutional. If CAFTA is implemented, then the Guatemalan state will relinquish even more of its right to regulate foreign investment, as disputes will no longer be tried in Guatemalan courts, he added.

Foreign investments in Guatemala have shown that not all trade is necessarily advantageous to poor communities, said the bishop.

For example, he said, a gold mine in his diocese run by Montana Exploradora, a subsidiary of the Canadian and U.S. company Glamis Gold Ltd., has started operations although many of San Marcos Ixtahuacan's mainly indigenous residents claim that there was no adequate consultation with the community, as required by an International Labor Organization convention. The convention sets out the rights of indigenous peoples, stipulating that they must be consulted prior to any development on their lands.

While the mining operations will create a number of jobs for a limited period, the bishop said he wondered whether such jobs were worth the environmental damage and the depletion of an already limited water supply. The company pays only 1 percent of profits to the state; half goes to the central government and half to the local government.

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Family conference to feature popular speakers, entertainers in July

SAN ANTONIO—The first annual Summertime Catholic Family Evangelization Conference will be held Friday, July 28 through Sunday, July 30, 2006, at the Municipal Auditorium in San Antonio, Texas.

The conference themed “The Truth Will Set You Free!” will be presented by Fullness of Truth, a non-profit Catholic Evangelization Ministry.

The conference will hold inspiring youth presentations, as well as adult features including Fathers Mitch Pacwa and Pablo Straub, Rosalind Moss, Tim Staples, Christopher West, Jesse Romero and many more.

Youth ages 8 – 17 will experience an inspiring program and concerts featuring RADIX, a Catholic ministry that challenges and encourages youth to embrace

the Catholic faith using a variety of means such as drama, music, comedy and history. Tim Staples, Jesse Romero and Christopher West will also present at the youth presentations.

A special concert featuring San Antonio’s own David Kauffman and internationally renowned spiritual performer Tony Melendez will grace attendees on Saturday night. Dramatic and musical

presentations will continue throughout the conference by RADIX, with Doug Barry and Eric Genuis.

Child care for children ages 12 months to 7 years is available.

Don’t miss this inspiring event. For more information or to register, please go to www.fullnessoftruth.org or call Ticket Servant at 1-800-731-4500.

Special Collections

Retired and needy priests of the Diocese — Sept. 2-3

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: Sept. 15-17, and Nov. 17-19. The dates for 2007 are: Jan. 26-28, March 2-4, April 27-29, June 22-24, Sept. 28-30, and Nov. 30-Dec. 2. 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 (800) 470-2230. 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 Georgia (361) 573-9435 or Jean at (361) 578-8760 or Sue at (361) 578-3106.

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—Upcoming ACTS retreat dates. **Men’s ACTS** retreats: August 17 – Holy Family, Victoria, SRC. **Women’s ACTS** retreats: July 13 – Holy Cross, Bay City, SRC; July 20 – OLG/Spanish, SRC; July 27 – OLS, Victoria, SRC; Aug. 3 – Sacred Heart, Hallettsville, Women/Teens, Cathedral Oaks; Aug. 10 – Assumption, Ganado, TBE. **Teens ACTS** retreats: June 15 – Sacred Heart, Hallettsville, CO; July 27 – St. Philip, El Campo, CO; Aug. 3 – Sacred Heart, Hallettsville, Women/Teens, CO. For more information see the ACTS Web site at www.actsmissions.org.

Natural Family Planning—For English or bilingual sessions of the **Sympto-Thermal Method (S-TM)** in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. For information about the Sympto-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella DeLos Santos (361) 573-2624. Introductory presentations on the **Creighton Model Ovulation Method** are offered in Wharton at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and in East Bernard at Holy Cross Catholic Church. Please contact Melissa Morse at (979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. **Natural Family**

Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.

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

Picnics, Activities, etc.

July

Moravia—Ascension of Our Lord Parish Picnic (located at FM 957 and FM 532) July 16 with Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by a fried-chicken and stew dinner at 11:00 a.m. at \$6.50 p/p and children \$3.50 with drive-thru plates (\$6.50 p/p) to go from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There will be a cakewalk, games, country store and music during the day and night with The Czechaholics and Mark Halata - Texavia. There will be an auction at 1:00 p.m.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser July 16 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.

Austin— Marywood Children and Family Services in Austin will hold an adoption information meeting Tuesday, July 18, at 6:30 p.m. at 510 W. 26th Street in Austin, Texas. Free parking is available off Guadalupe Street. For more information, please go to: www.marywood.org or call (512) 472-9251.

San Antonio—1st Annual Catholic Men’s Conference, *Come to Me*, July 28 eve. – July 29, with nationally known speakers, inspirational music, the rosary, Mass, Eucharistic Healing Service and much more. Speakers: Ralph Martin – “My Five Most Important Decisions”; Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers, “Male Spirituality”; Steve Bollmann, “That Man Is You!”; Father John Jesus Maloney, FJ, “Mary, Seat of Wisdom”; and Father John Waiss, “Man, Created in God’s Image”. The conference will focus on the Search for Truth of God’s Plan in the Life of Men. \$35 p.p. includes box lunch on Saturday. For more info. please go to www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org or call (210) 521-3377.

When & Where

August

Port O’Connor—Knights of Columbus 9088 fishing tournament. See p. 17 for more information.

Boling—St. Joseph Mission Annual Bazaar and Barbecue Aug. 6 at the community center (County Road 162). A barbecue-beef, chicken, and sausage dinner will be served rom 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be various games and booths for all ages. Music by Bobby Jones Czech Band 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. A domino tournament begins at 7:30 a.m. with registration at 7:00 a.m. at \$10 p/p (bring your own partner).

Frelsburg—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival Aug. 6 beginning with Mass at 8:15 a.m. A fish-fry dinner begins at 11:00 a.m. (lg. \$7.50 p/p and small \$4.50 p/p) with drive-thru available at \$7.50 p/p. The auction starts at 1:00 p.m. There will be a country store, silent auction, cakewalk, children’s games, horseshoe ptching, refreshments and more. Music during the day by Douglas Polasek. A free dance from 4:00-8:00 p.m. with the Red Ravens providing music. See pg. 14 for more information.

Yoakum—St. Joseph Parish Picnic Aug. 6 at the community center. A stew and sausage dinner begins at 10:30 a.m. An auction starts at 12:30 p.m. There will be a country store, games, cakewalk, pantry wheel, horseshoe tournament and more throughout the afternoon. Mexican food available in the afternoon.

Palacios—St. Anthony Shrimporee Aug. 6 at Palacios Rec. Center (2401 Perryman). A barbecue-seafood dinner will be served. There will be live music, country store, games, an auction and much more. Fun for all ages!

Weimar—St. Michael Harvest Feast Aug. 13 at the Veteran’s Memorial Park. A fried-chicken and stew dinner will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. Drive-thru, take-home plates available at St. Michael Family Center only. There will be entertainment for all: games, train ride, moon walk and

cakewalk. Music throughout the afternoon and evening. There will be an auction at 1:30 p.m. in the a/c hall.

Praha—St. Mary Parish Picnic, “Prazska Pout,” Aug. 15 beginning at 10:00 a.m. with Mass. A stew and fried-chicken dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. An auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be a country store, cakewalk, toy walk, games and more. Food available throughout the afternoon and evening. Hamburgers available after 4:00 p.m. Music throughout the day and evening.

Hillje—St. Andrew Summer Festival Aug. 20 at St. Andrew Parish Hall. A prime-beef barbecue, homemade sausage dinner will be served starting at 11:00 a.m. (serve yourself in the hall) and drive thru plates-to-go available at \$6.50 p/p. Bulk sales available at the pit. The indoor auction begins at 12:30 p.m. There will also be a country store, bake sale, cakewalk, games and music.

Cistern—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Picnic Aug. 20 beginning with Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by a stew and fried-chicken dinner. Music throughout the day. There will be an anuction, games and more for all to enjoy.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Aug. 20 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.

El Campo—St. Robert Bellarmine Parish Picnic Aug. 27 at the KC Hall.

Upcoming Events

High Hill—St. Mary Parish Picnic, Sept. 3

Hallettsville—Sacred Heart Parish Festival, Sept. 3

Shiner—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Picnic, Sept. 3

Vanderbilt—St. John Bosco Picnic Sept. 3 at the Trinity Family Center. A barbecue-brisket and sausage dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with plates to go available at \$6 p/p. There will be an auction at 1:00 p.m.; games, refreshments, cakewalk, religious and craft store and much more for young and young at heart.

Cuero—Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Jamaica, Sept. 3

Nada—St. Mary Parish Festival and Homecoming, Sept. 3

Inez—St. Joseph Annual Parish Picnic, Sept. 10

Yorktown—Holy Cross Festival, Sept. 10

Port Lavaca—Our Lady of the Gulf Festival, Sept. 10

San Antonio—5th annual Catholic Women’s Conference, *Come to Me*, Sept. 22 eve. – Sept. 23, with nationally known speakers, inspirational music, the rosary, Mass, Eucharistic healing service and more. Speakers: Father John Jesus Maloney, FJ, –*Mary, our Mother of Hope, Model for all Women, and Intercessor*; Dr. Martha Garza, OB/GYN, *A Professional Woman Speaks on God’s Mercy and Forgiveness*; Mary Jane Fox founder and chairperson of the Catholic Women’s conference, *Encounter the Risen Lord – Our Healer*; Gloria Zapiain, Diocese of Laredo, *Between the Rock Peter, and a Hard Place – Living the Life of Faith in the New Millenium*; Barbara Nicolosi, ACTONE, Inc., *Signs of Hope from Hollywood* and *What is Beauty? Women – Nurturers of Art*; Suzanne Baars, LPC, Healing Ministry, *I Will Give Them a New Heart: Discovering the Divine Plan for Our Emotions*; music by Sarah Hart; and Emceed by Stephanie Welch. \$45 p.p. includes boxed lunch on Saturday. For more information, please go to www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org or call (210) 521-3377.

Bloomington—St. Patrick Annual Turkey Dinner and Fall Festival, Sept. 24

El Campo—St. Philip the Apostle Parish Picnic, Sept. 24 at the KC Hall

Meyersville—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Barbecue, Sept. 24

Sweet Home—Queen of Peace Parish Picnic, Sept. 24

Victoria—Catechetical Conference Sept. 30 at Holy Family

Goliad—Immaculate Conception Fall Festival, Oct. 15

San Antonio—Oct. 20-21, 2006, Criminal Justice Conference at the Cathedral Conference Center. For more information, please contact Beverly Lincke at (361) 277-5828.

Summer Events

Victoria—Our Lady of Victory Summer Day Camp Program for children ages 3-12. Activities include field trips, arts and crafts, cooking, reading, movies, swimming, special programs and many more fun activities. For registration information call (361) 575-0498.

Victoria—Our Lady of Lourdes Vacation Bible Study “Gospel Light’s Son Treasure Island – Discovering God’s Love” will be held July 10 – 14 from 9:00 a.m. to noon in OLL’s CCD building for kindergarten through 4th grade children (2005-06 school yr.). Youth and adult volunteers needed. For more information contact VBS directors: Michelle Yates 576-9819 or Deidre Kalina 576-5235.



ACTS of faith

Retreats to isolated Spiritual Renewal Center result in profound experiences

By Tracy Simmons
Victoria Advocate

The buses roll along a long bumpy road between Victoria and Refugio, past grazing cows, mobile homes and fallen tree limbs until they come to a somewhat smooth road that leads to a cluster of mud-brown log cabins.

In the center is a tall chapel, called cenacle, topped with a cross. Its backdrop is some of the only rolling hills in South Texas.

A cow lows in the distance and sleek hawks squawk overhead - witnesses to prayer, Bible studies and hearts that soften at the Spiritual Renewal Center of the Victoria Diocese.

This is home to the local ACTS retreat. The name doesn't represent the biblical book of Acts, but instead stands for Adoration, Community, Theology and Service, and is a retreat open to anyone, no matter their religion.

On any given Thursday evening a group of at least 40 women or 40 men board a bus at a local Catholic parish and head out to the retreat center - some with the jitters.

"When I got on the bus I thought, 'What did I get myself into?'" said Kathy Barnette, who went at the urging of co-workers at Citizens Medical Center.

She wasn't alone. No one on the bus was sure what awaited them at the renewal center, but they had all been told to go experience it for themselves.

Before Barnette left for the bus she wrote a note to her husband that read, "I don't know what I'm getting myself into, no one will tell me anything, but I know I'm very sad, I'm very lonely, and this is something I have to do for myself."

When she got there, the first thing Barnette noticed was the serenity.

"It's beautiful, very quiet and very peaceful," she said.

It was a far cry from what life had been dealing her.

"I had several things in my life that had come up - my husband had cancer, my mother died three years ago and my son was on his second tour in Iraq," she said. "I was very sad all the time and I needed to do something. This came up and I said yes."

The renewal center only has room for so many, so not everyone who signs up is selected. But it wasn't by chance that her name was chosen, she said.

"I've really learned that in this walk, nothing is a coincidence."

After three days at the Spiritual Renewal Center, Barnette could say she was happy again, though she couldn't explain the specifics of what took place, the things that put a smile back on her face.

"It's the River Rule. You never discuss anything that happens out there," she said.

But she feels sure enough of what she learned to recommend the retreat.

"When you go out there, there's an answer for everybody," she said. "Everybody has questions in their life and I think they'll find it. If you really go there with an open heart and are searching for something that's missing in your life, if you have a void in your life, go and find it."

Sharing with others is one way to experience the retreat but it isn't mandatory.

"The only time I got up to speak was to say my name," Barnette said. "If you don't feel like saying anything, you don't have to. It's your choice."

Barnette had been raised a Catholic but hadn't been attending church. Since the

retreat, she said, she's been attending Our Lady of Victory on a regular basis.

"I'm having to start all over," Barnette said. "I go to church and I'm looking at what I'm supposed to be saying. I couldn't remember how to do confession."

She's made lifelong friends from the retreat and attends church with them.

"I met so many wonderful ladies there. It was a good camaraderie and coming together with people from all walks of life," she said. "I have no doubt that I can call any one of these women and they'll be there for me for anything. It's a close-knit group."

Now Barnette is on an ACTS team and is helping to organize an April retreat. She explained that people go once as a participant and after that serve on teams.

Wayne Gonzales, who serves on ACTS teams, has a black, red, blue, green and white beaded bracelet around his wrist, a symbol of his participation.

"Black stands for the original sin that we were born into, red stands for the blood shed for us by Jesus Christ, blue is for baptismal sacrament, green is for spiritual growth and white is for the purity we strive for," said Gonzales, a jeweler at Eichhorn Gonzales & Miller Jewelers.

His face lights up when he looks back on the three retreats he's been to at the renewal center.

"I was invited to go and had a chip on my shoulder," he said, goose bumps rising on his arms as he relates his story - at least the part he's allowed to tell.

"It's very powerful," he began. "There's a little chapel and no noise but the birds. You're one with God there."

At the retreat he discovered why he had that chip on his shoulder.

"When I looked at myself, there were sins that had been forgotten for about 25, 26 years that had come back up," he said. "I must have kept it hid away, but the thorn was still there."

He described the sins as a skeleton in his closet that he had been trying to forget about, but couldn't.

The retreat made him realize that the sins he had committed during his life that he thought were unmentionable weren't so paralyzing after all.

"It makes you realize that no sin is unforgivable (except for one)," Gonzales said.

Matthew 12:31-32 says, "Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

Gonzales said he will always remember when he told his "unspeakable sins" to his confessor, Father Michael Lyons, pastor of Assumption Church in Ganado.

"He got up and hugged me," he said. "The baggage is gone. I realized out there that one sin I thought was unspeakable

wasn't that bad to God."

Bill Reichert said he has been on about 10 retreats as part of a team and now e-mails about 500 participants and team members with prayer requests and daily reflections.

"I turned into the info guy," he said, clutching wooden rosary beads.

Reichert said he went on his first ACTS retreat when he realized he was "mortal."

"I guess I was at a point in my life where I realized it was 30 years of selfishness," he said.

He explained that he had been focusing on the fun things in life that made him happy instead of what made his wife and children happy, and more importantly what made God happy.

He said he had fallen away from the Catholic Church and wasn't pleased with his life so he joined a rosary group.

"It helped me get focused on God and on what I need to be," Reichert said.

Someone in his rosary group asked him if he'd like to have a "weekend of Christian faith," and that's how he got involved with ACTS. His first retreat was in Cuero.

Since then each retreat he's been on has gotten better, he said.

"It's basically people reminding us that we share a common threat of failure," he said. "There's always hope no matter what."

To keep the "spiritual high" he gets from the retreats, Reichert said he surrounds himself with reminders - prayer beads, the ACTS beaded bracelet and the book "Coming Down the Mountain (how to turn your retreat into everyday living)" by Thomas Hart.

Marie Walker isn't a member of any particular church. She, too, was inspired by a friend to go on the retreat.

"I work with somebody who is very involved in the ACTS retreat," she said. "At first I said no."

Eventually Walker changed her mind and on Feb. 9 got on the bus and headed to the Spiritual Renewal Center.

"I wanted to go for my own spiritual growth, not for a religious experience," she said. "I had heard a lot of good things about it and wanted to see what I could learn from it."

She said her friend told her that although the Catholic Church sponsors the retreat, it's open to all faiths.

"It didn't matter to me that it's based on the Catholic religion ... I can learn from anybody," Walker said.

However, on the Thursday she left for the retreat she wasn't sure of her decision.

"I don't really know what goes on there," she said before embarking. She was walking into the unknown.

But when she returned Sunday night, she realized she had learned how not to be judgmental toward others.

"I think that when I look at people I can stop judging them automatically before I ever get to know them," she said.

Walker also said that by meeting other

women at the retreat she was reminded of how strong women are.

"It reinforced everything I knew," she said.

The retreat also made her realize that her life is important to God.

"I'm worthy. No matter what I've done in my life, I'm a worthy person," she said. "Forgiveness is a big thing. We all have skeletons in our closet."

"I'd recommend it for anyone who wants to go on a spiritual journey," said Walker, adding that she would go back if given the opportunity. She wears the beaded bracelet to remind her of the weekend.

Kimberly Haschke said the bracelet has an extra special meaning for her.

Each ACTS team does something special for the retreat. Haschke's team let the participants pick out a charm to add to the beads.

Haschke said she didn't know which charm to choose, so she let one of her team leaders pick one out for her. The team member chose a Jesus fish, called ichthus, with a cross inside of it - which happened to be an exact replica of the tattoo on the arm of her ex-husband, who had recently passed away.

The charm wasn't a coincidence, Haschke said, and neither was the timing, allowing her to get closure regarding his death.

"If you go, you go exactly when you're supposed to go," she said.

Jennifer Poncik doesn't wear the ACTS bracelet, instead she has one with 14 charms - one for each retreat she's been on.

She went first as a participant to see what it was all about.

"I think the world of it," she said. "It's pretty amazing. It helped me grow spiritually and it helped me become aware of others."

Poncik said she has made lifelong friends through the ACTS retreat and is comforted knowing the ACTS community is there for her.

"It helps through the trials in life to know we have a community where someone always has your back," she said.

Men and women go on the retreats separately and Poncik said it's not unusual for 100 women to sign up, though only about half of them can go at a time.

"At a retreat you definitely feel the Holy Spirit, you can tell its presence," she said. "It's an eye opener. It makes you realize there is a God and there is eternity, which makes you want to strive for it."

The retreat is a time to put everyday problems aside and focus on God, she said.

"What do you have to lose except for a few days? I don't know anyone who's left ACTS disappointed they came."

The ACTS retreat movement began in the Archdiocese of San Antonio in 1987. According to www.actsmissions.org the retreat is expanding to parishes across the country. There are retreats in Texas, Missouri, California, Connecticut and Alaska.

A typical retreat is from Thursday evening through Sunday morning. Reichert said it costs between \$130 and \$150, but he noted that scholarships and sponsorships are available.

Recently the retreat had its first all-Spanish weekend for men. A retreat is also available for those who are physically disabled.



Wayne Gonzales assembles a handcrafted bracelet for people who attend an ACTS retreat to wear. He explained that each colored bead has a significance. Photo by Advocate