

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

May 2006

In Brief



David Wayne Berger, son of Ernest and Mary Ann Berger, will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop David E. Fellhauer at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, David's home parish in Shiner, on Saturday, June 3, 2006.

David is a 1994 graduate of Shiner High School and is 30 years old. He attended Texas A & M University, graduating in 1999 with a BS in psychology; he entered the University of Dallas, Holy Trinity, in the fall of 1999 and graduates in May of 2006 from St. Mary's Seminary in Houston.

Attending his ordination will be his six sisters: Nancy Ellis, Patricia Svetlik, Jeanette Shimek, Anna Berger, Laura Srubar, and Jane Crosslin; and three brothers: Thomas, Ernest Jr., and James.

**Islam, West Clash;
Arab and a good neighbor
See pg. 15.**



CNS photo from Reuters

On April 18, St. Peter's Basilica celebrated its 500th anniversary since the laying of its cornerstone. See pg. 17.

Coming in June

- Holy Family, Victoria, 25th Anniversary
- 9th Annual Mother Seton Awards
- Diocesan High School's 2006 Top Graduates

St. Philip Parish to celebrate 75th anniversary

EL CAMPO—St. Philip the Apostle Parish in El Campo, Wharton County, will dedicate an official Texas Historical Marker on Sunday, June 4, at 3:00 p.m. to reflect the history of the parish, from the first Mass in 1898 to the present time.

On this occasion, the parish will also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the dedication of the present church building and Bishop David Fellhauer will unveil the marker.

Anyone who would like more information about the afternoon's program may contact the parish office at (979) 543-3770.

El Campo was established as a stop on the New York, Texas, and Mexican Railroad line in 1881. The rich farmland brought settlers from nearby counties as well as from other states and Europe. Each ethnic group brought its own language, culture, traditions, and religion. Individuals of Czech, Irish, and German descent were among those of the Catholic

See St. Philip Parish, p. 7

Special 4-page, pull-out on the Da Vinci Code

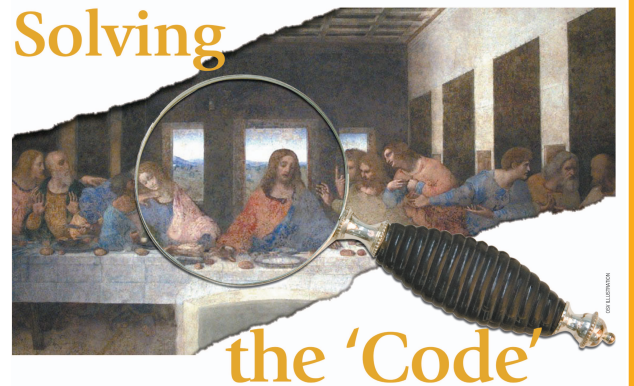
Vatican official suggests Catholics boycott 'The Da Vinci Code' film

OSV In Focus
'The Da Vinci Code'

ROME (CNS) — Catholics should consider boycotting the film "The Da Vinci Code" as one way to let the world know the story offends and defames the church, said Archbishop Angelo Amato, secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

If the kind of "slander, offenses and errors" contained in Dan Brown's best-selling book and the film based on it had been written about "the Quran or the Shoah (the Holocaust), they rightly would have provoked a worldwide uprising," the archbishop told Catholic communications directors.

Speaking about "The Da Vinci Code," Archbishop Amato said, "Christians should be more sensitive to rejecting lies and gratuitous defamation."



Truck fund-raiser, Bishop's Golf Tournament bring in big donations for Spiritual Renewal Center

By Debbie Vanelli, Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

"The great thing about this game is that even the bad days are wonderful." That quote seems to capture the spirit and enthusiasm of the 31 teams at the Bishop Fellhauer Charities Invitational Golf Tournament held on March 31, 2006, at the Colony Creek Country Club.

The tournament, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus 9088 from Holy Family in Victoria, raised \$11,100 for construction of the youth activity/multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.

It was a beautiful spring day with a persistent breeze which challenged the golfers throughout the afternoon. Amid sounds of good-humored joking and some serious golf playing, the teams competed for the cash prizes and bragging rights.

The celebrity fun hole featured former Dallas Cowboy star linebacker D.D. Lewis, winner of five Super Bowl rings, and our very own Bishop David Fellhauer.

The non-golfing members of the Knights of Columbus enjoyed the day on the club house deck playing dominoes and cards until the day transformed into evening and the tired but ever jubilant golfers joined them in the club house for seafood gumbo and crawfish "ottouffee," compliments of Otto Bleier and his crew of culinary specialists.

The winners of the golf tournament include: **First Flight winners:** 1st place: the team of Claude Jacobs, Dr. Joe Long, Ricky Reeves, and Scott Nichols with a score of 46.3; 2nd place: the team of Doug Vrazel, Jim Poe, John Brimberry, and Ron Dickson with a score of 47.0; 3rd place: the team of John Pribyl, Mike Wharton, Tim Tinsley, and Tommy Orsak with a

score of 49.9.

Second flight winners include: 1st place: the team of Cliff Korpi, Dean Stagner, Linda Stagner, and Rick Hopper with a score of 42.6; 2nd place: the team of Bill Sanders, Carol Willis, Tim Braaten, and Wanda Sanders with a score of 43.0; 3rd place: the team of Bob, Darryl and Gilbert Melnar and Joe Darilek with a score of 45.1.

Third flight winners include: 1st place: the team of Eddie Miller, J.D. Williamson, Junior Adams, and Ronnie McCown with a score of 43.8, 2nd place: the team of Arthur Buckert, Bill McArdle, and Denise and George Totah with a score

of 44.6, 3rd place: the team of Robert Kaiser, Shannon Henrichs, Silvano Silva, and Tom Hawes with a score of 44.8.

Special contest winners were Scott Nichol and Tina Garcia for closest to the line, and Joe Darilek and Susan Adams for closest to the pin.

Anticipation ran at a feverish pace as at the end of the evening the one winning ticket for a Blackwood 2006 Toyota Tacoma pick-up truck was drawn. Many in the audience had altruistic plans for the pick-up if they had been declared the winner. One of the golfers planned to give the truck to Hospice if he were the win-

See Truck fund-raiser, p. 2



Bishop David E. Fellhauer hands the keys of the prized Blackwood Toyota pick-up to Joseph Jendrzey of Holy Cross Parish in Yorktown. He is the winner of the truck fund-raiser held this spring — just one of many fund-raisers to be held throughout the diocese for the construction of the youth activity/multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.



St. Philip's students experience poverty

EL CAMPO—During the season of Lent, the church calls us to intensify our spiritual practices of prayer, fasting, and charitable giving: *prayer* to strengthen our loving relationship with God, spilling over to a love of others; *fasting* to deprive ourselves of certain earthly things to remind ourselves of our necessary dependence on God and also to experience a solidarity with those poor who must “fast” everyday, not out of choice, but out of want; and finally *charitable giving* by which we participate in the overflowing generosity of God by sharing our abundance with “the least of the brethren.”

In an attempt to concretely impress upon the students of St. Philip School in El Campo the significance of Christ's mandate of charitable giving as a path to Christian perfection, as well as to raise a greater awareness of the reality and injustice of poverty in our world, Mr. Tommy Chen, a diocesan seminarian from St. Ann Parish in Point Comfort who is spending his Pastoral Year in El Campo, taught a lesson in poverty to St. Philip School's fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. With the help of Mrs. Gwen Edwards and Ms. Lynette Strnadel they participated in a “World Banquet” which was modeled

table organization called *Food for the Poor*. This video vividly portrayed the sad conditions of life in Third World countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, and various Central American countries. The intention of showing this video was to visually connect the students' First World sensibilities to the real plight of the Third World countries.

The next day, the “World Banquet” was conducted. The students in the four classes were randomly divided into three groups representing the three major socioeconomic classes in the world: wealthy, middle-class, and poor, with the worldwide distribution of the classes being roughly 15 percent wealthy, 25 percent middle-class, and 60 percent poor. As the students entered the “banquet hall” ... i.e. the school cafeteria, each student reached into a canvas bag and drew out a colored poker chip. Fifteen percent of the poker chips were blue, representing the wealthy class; 25 percent of the poker chips were red representing the middle-class; and 60 percent of

the poker chips were white, representing the poor. The students were not informed beforehand of the meaning of the poker chips.

After they were warmly welcomed to the banquet, the “wealthy” students with the blue chips were invited to stand and proceed to a dining table that was formally set with a tablecloth, lit candles, fresh flowers, china, and silverware, with classical music playing in the background. These students feasted on freshly baked rolls with real butter, a whole rotisserie chicken, bacon-wrapped green beans, a rich chocolate cake topped with vanilla ice-cream, and had a variety of drinks such as sparkling grape and apple juice, Coke, Dr. Pepper, and bottled

water.

The “middle-class” students with the red chips were invited to a separate undecorated cafeteria dining table positioned across the room. These students feasted on homemade sausage, bread, cookies, and tea using plastic-ware.

The “poor” students with the white chips were literally “marginalized.” They were invited to take a seat on the floor in

one of the far corners of the cafeteria. A piece of burlap was placed on the floor for their “comfort.” These students received one Styrofoam plate and one plastic spoon and “feasted” on steamed white rice and bland, boiled pinto beans.

Needless to say, the eyes of the “lower class” students were fixed on the abundant and rich foods of the “wealthy” students. While the “wealthy” students laughed and



The students representing the world's wealthy — 10-15 percent of the population — were served a formal dinner seminarian Tommy Chen.

enjoyed their feast, the necks of the “poor” students grew long, peering over the tables in envy of the sumptuous banquet of the “wealthy.” The inequality between the classes was quickly felt and vocally expressed by the “poor” students and even by some of the “middle-class” students.

After about thirty minutes of “feasting,” the entire participating student body was called together for a discussion of their experience and to reflect on two key gospel passages: Luke 16: 19-31 (The Rich Man and Lazarus) and Matthew 25: 31-46 (The Judgment of the Nations).

The central message of this exercise and of the school's lesson on poverty was summed up in the words of our Lord Jesus as recorded by St. Matthew: *Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you? And the king will reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'*



To emphasize the great divide between the world's rich and poor, these St. Philip students represented the marginalized poor of the world - 60 percent of the population. They sat on burlap, eating beans.

after Oxfam's hunger banquet.

By participating in this exercise, the students were allowed a small taste of the disparity between the various socioeconomic classes within our own global society.

They began their lesson on poverty on Wednesday, March 22, by first watching a video titled *Love One Another* which was produced by an interdenominational chari-



Sacred Heart School National Junior Honor Society new members are (back) Morgan Meyer, Jamie Vanek, Haylee Grahmann, Cody Filip, Stephen Jansky; (middle) James Hemmi, Delani Filip, Amanda Shimek, Ariel Fojt; and (front) Jordan Pettus, Alexandra Bludau, Daniel Halata, and Colby Mikes. They join current National Junior Honor Society members Kristin Dworsky, Serena Remmers, Collette Lapham, Samantha Kubena, Kelsey Jansky, Clay Bludau, Aaron Schaefer, Wade Brown, Kaylie Steffek, Kadee Bludau, Jennifer Kallus, Amaris Wick, Ryan Fojt, Amy Klimitchek, Whitney Snider, Ricky Fenner, Anna Hemmi, and Megan Pavlicek.

Truck fund-raiser, Bishop's Golf Tournament brings in big donation for Spiritual Renewal Center

Continued from p. 1

ner; several planned to donate it back to the Diocese of Victoria, while one of the priests in our diocese planned to give it to his dad.

Mr. Joseph Jendrzey was announced the blessed winner as the crowd gave a thunderous applause. He is a parishioner of Holy Cross Parish in Yorktown.

Joe received a call from George Wenzel, a fellow Knight and a family friend on March 31 announcing that Joe won the truck. Because it was the day before April Fools Day, Joe had to ask George, “Are you sure you're not kidding me?” Joe bought just one ticket, but it was the winning ticket.

The Truck Give-Away raised a total of \$86,023.50 in donations to go towards the building of the multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.

A very special thank you goes to Monroe Rieger, tournament chairperson, and his committee, Gerald Bludau, Bob Leach, Ed Lehnert, Jo Ann Martinez, Hardy McCullough, John Pribyl, Bill Reichert, Tommy Treybig, and Bennie Vitek, who worked for several months on the numerous details that made this day such a success. In addition to the work of these dedicated people, many members of this organization kept the day flowing in a seamless manner.

The major recipient of the proceeds of this tournament, as well as all the proceeds from the truck raffle, is the youth activity/multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center. Currently, there is no multi-use building at the renewal center capable of housing 150 plus occupants for special events. The new building will be used for youth retreats, youth camps, adult and priest retreats, and many other similar events. This project is extremely important to the spiritual future of the youth and adults in our diocese.

CORRECTION: In the April issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse* Mr. Jendrzey's name was incorrectly spelled Gentry.

**The Chancery Office
will be closed May 29 for
Memorial Day.**



New members of Sacred Heart School National Honor Society were presented their stoles by Sister Gloria Cain, SSND, Catholic school superintendent, at a ceremony in March 2006. Pictured are (back row) Andrew Herndon, Garet Pustejovsky, Marshal Sevcik, Kendra Krupala; (middle) Nicholas Barton, Emily Gallia, Clayton Mikes, Erin Krischke; and (front) Heather Saulnier, Sara Grahmann, Casey Leopold, and Stephanie Tobola. They join current members Julie Jakubek, John Greive, Kyle Demel, Donald Smolik, Laura Boehm, Erin Schott, Kasey Bludau, Kayla Bludau, Sara Steinocher, Holly Pustejovsky, Jessica Janak, Elizabeth Barton, Blasé Konvicka, Kevin Hartenstein, Janelle Bludau, Allyson Klimitchek, Kristin Kunz, Jessica Janak, Renee Guenther, Sarah Grahmann, and Michelle Sevcik



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

May	
6	5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Yoakum
7	10:15 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Meyersville 2:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Family Church, Victoria
9	Clergy golf tournament, Boerne, Texas
10	7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Agnes Church, Edna
12	6:00 p.m., Reconciliation service, Holy Family ACTS retreat, Spiritual Renewal Center
13	6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Patrick Church, Bloomington
14	9:30 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Shiner 6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Assumption Church, Ganado
16	6:30 p.m., Knights of Columbus Council 9088, Catholic schools appreciation dinner, Holy Family Activity Center, Victoria
17	7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart Church, Flatonia
18	4:00 p.m., Diocesan Building Board meeting, Chancery Office
20	6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Immaculate Conception Church, Goliad
21	10:30 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. John Bosco Church, Vanderbilt 4:00 p.m., Mass, Catholic Committee on Scouting Awards Banquet, St. Mary Church and Activity Center, Victoria
23	7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Inez
27	12:00 noon, Serra Club gathering for Religious Sisters, Incarnate Word Convent, Victoria 5:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Cross Church, Yorktown
28	9:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Joseph Church, Moulton
June	
3	10:00 a.m., Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon David Berger, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, Shiner 6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, Ascension of Our Lord Church, Moravia, including St. John Church, St. John
4	9:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Rosary Church, Hostyn 3:00 p.m., Mass celebrating 75th Anniversary of the church building and blessing of historical marker, St. Philip Church, El Campo 6:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. Philip Church, El Campo
7	6:00 p.m., Mass, celebrating Father Michael Lyon's 10th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, Assumption Church, Ganado
8	6:30 p.m., Serra Club NW priests' cookout, St. Mary, St. Mary (Hallettsville)

Catholic Charities says Web site falsely claims connection to agency

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS) — The president of Catholic Charities USA has asked potential donors not to direct their contributions to a Web site that he said falsely claims a connection to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities, and other charitable causes. "We are alerting federal officials and will take appropriate steps to prevent donations from being solicited in such a manner," said Father Larry Snyder, head of the Alexandria-based organization, of the Web site www.catholic-charities.net. Legitimate Web sites associated with Catholic Charities USA include www.catholiccharitiesusa.org and www.catholiccharitiesinfo.org. "Let me be clear, the Web site www.catholic-charities.net is not affiliated with Catholic Charities," said Father Snyder in a statement April 17. "We urge anyone who wants to support Catholic Charities not to make donations through www.catholic-charities.net."

Upcoming Special Collections

STRENGTHENING
THE CHURCH IN AMERICA



May 6-7

Combined Collection

June 3-4



Catholic
Communication
Campaign

Black and Native American
Catholic University of
America



"I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "Plans for peace and not for misfortune, to give you a future and hope."

— Jeremiah 29:11

2006 DSA Monthly Report

To date, our records indicate a pledged amount of \$428,500 and the amount paid-to-date of \$321,248.

To the faithful people who have already responded, we send a "Thank You" for your support in carrying out the work of the diocese.

God has given us many gifts and calls us to use those gifts to build up his kingdom. Our faith identifies us as stewards and gives us a relationship with God. Many of these gifts are given for our needs; others are given for the needs of others. Stewardship is a ministry by which we nurture and share our gifts.

Have you ever thought about how many hours you spend doing things for yourself versus how many you spend doing things for others?

Jeri Joseph
DSA Coordinator

Stewardship Thought

On this Mother's Day, let us look to Mary, a model of stewardship for guidance in following her Son, Jesus.

Thank You Notes

Dear Editor,

The members of the Fund-raising Committee for the new multi-purpose building at the Diocesan Retreat Center want to thank everyone in the diocese who helped with the raffle on the Toyota pick-up.

We had so much help from the different churches it would be hard to mention them by name.

A special thanks goes out to the Youth Office at the diocese. Without the hard work of Debbie Vanelli and Jo Ann Martinez we couldn't have pulled this off. Martha Pearson-Vela was so nice to keep the little, red truck in her garage during this time. Mike Brown was great with his advice and finding answers for us when we needed direction.

There will be more projects in the future and we will be calling on all of our friends again.

God Bless,

George Wenzel
Hardy McCullough
Monroe Rieger

Dear Bishop Fellhauer,

At the Holy Father's direction, I am writing to acknowledge the sum of \$27,781.17 which you kindly forwarded to the Apostolic Nunciature as the Peter's Pence offering of the Diocese of Victoria for the year 2005. This donation will be recorded in the 2006 *Obolo di San Pietro* Report of the Secretariat of State.

His Holiness is most appreciative of the charitable assistance which you and your people have given to him for his service to the Church throughout the world. He sees in this gift a sign of ecclesial communion, motivated by faith in Jesus Christ and devotion to the See of Peter.

Assuring you and the clergy, religious, and laity of the diocese of a remembrance in his prayers, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord.

With every good wish, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,
A. Cardinal Sodano
Secretary of State



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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 April 24, 2006

	TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$73,784.00
In memory of Evelyn Riebschlaeger by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Evelyn Riebschlaeger by Deacon and Mrs. Dick Wearden	50.00
Total	\$73,859.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Seminary Burse #3	
Previously reported	\$5,972.50
In memory of John L. Kruppa by K of C Victoria Council 1329	100.00
Total	\$6,072.50

— Catholic Daughters of America Court Our Lady Queen of Peace 1374 Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$2,777.72
In memory of Ida Heizer by Lucian Kainer	100.00
Total	\$2,877.72

— Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$3,036.00
Donation by Dennis Caka	50.00
Total	\$3,086.00

— Catholic Life Insurance Victoria Branch 51— Rev. Msgr Eustace Hermes and Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$14,990.47
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi by Margaret and George Boedeker Jr.	20.00
Total	\$15,010.47

— Catholic Life Insurance Victoria Branch #51— Rev. Msgr Eustace Hermes and Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi Seminary Burse #2	
Previously reported from Burse #1	\$10.47
In memory of Edna Odom by Our Lady of Lourdes Altar Society	25.00
In memory of Rev. Msgr. Gino Bernasconi by Mark and Melita Zafereo	100.00
In memory of Cpl. Andre (A. J.) Aguilar, Jr. by Our Lady of Lourdes Altar Society	25.00
Annual donation by Catholic Life Insurance Victoria Branch 51	400.00
Total	\$560.47

— Rev. Msgr. Benton A. Thurmond Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$755.00
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Benton A. Thurmond for a blessed birthday by Dyrel and Arlene Holmes	50.00
Total	\$805.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Seminary Burse #3	
Previously reported	\$8,786.00
In memory of Tillie and John Peters Jr.	50.00
Total	\$8,836.00

— Josephat R. Janak Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$14,083.77
For Vocations, Priests and Religious Life and the recovery of Rev. Dan Morales by Evelyn Janak	10.00
In memory of Joe and Louise Krejci by Rose Marie Janak and family	20.00
Total	\$14,113.77

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$9,542.50
In honor of Edwin and Julia Stryk's golden wedding anniversary by Gerald and Celine Kalina	50.00
Total	\$9,592.50

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik and Rev. Vincent Verdame Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$7,005.00
In memory of LaNelle S. Blinka by M/M Edwin Stryk	10.00
In memory of Norma Trigo by M/M Archie Dworaczky	25.00
In honor of Heather Walleck by M/M Archie Dworaczky	25.00
Total	\$7,065.00

Additional Burses for donations:

- Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy
- Rev. Msgr. Julius Petru Burse #2
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclavic Bily
- St. Mary Church – Praha
- St. Mary Church – High Hill
- Rev. Charles Kram
- Eddie & Olga Juroske and Floran & Laura Frnka
- William L. Schmidt
- Willamena and Herman Grahmann, Sr.
- Deceased Priests of Praha
- Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS
- Jim Vacek
- Knights of Columbus Council 3204 – Ganado
- Rev. Joseph Hybner

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



NEW OFFICERS ELECTED FOR SERRA CLUB-NORTHWEST—Serra Club-Northwest elected officers for the Hallettsville area club April 18. Pictured are the officers: (seated left to right) JoNell Janecek, vice president of membership; Ed Scherer, president; Beatrice Heinzl, secretary; (back row) Frank Janecek, trustee; Georgia Bujnoch, treasurer; Peggy Scherer, vice-president of programs; Rev. John Peters, chaplain; Margaret Dornak, vice president of vocations; and Mary Krischke, trustee. Not Present: Ernie Surman, vice president of communications, and Anita Kallus, trustee.

Heavenly Helpers

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World Day of Prayer for Vocations May 7

In 1963 Pope Paul VI designated the feast of the Good Shepherd as *World Day of Prayer for Vocations*. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows us well and is willing to lay down his life for us, his flock. Through the Father's love we receive blessings as followers of Jesus.

As we celebrate this feast we pray for unity and the gift to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. The Church invites us to honor the vocation of all Christians given at baptism. Through the vocations of marriage, priesthood, diaconate, consecrated life, and the single life, may we unite our hearts and hands to further the reign of God.



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Contribution by: 2006 YLT Team

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or Incarnate Word Convent at (361) 575-7300; iwbsvoc@yahoo.com

Sacred Heart picnic celebrated Memorial Day weekend

HALLETTSVILLE—The Sacred Heart Parish spring picnic, to be held May 28 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, is featuring an "all you can eat" dinner consisting of country-fried chicken, stew, and homemade cornbread dressing with all the trimmings. Meals for adults are \$6; \$3 for children. The picnic meal will be served from 10:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. in the hall and drive-thru until 1:00 p.m.

Advance tickets are available for drive through plates-to-go at the Sacred Heart Rectory, Hoffer's Drive-in, Morton's Drive-in, or Peoples State Bank.

Activities run all day and include an auction beginning at 1:00 p.m. that features antiques, cattle, handmade quilts, arts and crafts, and numerous other items.

Other activities include kiddie rides,

bingo with many prizes, in the air-conditioned KC Hall from noon until 4:00 p.m.; a cakewalk, country store, game booths, and horseshoe (2:00 p.m.) and washer pitching (5:00 p.m.) tourneys. Hungry and thirsty? Hamburgers, french fries, popcorn, nachos, sno-cones, and lots of cold refreshments will be served all afternoon.

An open-air biergarten provides polka and country-western music free with Rusty Steins on the main pavilion from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Tony Janak Orchestra and Bobby Jones Czech Band from 1:00 to 10:00 p.m. on the Polka Pavilion - all free.

Free karaoke will be featured from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. inside the KC Hall. Come and see if you have what it takes to sing and hear the cheering from the crowd!

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.



Pastoral Institute Short-Term Summer Classes

Date	Class	Time	Place	Facilitator/Instructor
6/20	Intro. to the Scriptures Part 1	6:00-9:00 p.m.	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt	Judy DeBord
6/21	Intro. to the Scriptures Part 2	6:00-9:00 p.m.	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt	Judy DeBord
6/28	Getting Started as a Catechist	6:00-8:00 p.m.	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt	Judy DeBord
7/5	Roles of the Catechist	6:00-8:00 p.m.	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt	Judy DeBord
7/12	Person of the Catechist	6:00-8:00 p.m.	St. John Bosco, Vanderbilt	Judy DeBord
6/17	Roles of the Catechist	9:00-11:00 a.m.	Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria	Rick Navarro
6/17	Methods for Grades 5 & 6	11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria	Rick Navarro
6/24	Person of the Catechist	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria	Josy Martinez
7/22	Getting Started as a Catechist	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	St. Andrew, Hillje	Bernadette Merta
7/22	Roles of the Catechist	12:30-2:30 p.m.	St. Andrew, Hillje	Bernadette Merta
7/22	Person of the Catechist	2:30-4:30 p.m.	St. Andrew, Hillje	Bernadette Merta
6/17	Methods for Grades 3 & 4	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	St. Andrew, Hillje	Bernadette Merta
7/22	Introduction to the Learner	9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Assumption/BVM, Ganado	Sr. Mildred Truchard
6/27	Catholic Morality Part 1	6:30-9:30 p.m.	Assumption/BVM, Ganado	Sr. Mildred Truchard
6/29	Catholic Morality Part 2	6:30-9:30 p.m.	Assumption/BVM, Ganado	Sr. Mildred Truchard

Everyone who is interested in learning more about their Catholic faith, especially catechists, youth ministers, lectors, ministers of communion, music ministers, parents, RCIA teams, etc., are invited to attend classes being offered around the diocese this summer. For more information or to register, call (361) 573-0828, or e-mail calvarez@victoriadiocese.org

Advantages of Natural Family Planning

Editor's note: The Catholic Lighthouse will intermittently feature a series of articles from the Couple to Couple League on the advantages of Natural Family Planning. This information can be found at www.ccli.org/nfp/basics/faq.php.

1) Safe & healthy

Natural Family Planning is safe and healthy because it is 100% natural and a woman simply observes the signs of fertility and infertility that God built into her fertility cycle. In the case of spacing children with ecological breastfeeding, a woman simply nurses her baby frequently. What could be safer and more in tune with nature?

NFP uses no birth control drugs or devices, so there are no risks to a woman's health. Practicing NFP involves respecting the body and how it functions, while artificial methods use medications or devices whose purpose is to thwart the body's normal function. Every drug has potential side-effects, which may be worth risking when trying to restore good health, but normally, we don't take a drug product unless it is necessary to cure or relieve something that is wrong with us. Birth control drugs, however, treat your perfectly healthy, natural fertility as a disease. They are unnecessary, which makes accepting the risks of their side effects even more needless.

It is common to assume chemical birth control (the Pill, the Patch, Depo Provera) and invasive devices or surgery (the Intrauterine Device or IUD, vasectomy, or

tubal ligation) are perfectly safe because they are used so widely. Not so. There are many undesirable and even risky side effects to every artificial method. Some of these side effects are more a nuisance (weight gain, irritability), and others quite serious (increased risk of blood clots, stroke, or some types of cancer). Yet they are all unnecessary.

Remember, drug companies have consistently claimed great safety for every birth control drug that has ever appeared (since 1960, in fact). With the birth control pill, however, it was generally only when a "new generation" was announced that anyone admitted the problems of the "older" version. Also, several artificial methods, like the older IUDs or Norplant, have been taken off the market over the years because health-related lawsuits, and some studies have linked chemical spermicides with birth defects.

At CCL we routinely hear of the frustrating, bothersome, and tragic consequences of the choice to use unnatural methods to space births. Some women have even lost their ability to conceive due to their use of an artificial method. Natural Family Planning offers a much healthier and more positive approach to family planning, for which thousands of couples are grateful!

For more information about classes in Victoria on the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning, please contact Estella and Rudy De Los Santos at (361) 573-2624 or see Natural Family Planning, When & Where, p. 22.



Theologian warns against some interpretations of Book of Revelation

By Ana Rodriguez-Soto
Catholic News Service

MIAMI (CNS) — Should you be scared of the apocalypse?

Only if you read the Book of Revelation as a script for ending the world in the 21st century, according to Father Jean-Pierre Ruiz, a biblical scholar and professor of theology at St. John's University in New York.

Speaking at St. Thomas University in Miami, Father Ruiz warned against the interpretations of the last book of the Bible promoted by Christian evangelicals such as Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins in their "Left Behind" series of books and movies.

"They're all well-intentioned people, even if they're wrong," Father Ruiz told The Florida Catholic, Miami archdiocesan

newspaper.

In his talk, he quoted television journalist Bill Moyers on the belief of many evangelicals that a war with Islam in the Middle East is "an essential conflagration on the road to redemption" and that the current war in Iraq is a "warm-up" to that conflict.

"This is awfully frightening stuff, terrifying both because it represents a terrible distortion of the message of the Bible, and because such misreadings over the course of history led to the spilling of much ink, and to the spilling of even more blood," Father Ruiz said.

There is no question that the Book of Revelation is a "fascinating and frustrating" work, he said, and it even confounded

See Theologian warns, p. 7

Pray for Vocations

Dear Lord, we invoke your help so more young men and women will be touched by your grace and become priests, sisters, brothers, and lay ministers in service to you. We ask this in Jesus' name and through the intercession of your Blessed Mother. Amen.
Serra International

Teachers should be like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, bishop says

ATLANTA (CNS) — Teachers must assume the role of Jesus as he walked with the two men headed to Emmaus when they deal with children who are often confused about what they should do, said the outgoing chairman of the National Catholic Educational Association's board of directors. There are also times when teachers themselves may feel as confused as the men walking to Emmaus, said Bishop Gregory M. Aymond of Austin, Texas, in a homily at an April 19 Mass during the NCEA's convention in Atlanta. Borrowing from that day's Gospel reading, the bishop said, "There are times when we walk this road," when teachers ask themselves "How does one teach as Jesus did?" and "Does it really make a difference?" "As we find him (Jesus) walking with us, asking probing questions with us, our hearts begin to burn," as happened to the men headed for Emmaus, Bishop Aymond said. "You and I have the privilege in our teaching ministry to deal with those probing questions, and not to give up on them (students)," he added.

Archbishop calls Judas text 'not a real Gospel'

SANTA FE, N.M. (CNS) — Santa Fe Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan has warned his people that the widely publicized gnostic Gospel of Judas is a heretical document that contradicts the teachings of the Bible. Writing in the May issue of the monthly archdiocesan newspaper, People of God, Archbishop Sheehan said the National Geographic Society, which sponsored an English translation of the ancient text and put the manuscript on

2006 Schedule for Safe Environment Renewal Sessions

The sessions listed below are for individuals who completed their first workshop in 2003. Only those who completed the program in 2003 will receive credit for this class. New employees and volunteers must complete the original core program, which consists of an online application/background check, Code of Pastoral Conduct, and the Hope of South Texas (Creating a Safe Environment) Workshop.

Renewal Sessions will be conducted at the Chancery Office, located at 1505 E. Mesquite Lane in Victoria, on the following dates: Monday, May 8; Wednesday, May 10; Wednesday, May 17; and Monday, May 25.

Each day also includes four sessions for your convenience. Sessions will last approximately one hour beginning at 8:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m.; 2:00 p.m.; and 7:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is required. Please specify which time is best for you when you call. Please call 361-573-0828, ext. 49 to register.

Most parishes and schools are also offering the renewal workshops on the local level; please contact your parish or school for information.

exhibit in early April "did a disservice to Christian people and has exploited this old manuscript for its own purposes." In the early centuries of Christianity several breakaway sects, mixing Christian beliefs with pagan speculation, claimed that salvation could be obtained only through the knowledge and acceptance of certain arcane, divinely revealed mysteries that they alone possessed. The sects were called gnostic, after the Greek word for knowledge, and were rejected as heretical by the early church. The Judas manuscript is a third-century Coptic text, uncovered in Egypt in the 1970s. It may be the sole surviving version of a long-lost Greek text of the same name that St. Irenaeus condemned as heretical in A.D. 180.

Vatican officials say condom-AIDS study still in consultation stage

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Vatican officials said a study on condoms and AIDS protection was still in the consultation stage and that Pope Benedict XVI had yet to decide whether a document would be issued on the topic. The sources said there were strong arguments for allowing married couples in which one spouse is infected with HIV, which causes AIDS, to use condoms as a disease-preventing measure, when it overrides any contraceptive intent. On the other hand, the sources said, the Vatican is hesitant to make any move that would be seen as an endorsement of condoms as a method of disease prevention, because condoms do not offer 100 percent protection from AIDS and could encourage sexual promiscuity. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to Catholic News Service April 26, after several days of speculative reports on what the Vatican planned to say on the subject.

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

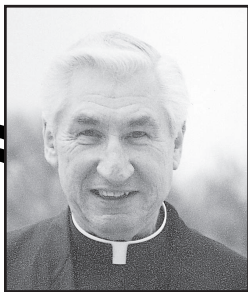
Reporting Child Abuse • Hotline 1-800-252-5400



Faith Point

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

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



Whose Values in Education?

Public schools paid by general taxation should not push any religious creeds. Fair enough. But does that mean that anti-religious values can be promoted at taxpayer expense? Secularists who are ultra-sensitive about religious encroachment in public education, as in singing Christmas carols or even calling holidays by their traditional names of Christmas or Easter, are not at all distressed by the indoctrination of Christian students with secularistic values.

Let us look at some examples. A few public schools offer abstinence only sex education but most prefer comprehensive education in contraception. For more than a decade parents have had to battle public school authorities who want to incorporate in the school curriculum messages about homosexuality. Under the guise of protecting gay children from abuse or ridicule, instruction has the effect of presenting the abomination that is homosexuality in a favorable light. A parent does not have to base his stand on religion to oppose homosexual approval. Homosexuality is not merely an immoral lifestyle but a destructive deathstyle. Homosexual behavior reduces the life span of males from eight to twenty years. By comparison male smokers lose an average of 13.2 years and female smokers 14.5 years. Objection to homosexual instruction is not just a religious but an entirely reasonable health choice.

In science classes Darwinism must be taught but not intelligent design. As a scientific theory Darwinism is acceptable but it is not just a bald, neutral scientific theory. It has atheistic presuppositions and is riddled with problems having nothing to do with religion. Secularists cannot tolerate presentation of intelligent design with its presupposition that there might be a God involved in creation of the universe. The atheistic assumptions are okay, but not the God assumptions.

Decorations specific to any winter holiday are banned from many public schools in Yonkers, New York, and in Boulder, Colorado, school officials denied the formation of a Bible club as not related to the curriculum, while at the same time allowing a Gay/Straight Alliance on the grounds that it is related to the health education curriculum. As an example of an unhealthy life style?

In California a proposed law would make mandatory gay history and the positive historical impact of homosexuals in America. Can similar requirements for the transgendered be far behind?

Fresh from passing a since-vetoed bill abolishing traditional marriage and replacing it with "any two people," California legislators are proposing a new law that will force middle and even elementary schools to include materials and speakers that promote homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism. The bill redefines gender as "gender identity and gender-related behavior whether or not stereotypically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth." If you find

that confusing, let me explain.

It does not matter whether you were born a boy or a girl. It's how you choose to behave. Thus a little boy who is confused about his gender and wants to wear a dress to school should be encouraged to do so. Enforcement of masculinity or femininity would be subject to discipline.

In public schools, an Ohio middle school student last year won the right to wear a T-shirt that proclaimed: "Homosexuality is a sin!," but a teenager in Kentucky lost in federal court when he tried to exempt himself from a school program on gay tolerance on the grounds that it violated his religious beliefs.

The public school systems have become a social climate where conservative Christian views are frequently bullied into silence. Meanwhile any sort of secularistic ideas that are frontal assaults on Christian belief are promoted as if by Constitutional right.

There is no such thing as a "value free" education. The question is not whether education - any education - inculcates values because every one does, but what values are going to be inculcated. The problem in public education today is the de facto dominance and inculcation of secularistic values.

Where is it ordained that only the secular point of view may be presented to a parent's child and that the parent must subsidize the indoctrination that represents the antithesis of his values? If all teaching must be done from a particular philosophy, what makes secularism the default philosophy that will prevail in areas that are debated? If religious viewpoints are ruled out of court when some taxpayers oppose them, why are not secular views ruled out when other taxpayers oppose them? Who made secular ideology the official religion of public education supported by compulsory taxation? This is taxation without representation of the worst sort.

An obvious solution to the problem of ideology in education is to give vouchers to parents who may then choose the kind of education that would most closely reflect their values. Professor Eugene Volokh of UCLA wrote:

To my mind, the best solution would be to get government out of the business of supplying education (though it could still fund it through vouchers or tax cred-

its). That would reduce, if not eliminate, the state's ability to engage in large-scale indoctrination of children. Individual, private schools might still make bad decisions, but there would be no centralized authority capable of enforcing a dangerous orthodoxy throughout the whole of the nation or an entire state.

Vouchers have been used in other democracies without harm to the unity of the nation. They would solve the intractable, built-in problem of reconciling incompatible philosophical systems. As of now the solution selected is in having minority secularists shove their views down the reluctant throats of the majority.

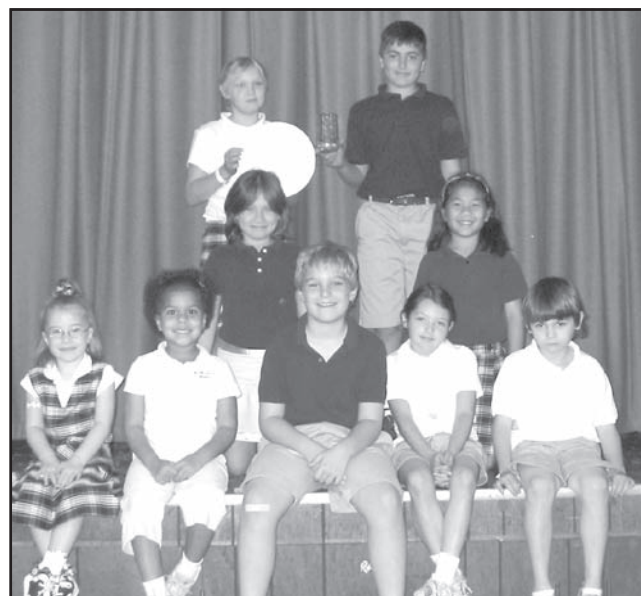
Where educational vouchers have been tried the competition for students that they engender has improved both public and private schools. And there is much in public schools that needs improvement. Not one US state can boast that a majority of 8th-graders in the public schools last year achieved grade-level proficiency or better in reading or mathematics. Recently released findings of the Program for International Student Assessment ranked US high school students 24th out of 29 countries. American 15-year-olds demonstrate less mathematics proficiency than their counterparts in Hungary and the Slovak

Republic. The United States Department of Education found that nearly half of all college students must take remedial courses in mathematics and reading. The National Center for Education Statistics said that in 2000 close to 80 percent of colleges offered remedial courses. How educational vouchers issued to parents could help improve this sorry situation is the topic for another article. The main point that I wish to develop here is that vouchers are a way out of the ideological battleground that the public schools have become.

It would be useful to follow the lead of the June 1, 1925 Oregon School Decision of the US Supreme Court:

The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments to this Union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public school teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.

If secularists want to propagate their ideology, is it too much to ask that they do so on their own dime?



St. Michael School in Cuero held a "Hunger Banquet" to show the unequal distribution of the world's food supply. This group of students represents the world's wealthy - ten percent of the population.

St. Michael's in Cuero holds 'Hunger Banquet'

CUERO—On Wednesday, April 12, the students and faculty of St. Michael's School participated in a "Hunger Banquet." During Lent they have been studying different aspects of how children live in underdeveloped countries. This banquet was a demonstration of the uneven distribution of food in our world. Each grade, including the teachers, was divided into three levels.

Level 1 had 10 percent of the school's population in it - in St. Michael's case, only one person from each class. Level 1 represents the most highly developed countries, such as the United States, France, England, Australia, etc. The

people in this group received a big breakfast with many different types of food and drink.

Level 2 had 30 percent of each class in it. This represents areas where people have an adequate, but not extravagant, standard of living. Countries on this level include Russia, Poland, Hungary, etc. Everyone in this level received a small breakfast.

Level 3 was the largest, with 60 percent of each class in it. This level represents countries that are not yet developed, such as Nigeria, Peru, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. The people in this group only received a serving of rice and a serving of water.

St. Rose to hold parish picnic in May

SCHULENBURG—St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Schulenburg will hold its annual parish picnic on Sunday, May 28, at Wolters Park. This is the second year the event has been held over Memorial Day weekend after being held for many years in August.

A flag-raising service will kick-off the day at 9:30 a.m. in Wolters Park.

Masses will be held Sunday at 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. A meal featuring fried chicken, stew, and all the trimmings will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the pavilion in Wolters Park. Adult plates will be \$6.50, children under 12, \$3. Drive-through adult plates will be available at the Knights of Columbus Hall on South

Street.

Hamburgers, iced tea, and other food and refreshments will be served all afternoon and evening. The biergarten will open at noon.

Lazy Farmers Band will provide music from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Texas Dream will play from 5:00-9:00 p.m.

One of the highlights of the picnic will be the big auction starting at 12:30 p.m. featuring cattle, quilts, antiques, and much more.

Other activities at this year's picnic will include amusements and games, a country store, cakewalk, country walk, rides for children, bingo, pull-tab bingo, and much more.

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Catholic Daughters build Habitat Home

Brockton, Mass.—If you think women can build houses as well as the next guy, you hit the nail right on the head.

Last week over one hundred Catholic Daughters of the Americas women walked the talk (and banged the nail and sawed the wood and did whatever else was needed to get the job done) at a CDA-sponsored Habitat for Humanity house build in Brockton, Massachusetts.

Among them was Victoria Catholic Daughter Libby Ramirez. Libby flew from Victoria to Massachusetts to pitch in with her fellow Catholic Daughters to make the dream of home ownership a reality for a wonderful family that would otherwise be unable to afford a home of their own.

Libby and her fellow volunteers rolled

up their sleeves and dived into the “Blitzbuild,” a focused, intense week of hard construction work between April 3-April 8.

In the photo, Libby is standing on a ladder on the second floor, undaunted by the height, focusing on the task at hand.

Libby is a member of Court St. Ann 369 in Victoria. She worships at St. Mary Church. Libby is third vice national regent, the fourth highest national leadership position in the organization.

The Blitzbuild took place in partnership with South Shore Habitat for Humanity. Catholic Daughters in Massachusetts raised part of the funds to build the home and the rest were provided by a special Catholic Daughters of the Americas Habitat for Humanity national fund to which

the entire membership contributes.

More stories and pictures about the house build can be found on the Catholic Daughters Web site home page at



Libby Ramirez, St. Mary Parish Victoria, and CDA third-vice national regent, helps build a Habitat for Humanity home in Massachusetts.

www.catholicdaughters.org. Catholic women interested in joining or learning more about the organization can also call National CDA Headquarters, (212) 877-3041.

Kolache Klobase Festival coming to East Bernard

EAST BERNARD—The 16th Annual Kolache Klobase Festival is scheduled for June 10 at Riverside Hall in East Bernard, Texas. This year promises to be as good as ever with outstanding bands and wholesome family entertainment. This event brings people together to enjoy good music, good food, and to celebrate ethnic heritage and culture.

This year's entertainment is first rate including Dujka Brothers, Vrazel Polka Band, Bobby Jones Czech Band, Red Ravens, Texas Sound Czech, Czechaholics, East Bernard Dance and Tumbling Group, and Keller Academy of Performing Arts dance students. Entertainment begins at 10:30 a.m. and continues non-stop until 8:30 p.m. Festival admission is \$6 per person — children 12 and under are free.

Arts and craft booths will be located inside and outside the hall.

The kids games and activities will keep the youngsters occupied.

A plate lunch featuring sausage, barbecue chicken, sauerkraut, and other trimmings will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. Other food available in the afternoon.

For more information go to their Web site: www.kkfest.com.

St. Philip Parish to celebrate 75th anniversary

Continued from p. 1

lic faith. In spite of their diversity, the desire to practice their faith encouraged them to gather as a community.

In 1897 Rev. J.A. Forest, Catholic Bishop of San Antonio, bought three and a half acres of land at a cost of \$50. The first Mass was celebrated in the home of a Catholic family by the Rev. William E. Heffernan of Inez in the spring of 1898. The public school, which was next to the church property, was also used for services. By 1901 the small congregation consisted of twenty families, and services were held regularly once a month.

The first church was built in 1902 and was placed under the patronage of Sts. Peter and Paul. The church was dedicated by Bishop Forest, and Father Heffernan became the first resident pastor in 1909. A storm destroyed the church and badly damaged the new rectory that same year. El Campo again became a mission of Inez.

Men of the parish salvaged the lumber and used it to build a church, which was named for St. Philip the Apostle. Parish

status was reestablished with the guidance of a full-time priest. The church was blessed by Bishop Shaw on July 10, 1910. The priests in El Campo began serving missions in the area; Taiton was the last mission of St. Philip.

By 1929 the parish had grown to 300 families, and a larger building was needed. The cornerstone of the present structure was blessed and laid by Archbishop Drossaerts on December 7, 1930. The archbishop returned to El Campo on June 14, 1931 to dedicate the building. The first major renovations began in 1964; and in 2000 a chapel was added as part of another major renovation project.

Additions within the parish included the establishment of Holy Cross Memorial Park in 1929 and the opening of St. Philip Catholic School in 1949. In 1982 the parish became part of the newly created Diocese of Victoria.

At the present time (2006) there are approximately 1,100 families or households on the parish census.

Theologian warns against some interpretations of Book of Revelation

Continued from p. 5

St. Jerome. The saint translated the Scriptures from Hebrew and Greek into Latin in the late fourth and early fifth century.

The Catholic interpretation of the Book of Revelation is not necessarily the only correct one, Father Ruiz said.

But “there is something about our particularly Catholic way of being and knowing that helps us to read and understand the Apocalypse of John with different eyes, with different hearts, with different minds,” Father Ruiz said.

He said the concept of the “rapture,” which is the basis for the hugely popular “Left Behind” series, comes from a misinterpretation of a passage in the First Letter to the Thessalonians, in which St. Paul is trying to answer a question posed by members of that community.

The rapture is a fundamentalist belief that during Jesus’ second coming, only the truly faithful believers will be taken to heaven while all others will be left on earth.

Paul’s letter is the “earliest document of the New Testament,” Father Ruiz noted, written around A.D. 50.

“People are still trying to figure out what this Resurrection means to them,” Father Ruiz said, when a member of the community dies. “The faith that they had just arrived at is suddenly shaken.”

To reassure them, he said, St. Paul “recourse to poetry” in Chapter 4, Verse 17, of his letter: “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

The phrase “caught up” is what 19th-century itinerant preacher John Nelson Darby termed “the rapture.” But St. Paul is simply using poetic language to reassure the Thessalonians that “ultimately, neither life, neither death, there’s nothing that can separate us from the power of the Resurrection,” Father Ruiz said.

The same is true of St. John’s writings to “a small and embattled group of first-

century Christian communities in Asia Minor that sought to resist the temptation to assimilate, to yield to the omnipresent power of Rome,” he said.

Back then, “religion and politics were not neatly divided into separate spheres,” Father Ruiz said. The emperor was worshipped as a god, and “to do otherwise was awfully risky. People were suspicious of the members of this ‘Christ party.’ ... To sing a hymn to Christ as to a god was a political act.”

So St. John uses the language of the Christian liturgy — celebrated then in “modest, private settings,” inside people’s homes — to move those embattled Christians to political resistance, and to reassure them that they would not be “left behind as bystanders in the great drama of history,” Father Ruiz said.

He described John’s Revelation as “a fabulous vision” that “transports us from our time into God’s time,” a mirror “that provides insights into our world” and “helps us react to what we see.”

“I don’t think the Bible means to spell out an end-times scenario,” Father Ruiz said in response to a question from the audience. “The Book of Revelation furnishes us not the when but the wherefore, not the end of history but the purpose of history.”

For suggested readings on The Book of Revelation, see pg. 17.

Masses:

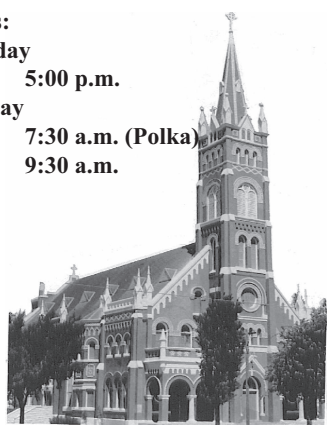
Saturday

5:00 p.m.

Sunday

7:30 a.m. (Polka)

9:30 a.m.



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Hermann Sons Dancers

6 — 8 p.m.

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Polka & Country

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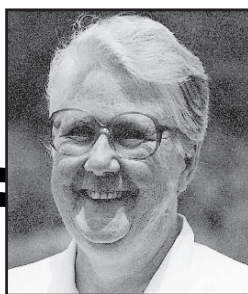
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Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Rejoice, disciples of today

Those disciples of old – the first followers of Jesus – rejoiced when they experienced the presence of Jesus after his resurrection. The stories that had circulated throughout the countryside, and the various appearances of the risen Jesus buoyed up their spirits and strengthened their belief.

We – the disciples of Jesus today – have the same opportunity to bolster our faith! We witness Jesus making himself present to us every time bread is broken in the Eucharistic celebration, the Mass. We hear the stories of God's presence and activities every time the Scriptures are proclaimed in the public liturgies and in our family and personal reading of the Word of God, the Bible.

Sacraments and celebrations furnish us with so many grace-filled opportunities. We join in the joyous response of our children as they receive Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion. May we adults ap-

proach each Communion with the same fervor and devotion that these young ones display! We renew our commitment as we journey with those teenagers whose faith is being deepened through the Sacrament of Confirmation. May they and we appreciate and respond to the Holy Spirit's presence in our church and in our lives! We also rejoice with all those young people whose utilization of their God-given intelligence and talents has been rewarded through their graduation and the beginning of the rest of their lives. May their spiritual growth be a lifelong process!

As disciples, all of us anticipate the celebration of the birthday of the church on Pentecost, the occasion when the Holy Spirit came down and strengthened those timid, frightened disciples of old and gave them the grace and courage to risk all to proclaim the message of Jesus and his saving action to all the nations. May we, too, during this season of special grace, allow the Holy Spirit to overtake us and embolden us to proclaim Jesus and his love to all with whom we live, worship, work, study, and socialize. Let all our words and actions reflect our faithful and joyous discipleship in our church and in our world today!

Iconography Workshop offered in Victoria

A six-day iconography workshop will be offered by Irene Perez-Omer of Icon Arts Studio in Austin May 22 – 27, 2006, at Edwards Art Studio in Victoria.

This six-day (9 a.m. – 4 p.m. daily), intensive workshop will study the Byzantine Russian tradition of icon writing. The students will write an icon in the ancient medium of egg-tempera. This multi-layered process will be presented along with the theological meaning of each step and the rich symbolic associations of the natural materials used.

Beginning students will work on the icon of Archangel Michael; intermediate students may work on the icon of the Guardian Angel.

Tuition is \$500, which includes supplies to be used in class; registration and tuition due by May 10. Classes will be held at Edwards Art Studio at 501 E. Juan Linn St.

Irene Perez-Omer has studied iconography for the past 8 and 1/2 years under master iconographer Vladislav Andrejev of the Prosopeon School of Iconology. Perez-Omer holds a BFA from UT Austin and currently works on both private and church commissions at her studio, Icon Arts, in Austin.

For more information about class please contact Kathleen Edwards at (361) 576-9887. For more detailed information about the instructor, her work, classes, or the technique of icon writing, please go to www.iconarts.com



The hardest goodbye

Family, friends attend funeral for Marine Cpl. A.J. Aguilar Jr.

By Patrick Brendel - Victoria Advocate

Hundreds of family members and friends welcomed Cpl. Andres "A.J." Aguilar Jr. home on April 11, Tuesday morning, and in the same ceremony at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, said goodbye to the 21-year-old Victoria Marine who died in Iraq on April 2 after his 7-ton truck overturned in a flash flood.

The Rev. Celestino Say presided over the Mass of Christian Burial, which was relocated from Aguilar's home church Our Lady of Lourdes in order to accommodate all the people who wished to attend.

Comparing the white pall covering the veteran's casket to the white garment Aguilar wore as a baptismal neophyte, Say said the ceremony was a celebration of Aguilar's "new rebirth into life eternal."

"Whenever we do a burial for someone, we do more for our sake than the one who died," he said, citing the words of St. Augustine of Hippo.

Say said the funeral ceremony not only reminds us of the shortness of life and the ineluctability of death, but "also how precious life is."

"Are we using it well?" he asked the mourning crowd.

"A.J. has done so much in his short life," he said, adding that Aguilar provided in his life a worthy example of devotion to family, to community, to country, and to God.

A vertical green field adorned the white pall, containing the image of a candle. Say said that, as the color white signifies joy, green is the color of spring and hope; the candle is a symbol of light, and light, God's word.

Jamie Lynn Schoener, who served as lector during the Mass, said that she and Aguilar "grew up going to church together" and were close despite the two-year difference in ages.

"He was one who always had a smile on his face," she said. "You never saw him without a smile."

"Family was everything to A.J.," Schoener said.

Angelita Estraca and daughter Barbara, who are cousins on the maternal side of Aguilar's family, said that Aguilar's father, Andres Sr., mother Olivia, brother Alex, and sisters Amanda and Andrea were all very proud of him for his accomplishments in the military and elsewhere in life.

"A.J. did what he wanted to do," Angelita said. "He wanted to travel."

"His father's been very strong," she said. As for Aguilar's mother, "that was her baby - she loved her baby."

Barbara, an Air Force senior airman who recently returned from a tour in Iraq, said that Aguilar's affability extended throughout the entire family.

"I'm very honored and very proud to say he was my cousin," she said. "And I

love him very much."

Aguilar's casket was draped in an American flag before being put in a hearse under the auspices of an official honor guard and the watchful eyes of the Patriot Guard Riders, a national group of bikers who attend the funeral services of fallen servicemen "to show our sincere respect for our fallen heroes, their families, and their communities" according to the group's Web site, www.patriotguard.org.

Ride Captain Oscar Pena said a group of about 20 riders from the San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and Victoria areas attended the service on Tuesday and that many of the riders would continue south to Mathis, where the burial was to take place Thursday.

Aguilar was born on May 20, 1984, in Corpus Christi and grew up in Mathis until his family moved to Victoria when he was in the third grade. He graduated from Memorial High School in 2002 and then went to Marine boot camp in San Diego.



Servicemen and law enforcement salute the flag-draped casket of Marine Cpl. Andres "A.J." Aguilar Jr. as he is transported from Our Lady of Sorrows Church. Aguilar was laid to rest April 13 in the family plot in Mathis. (Photo by Cindy Brewer)

Aguilar was stationed in Hawaii and served tours in Afghanistan as well as Iraq.

A rosary was recited at the Dobie Funeral Home in Mathis. Following a Mass at Sacred Heart Church on Thursday, Aguilar was buried at Cenizo Hill Cemetery.

"His good deeds will not be forgotten," Say said. "Just because his body is laid to rest in the ground."

In a rosary held for "A.J." Aguilar Jr. at Our Lady of Sorrows April 10, Father Say told a story of when A.J. had become an altar server in fourth grade. "When the church opened the altar service to girls, A.J. protested until I told him the pope approved it. A.J. said, 'Oh, if the Holy Father said it's OK, then it's OK with me.' A.J. was never more proud than when he saw his younger sisters and brother follow in his footsteps as servers," Father Say said. Barbara Gillig Yanta told of how A.J. kept her on her toes as his CCD teacher. "He always had questions for me," she said.

NOTICE TO SENIORS AND THE DISABLED

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Catholic Family Fraternal of Texas-KJZT

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NA PODCASTS STUDENT-RUN RADIO SHOW—Nazareth Academy in Victoria has just begun podcasting a student-created, student-run radio show. It is available for free on the Apple iTunes Store nation-wide. The show, by Mrs. Janet Zapalac's Speech Class, is titled "Jet Jive" and features a hostess, a weather girl, a sportscaster, and an entertainment beat in addition to "local" Nazareth Academy news (with a commercial thrown in). They taped the first show and played it over the intercom Friday, March 24. The plan is to have one every two weeks. Those with iPods, or with the free iTunes software on their computers, can subscribe for free to the show. This inaugural edition of Jet Jive is approximately 7.45 minutes long. Vice principal Scott Kloesel believes they may be the first school in the diocese to have a podcast and possibly the first of any school in Victoria and the surrounding area.

NEW RECORD!

Youth raise over \$4.6 million through "Souper Bowl of Caring"

Columbia, SC —2006 was a record year for the Souper Bowl of Caring, where over 11,500 youth organizations raised over \$4.6 million for local charities across the country. In Texas, 109 Catholic parishes participated and raised \$75,204.

"Youth everywhere are demonstrating how small efforts can make a huge impact in the fight against hunger and poverty," exclaimed Brad Smith, Founder and Executive Director of the Souper Bowl of Caring. "We applaud everyone who used the Souper Bowl of Caring to step outside of themselves and help their neighbors in need."

Bay City graduate honored at student enterprise group awards

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO—Sean Michael Breeden, a graduate of Bay City High School and a member of Holy Cross Parish, is a member of Franciscan University of Steubenville's Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team that recently won the championship trophy at a regional competition in Cleveland. Breeden's team also won all six special-projects trophies, sweeping all the awards in their league.

Breeden, the son of Doug and Marsha Petter of Bay City, Texas, serves as the Head of Time Management for the SIFE team, helping students make their weekly schedules.

"SIFE teaches you the hands-on aspect of business," said Breeden, a sophomore theology and management major. "You can't get that in the classroom."

The students will now head to the SIFE National Exposition in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 23, 2006, to compete for the national title. If they win there, then it's on to Paris, France, later this summer for the world competition.

Youth across the country collected one-dollar donations in large soup pots on or near Super Bowl Sunday, February 5, 2006. Each group donated their money directly to the charity of their choice—no money was sent to Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. Organizers simply asked that groups report their collection amount so a national total can be determined.

Since beginning with a prayer in a single South Carolina church, the Souper Bowl of Caring has raised close to \$33 million for hungry and hurting people. Visit www.souperbowl.org to see pictures and stories shared by this year's participants.

Blogs pose dangers to students, Catholic legal expert says

ATLANTA (CNS) — Blogging poses grave safety and legal issues, said Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy, a Sister of Charity of Nazareth, Ky., who is executive director of the Education Law Institute in Louisville, Ky. "Two years ago, I don't think I could have told you what blogging is," Sister Mary Angela said during an April 19 workshop at the National Catholic Educational Association's annual convention in Atlanta. "Now, I'm some sort of expert." Blogs, a contraction of the phrase "Web logs," are archives of diarylike postings on individuals' own Web pages. Blogs are often collected on certain Web sites, such as www.myspace.com. High school students, who often create blogs, "don't get it," Sister Mary Angela said. "They don't get that giving their name, their address, their telephone number, the school they go to, and the hours they go might get them caught." Despite teens' seeming ignorance of the dangers of blogs, "parents know even less about computers than their kids do," she added.

-HOST FAMILIES NEEDED-

Share! Your Heart And Home

HOST FAMILIES are needed to host international high school exchange students for the upcoming 2006/2007 fall semester or academic year. Students speak English, have spending money, and medical insurance. Families are able to review student applications and select the student they feel will best match their family and provide a bed, meals, and a caring environment. The students, from over 30 different countries, are hoping to arrive in AUGUST for enrollment in their new American high school. For more information please phone Yvette Coffman at the SHARE! Southwest Office at 1-800-941-3738.

YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 7 — Youth Leadership Training - Camp David planning and development session, Chancery Office 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. **Mandatory session for all Camp David Staff**

June 1 — Deadline — Camp David registration / D-week registration

June 4 — Rocky Mountain High parents meeting, 3:00 p.m. Chancery Office

June 9-10 — Staff preparations for Camp David, at the Spiritual Renewal Center

June 11-13 — Camp David at the Spiritual Renewal Center for Elementary and Junior High Students

June 11-13 — Session I - Two-night, junior high camp

June 14 — One-day elementary camp

June 14-16 — Session II - Two-night, junior high camp

June 26-29 — Discipleship Week at the Spiritual Renewal Center

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

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

November 17-19 — Region X Youth Conference in Laredo

November 30-December 3 — National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada

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

Debbie Vanelli at the Office of Youth Ministry

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

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

Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice



YOUNG PEOPLE CARRY WORLD YOUTH DAY CROSS

Young people carry the World Youth Day cross during the Palm Sunday open-air Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 9. The cross will travel across Africa and Oceania on a two-year trip ending at World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, in 2008. Pope Benedict XVI gave the organizers a morale boost when he told pilgrims, "See you in Sydney, God willing." The pontiff recently assured Cardinal George Pell of Sydney that he planned to come.

CNS photo/Daniele Colarieti, Catholic Press Photo)

NATURE'S CALLING KIDS TO CAMP WOODMEN

THIS SUMMER!!!



Woodmen offers members ages 8 to 15 a summer camping experience as a special fraternal benefit. It's been a beloved tradition for over 50 years. All camps are affiliated with the American Camping Association (ACA).

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Evangelical columns and memory gardens dedicated at Spiritual Renewal Center

By Mary Cox

On Saturday evening, March 25, four evangelical columns, set amongst memory gardens at the Spiritual Renewal Center, were illuminated and then blessed by Father Kirby Hlavaty. The columns and gardens were dedicated to the memory of the deceased children of parents attending an ecumenical grief retreat at the renewal center that weekend. The retreat was partially underwritten and sponsored by Spirit Wind Ministry; Rev. Hlavaty, Mary Cox, Madeline Dodson, and Susan Oakley. Our Lady of Lourdes Church also helped underwrite this healing experience for parents from numerous parishes.

The retreat was led by Khris Ford, M.A., a grief therapist, retreat master, and spiritual director; and Ken Druck, Ph.D., a psychologist, author, founder of the Jenna Druck Foundation, and grief consultant of national repute. Both retreat leaders brought many years of grief counseling to the experience. They are also bereaved parents.

The theme of the retreat was “A Season of Sorrowing: Tending the Soil of the Soul.” In keeping with this theme, parents had a chance to complete the memory gardens by planting meadow sage in the four garden beds, each filled with drought-tolerant, deer-resistant plants. The four circular beds are 22 feet in diameter, and each one is anchored in the middle by a square pillar made of Cantera rock.

On each column, the symbol of one of the four evangelists is carved on two opposing sides. The name of the evangelist is carved vertically on the remaining two sides. Taken from Scripture references,

the symbols are St. Matthew – the angel/man; St. Mark – the lion; St. Luke – the calf; and St. John – the eagle. Each pillar sits in the center of a Greek cross, as Greek was the language in which the Gospels were written. Crushed granite was used to create the equal arms and flanged ends



Memory gardens and columns made of Cantera rock grace the pathways that meander through the Spiritual Renewal Center in Victoria. Local artist and sculptor Kathleen Edwards created the design for the pillars. Participants of the Spirit Wind grief retreat planted the gardens that encircle the four columns — one for each gospel: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

of the crosses that make up the paths to the pillars. The memory gardens were then planted in the spaces between the cross arms.

In beginning the dedication, Father Kirby made reference to a quote from St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a second century saint whose words provided inspiration for this project: *It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four*

asked parents to remember the full courage and seeds of hope that God had secretly planted within them. In blessing the west column (the lion), he asked the parents to recall the surrender required for growth, and the God who stands ready to protect them from despair. In blessing the east column (the angel/man), he asked parents to remember God’s promise of new life and the blessings to come out of the hidden and the unknown. Parents then filed into the chapel for a beautifully moving Mass of remembrance and healing.

Local artist and sculptor Kathleen Edwards created the design for the pillars. She attended the blessing along with members of the Amador Family and Renewal Center staff.

The pillars and gardens were dedicated to the memory of the following children: James Baxter, Bradley Brown, Angel Cortines, Justin Cox, Ryan Davies, Jenna Druck, Nick Finnigan, Stephen Ford, Tyler Herbst, Henry Jones, Michael Joy, Emily Morrow, Michael Schmidt, Eric Silva, Eric Stafford, Jim Eddie Stahl, and Timothy Tierney.

Spirit Wind Ministry extends special thanks to John Fossati and Four Seasons Nursery for providing the plants at cost, as well as donating all of the bed design, labor, bed preparation materials, and crushed granite for the paths. Other in-kind contributors include Edwards Art, Penny Sherwood, and Alfredo Galvan of Cantera Rock.

In addition to Spirit Wind Ministry, deep appreciation is also expressed to the following project underwriters whose contributions helped make this project a reality: Frances and Don Baxter, Mary and Gary Cox, Madeline and James Dodson, Susan and Bill Finnigan, Claudia Hitchcock, Don and Cornelia Jones, Susan and Bob Oakley, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Amy Sterling and Howard Davies, Cindy and Tom Schmidt, Brigid and David Sonntag, Sharon Steen and Gary Dunnam.

How many discoveries we shall make in the next world! We shall be astonished to meet people who, unacquainted with Christ, were living by him unawares.

from Peace of Heart in All Things / Brother Roger of Taizé

Foster children in need of adoptive parents

Sometimes, it takes a congregation to raise a child. The State of Texas is asking for your help. There is no greater responsibility than parenting a child. Surely there is no greater joy.

Meet Kelsey and Kayla:

Kelsey is a typical big sister who loves to take on the role of caretaker. Kelsey is extroverted when she gets to know a person and can be very engaging. Her foster mother reports she likes helping out around the house, especially with the younger children in the home.



Kayla and Kelsey

Kayla loves her big sister. Kayla easily trusts and appropriate boundaries need to be in place with adults and peers. Kayla has shown improvement in school. She needs extra assistance and time to complete assignments. Kayla loves playing and talking with her friends and this prevents her from concentrating. Kayla loves playing with her dolls and dress-up. She also likes being outdoors.

The potential adoptive family needs to be in Texas so they can have some significant contacts and visits with the children prior to placement. The family that is chosen will have to work closely with their

foster parents to help the girls make the adjustment to adoption.

To learn more about Kelsey and Kayla go to the children’s web page at: <http://tare.dfps.state.tx.us/search/SibDetail.jsp?SibGroupNumber=15983>

Meet Aracely, Jasmine, Jacqueline, and Estevan at:

<http://tare.dfps.state.tx.us/search/SibDetail.jsp?SibGroupNumber=20165>

and Desaree at

<http://tare.dfps.state.tx.us/search/ChildDetail.jsp?TareId=32123>

Please contact Felicia Mason-Edwards if you’re interested in adopting any of the children featured in The Catholic Lighthouse: Child’s Contact: Felicia.mason-edwards@dfps.state.tx.us; (512) 438-4516

Congregations Helping in Love and Dedication (CHILD) is a unique collaboration between Texas’ faith-based communities and Child Protective Services to find loving homes for children who have come into the state’s care due to abuse and neglect. The goal of CHILD is to recruit and license as foster parents at least two families from each participating congregation. Additionally, each congregation will have the opportunity to develop supportive services for their foster families. These services could include respite care, reduced tuition for day care, tutoring and after-school programs, transportation, celebrations for special occasions, and enrichment activities.

zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout the world, and the “pillar and ground” of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.

The dedication proceeded from the south column (the eagle) by the Emmaus dining hall to the north column (the calf). In blessing the north column, Father Kirby

Organization provides comfort and hope to children in crisis

My Stuff Bags Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides duffel bags filled with new belongings to abused, neglected, abandoned, and displaced children who often enter crisis care with nothing of their own, is observing National Child Abuse Prevention Month by donating nearly 4,500 bags this April throughout the U.S.

My Stuff Bags was launched in 1998 to address some of the immediate physical and emotional needs of children suffering from abuse and neglect as well as those affected by catastrophes such as last year’s Katrina. So far, the nonprofit has donated almost 300,000 bags to children from newborn to 18 years of age. The bags contain essentials like toothbrushes and toothpaste, hairbrushes, toys, stuffed animals, books, games, school supplies, and one of the most comforting and important items, a cuddly blanket, often made by volunteers.

“We observe this important month by helping as many rescued children as possible,” says Janeen Holmes, president and executive director. “Imagine going from a dangerous home environment to a police car or social worker’s vehicle with only the clothes on your back. The children are afraid and helpless.” Holmes adds, “By giving each child a My Stuff

Bag, we help them through an isolated and lonely period of adjustment.”

My Stuff Bags Foundation serves children entering care in 950 organizations in 49 states. Each bag carries the message, “lots of people care about you,” because almost all of the items inside are donated. According to Holmes, it is the foundation’s way of wrapping its arms around these unfortunate children.

A national grass roots effort, the program is supported by thousands of individuals, schools, churches and synagogues, children’s groups, as well as foundations and corporations. “We have both adults and kids volunteering every day to make blankets, sort items and stuff bags,” says Holmes. “What we need just as much, however, is money to ship the bags and more product donations so that we can serve even more kids in need.”

She adds, “You should see the look on a child’s face when they receive a My Stuff Bag. The tears and sadness are replaced by big smiles. Even if it is just for a little while, we know that we make an impact on a desperately lonely child.”

For more information, to make a cash or item donation or to volunteer, contact My Stuff Bags Foundation at 866-3MY-STUFF or visit www.mystuffbags.org.



SPECIAL INSERT

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What does this new pope want us to know?

By Bob Zyskowski

This is the first in a two-part series examining Pope Benedict's encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God is Love") in commemoration of his one year pontifical anniversary. To read full text of the encyclical, please go to the front page of

www.victoriadiocese.org
and click on link.

When the white smoke wafted from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel 12 months ago, and the announcement made that the new pope was to be Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, how many Catholics would have predicted that the topic of his first encyclical would be, of all things, love?

Those who would have predicted that Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical would be meaty and provide much food for thought would have been right on target.

Archbishop Harry Flynn threw a challenge at those of us who work in archdiocesan ministry. At the annual Mission Day for archdiocesan employees earlier this year, the archbishop gave everyone a copy of "Deus Caritas Est" ("God Is Love") and suggested — OK, strongly suggested — that we read it and reflect on what this pope is trying to tell us.

Admittedly, it took me a while. Although the small booklet is only 32 pages, this papal encyclical isn't easy reading. But it is good reading. And it is worthwhile reading.

Rather than join in the analysis of Pope Benedict's pontificate to date, I write this brief, two-part series to share what I understood the pope wanted us to know. I sense that so much of what Benedict XVI wrote is important for us to be thinking about as we try to follow Jesus in our world today.

This new pope wants us to really understand what love is,

and to understand the richness of love and the satisfaction, the fulfillment that love can be for us. He begins by teaching us about the marital love between a man and a woman.

Given the prevalence of sexuality in modern culture, Pope Benedict explains how love is stripped of its dignity and dehumanized when it is reduced to sex. When love is expected to be something merely enjoyable and harmless, the pope says, it becomes a commodity, a mere thing to be bought and sold rather than what love is meant to be: an expression of the giving of one's self for the good of another.

Love moves us beyond selfishness, the pope says.

Love may at first be "a fascination for the great promise of happiness," but in drawing nearer to the one we love, we become less and less concerned with our own happiness and increasingly seek the happiness of the other person. We want to "be there" for the one we love.

Importantly, Pope Benedict teaches that this kind of love has to be mutual. In order to be able to give love, we have to receive love as a gift. We can't always give; we must receive.

Pope warns against denying, downplaying Christ's resurrection

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI warned against trying to negate or minimize Christ's resurrection, saying it was the central event of Christianity. The pope made the comments at his weekly blessing April 30, speaking to several thousand people from his apartment window above St. Peter's Square. The pope said the Gospel recounts how Christ appeared repeatedly to his disciples after his death, inviting them to "overcome their amazement" and believe in his resurrection. "The

It is with the idea of selfless giving that the pope connects the love in a marriage with God's act of love — Christ's death on the cross — and moves on to tie the sacrifice of Jesus with a wider vision of love: love of neighbor.

We believe our re-enactment of Jesus' sacrifice through Mass and the reception of the Eucharist joins us as one body with Christ and with other people. "God incarnate draws us all to himself," Benedict teaches and, in this way, love of God and love of neighbor are united.

The pope recalls the parable of the Good Samaritan to clarify the Christian understanding of who is our neighbor: "Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbor," he reminds us.

And he teaches that that concept of love of neighbor can't be "a generic, abstract and undemanding expression of love." Instead, Pope Benedict writes, it "calls for my own practical commitment here and now."

Next month: How Pope Benedict says we should put love into practice.

Bob Zyskowski is associate publisher of *The Catholic Spirit*.

resurrection of Christ is the central fact of Christianity, the fundamental truth that should be reaffirmed with vigor in every age, because to deny it — as has been attempted in various ways and is still being attempted — or to transform it into a purely spiritual event, is to negate our very faith," he said. He quoted St. Paul, who wrote that "if Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; (and) empty, too, your faith." As May approached, the pope also noted the comforting role of Mary in scriptural accounts following Christ's death. The mother of Jesus was "a mother and teacher" for the apostles during this period, and she continues to perform that role for Christians of every era, he said.

Sunday readings from May 7 to June 18

May 7 — Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 4:8-12 Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29 1 John 3:1-2 John 10:11-18
May 14 — Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 9:26-31 Psalm 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32 1 John 3:18-24 John 15:1-8
May 21 — Sixth Sunday of Easter	Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48 Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4 1 John 4:7-10 John 15:9-17
May 28 — The Ascension of the Lord	Acts 1:1-11 Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 Ephesians 1:17-23 Mark 16:15-20
June 4 — Pentecost Sunday	Acts 2:1-11 Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25 John 20:19-23 or John 15:26-27; 16:12-15
June 11 — The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity	Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 Psalm 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22 Romans 8:14-17 Matthew 28:16-20
June 18 — The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Exodus 24:3-8 Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18 Hebrews 9:11-15 Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Capitol Comment

By Brother Richard Daly
Texas Catholic Conference



The Pope's first encyclical, support for Catholic Social Teaching

The first Encyclical issued by Pope Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est" ("God is Love"), is of course a scholarly and elegantly written treatise on the topic of love in all of its manifestations.

What many of the commentators have not mentioned is that the second part of the encyclical is all about Catholic social teaching and the responsibility of all people of good will to minister

to their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

The second part talks about promoting justice in society and in the public square, that is in the political realm of national and local governmental activity.

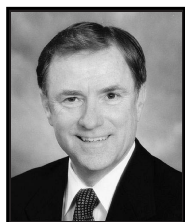
In his letter, the Holy Father lists all of the great encyclicals on Catholic social teaching starting with *Rerum Novarum* and then comments on the responsibility of all Christians to be concerned for all men and women regardless of their status in society. "Deus Caritas Est" is a tremendous support for those who work to provide health care, social services, and education, especially for the poor.

The Holy Father talks in the encyclical about the importance of those who are responsible for the church's charitable activity and mentions some specific men and women who are very familiar to Catholic social ministers including Francis of Assisi, Vincent de Paul, Louis de Marillac, and Teresa of Calcutta.

Catholics of the conservative persuasion were delighted when Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI. Now it appears that there should be elation from the moderate to progressive wing of the church as well. This is all very good news for our church, especially at this time in our history.

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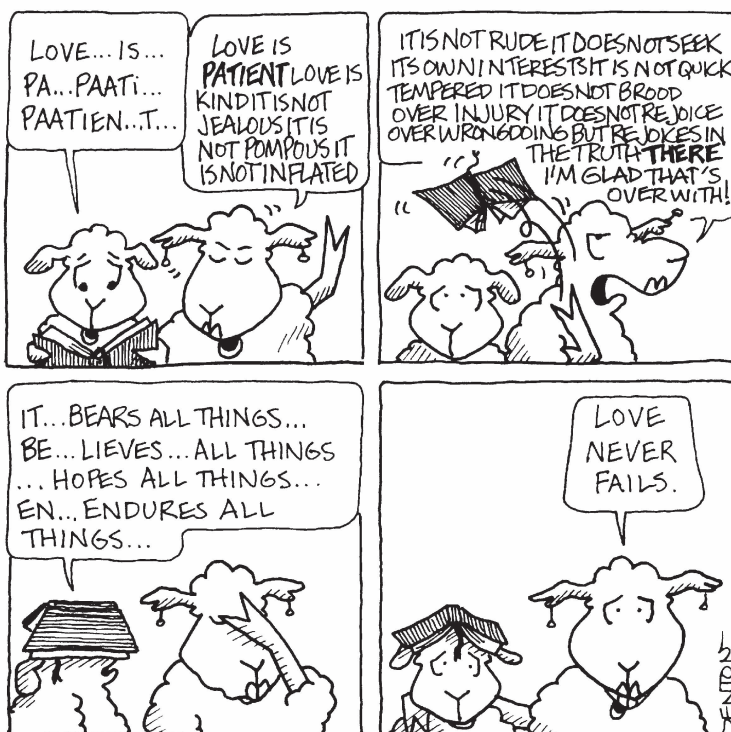
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The Flock

By Jean Denton
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Book Review and Family Puzzle Contest Prize

The Healing Touch of Mary

by Cheri Lomonte

A thought-provoking book exploring the connection between the human and the spiritual world, "The Healing Touch of Mary," reminds us that there is always hope for peace and healing. The winner of the May Family Puzzle Contest will receive "The Healing Touch of Mary." Drawing will be May 25.

By Mike Daniels

No matter your religious preference, *The Healing Touch of Mary* is a beautifully presented work of color images and stories that open the mind to faith, hope, and prayer. Cheri Lomonte did a wonderful job of combining her photojournalistic talents with the voices of those who have been touched by Mary as she traveled throughout the United States. Even those who may not believe in the miracles described within will no doubt be entertained by the tales of those claiming to have experienced the healing touch of Mary.

For those true believers and followers of the faith, *The Healing Touch of Mary* published by Divine Impressions, will inspire and regale readers as they follow the detailed personal accounts of how the Holy Mother touched the lives and souls of those who needed her. Anyone who truly holds to their belief will find this book to be a must-have addition to their collection.

The design of the book merits special mention as well. This is a softcover, square book with cover flaps as normally found on a hardcover's dustjacket. The cover is attractively enhanced with "touches" of gloss to highlight the title, and the color reproduction of the photos within is outstanding.

This award-winning book is available on line, from bookstores, and from the publisher, Divine Impressions at www.divineimpressions.com.

Mike Daniels is the president of the Colorado Independent

Publishers Association and is the Literary Editor for the Mountain Connection newspaper.

Book Description

The Healing Touch of Mary explores the fascinating connection between the human and spiritual world. This collection of true stories focuses on the divine intervention of Mary, the Blessed Mother, in the lives of people from all walks of life. These personal accountings of answered prayers, celestial visions, and reclaimed lives are powerful testimonials to the Queen of Peace and invite readers everywhere to

think about the profundity of miracles. This award-winning book is an extraordinary documentation of people whose lives have been transformed by the Madonna in everyday circumstances, communicating the grace of inspiration and hope with every story. It has received an EVVY award for best Inspirational/Spiritual Book (06/05) and the Best Photography Book Award by Fresh Voices (1/06)

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About the Author

Cheri Lomonte is a photojournalist who began this project by photographing pictures of the Madonna. After hearing heart-stopping personal accounts associated with Mother Mary, she recorded the stories to share with others who might be equally inspired by them.

In the five years that she collected stories and photographs, she traveled extensively to all parts of the world, including Nicaragua, Peru, Italy, France, and most of the United States. Lomonte is convinced that every person has a story to tell and is currently collecting stories for her second book. She and her husband, Tony, re-located to Austin and continue to enjoy visiting their six grown children in various areas of the United States.

Winner of the May contest to receive *The Healing Touch of Mary*

Congratulations to Gladys Welfl of Victoria; she is the winner of the April Family Puzzle Contest and will receive *Breaking the Silence ... Reminiscences of a Hidden Child* by Paul A. Schwarzbart.

The winner of the child contest was Arik Michael Shimek (7) from Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville, he will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

The winner of the May Family Puzzle Contest will receive *The Healing Touch of Mary* by Cheri Lomonte, 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 May 25 to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. Only youth need to include age.

DAILY PRAYER

GABRIEL PUBLICATIONS © 2002

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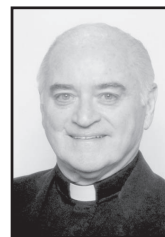
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RESPONSORY
TRINITARIAN
VERSE

Spirituality for Today

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service



Honoring Mary

The month of May is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

St. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, once said, "Of all women, Mary, you are the most blessed; blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42-45, The Jerusalem Bible).

We honor Mary every May because God gave her the most privileged position in human history when she became the mother of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

The divine command to honor one's mother is found in Exodus 20:12. We know that Jesus honors his mother, just as any good son would honor his mother. Since the Lord's love flows through us, we love and honor Mary as well.

The Hebrew Bible helps us to imagine how Jesus might relate to Mary in heaven. We read that King Solomon had his mother

sitting to the right of his throne. She often interceded with him on behalf of his subjects saying, "I have a favor to ask of you. ... Do not refuse me." Solomon would answer, "My mother, make your request for I will not refuse you" (1 Kgs 2:21).

When Catholics recite the Hail Mary, "Pray for us, now and at the hour of our death," they do not think of Mary as a kind of goddess with independent power. They know that her power is from the Lord. They simply ask her to intercede for them, knowing well that Jesus will honor her request.

St. Elizabeth is recorded in Scripture as saying, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Mary believed and then surrendered herself to the Lord in perfect submission: "Be it done unto me according to thy word" (Lk 1:38), and the miracle

of the incarnation took place in her womb. Jesus became flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone.

Each of us has some special memory about Mary. My story is about my maternal grandmother, Anna Caslin. She had a rich devotion to our Lady because she was born Sept. 8, the same day the church celebrates Mary's birthday.

I'm told my grandmother always prayed that at least one of her nine children would be born on that day too. She also prayed that one of her four sons would become a priest, but they all married. She later realized that God answers our prayers, but in his own way, taking his own sweet time.

Grandma Anna's prayers were answered a generation later when I was born Sept. 8, 1931. She must have been exceedingly happy, but I'm sure her joy did not stop her from continuing to pray to have a priest in the family.

I still have an old photograph of Grandma Anna holding me in her arms as a newborn infant. She died when I was 6 months old, so I never got to know her. I didn't even learn of her secret prayer campaign until I was about 50, when my aunt told me the story.

For all those years, I thought my early struggle to discern my vocation was exclusively my own business; something private between God and me. Today I see it in a slightly different light. My grandmother never stopped asking Mary to help me to accept my calling. All that grace finally wore me down.

And so, without taking my freedom away, God led me to my ordination May 28, 1960, and I have lived happily ever after, as the story goes, with only a few bumps along the way.

by Gary Cangemi

Umbert the Unborn



© 2006 Gary Cangemi



Hail Mary and the Times Tables

By Michael T. Dolan

Sitting near the back of the classroom, I remember our second-grade class racing through the multiplication tables with unwavering speed. Mrs. McVeigh guided us through the numerical litany, and we chimed in, trying to keep pace.

Four times four is 16.

Four times five is 20.

Four times six is 24.

And so on down the numerical line. Sometime during that drill an ambulance raced down the street outside our window, sirens wailing. Some two dozen little heads looked toward the street, eager to get a glance at the excitement.

Mrs. McVeigh could have easily continued on with the next lesson.

Five times one is five.

Five times two is 10.

But she didn't. Instead, looking out the window herself, she asked us all to say a Hail Mary for those in the ambulance, and for those they were racing to reach. She didn't make a big scene of it. Rather, she merely had us recite the simple prayer and then continued on with the times tables. I don't recall it happening again that year.

Little did Mrs. McVeigh realize what an impact that one little lesson would have on me. Twenty-some years have passed, with countless sirens in the mix, and to this day I still take the 15 seconds or so needed to recite a Hail Mary whenever I hear the siren of a fire engine, ambulance, or police car in the distance.

Sure, it may not be much, but it is something. Whether my prayers have any effect on the urgent situation I do not know. I like to think they do. And if there are other classmates out there who took from that math class the same lesson I did, perhaps our collective prayers make a difference.

I'll never know the outcome of my Hail Marys for all those faceless individuals behind the sirens, but I know for certain that the practice benefits me, for behind every siren and Hail Mary are countless life lessons.

The ritual reminds me that there's always someone out there who is worse off than myself, and that there is always something I can do to help - even if that means simply taking 15 seconds for a silent prayer. It reinforces gratitude for what one has - family, friends and home - and it teaches concern for others.

The ritual helps me reflect on my priorities in life. How can I be annoyed that a passing ambulance caused me to miss that last green light when someone out there desperately needs help? I can afford a few more minutes tacked on to my commute; the ambulance cannot.

It teaches me that life is short and you know not the hour, so seize the day. The anonymous victim on the other end of the siren is just that - anonymous -

causing me to create a face for the person in need. Did a 40-year-old father of three just have a heart attack? Was a young woman in a car accident?

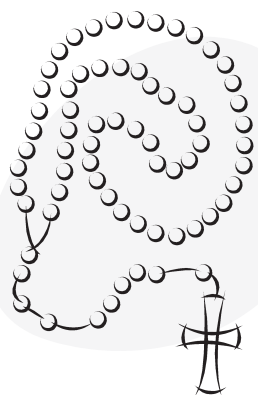
It reminds me that prayer should not be relegated to the pew or the bedside. Like all of us, I am called to live a life of prayer, and the very act itself helps me grow in that prayerful vocation. The adage "You are what you eat" has today morphed into "You are what you watch." I much prefer it become, "You are what you pray." Say a prayer of love, you become love.

The ritual reminds me that life is about love—love of neighbor love of enemy. How can I

stay angry with a loved one when I'm willing to say a prayer of love for a complete stranger?

Finally, it helps me open up my heart to those in need. Once the ritual is started, it becomes impossible to ignore the sound of a siren, no matter how distant it may be. The siren doesn't care where I am, but it is a constant reminder that I should most certainly care where it is. Sitting at a restaurant or flipping burgers on the grill, jogging down the street or stuck in a sea of brake lights - the sirens sound.

And thanks to Mrs. McVeigh, I respond. The multiplication tables can wait.



Camp Marymount accepting summer applications

Fairview, TN - Camp Marymount, a 68-year-old institution, has been voted "Best Sleep-Away Camp" of 2005 by parents responding to *Nashville Parent Magazine's* "Best of Parenting Awards" survey, the third time the overnight camp has been honored with the distinction. Camp Marymount, the only Catholic camp in the Southeast accredited by the American Camp Association, is currently accepting applications for its 2006 summer season.

"This award is a great honor and a tremendous validation of what so many who have experienced Marymount already know," said Camp Director Tommy Hagey. "Summer after summer, Marymount offers excellent programs, rich traditions, strong spiritual guidance, and just plain, great, summer fun."

Located on 340 rolling, wooded acres just outside of Nashville, Marymount hosts more than 600 campers throughout June, July, and August, and focuses on traditional camp activities like horsemanship, nature, arts and crafts, gardening, archery, swimming, canoeing, and camp-outs. The camp strives to build character, community, and life-long friendships over the course of two- and three-week sessions.

Camp Marymount offers two girls' sessions and one boys' session for campers age 6 to 16. The first girls' session runs from Sunday, June 4, to Saturday, June 17; the second session runs from Sunday, June 18, to Saturday, July 8. The boys' session runs from Sunday, July 16, to Saturday, August 5. Each session offers a Junior Camp (age 6 to rising 8th graders) and Senior

Camp (rising 9th to 11th graders).

Applications are being accepted for the girls' 3 week Junior Camp, the girls' 2 week Senior Camp, and the boys' Junior and Senior Camps. Due to Camp Marymount's popularity, the girls' three week Senior Camp and 2 week Junior Camp already has reached capacity for the 2006 season, and will not be accept-



A day at Camp Marymount

ing new applicants.

The application process is ongoing, but receipt of applications is preferred in May 2006. Camp Marymount maintains a low fee structure and a strong scholarship program to ensure that all children have the opportunity to attend. Sibling discounts also are available.

Two-week session for Junior Camp — \$570, Senior Camp — \$615; 3-week session for Junior Camp — \$740, Senior Camp — \$790. Applications are accepted ongoing, but preferred by May 1, 2006. Marymount also is accepting applications for Camp Counselors, Kitchen Staff, Camp Nurse, and Maintenance. Please contact the camp at (615) 799-0410 or visit www.campmarymount.com.

For more information on the camp, please call Camp Director Tommy Hagey at (615) 779-0410 or visit www.campmarymount.com.

The Pope Speaks

Pope Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Church tradition helps keep connection with Christ's life, apostles

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Remaining faithful to church tradition keeps Christians connected to Christ and the apostles' firsthand experience of the savior's life, teachings, death and resurrection, Pope Benedict XVI said at his weekly general audience.

By adhering to church tradition, Christ remains present in the ecclesial communion, linking women and men across the world and throughout history by the same faith, he said in his catechesis delivered April 26 to more than 50,000 pilgrims in St. Peter's Square.

"Tradition is the communion of faithful gathered round the legitimate shepherds throughout history, a communion which the Holy Spirit nourishes, guaranteeing a connection between the experience of apostolic faith lived by the original community of disciples and the present experience of Christ in his church," he said.

Tradition, however, is not handing down inert things or words; "tradition is a living river" that links the faithful directly to its origins and to Christ, he said.

Being immersed in this "great river" will carry the faithful to the doors of eternity in heaven, he said. Since it is "a living river," being part of the church's 2,000-year tradition reminds people that God will always be with his people, until the end of time, said the pope.

In his catechesis on ecclesial communion, the pope spoke on how the church is sustained by the Holy Spirit and "safeguarded and promoted by the apostolic ministry."

Thanks to the presence of the Holy Spirit, the experience of the risen Lord "will always be lived by successive generations" through their common faith, lived through worship and the church community, he said. In this way, the Holy Spirit, Christ's disciples, and the Christian communities remain forever linked, he said.

The Holy Spirit helps guide the church and its pastors to be in uninterrupted continuity with its origins so that Jesus always remains present in the church's life and its future, the pope said.

Pope clears way for canonization of founder of Indiana sisters' order

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI cleared the way for the canonization of Blessed Mother Theodore Guerin, the 19th-century foundress of a religious order and numerous schools in Indiana.

During an April 28 private meeting with head of the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes, Cardinal Jose

Saraiva Martins, the pope signed a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of the French-born nun.

At the same meeting, the pope recognized a miracle clearing the way for the beatification of Father Basil Anthony Moreau, founder of the congregations of the Holy Cross.

Suggested Catholic Reading

By Cindy Brewer, Editor

The Catholic Lighthouse Editor's suggested reading on the topic of The Book of Revelation include:

The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth by Scott Hahn

The Rapture Exposed - The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation by Barbara R. Rossing

The Apocalypse and the Third Millennium - Today's Guide to the Book of Revelation by George T. Montague, S.M., published by CHARIS

Apocalypse - A Catholic Perspective on the Book of Revelation by Stephen C. Doyle, OFM, published by St. Anthony Messenger Press

Suggested readings from Servant Books, 1-800-488-0488, or www.AmericanCatholic.org:

Standup Girl - Take charge of your unexpected pregnancy by Becky Fraser with Linda Shands; ISBN 0-86716-718-1; \$12.99

The Awesome Mercy of God by John H. Hampsch, CMF; ISBN 0-86716-761-0; \$9.99

Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage - 10 True Stories by Fletcher Doyle; ISBN 0-86716-760-2; \$12.99

John Paul II and the New Evangelization edited by Ralph Martin & Peter Williamson; ISBN 0-86716-748-3; \$19.99

The Passion of the Lamb - The Self-Giving Love of Jesus by Thomas Acklin, OSB; ISBN 0-86716-743-2; \$12.99



Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval
Servicio Noticiero Católico



Dones de una madre

Hace tiempo, le pregunté a mi tía Dora, ¿Cómo era mi madre? “Muy bella y muy religiosa,” respondió sin vacilar. Su descripción me impactó porque nunca había considerado a mi Mamá bella. Busque una foto antigua, hecha cuando ella tenía 30 años, y vi que en realidad era hermosa. Igualmente, no me había dado cuenta que sí era muy religiosa. Para el día de las madres pienso de ella otra vez han pasado nueve años desde que falleció y de sus dones a nuestra familia, la fe siendo de mayor importancia, no sólo la práctica de la religión, sino un indefectible optimismo de su confianza total en Dios.

La fe es don de nuestros padres, y en el caso de mi madre, vino en especial de su padre, Enrique Perea. Mi prima Josie Montoya, creada por mis abuelos, recuerda que mi abuelo, un ranchero que empezaba a cultivar diariamente antes de que saliera el sol, almorzaba y, después se sentaba en su silla mecedora y rezaba el rosario. Era muy fiel en asistir la Misa dominical. Mis abuelos vivían ocho millas de la iglesia parroquial. Tenían que viajar por carro o carruaje de caballos, pero después de lluvias o nevadas grandes, la carretera, de barro rojo, era casi intransitable. En tales ocasiones él iba solo montado acaballo. Más de simplemente cumplir con sus obligaciones, le interesaba aprender más de su fe, un fiel subscriptor de La Revista Católica, revista jesuita en Español.

Mamá se sintió feliz cuando nos mudamos a Brighton, Colo., porque la iglesia parroquial de San Agustín estaba cerca, menos de una milla, y podíamos ir a pie a la Misa. Eso hicimos por tres años hasta que pudimos comprar un camión. Le encantaba ir a la Misa cualquier día, lo más temprano mejor. Cuando yo regresaba de la universidad, me decía: “Llévame a la Misa a las seis mañana.” Todos menos uno de sus hijos sirvieron de monaguillos. Tengo una foto con siete hermanos Sandoval con nuestros padres, el párroco, Padre Roy Figliano, y su asistente enfrente del altar. No obstante, cuando la Hermana de Victory Noll Martha Wordeman, mi maestra de religión, se sentía segura que yo tenía una vocación para el sacerdocio, mi madre no mostró entusiasmo; mis padres esperaban que yo ayudara a mantener a la familia. Nunca me pesó postergar mis estudios universitarios por tres años para ayudarles. Además, no tenía vocación. Con su bendición dos hermanos menores sí ingresaron a un seminario Teotino, una

congregación española de disciplina rígida, pero pronto volvieron. Mi madre los recibió con alegría, porque como se inscribió en su lápida, “Su familia era su mundo.”

Cuando Catarina, la menor de sus 10 hijos, estudiaba su catecismo en la parroquia, Mamá le ayudaba a la Hermana quien era su maestra. Cuando tenía 62 años, un reportero del periódico Denver Post le pregunto como nueve de sus hijos habían graduado de la universidad. Contó la historia y añadió: “Ojalá que yo hubiera podido ir a la universidad también. Hubiera estudiado consejería matrimonial, porque hay demasiados divorcios hoy día. Hubiera también estudiado religión, porque la gente no conoce su religión.” La fe estaba tejida profundamente en la tela de su vida.

Mamá cantaba mientras hacia sus tareas diarias, creando no sólo a sus hijos pero también dos nietas abandonadas por la esposa de un hermano. Cuando vez tras vez dos hijos fracasaban en vivir independientemente y volvían al hogar, soportaba con calma. Hasta hospedo por meses a un nieto que de repente se encontró en la calle. Seguramente oíría cantos alegres cuando fue recibida en su eterno hogar.

Padres Pada Vida

Por Padre Frank Pavone
Director Nacional



Desenmascarar el Mal

He pasado más de la mitad de mi vida desarrollando estrategias para que el pueblo de Dios pueda luchar eficazmente y acabar con el aborto. No hay mejor frase para resumir mis conclusiones que lo que escribió San Pablo en Efesios 5:11, “no participéis en las obras infructuosas de las tinieblas, antes bien, denunciadlas.”

El mal florece cuando está oculto, la injusticia abunda cuando la víctima es invisible. La historia demuestra que aquellos que han vencido injusticias sociales han seguido el consejo de Pablo de *desenmascarar* el mal. Por ejemplo, los que combatieron el tráfico de esclavos en Inglaterra iban a los puertos para dibujar cuadros de los barcos y la forma como se mantenía a los esclavos como sardinas.

Exponer el mal hace que este colapse bajo su propio peso cuando enfrenta la luz de la conciencia humana. Para vencer a la injusticia no hace falta que *todos* crean que es una injusticia. Existe, más bien, una masa crítica en algún punto del espectro, cuando “suficientes” personas están convencidas de ello. La buena noticia es que esas personas ya tienen conciencia para rechazar el mal. El problema es que el mal no ha sido expuesto lo suficiente para que lo vean.

Así pasa con el aborto. Cuanto más se

expone, más gente lo rechaza. La opinión pública en Estados Unidos en cuanto al aborto ha sido sorprendentemente estable desde *Roe vs. Wade*. El cambio más significativo ocurrió a mediados de los noventa cuando se expusieron los detalles del procedimiento de aborto de parto parcial. Nunca antes había habido una audiencia tan grande que viera y oyera con tanto detalle lo que es el aborto.

El aborto debe ser expuesto de cinco maneras diferentes:

Estadística. La mayoría de los estadounidenses no tienen idea del número inmenso de abortos, ni que los abortos se producen durante todo el embarazo. Los mismos promotores del aborto nos ofrecen las estadísticas. Véase el sitio del Instituto Alan Guttmacher www.agi-usa.org. Con sólo ver estos hechos mucha gente se da cuenta de la necesidad de un cambio de política sobre el aborto.

Descripciones. Los libros de texto de medicina como *Práctica de Abortos* (Abortion Practice) usan las palabras “decapitar” y “desmembrar” para describir lo que le pasa al bebé durante el aborto. Más aún, existen ahora para los distintos procedimientos de aborto numerosos testimonios judiciales bajo juramento de quienes practican abortos. (Véase www.Priestsforlife.org/pba). Una vez más, ¡las propias palabras de los abortistas los acusan! Cuando se expone el mal de esta forma, ¡nadie puede acusarnos de inventarlo!

Fotos. Muéstrole a la gente como se ve un aborto y nunca sentirán de la misma forma sobre este tema. Vea de que manera las fotos impactan a la gente leyendo sus testimonios en

www.priestsforlife.org/resources/abortionimages/graphicspraise.htm.

Devastación de mujeres, hombres y familias. Cada vez son más las madres, padres y familias de niños abortados que no callan sus efectos devastadores. El poder de su testimonio cambia mentes y corazones. (Vea

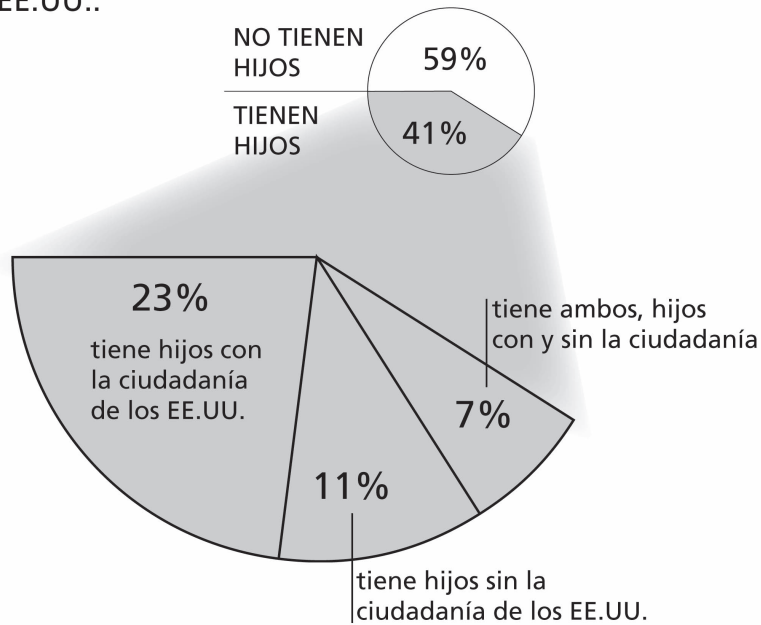
www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org/testimonies)

Corrupción en la industria del aborto. Lea el libro *Lime 5* (contáctenos) y vea como la mala praxis, el fraude y el abuso sexual están a la orden del día en las clínicas de aborto. Vea www.ClinicWorker.com para enterarse de otros abusos y violaciones.

El camino para acabar con el aborto está despejado adelante. Simplemente tome la evidencia mencionada y expóngala a la conciencia de la mayor cantidad posible de gente.

Familias de estado mixto

De las 6,6 millones de familias con por lo menos un padre o un jefe de familia sin la ciudadanía de los EE.UU.:



Fuente: Pew Hispanic Center basado en la Encuesta demográfica actualizada del marzo de 2005

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Como reportar un abuso.

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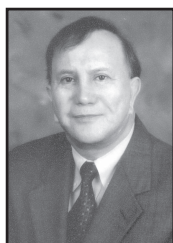
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Clash between Islam, West called inevitable unless both sides change

By Ana Rodriguez-Soto

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (CNS) — Jihad and suicide bombers, bin Laden and terrorism. That image of Islam, prevalent in the West, may not be representative of the majority of Muslims in the world.

But neither is it a false image, says Archbishop Cyrille Salim Bustros, an expert on Christian-Muslim relations who currently serves as head of the Melkite Diocese of Newton, Mass., and spiritual leader of all Melkite Catholics in the United States.

While visiting the Melkite communities in Miami and Delray Beach in March, he spoke at St. Thomas University on the “clash of civilizations” between Islam and Christianity.

Archbishop Bustros was born in Lebanon, studied in Jerusalem, and was head of the Lebanese Archdiocese of Baalbeck from 1988 to 2004. He said the current conflict is not about religion but about “the different forms of structuring society and the relationship of religion to the state.”

While Islam has many different interpretations and no central arbiter of doctrine, such as the pope, he said, most Muslims are taught to interpret the Quran literally. Following its precepts, they divide the world into Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb — the land of Islam and the land of war, the land conquered by Muslims and the land yet to be conquered by Muslims.

Like Christians, Muslims are obligated to “convert nonbelievers.” Unlike Christianity, however, “the doctrines of Islam dictate war against unbelievers.” Jihad, or holy war, is justified as self-defense whenever Islam is threatened — whether by a conquering power or an offensive cartoon.

Most Muslims do not take those interpretations of Islamic teaching as far as Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, Archbishop Bustros said. But “the concept of nonviolence is absent from Muslim doctrine and practice,” he added.

Although Islam calls itself a religion of peace, the peace it preaches is the literal interpretation of Islam, which means “surrender to the will of God.”

“The peace in Islam is based on the surrender of all people to Islam and to God’s power based on Islamic law,” Archbishop Bustros said. “They have to defend this peace of God even by force.”

Islam also is an “absolutist faith” that merges religion and politics — quite a different understanding from the Western concept of the separation of church and state.

“In the Islamic conception, there is no separation between God and Caesar. Caesar is governing in the name of God,” Archbishop Bustros said.

Complicating matters is their view of the West not so much as a Christian society but as materialistic, corrupt and immoral.

“Muslims see their opponents as the godless West. They are convinced of the superiority of their culture and obsessed with the inferiority of their power,” Archbishop Bustros said. “Muslims fear and resent Western power and the threat which this poses to their society and beliefs.”

Today, many Muslims see themselves “as victims of a widespread anti-Muslim prejudice comparable to anti-Semitism,” he said.

That worldview, combined with the large number of unemployed people be-

tween the ages of 15 and 30 and the ease with which religious and political leaders can exploit their religious zeal, explains the existence of suicide bombers.

“He has no future. He has no work. He is convinced that is the only way to win the war against the infidel,” Archbishop Bustros said.

Not that it is impossible for Christians, Muslims, and Jews to live together, the archbishop said. Although all three faiths have engaged “in deadly combat for power, land, and souls” for most of the past 1,400 years, Islam does not view Christians and Jews as infidels.

The Quran calls them “people of the holy book,” followers of a revealed religion, and believers in the one true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Muslims regard Christ as a great prophet and revere his mother, Mary.

The Quran also teaches that Christians and Jews are to be allowed to practice their

faith freely, so long as they follow Shariah, or Islamic law, and do not plot against the government.

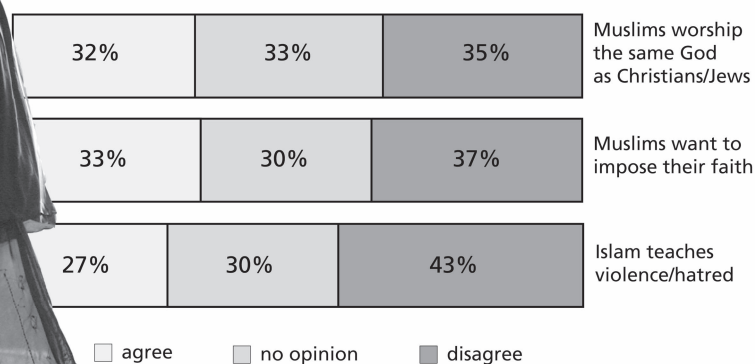
Although the situation appears grim, Archbishop Bustros said “the clash of civilizations can be avoided” by heeding the words of the Second Vatican Council’s document on non-Christian religions, “Nostra Aetate,” which called on Christians and Muslims to “forget the past and strive sincerely for human understanding and make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.”

That means “the West has to respect all other religions and all other civilizations” and not impose its values on them, Archbishop Bustros said.

It also means “Islam has to change its mentality” and arrive at a new, less literal interpretation of its teachings. “With the Islam of bin Laden, it’s impossible,” he said.

How Americans View Muslims

About a third of Americans are unaware that Muslims worship the same God as Christians and Jews.



Source: Council on American Islamic Relations
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Arab and a good neighbor

By Moises Sandoval
Catholic News Service

My Uncle Sam Alle came to the United States in 1909 from Beirut, Lebanon, at the age of 15. He apparently came alone and, though he had a cousin in Uniontown, Pa., settled in Wyoming. There he became a section hand on the Union Pacific Railroad, a job he held until his death, never rising above the level of laborer. But he played a far greater role in his community.

When he became a Catholic so as to marry my aunt Pablita, Alle and his bride settled in Wamsutter, then a tiny community of about 100 people, consisting largely of the crews for two railroad sections and their families.

Anthony Raymond Alle, the youngest of the Alle’s five children, remembers that his father frequently brought home strangers who needed a meal, a place to stay or a job. Alle outfitted shepherds and other workers with a bedroll, clothing, perhaps a rifle, food — whatever they needed — trusting them to pay him once they began drawing a wage. A barterer and a trader who bought and sold animal hides, wild horses and sheep, he knew all the sheep and cattle ranchers, and they told him when they needed workers. He had similar contacts on the railroad.

During the Great Depression when my father and uncles hardly could survive on their small dry-land farms in New Mexico, Sam Alle found temporary or permanent jobs for them. But he also helped many others.

The Alles lived simply. “My home when I was growing up was adequate, but never a place where I wanted to bring a friend,” Anthony says. “But it had a big pantry with stacks of five-gallon tins of soy sauce, cases of spaghetti and maca-

roni, big bottles of olive oil and olives. Today when we help the homeless, that is what my father did. My mother, too, helped everyone as much as she could, and if you were in trouble she would even co-sign for you.”

Eventually they moved to Rawlins, where Alle bought lots and built simple cabins to rent to workers. Yet he never became wealthy, never realized his dream of going to Lebanon to see his family, for he did much of his business on credit. When he died, at the age of 58, many people owed him money, debts never paid.

The powerful lesson of Alle’s life — how to be a good neighbor — was not lost on his children, especially Anthony. In the 27 years he taught international management at Illinois Central College in Peoria, retiring as a full professor, he was surrogate father for 150 students, all non-Christians from Lebanon. “When they came, they sought me out. I said to myself, ‘My Dad is not here, but I am in a position to guide these boys.’ My wife Martha and I opened our home to them.” All did well after graduation, one becoming a vice president in Dubai, the Arab Emirates, others gaining prominence in business and in the professions. In Phoenix, where Anthony now lives in retirement, one owns a deli and a Middle Eastern restaurant.

“During a Cursillo right after 9-11, I shared the story of these wonderful boys,” Anthony says. “I said: ‘The values I have did not come from a priest, or the church or the Catholic college I attended. I got them from my father, who was from Lebanon, and from my mother, who was from good stock in New Mexico and sang in the church.’”

In these bitter times when anyone Arabic may be viewed with suspicion, it is good to think of persons like Sam Alle.

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Archbishop: Future of schools may be different but no less glorious

ATLANTA (CNS) — Catholic schools have a precedent from which they can learn how to break through when things look rough, according to Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta. “The church of Jesus Christ was born in challenging times!” he said, echoing the theme of the National Catholic Educational Association’s 103rd annual convention, “Charting the Future in Challenging Times.” “From our very beginnings, we have faced difficulties that would have overwhelmed ordinary people,” Archbishop Gregory said in his homily at the NCEA convention’s opening Mass April 18. The convention was relocated to Atlanta after the original site, New Orleans, became unsuitable following Hurricane Katrina last summer. “Catholic educators are the heirs to the legacy of faith that was born in those challenging times,” the archbishop said, alluding to the Gospel reading for the Mass, in which the apostles knew that Jesus was dead — but did not yet know that he had risen. He called it a “temptation” within the church “to believe that yesterday was the zenith of our lives.”

Bullying seen as persistent problem; overweight children bear brunt

ATLANTA (CNS) — Bullying is such a serious issue that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta monitor it as a “child risk behavior,” according to Lynne Lang, a school community health educator in St. Louis. To illustrate her point, she said 160,000 children stay home from school each day because they’re afraid of someone at their school. Among the easiest targets for bullying are

overweight and obese children — a group whose ranks are swelling as a result of America’s dietary habits, said Angela Sheer, a dietitian who works with Lang at Barnes Jewish Christian HealthCare. The percentage of overweight children and youths ages 6-19 in the United States tripled from 5 percent to 15 percent between 1980 and 2000, Sheer said, and CDC figures indicate the current obesity rate at 17 percent of youngsters in that age group. Lang and Sheer presented a workshop, “Tipping the Scales on Childhood Obesity and Bullying,” April 19 during the National Catholic Educational Association’s 103rd annual convention being held in Atlanta

Catholic school enrollment down again; numbers affected by Katrina

ATLANTA (CNS) — The number of students in Catholic schools again declined for the 2005-06 school year, according to an annual National Catholic Educational Association report. Total Catholic school student enrollment is 2,363,220, down 57,370, or 2.4 percent, from the year before, according to “United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2005-2006: The Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment and Staffing.” The report was made available during the NCEA’s 103rd annual convention in Atlanta. Meanwhile, 38 new schools opened, while 223 were consolidated or closed — with the Archdiocese of New Orleans’ schools excluded because of the effects of Hurricane Katrina. The current number of schools is 7,589. “These national enrollment trend data reflect a continued significant decline in the elementary school population and a slight decrease in secondary school enrollment,” said an executive summary to the report by Sister Dale

McDonald, a member of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the NCEA’s director of public policy and educational research.

Bishops get at least \$500,000 to aid trafficking victims

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced April 18 that it has awarded a contract of at least \$500,000 to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to aid victims of human trafficking. Awarded through the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the department’s Administration for Children and Families, the contract will fund direct services provided to such trafficking victims through the USCCB’s Migration and Refugee Services. It provides a minimum of \$500,000 a year and up to \$6 million a year to cover such costs, with a yearly renewal option up to four more years. The Catholic Church has been a leader in efforts in recent years to draw attention to and provide services for the large number of people who are brought into the country each year by force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation, slave labor, or domestic servitude.

Catholic leaders urge prayers, action on immigration reform

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Bishops and church organizations are urging Catholics across the U.S. to pray for comprehensive immigration reform and to push their legislators for measures that would legalize the status of millions of illegal immigrants. The bishops of New York state in a Good Friday statement supported legislation that “provides for a pathway to permanent legal status for undocumented workers” and sets up “a rational and fair temporary worker program.” San Francisco Archbishop George H. Niederauer called for special prayers for a humane immigration reform to be said April 23, Divine Mercy Sunday. In an April 12 statement, he also urged Catholics to make sacrifices and contact their legislators on behalf of measures that respect “the dignity of our brothers and sisters who have come here from other lands.” An April 10 statement by the Knights of Columbus supported paths to legalization and noted that the world’s largest Catholic lay organization “has proudly included brother Knights in Mexico for more than 100 years.”

Christian Churches Together in the USA is officially started

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Christian Churches Together in the USA — the broadest, most inclusive ecumenical movement in U.S. history — was officially founded during a March 28-31 gathering near Atlanta. Its founding 34 Christian churches and national organizations represent more than 100 million Americans. Twenty-two additional churches and organizations are participating as observers or are in the process of deciding about joining, and more than 30 others are in conversation with Christian Churches Together. Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore, who hosted a 2001 meeting in Baltimore at which plans for the new organization first took shape, will represent the Catholic Church as one of its five co-presidents. He said he was “delighted that the work we began in Baltimore has continued to prosper.” Christian Churches Together is intended as a forum of ecumenical dialogue and witness involving the participation of representatives from all five major Christian families of churches in the United States: Catholic, Orthodox, historic Protestant, evangelical/Pentecostal, and historic racial/ethnic.

Archbishop says more Spanish-language Catholic radio stations needed

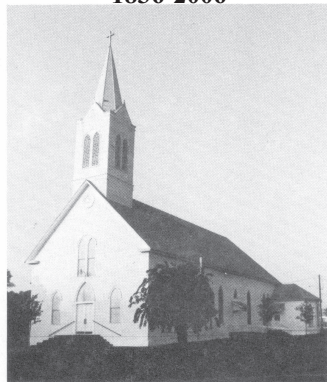
OMAHA, Neb. (CNS) — Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss of Omaha has encouraged his fellow U.S. bishops to develop Spanish-language Catholic radio stations as a way of reaching Hispanic Catholics. With the Hispanic population growing rapidly in the United States, many dioceses face difficulty finding enough Spanish-speaking priests, staff and volunteers, he said in a March letter to the country’s bishops. Spanish-language Catholic radio is “an impressive and overlooked means” of reaching Hispanics, he said. It can help teach about religion and provide practical information about accessing social services, he added. Archbishop Curtiss invited bishops to attend a June 16 breakfast during their annual spring meeting in Los Angeles to learn more about how to start a radio station and how to find Catholic programming in Spanish. The breakfast is being sponsored by the Catholic Radio Association’s episcopal advisory board. Archbishop Curtiss is the board’s chairman.

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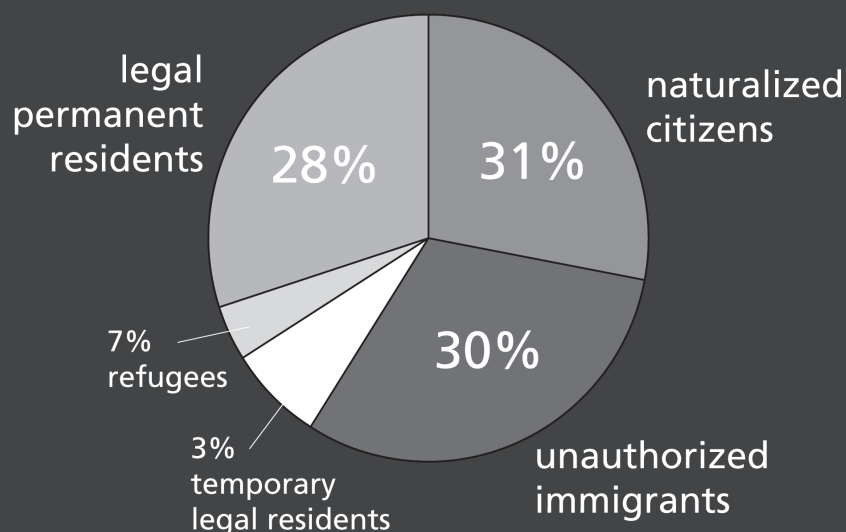
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Less than a third of those born in other countries are in the U.S. illegally.



Source: Pew Hispanic Center demographic estimates based on 2005 Current Population survey

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CNS photo/Paul Haring

MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVE OFFERS HUG TO JEWISH REPRESENTATIVE—Imam Warith Deen Mohammed, representing the Muslim American Society, offers a hug to Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen at the end of an interfaith discussion with representatives of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity at the International Prayer for Peace interfaith meeting at Georgetown University in Washington April 26.

Interreligious peace gathering in U.S. marks 20 years since Assisi

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Themes of prayer, peace, justice, love, dialogue, and care for the poor intermingled as representatives of world religions gathered at Georgetown University in Washington April 26 for the 2006 International Prayer for Peace.

It marked the 20th anniversary of the first such gathering, convened by Pope John Paul II in 1986 in Assisi, Italy, and it was the first time the yearly interreligious prayer and dialogue meeting was held in the United States.

Religious leaders of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists and Sikhs were among the more than 500 participants.

Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of the Washington Archdiocese, one of the co-sponsors of the two-day gathering, told the group that by coming together they were fulfilling Pope John Paul's dream "that we would pray together for peace."

But he added that Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, "God Is Love" ("Deus Caritas Est"), added another dimension to the meeting. "Because God is love, we must love each other. ... We will find peace in our love for each other," he said.

"Religion and Cultures: The Courage of Dialogue" was the overall theme of the two-day gathering, co-sponsored by Georgetown University, the Washington Archdiocese, The Catholic University of America, and the Rome-based Sant'Egidio Community.

The Sant'Egidio Community, which now has 50,000 members in 70 countries, is an organization of lay Catholics devoted to serving the poor and working for peace. After Pope John Paul convened world religious leaders in Assisi to pray side by side for peace, the community began sponsoring a similar international gathering every year to keep the spirit of the Assisi gathering alive.

The two-and-a-half-hour opening session of the Washington meeting included brief talks by heads of sponsoring organizations and a panel discussion featuring an American Muslim leader, the chief rabbi of Haifa, Israel, and the Catholic archbishop of Dublin, Ireland.

Georgetown University President John J. DeGioia reminded the participants that

all religions must face the challenges posed by violence and poverty in a world where 1 billion people are in abject poverty, living on less than \$1 a day, and 2 billion people have less than \$2 a day.

Ambassador Karen P. Hughes, U.S. undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, challenged the young people at the gathering to start an interfaith grass-roots peace movement "to do to terrorism what was done to slavery in the 19th century."

"The targeting of innocents is not a legitimate tenet of any faith," she said. She reminded them that the anti-slavery movement began as a religious movement among a few small Christian denominations but grew to capture the conscience of the world.

Sant'Egidio founder Andrea Riccardi said the pope's purpose in Assisi 20 years ago was simple: to invite representatives of all faiths "to pray, one alongside another," for peace.

The schedule for the second day of the gathering was devoted to more than a dozen panel discussions on religious dialogue and religious responses to current challenges to peace, justice, and human life and dignity, culminating in an hour of prayer at different sites around the campus and closing ceremonies that included participants signing a joint appeal for peace.

St. Peter's Basilica: 500 years represent masterpiece of art, faith

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With Pope Julius II reigning, 1506 was a big year for the Vatican: The Swiss Guard was formed, the Vatican Museums were founded and the first stone was laid for the new Basilica of St. Peter.

While the basilica will have to wait until this October for its chance to host an exhibit at the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI marked the April 18 anniversary of the stone-laying ceremony.

Calling the basilica a "masterpiece of art and faith," the pope said the whole world has admired "the powerful harmony of its form."

He offered thanks to the popes who guided its almost 130-year construction and commissioned embellishments over the centuries, the great artists who worked on it and the personnel of the Fabbrica di San Pietro who continue to welcome visitors and clean up after them.

"May the happy event of the 500th anniversary reawaken in all Catholics the desire to be 'living stones' for the construction of the holy church in which the light of Christ will shine through concrete charity and witness before the world," the pope said.

Cardinal Francesco Marchisano, archpriest of the basilica, presented a calendar of commemorative events at an April 20 press conference: a special Mass of thanksgiving on the June 29 feast of Sts. Peter and Paul; the exhibit, which will run six months; a Jan. 19, 2007, scholarly conference on the figure of St. Peter; and the release of special stamps and coins.

The events, he said, are designed to highlight "the religious, historical and artistic importance" of the basilica, which still functions today as a "true work of first evangelization," giving visitors a taste of the beauty and solidity of Christian faith.

Antonio Paolucci, an art historian serving as curator of the autumn exhibit, said the story of the basilica is mind-boggling.

"In ancient Rome — a city we would describe today as having been multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious — a simple Jew is executed and buried alongside a road on the edge of the city," he said.

"The amazing thing," he said, "is that someone built a memorial over this out-of-the-way tomb and over time this memorial grew into the grandest church in the world."

The oldest trace of the memorial to St. Peter is a bit of graffiti scrawled on a piece of red-tinted wall. Dated to sometime shortly before the year 200, it reads "Petros Eni" (Peter is here).

The small chunk of wall containing the writing will be one of the items put on display in October.

St. Peter was "a humble Jew buried without honor" in an unimportant cemetery, Paolucci said, "yet some of the most important artists and architects have

worked on the church" erected over his tomb.

Michelangelo, Raphael, Donato Bramante, Antonio da Sangallo, Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini are among hundreds of artists who had a hand in making the basilica "the most recognizable symbol of the Catholic Church," he said.

French Cardinal Albert Vanhoye, former rector of Rome's Pontifical Biblical Institute, is organizing the scholarly conference on St. Peter.

He told reporters St. Peter's role as the first

among the apostles is confirmed throughout the Bible, despite the fact that at times he is depicted as being presumptuous, fearful or completely lacking understanding about Jesus' mission.

While the basilica is built over St. Peter's tomb, Cardinal Vanhoye said, the church is built on Christ.

"The church always has been very careful to emphasize the difference between its founder, Jesus Christ, and 'the rock,'" St. Peter, whom he chose to lead the church on earth, Cardinal Vanhoye said. "Christ is the only savior. Peter, a sinner, was saved by him."

While the "Petros Eni" inscription is so important that the October exhibit will go by the same name, Cardinal Marchisano said that, unfortunately, it is not the only graffiti found in the basilica.

"Visitors frequently are writing on the walls," he said, especially the exterior walls of Michelangelo's grand dome. "You would not believe how much scribbling we clean off each week."

At least, he said, visitors who go up to the dome buy a ticket for the visit, so the income from ticket sales forms the bulk of the basilica's budget for cleaning and maintenance.



CNS photo/Nancy Wiechec

Visitors tour St. Peter's Basilica in this 2005 photo. At center is the baldacchino designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The structure rises to 95 feet beneath the basilica's main dome and marks the main altar and the grave of St. Peter.

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TV program notes — week of May 14

By Harry Forbes
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — Here are some television program notes for the week of May 14. They have not been reviewed and therefore are not necessarily recommended by the Office for Film & Broadcasting. TV Parental Guidelines are included where known. "The Da Vinci Code" movie tie-in programming listed below is included strictly for informational

purposes, although the premise of Dan Brown's best-selling novel, on which the film is based, is contrary to the tenets of the Catholic Church.

- Sunday, May 14, 9-10 p.m. EDT (Discovery) "The Secret Life of Christ." The "Conspiracy Files" series explores the theory that a bloodline from the Son of God survives to this day.

- Sunday, May 14, 10-11 p.m. (Discovery) "Unlocking the Da Vinci Code." Documentary exploring whether a painting bought some 30 years ago for a relatively small sum was actually painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

- Tuesday, May 16, 8-9 p.m. EDT (History) "Opus Dei: Secrets Revealed." A look at Opus Dei, the Catholic organization that was thrust into the spotlight because of the way it was portrayed in Dan Brown's book "The Da Vinci Code." For the first time in its 80-year history, Opus Dei's leaders, including Cardinal Julian Herranz Casado, Father Thomas Brohlin and Father Hilary Mahaney, have granted unprecedented access to tell their side of the story to demystify the myths surrounding the organization.

- Tuesday, May 16, 9-10 p.m. EDT (PBS) "Can You Afford to Retire?" The

"Frontline" series explores how the baby-boomer generation is headed for a shock as it hits retirement: Boomers will be long on life expectancy but short on income.

- Thursday, May 18, 9-10 p.m. EDT (A&E) "The Da Vinci Code." The "MovieReal" series looks at the making of Ron Howard's new film with exclusive clips and interviews with the stars.

- Friday, May 19, 9-10 p.m. EDT (History) "Before the Da Vinci Code." A look at Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln's book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," the nonfiction precursor to Dan Brown's best-selling "The Da Vinci Code."

The Movie Review Line — (800) 311-4CCC

www.catholicnews.com/movies

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Black and Native American, Catholic Communications Campaign, and Catholic University of America (All three combined) — June 3-4

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

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

Retrouvaille — For troubled marriages—The word Retrouvaille means 'rediscovery.' It is a program that offers the chance to rediscover yourself, your spouse, and a loving relationship in your marriage. Tens of thousands headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending. The next Retrouvaille weekend will be held Sept. 1, 2006, in Victoria. To register, please call Gerd and Linda Conner at (979) 648-2276. For more information or for other dates in Texas, please go to www.retrouvaille.org.

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

Singles — Catholic Singles, 40 and over, meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month at Holy Family Education Building at 7:00 p.m. Call 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: May 18 — OLS, Victoria, TBE; June 1 — St. Philip, El Campo, Spiritual Renewal Center (SRC); August 17 — Holy Family, Victoria, SRC. **Women's ACTS** retreats: May 11 — Holy Family, Victoria, SRC; 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. Introductory presentations on the **Creighton Model Ovulation Method** are offered in Wharton at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and in East Bernard at Holy Cross Catholic Church. Please contact Melissa Morse at (979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. For information about the Sympto-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella DeLos Santos (361) 573-2624. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

Goliad—Presidio La Bahia Museum and Visitor Center — a National Historic Landmark — is the only Spanish fort remaining in 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**

When & Where

Picnics, Activities, etc.

May

Hostyn—Holy Rosary Mayfest May 7 beginning with a Polka Mass at 10:00 a.m. A barbecue-pork and sausage dinner will begin at 11:00 a.m. with music, activities, and games all day.

Wharton—Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Annual Bazaar and Barbecue Dinner May 7 on the church grounds (506 S. East Ave). A barbecue dinner of chicken, beef, and sausage will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for \$7 each. Dine-in or drive-thru serving available. There will be an auction (1:00 p.m.), live music, Mt. Carmel Folklorico Dancers, games, cakewalk, food booths, plant walk, and much more.

Schulenburg—Bishop Forest High School Reunion May 13 at Wolters Park Pavilion beginning at 3:00 p.m. This reunion will be similar to the one three years ago. Hamburgers and soft drinks will be sold by St. Rose School. For more information call Joe Cernosek at (979) 743-4331 or Dan Mueller at (979) 247-4746. See page 6 for more info.

Cuero—St. Michael Spring Festival May 21 on the parish grounds. A roast-beef dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with drive-thru for plates to go at \$7 p.p. Also there will be an auction, country store and a fun-filled assortment of game booths for all ages. The festival will benefit St. Michael Church and School. For more information contact the church office at (361) 275-3554.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser May 21 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.

Victoria—An Iconography Workshop will be presented by Irene Perez-Omer in Victoria from May 22-27, 9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m. Tuition: \$500, includes supplies to be used to create an icon. For more information please contact Kathleen Edwards (361) 576-9887.

Victoria—Texas Tunes presents Horizons at Schroeder Hall Friday, May 26. Pre-sale tickets are \$10 and \$12 at the door. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. and dance from 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Proceeds to benefit Our Lady of Victory School Educational Opportunities. Advance tickets available at OLV School and various local businesses in Victoria including Cavendars, Victoria Harley Davidson, and High-Brehm.

Hallettsville—Sacred Heart Parish Spring Festival May 28 at the KC Hall. A fried-chicken and stew dinner will be served with homemade cornbread dressing from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at \$6 per plate (children \$3). Music throughout the day and night: Rusty Steins from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Tony Janak Orchestra and Bobby Jones Czech Band from 1:00 to 10:00 p.m. free of charge on the Polka Pavilion. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be games, entertainment, and a train ride for the children. There will also be a horseshoe (2:00 p.m.) and washer pitching (5:00 p.m.) tourney. Free karaoke will be featured from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. inside the KC Hall.

Shiner—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Spring Picnic May 28 at the American Legion Park. A stew, fried-chicken and sausage

dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. An auction begins at 12:00 p.m. There will be a country store, cake wheel, plant wheel, kiddie rides, and games. Music day and night.

Schulenburg—St. Rose of Lima Parish Picnic May 28 at Wolters Park. A fried-chicken and stew dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Adult plates \$6.50; children under 12, \$3. Drive-thru plates available at KC Hall. The auction begins at 12:30 p.m. There will be games, country store, cakewalk, rides for children, and much more. Music at 12:30 p.m.: Lazy Farmers Band and Texas Dream.

Upcoming Events

Flatonia—Sacred Heart Spring Picnic June 4 with a fried-chicken and stew dinner beginning at 11:00 a.m. There will be a horseshoe tournament. Music throughout the day. There will be an auction, country store, and more.

East Bernard—Annual Czech Kolache Klobase Festival June 10 from 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Riverside Hall sponsored by KJT Society No. 40. A sausage and barbecue-chicken dinner will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. There will be dancing, live continuous entertainment, arts/crafts, cakewalk, children's entertainment, and kolaches for sale. Entertainment includes: Dujka Brothers, Vrazel Polka Band, Bobby Jones Czech Band, Red Ravens, Texas Sound Czech Band, Czechaholics, East Bernard Dance and Tumbling Group, and Keller Academy of Performing Arts Dance students. Admission is \$6 p.p. and children 12 and under are free. For more information call (979) 335-7907 or www.kkfest.com.

St. Mary—St. Mary Parish Picnic June 11 at the parish hall. Mass will be celebrated at the church beginning at 9:15 a.m. A stew and sausage dinner begins at 10:30 a.m. There will be games, plants, cakewalk, train ride, and country store. Hamburgers will be sold in the afternoon. Auction begins at 1:00 p.m. Dance to live music from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Bay City—Our Lady of Guadalupe Annual Parish Jamaica June 11 on the parish grounds (1412 12th Street). Food booths open at 11:00 a.m. There will be live music, Mexican food, entertainment, games, and fun for all ages.

Cuero—St. Michael's Family Fishing Tournament June 17 at the Port O'Connor Community Center. Registration fee is \$40 per fisherman with maximum of four per boat; children under 12 \$20 per fisherman. There will be a meal served that evening along with a silent auction. For more information or to register call St. Michael School at (361) 277-3854; James or Amy Crain at (361) 277-9433; or Chris or Jill Crain at (361) 277-8766. Benefitting St. Michael School.

Wharton—Holy Family Annual Bazaar, June 25

Dubina—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish Picnic July 2

St. John—St. John Annual Parish 4th of July Picnic

Moravia—Ascension of Our Lord Parish Picnic, July 16

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.

Boling—St. Joseph Mission Annual Bazaar, Aug. 6

Frelsburg—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival, Aug. 6

Yoakum—St. Joseph Parish Picnic, Aug. 6

Palacios—St. Anthony Shrimporee, Aug. 6

Weimar—St. Michael Harvest Feast, Aug. 13

Praha—St. Mary Parish Picnic, Aug. 15

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 at \$45 p.p. includes box lunch on Saturday. For more info. please go to www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org or call (210) 521-3377.

Victoria—Catechetical Conference Sept. 30 at Holy Family **San Antonio**—Oct. 20-21, 2006, Cathedral Justice Conference at the Cathedral Conference Center. For more information, please contact Beverly Linke at (361) 277-5828.



Re-enacting an ancient church custom, Sister Emiliana Grafe, IWBS, and her sixth-grade religion class at Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville prepare to burn the Alleluia hymns before the season of Lent. The Alleluia hymn is not sung prior to the Gospel reading during Lent.

Students burn the Alleluia to make its Lenten absence more real

HALLETTSVILLE—The Sacred Heart Catholic School sixth-grade religion class ritualized the beginning of Lent with customs popularized in the church as far back as the Middle Ages. The students realized that the Alleluias sung at Easter would mean more to them if they were more aware of their absence throughout the forty days of Lent.

To heighten their awareness, they made colorful Alleluia banners in preparation for their special prayer service. On the day before Ash Wednesday, they gathered for their Farewell to the Alleluias. The service began with a joyful procession, holding their Alleluia banners high and singing all their favorite Alleluia melodies. After a short prayer service they processed

outside and listened to an explanation of various church customs of burning, burying, and hiding the Alleluias before Lent.

To participate in these customs some students placed their Alleluia banners in the fire and all prayed as they burned. The ashes were then ceremoniously buried.

Others “hid” their banners in a folder to put behind the large classroom Bible until Easter when they will take them out and carry them in procession, once again rejoicing and singing their favorite Alleluia hymns.

Hopefully the students will be more mindful of the solemnity of the Lenten season as they think of their “Alleluias in hiding” and will be looking forward to the return of the Alleluia at Easter.



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY CELEBRATED—Father Gabriel Bentil of Our Lady of Victory Parish speaks at St. Mary Parish in Victoria at their 15th annual Divine Mercy Sunday celebration April 23, 2006. While reflecting on the Divine Mercy painting, he emphasized the mercy of God towards all people. In a 1931 vision in Poland, Jesus instructed St. Faustina to paint the picture of Jesus with Divine Mercy flowing from his heart.



JCDA SERVE ON ANNIVERSARY—Members of the Junior Catholic Daughters of the America Court St. Paul 1604, Shiner, delivered approximately 500 cookies to the residents of the local nursing home on Valentine's Day, which was also National JCDA Day. The juniors baked the cookies at their annual cookie bake, decorated the bags, and then delivered the cookies and spread cheer to the residents. Following the delivery of the cookies, the members enjoyed a pizza party held in their honor on the 80th anniversary of the Junior Catholic Daughters national organization.

God's Little Helpers prepare for Shiner's church picnics

SHINER—Organized in 2001, a group of ladies known as “God's Little Helpers” have pieced and quilted a total of 69 large quilts and 38 baby quilts for Shiner Catholic Church annual spring and fall picnics.

Ten ladies quilt four times a week for approximately three hours Monday through Thursday. There is always a need for extra hands and anyone interested in quilting is welcome to join the group.

The quilts, made in numerous designs in regular and baby quilt sizes, are offered for sale at the annual auctions. Some quilts tops are pieced by workers while others are donated. Donations of material for the bottoms of the quilts and batting are always needed.

When the group formed, they had very little space to work and store their materials. Now they are enjoying a spacious storage cabinet. Edwin and Mildred Machacek donated the lumber, Harvey Picha built the cabinet, and the staining was done by Wanda O'Leary, Betty Adamek, and Mildred Machacek. Thanks to all the generous donors who filled the cabinet with quilting supplies, materials, threads, batting, etc. that are now conveniently organized and stored in their cabinet.

In addition to “God's Little Helpers” quilts, the picnic auction will have other quilts donated by individual parishioners,

as well as livestock, antiques, and hundreds of other items.

The spring picnic to be held on Sunday, May 28, will again include Shiner's famous three-meat noon meal, country



God's Little Helpers quilt in preparation for Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church Picnic to be held May 28 in Shiner. Quilters from left are Edith Harbers, Adeline Krennek, Mildred Roznovsky, Mildred Machacek, Dorothy Bender and Lillie Schreiber. Other members of God's Little Helpers quilting group, not pictured, are Mary Ann Wendt, Dolores Kyle, Rosalie Hagens, and Lillian Korenek.

store, cake wheel, plant wheel, arts and crafts, hamburgers, other snacks, and games and entertainment for all.

Beginning at 2 p.m., attendees at the picnic can enjoy listening and dancing in the air-conditioned hall to the music of the Hobo Band and Hoffmann Kickin' Polka and Country. Also, this year, the Shiner Hermann Sons Dancers will be featured as part of the afternoon entertainment. The afternoon music is free for participants' enjoyment. The Emotions will play for the dance Sunday night. There is a \$7 per person cover charge for the evening dance.

For more information about the spring picnic, call (361) 594-3836 or visit the Web site at www.shinercatholicchurch.org.



ST. PAUL'S BAND RECEIVES STATE SWEEPSTAKES AWARD—Shiner's St. Paul Band attended the TAPPS State Music Contest in Belton, Texas, on Saturday, April 8, 2006. The band received a state sweepstakes award for all superior ratings in concert and sight-reading. The band also received a superior rating plaque for all superiors in concert. Pictured from left to right top row: Gil Hodges, Chad Kloesel, Greg Siegel, Kurt Knesek, Kendall Kusak, Christina Iley, Thom Raabe, Zachary Beal, Bryan Molina, Timothy Soto, and Band Director Joel Whittington; middle row: Standing - Kyla Schacherl, Kneeling - Daniel Pierce, Courtney Panus, Regina Turnini, Cheritan Matias, Meghan Janak, Megan Zella, Nicole Schwab, Curtis Shields, Kendle Patek, and Shalane Matula; sitting: Britany Vesely, Hannah Kocian, Kelsey Knesek, Kelsea Panus, and Jill McElroy.



SHINER'S SOLO MUSICIANS COMPETE AT STATE TAPPS—These St. Paul participants had a solo at the TAPPS State Music Contest in Belton, April 8, 2006. They are left to right: Hannah Kocian (Superior), Shalane Matula (Superior), Bryan Molina (Excellent), Zachary Beal (Good), and Chad Kloesel (Superior).



4 of 5 in Suffering Church Series

By Susan Brinkmann
CS&T Correspondent

Kim Yong, a North Korean refugee, was in elementary school when he saw people gathering at an execution site in Hwanghae Province in North Korea.

"Tens of people were gathered there ... [because] they were Christians and they were going to be purged," he said during testimony before the U.S. Commission on International Religions Freedom on Jan. 27, 2004.

Instead of being shot, as were other citizens considered undesirables, "They were stoned to death," Yong said, "because [the authorities] did not want to waste any bullets."

Yong testified that Christians and all other religions were "liquidated" in the 1960's.

"[The government of] North Korea has been brainwashing the North Korean people that Christianity is actually the agent of all the wars and it is actually the foremost enemy of the North Korean people," Yong said. "In North Korea, if you are Christian, not only yourself but your next generation, and the next generation, and the second and third generation will be liquidated as well."

Yong told the Commission that Christians are the number one target of purges.

"And this is recognized nationally, recognized by all the people, recognized by all the Party members," he said. "North Korea is practicing a politics of deification and idolatry of Kim Il Sung. Kim Il Sung is designated as a deity and a god that is worshiped as sun in the sky by all the people in North Korea."

In spite of widespread poverty, Yong said that officials have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars building enormous statues of Kim Il Sung, before which the people are expected to worship and bow to prove their loyalty. Demanding the worship of false gods is not the only questionable policy of the North Korean government.

David Hawk, senior researcher for the U.S. Commission for Human Rights in North Korea also testified the same day Yong testified, describing an elaborate network of prisons built in the mountainous valleys in the north and central sectors of North Korea. The Commission said that up to 50,000 people are currently serving time there for a variety of "crimes" that range from political dissension to their religious affiliation.

Further, Hawk said, many of those people are imprisoned "without having been told of the charges or the offense. ... Without any judicial process whatsoever, [they] are sent for lifetime sentences at hard labor."

Hawk said the sentences were enforced on "not only the perceived political wrongdoer, but for up to three generations of that person's family."

The conditions inside these prisons are so inhumane as to be almost unprintable. Soon Ok Lee, who survived seven years in a North Korean women's prison, wrote a book about the horrors of North Korean prisons entitled "Eyes of the Tailless Animals: Prison Memoirs of a North Korean Woman."

Number one target in North Korea: Christians

Prisoners are fed a diet of salt soup and 100 grams of broken corn a day, while being forced to work 18-hour-days. Up to 90 prisoners sleep in flea-infested chambers that measure 19-by-16 feet, according to Lee.

"Prisoners sleep on the floor, squeezed together, head and feet alternating. Some 80 percent of the prisoners are housewives," Lee said.

Many are Christians. Lee was an eyewitness to the brutality routinely committed against them.

in the past five years as result of failed social, economic, and political policies as well as grave human rights abuses.

"The extent of the deprivation is startling," said Michael K. Young, a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. "An estimated 1 million people have died in the famines of the last decade. I recently learned that the North Koreans lowered the height requirement for adult male military conscripts from 4 feet-11 inches to 4 feet-2 inches due to the widespread stunted growth of the population."

In 2004, 6.5 million North Koreans will require food aid. One-third of all pregnant and nursing women in the country are malnourished; 40 percent of the children are chronically malnourished, which means they are becoming — or already are — learning impaired. Another 70,000 children are severely malnourished and expected to die of starvation.

It seems impossible to believe that North Korea was called the "Jerusalem of Asia" before the communist takeover in 1945, when, according to Yoon Kwon Chae, the religious persecution started to escalate.

First, there was the confiscation of church property. Next, Christian education of children was forbidden in

schools. Then, Christian meetings were forbidden. Finally, Christian leaders began to be secretly executed.

At present there is only one Catholic Church in the country, in the capital city of Pyongyang. The whereabouts of the Bishop of Pyongyang, Msgr. Francis Hong Yong-ho, and 50 priests, remains unknown. There are an estimated 3,000 Catholics in the country who mostly practice their faith at home, with no priests available to them.

Father Joseph Veneroso, M.M., who visited North Korea in 1989, said, "They can't have any public display of religion. Even if they have a crucifix in their home, it's in a place where nobody else might see it except for them."

Whatever religious activity takes place is staged by the government for the benefit of foreigners. During Father Veneroso's visit, he was permitted to say three Masses in the country's only Catholic Church.

"The church was filled, but we're not sure if it was filled because the government told [the people] to come out. But they knew all the songs by heart even though they didn't have any hymnals. They sang them from memory. And they knew all the responses to the Mass."

There are hopeful signs, according to Maryknoll missionary Father Gerard E. Hammond. Stationed in South Korea, he travels to North Korea several times a year with the Eugene Bell Foundation, a U.S. humanitarian aid organization working to eradicate North Korea's most serious public health problem, tuberculosis.

"These visits to the North are full of surprising opportunities," Father Hammond wrote in a recent article provided by Maryknoll. "Several times I have been asked to bless assistance given through Catholic organizations and have done so openly. We have developed warm friendships with government officials who assist with our delegations."

Father Hammond said the people of the North are as passionate about the reunification of their country as are those of the South. While bringing assistance to the North from the South, tiny bridges are being built between the two peoples.

"We are building bridges between people that, God willing, will last and last. Helping people, especially in times of need, is one of the best ways to build bonds of trust."

This article was written in the fall of 2004. For more information on how to help the suffering church, contact The Society for the Propagation of the Faith at (215) 587-3944, Aid to Church in Need (800) 628-6333, or Pontifical Mission Societies in the U.S. (212) 563-8706.



A child sips fortified milk donated by the aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, at hospital in North Korea in this file photo from May 1998. (CNS photo from Reuters)



North Korean Catholics attend Mass in a church in Pyongyang Aug. 17, 2003. The country reportedly has only one Catholic Church and religion is said to be severely restricted. Although the number of Catholics is unknown, there were some 100,000 reported in 1969. (CNS photo from Reuters)



Kim Ok-bae, right, of North Korea, cries as she embraces her mother, Hong Kil-soon, who lives in South Korea. The two were part of a limited number of brief family reunions allowed by the two governments for the first time in 50 years in mid-August 2000. (CN S photo from Reuters)

"In the spring of 1990, I was carrying a work order to the cast-iron factory in the male prison," Lee said in written testimony. "Five or six elderly Christians were lined up and forced to deny their Christianity and accept the ideology of the State. The selected prisoners all remained silent at the repeated command for conversion. The security officers became furious by this and killed them by pouring molten iron on them one by one."

North Korea is a country whose people have suffered through decades of repressive governments, beginning with the Japanese early in the century, and ending with the brutal regimes of Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jung Il. Totalitarian nationalism is all its people have ever known. There are no individual freedoms.

North Koreans' suffering has increased



First, there was the confiscation of church property. Next, Christian education of children was forbidden in Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Denver and the Rev. Richard Land of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission listen as Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., speaks during a session of the congressional working group on religious freedom hosted by the senator at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Dec. 14, 2005. Archbishop Chaput addressed the state of religious freedom in Indonesia, while Rev. Land's comments focused on North Korea. (CNS photo by Paul Haring)