

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 20, NO. 12

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APRIL 2007

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Founder of Victoria Trinitarians passes away

CUERO—One of the two founders of the Trinitarian Order in Victoria, Father Daniel E. Giorgi, O. Ss.T, passed away Thursday, March 22, 2007, in Cuero at the age of 91.

Father Daniel was born June 11, 1915, in Sante Marie, Dell'Aquila, Italy, to Carlo and Annunziata (Mari) Giorgi.

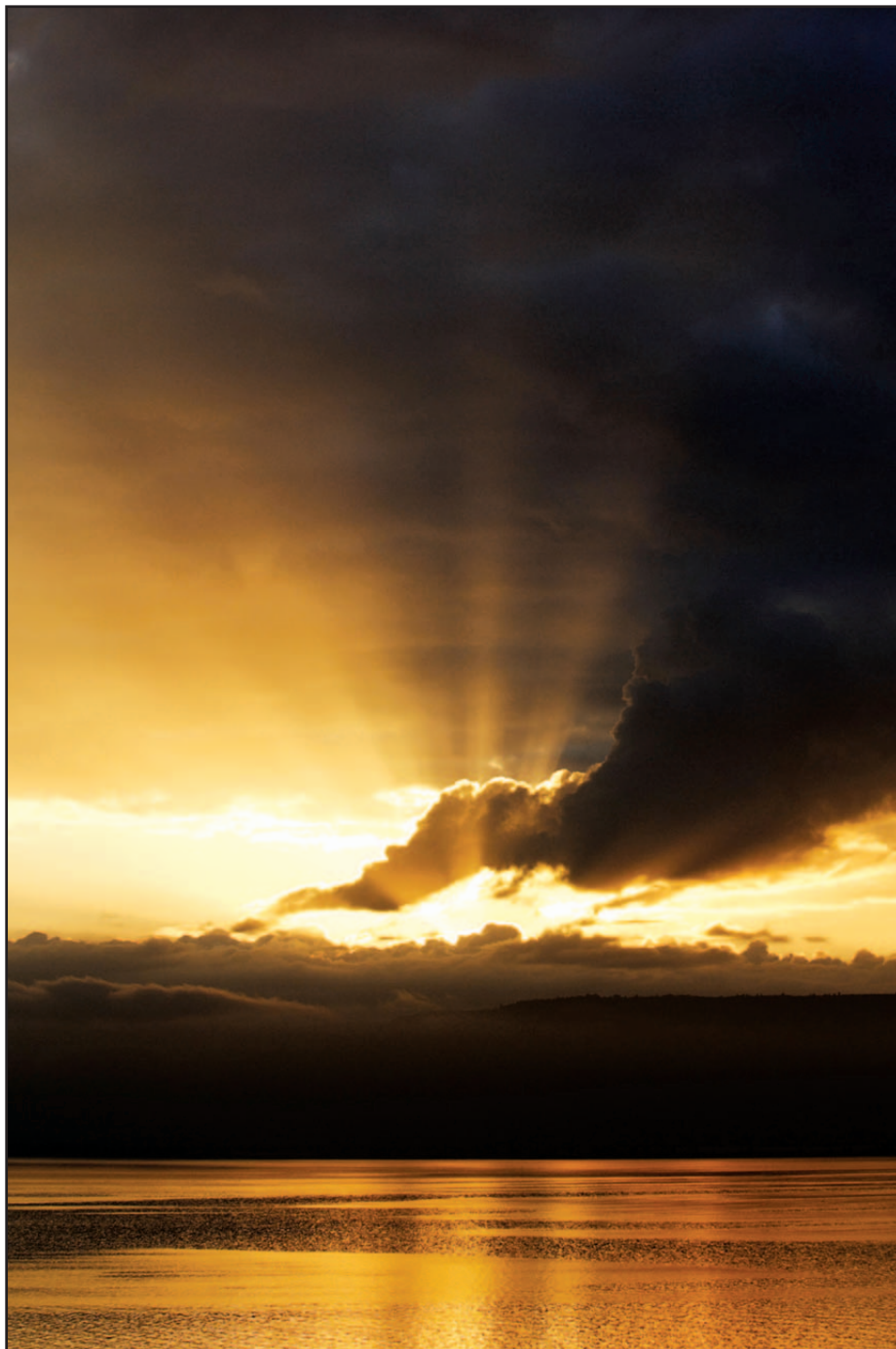
He entered the Order of the Most Holy Trinity (the Trinitarians) on Oct. 8, 1930, in Rome, Italy. On June 8, 1937, he made Solemn Profession of Vows in Naples, Italy, taking the religious name and title "Daniel of the Virgin." He came to the United States in 1939 and studied theology at the Catholic University of America, receiving the degree of Licentiate in Sacred Theology. Father Daniel was ordained a priest on June 10, 1941, in Hyattsville, Md.

He and Father Richard Toal, O.Ss.T., were sent to Victoria in 1943 to minister to Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. They were the first Trinitarians to serve in what is now the Victoria Diocese. Father Daniel served as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish from 1943 to 1950.

He was superior of St. John De Matha Monastery in Hyattsville, Md., from 1950 to 1953, during which time he taught at De Matha Catholic High School. In 1953, he was named pastor of Holy Rosary Church in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where he served for 31 years. From 1962 to 1968, Father Daniel served as minister provincial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity.

He served as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Cuero from 1984

See Founder, p. 2



CNS photo by Greg Tareynski

SUN RISES OVER THE SEA OF GALILEE—The sun rises over the Sea of Galilee as seen from Tiberias, Israel. With the breaking of dawn, Jesus arose on the third day. Happy Easter!

John Michael Talbot Concert in Ganado April 22

GANADO—John Michael Talbot, the top selling Catholic musician in the world, will perform at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 22, at Assumption Catholic Church in Ganado.

Talbot appears in more than 50 concerts nationally and conducts retreats and teachings. He has received eight Dove award nominations and one Dove award. He has produced 46 albums with sales approaching four million records. The artist has authored 16 books and produced video teachings on ministry to the poor, simple living and Franciscan and religious community living.

Over his 30-year career as a composer, performer, author, teacher and community founder, Talbot has received numerous accolades including induction in the Arkansas Entertainer's Hall of Fame in 2005. He was awarded the 2005 Mother Theresa Award for spiritual, artistic and philanthropic accomplishments. Other awards include receiving the Humanitarian of the Year for Mercy Corps, a non-profit organization to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression, and the President's Merit Award from the National Academy of

Recording Arts and Sciences.

Talbot is the founder, general minister and spiritual father of The Brothers and Sisters of Charity, the only integrated monastic community with canonical approval by the Catholic Church in America. The community is largely self-supporting.

He also is the founder and president of the Catholic Association of Musicians, a ministerial and support organization for Catholic musicians.

Tickets to Talbot's concert are \$20 each. They will be available from Assumption Church, Ganado; St. Agnes, Edna; OLG, Port Lavaca; Holy Cross and The Mustard Seed in Bay City; Heavenly Helpers, El Campo; Holy Family Catholic Church and the Bible Book Store in Victoria; St. Michael, Cuero; and Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Shiner.

Anyone wishing to have their tickets held at the door can order and pre-pay until Friday, April 13. Only cash and checks will be accepted.

For more information on tickets, call Assumption Church at (361) 771-3425.



N. A. students laugh at scenes from their volleyball teams' DVD displayed at a celebratory assembly March 5.

Tomorrow's media stars today

**Nazareth students win
\$2,500 prize from Best Buy
for their TV newscast**

By BJ Lewis - Victoria Advocate

They aren't old enough to have degrees in journalism, communications, photography or digital media, but the students at Nazareth Academy are writing, shooting and editing their own monthly newscast.

After school, the students can be found spending hours sharing time in front of the computer editing footage - they spend hours gathering sports highlights alone.

The eighth-graders write leads to the top stories and the transitions to their field reporters - a task eighth-grader and anchor Maddison Franklin once said is one of the greatest challenges behind the show.

"The news reporters sometimes ask, 'What do I say?'" Assistant Principal Scott Kloesel said. He said he tells them to ask the questions they would want to know, and he added, "I just let them do it."

The students behind the camera conduct interviews with other students, athletes and teachers. And they can be found in the garage making the music for the

See Tomorrow's media, p. 11

CORRECTIONS!!!

We had several errors in last month's (March) issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*. We express our apologies.

The last name of Auxiliary Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Washington, who will succeed Bishop Charles V. Grahmann of Dallas, was misspelled on the front page of *The Catholic Lighthouse*. The correct spelling is Farrell.

The Poor Clare Sisters will be moving to Bloomington (a suburb of Minneapolis), Minnesota, sometime around May, not to Omaha as printed in *The Catholic Lighthouse*.

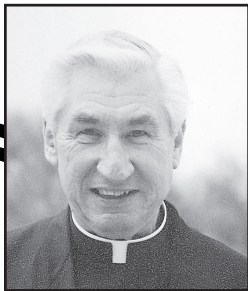
And Sister Katherine Vallone's book, "Wrapped in Joy," was published in 2004, not 1994 as printed in *The Victoria Advocate* and *The Catholic Lighthouse*.



Faith Point

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

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



Warm Mongers

A Gore has won an Oscar and may win a Nobel Peace Prize for his riveting work of science fiction called "An Inconvenient Truth." Its point is that computer models show that anthropogenic (manmade) carbon dioxide (CO₂) is causing global warming which will make the polar caps and Greenland's ice melt and raise sea levels by more than 20 feet. The result will be that Florida and many cities including New York City and Washington, D.C. will be under water. There will be water shortages, agricultural failures, increased disease, and death of forests. Within ten years or less without draconian measures to cut CO₂s, such as adopting the Kyoto Protocols, we shall be irretrievably committed to disastrous changes.

Not all consider Gore, who made a D and C+ in college natural science courses, a *Gorons*. He is Albert Gore, not Albert Einstein. If you believe the mainstream media, the science is already settled and skeptics are compared to Holocaust deniers.

Some skeptics who are climatologists and environmentalists include Professor Richard S. Lindzen of MIT, Dr. Timothy Ball, climatologist at the University of Winnipeg, David Legates, associate professor in Climatology in the Center for Climatic Research at the University of Delaware, Patrick J. Michaels, professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, Dr. S. Fred Singer, atmospheric physicist at George Mason University, and Dr. Claude Allegre, a celebrated French scientist who once ascribed to manmade heating but now doubts it.

The BBC has produced a documentary titled "The Great Global Warming Swindle" backed by many eminent scientists. It can currently be accessed at <http://littlegreenfootballs.com/>. Although it is 1 1/4 hours long, it is worth the investment of time. To date, no US network has shown the film.

Creation of climate models is a noble and useful undertaking but to date no one has successfully created a model that takes into account all the complex elements of world climates. Each model has anomalies that muddy the storyline of the warming warning zealots. Some of them are listed below.

From 1940-1975 global temperatures fell even as CO₂ emissions rose. CO₂ concentrations have grown *after* temperature rises which seems to absolve them of being the cause of global warming.

The models say that polar regions would warm first, but they are not doing it. East Antarctica is getting colder which it should not do if CO₂ is driving global warming. The magazine *Science* reported in November 2005 that Greenland was losing 25 cubic miles of ice per year, or 0.54 percent *per century*. In February 2007 *Science* reported that the acceleration of loss of its glaciers has reversed.

Gorons have relied on fraudulent data. Two studies by Michael Mann produced the infamous "hockey stick" chart that purported to show 900 years of relatively stable world temperatures followed by a

dramatic 20th century warming. The study has technical mathematical defects and seems to wipe out the Medieval Warming and Little Ice Ages, two of the most widely documented climate events in history. That did not prevent the Clinton administration from using it to "prove" global warming.

Global warming is blamed for making hurricanes worse. Chris Landsea, science and operations director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami said this perception is wrong and is contradicted by the statistics. Hurricanes seem to occur in cycles of 25-40 years. The hurricanes of 2005-2006 were no more intense than those that occurred in the 1930s.

The climate models do not square with climate history. An inconvenient truth for *Gorons* is that global temperatures closely track solar intensity. The sun was active during the 20th century and now stands at a high but level state of activity. If the sun reverts to the lazier pace of the Little Ice Age the earth will cool. Ice cores document a 1,500-year global warming cycle. Big ice ages come about every 100,000 years. Warm interglacial periods like our own last about 10,000 to 12,000 years. Human activity has never been the source of global temperature swings. There were no SUVs or power plants to cause past weather changes. The sun is the most likely cause of weather changes. Do not expect it to be a signatory to the Kyoto Protocols.

Water vapor, presumably not much under human control, is responsible for 95 percent of the greenhouse effect; CO₂ for only 4 percent. Man is responsible for only 1-3 percent of the CO₂ or, at most, 0.12 percent overall. Faulting human activity for global warming is like blaming the added weight of the flea on the elephant's back for the collapse of the bridge. A single volcanic eruption like Mt. St. Helens introduces more dust and ashes into the atmosphere than all human activity since the beginning of recorded history. Elimination of all US gasoline vehicles would reduce greenhouse emissions by less than 0.2 percent.

So the basic principle of the *Gorons* that global warming is anthropogenic lacks scientific basis and it is wrong to treat the principle as settled science.

If the science of manmade global warming is defective, its proposed remedy, the Kyoto Protocols, is the essence of absurdity. Kyoto commits signatory nations to cut emissions by 5.2 percent by 2012. The US Senate rejected the treaty

98 to 0. European nations that did accept it and bash the US for refraining have been unable to meet their quotas and have *raised* emissions by 2.4 percent. Meanwhile the rogue US has increased emissions by only 1.3 percent through voluntary adoption of cleaner technologies. Kyoto exempts China, India, and a large number of third world countries. Their emissions may continue unabated and could lure manufacturers from signatory nations to move their operations to those areas with no reduction in emissions worldwide.

Kyoto requires a reduction of 35 percent of energy use in ten years. That means, among other things, consuming one-third less electricity and eliminating one-third of all automobiles. Jerry Mahlman of the National Center for Atmospheric Research estimates the cost for the US at \$325 billion annually. Yale University's William Nordhaus and Joseph Boyer think it would take 30 Kyotos over this century to prevent global warming! The trillions of dollars needed would lead to a calamitous collapse of the world economy. Third world countries could not develop and would be consigned to eternal poverty if not extinction. All this to forestall a danger that probably does not exist.

Global warming has become a creed with fanatical adherents. It is particularly

embraced by leftists who see in it an opportunity to develop a structure to control world wealth by taxing energy and redistribute it. It fits in nicely with the aims of eugenicists who think that there are too many people in the world and would not grieve at the departure of the poorer ones.

What if the *Gorons* are right? Is not spending to prevent global warming like buying an insurance policy? How many people are willing to sell their houses and live under a bridge to buy an insurance policy to prevent their being struck by lightning at the bottom of the Grand Canyon? Life involves tradeoffs and an estimate of costs and benefits. Causing an economic cataclysm to avert a dubious danger does not appear to be rational. Wealthier nations are also greener ones because they have resources to develop cleaner technology and replant forests. The correct approach is not to impoverish all nations but to enrich all of them.

Ideas always have consequences. Environmentalists like Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*, used junk science to create hysteria that led to the elimination of DDT. The result was a return of malaria and millions of needless deaths. Implementing Kyoto could cause a great many more useless deaths.

Until *Gorons* make a better case for manmade global warming the best move is to cool it.

Preparations being made for 25th anniversary of Czech National Chapel in DC

Washington, DC—A 25th anniversary pilgrimage and celebration of the consecration and dedication of the Czech National Chapel of Our Lady of Hostyn in honor of St. John Nepomucene Neumann will be celebrated in June 2008. The Czech National Chapel is located within the Basilica of The National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the campus of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. This event is planned for June 28 and 29, 2008.

The Czech National Chapel is a gift from the American people—primarily American Czech Catholics—to the Basilica of the National Shrine of The Immaculate Conception. The gift, a Marian treasure, was presented in a three-day event (June 24-26, 1983), which included the consecration and dedication of the chapel and a festive celebration attended by hundreds of pilgrims from across the United States

and countries beyond, including dozens of church prelates and religious.

The two-day 25th anniversary event will comprise appropriate spiritual and social programs, including: welcomes by the rector of the Basilica and local leaders on Saturday morning; prayer services/spiritual focus on thematic topics; Saturday evening dinner and musical entertainment; speeches by prominent Czech and American leaders; penitential services; celebration of the Eucharist; appropriate liturgy and songs/music; and closing services on Sunday afternoon.

Further details will be made available to those who are considering making this pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in the name of the Czech National Chapel on its 25th anniversary on June 28 and 29, 2008. Please contact Alfons Broz at (703) 698-5318 or jb3316ab@cox.net.



Our Lady of Hostyn at the Czech National Chapel

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Seminary Burses

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

As of March 23, 2007

	TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$74,494.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Martha Pearson	20.00
In memory of Louie Huehlefeld by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Laura Irene Martin Obsta by Rev. Ty Bazar	100.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Albert and Gaynell Tristan	25.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Irene T. Orsak	10.00
In memory of Henrietta Nevlund by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
Total	\$74,699.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Burse No. 3	
Previously reported	\$6,522.50
In memory of Louie R. Huehlefeld by K of C Victoria Council 1329	100.00
In memory of Alfred "Buddy" Ramirez by Jim and Duchess Collins	30.00
Alvin and Janice Kulcak	15.00
M/M Alvin Schoener	10.00
Dan Stryk	20.00
Stanly Stryk	20.00
Gilbert and Faye Melnar	20.00
Louis Polasek, Jr.	10.00
Ruth Ann Boyd	5.00
Billy and Georgia Mikosh	20.00
M/M Charles Emery	20.00
Jim Koch	20.00
Gaye Nell Kalich	25.00
Total	\$6,837.50

— Catholic Daughters of America Court of St. Ann No. 369 Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$4,610.00
In memory of Audrey Abshire by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
In memory of Steve Borowicz by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
In memory of Alfred Ramirez by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
In memory of Marie DeBault by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
In memory of Louie Huehlefeld by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
M/M Benjamin Matus	15.00
M/M Randy Janak	5.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Joe and Joyce Morris	20.00
Wendy Hmcir	5.00
Deborah Orsak	20.00
Gift from CDA Court St. Ann No. 369	500.00
In memory of Henrietta Nevlund by M/M Otto Bleier, Jr.	25.00
M/M Benjamin Matus	15.00
Total	\$5,340.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Burse No. 3	
Previously reported	\$11,696.00
In thanksgiving by Ed and Judy Aulick	329.00
In memory of Henrietta A. Nevlund by Phillip and Evelyn Bujnoch	25.00
Total	\$12,050.00

— Josephat R. Janak Burse	
Previously reported	\$14,658.77
In memory of Hubert Hermes by M/M Victor Janak	10.00
In memory of Georgie Jobb by M/M Victor Janak	10.00
Total	\$14,678.77

— Rev. Jerome J. Stryk Burse	
Previously reported	\$10,317.50
In memory of Henrietta Nevlund by Edwin and Julie Stryk	10.00
In memory of Edith Yanta by Edwin and Julie Stryk	10.00
Total	\$10,337.50

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdame Burse	
Previously reported	\$7,935.00
In memory of Hubert Hermes by M/M Anton Schoener	20.00
In memory of Hubert Hermes by Vencil and Frances Janis	10.00
In memory of Hubert Hermes by Lelia Hermes	10.00
Total	\$7,975.00

Additional Burses for donations:

- Nicholas and Annie Grahmann Burse No. 2
- Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy
- Rev. Joe Levya
- Rev. Marcus Valenta
- Rev. Godfrey F. Kuratko
- Rev. Msgr. John Hanacek
- Sophie Schmidt
- Rev. Sean Donohue Burse No. 2
- Rev. Msgr. Robert Schmidt
- Rev. Msgr. Vaclav Bily
- St. Mary Church – Praha
- St. Mary Church – High Hill
- Rev. Charles Kram
- William L. Schmidt
- Willamena and Herman Grahmann, Sr.
- Sr. M. Perpetua Hawes, IWBS

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**

OLV to hold Saltwater Fishing Tournament May 4 – 5, 2007

Our Lady of Victory PTC will be hosting its first Annual Fundraising Saltwater Fishing Tournament. Sponsors and volunteers are being sought to support tournament activities.

Events will kick off Friday evening, May 4, at the K of C Hall in Victoria with a chance to enter side pots, purchase tournament merchandise, raffles, an auction and a meal.

The fishing tournament will be based out of the Indianola Fishing Marina. Highlights include a saltwater fishing tournament with trophy prizes, kid's bank fishing with prizes, side pot awards and a fish

fry.

Interested teams of up to four anglers can enter by downloading registration form at this Web site: www.indianolafishingmarina.com and e-mailing it to Scott Grones at sgrones@hotmail.com.

If you have a boat and would like to add teammates or would like to fish but don't have a team, please contact Scott Grones at his e-mail or at (832) 715-4907 for possible pairings.

The entire OLV family, fishing or not, is welcome to all the events, so plan to spend an enjoyable weekend with us.

Getting to know Chaplain Mensah

Part II

By Charlotte M. Brock, First Lieutenant, USMC, Assistant Operations Officer Recruit Training Regiment Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, S.C.

Editor's note: Father Gabriel Mensah was the first priest to be ordained in the Diocese of Victoria (1983). He served as pastor of St. Joseph in Yoakum before entering the Navy in 1994. This story was printed in two parts with the first part featured in the March issue.

In the 12 years since Father Gabriel Mensah joined the Navy, he has been stationed at Camp Butler in Okinawa, on the USS NIMITZ, and with the 2nd Marine Division in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where he served at 2nd Tank Battalion, and at 3rd Bn, 8th Marines. He deployed to Kosovo with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) as 3/8 Battalion Landing Team's (BLT) Chaplain, then with the 24th MEU SOC as the 1/8 BLT Chaplain. The Navy has also sent him to Rota, Spain; Gaeta, Italy; the Black Sea, and ... back home to Ghana.

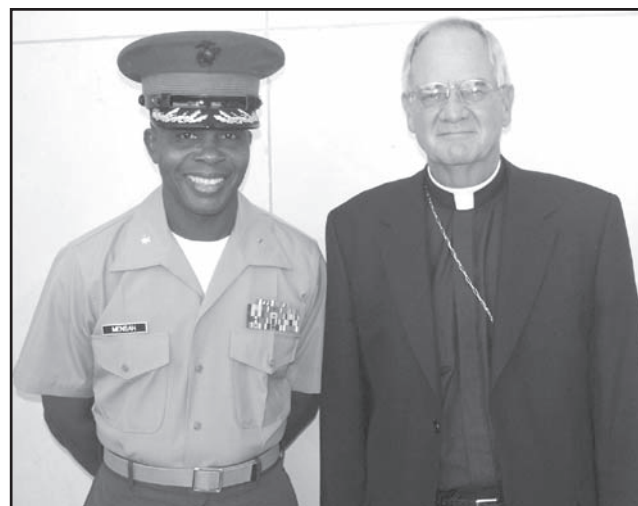
When Chaplain Mensah found out the Navy was sending him to his birthplace, he couldn't believe his luck. The USS Emory S. Land, on which he was stationed in 2005, deployed to the Gulf of Guinea and made a port stop at Accra, the capital of Ghana. Many sailors went ashore and participated in community relations' activities. Chaplain Mensah smiles and looks off toward the window, his fingers grazing the scar he still bears on his cheek, as he recalls the visit.

"The Seabees built schools, we went to small villages ... It was great. People saw my name, which is common in Ghana, on my coveralls. They were so surprised and happy that one of their own had come off the American ship! Kids followed me around. It was good for the kids. They asked me, 'How can I become a Navy Officer?' The media was even called and I was interviewed, made the national news. They called me a 'native son, transformed.' Give me a break!" the chaplain laughs, eyes shining behind his round glasses. "It was wonderful to be able to come back; I felt proud," he said, nodding to himself.

There are some things from his childhood that Chaplain Mensah takes with him

wherever he goes. As a young boy, his favorite sport was soccer; this year, it was hard to find the RTR Chaplain whenever Ghana was playing in the World Cup. He is an impressive athlete himself, running on average eight miles a day. "I have not seen a time when I didn't run," he said reflectively, chin resting on his knuckles. Regarding his last Physical Readiness Test, "I ran a mile and a half in 9:28 ... as an old man, hey!" he chuckles, and adds, in a hopeful voice: "I am getting better at push-ups."

Chaplain Mensah's upbeat attitude is especially beneficial to the recruits he interacts with. "Some of the recruits say they



Father Gabriel Mensah and Bishop David E. Fellhauer visit with one another on Father Mensah's 2006 vacation to the Diocese of Victoria.

only make it through because of Sundays. They go through a spiritual transformation here and they will never forget the faith they found," he says.

Indeed, the importance of Religious Ministries to the Recruit Training process cannot be understated. During Catholic services, the Recruit Chapel is so full that at times recruits sit on the floor. "You see them really worshipping, praying, singing. It's very different from regular Mass goers. These are teens and they actually ask for spiritual advice, seek to strengthen their faith ... it's incredible. Sundays are good days for chaplains on Parris Island." According to Chaplain Mensah, as many as 85 percent of recruits find God during Recruit Training.

Chaplain Mensah has also found meaning in his work at Parris Island. "It's incredible to be a part of the molding of young minds. They are ... the future of our military, and being a part of that is very exciting."

Chaplains work long hours on Parris Island and Chaplain Mensah is currently filling in as Support Battalion's chaplain, as well as handling his regular duties. But

See Getting to know, p. 5



Consider the Religious Life!

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at (361) 575-7300;
iwbsvoc@yahoo.com

Vocation Art

Artwork by Caitlin Orsak •
7th Grade
Sacred Heart School,
Hallettsville

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.



Twenty Something

By Christina Capecchi



Extreme makeover:

Interior design that really matters

I admit it: I cry when I watch ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. Something about Ty's neighborhood rally, the dazzling redesign and the awed reactions tug on my heart strings and tear ducts.

"She has epilepsy," I wail between sniffs, "and now she has a princess castle in her bedroom! And her brother has a life-size Lego fort!"

Extreme Makeover may pack in the most drama per minute, but in the booming business of home design, it's in crowded company.

With home ownership at an all-time high, our interest in not-so-humble abodes has kicked off a dizzying proliferation of reality TV, how-to books, glossy magazines and conversations at Panera.

Who doesn't want to flip their house or trade their space? Who doesn't crave a new look and a fresh start? And who doesn't secretly believe in the potential of Plum Burst walls framed in Angel Touch purple to unleash creative genius?

We set down *House Beautiful* and glance at that cluttered junk room with wistful eyes, imagining it reborn by a nautical motif, complete with life preserver and wooden ship wheel. Some favor a Tuscan look, dressed up with a terra cotta urn and rustic ceramic pottery. Others flirt with an Asian theme, wooed by the hip, exotic aura that somehow flows from elephant figurines and bamboo.

As a 20-something, the surging popularity of home design makes me restless. My June move will mark my fifth since 2004. And my next zip code will not be my final. I'm chasing jobs and dreams, putting the allure of home and family on hold. I'm exhaustingly mobile.

So when I stroll through Pottery Barn, I have to keep my yearnings in check. I'm sticking with the cheap, lightweight and unbreakable for now. The intricate rug, artistic mirrors and fireplace decor will come later.

Even if it's frustrating, the young-adult nomadic lifestyle serves us well spiritually. Our Christian disposition should be marked by a sense of restlessness, impermanence and impatience. We are all nomads on earth, preparing for our true home in heaven. As St. Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

If it weren't such a distant thought, heaven would shift our concept of interior design, compelling us to redesign an interior that's not held up by bricks and

mortar, but by bones and tendons.

True interior redesign begins with a restored prayer life, one that's dusted and made more prominent. Patch up the patience that's been so flimsy for so many years. Caulk the cracks that keep letting materialism and relativism seep in. Demolish envy. Repair self love. And reinforce the weight-bearing walls made of principles and priorities.

The Easter Gospel reminds us of the empty tomb Mary Magdalene discovered and the eternal home Jesus entered. The story comforts a restless nomad like me. I may not have found my earthly home, but my spiritual home is all set.

Easter beckons us to reflect on heaven, that place eye has not seen and ear has not heard. Its design will astonish us. Every feature will accommodate. There'll be no cramped closets, junk rooms or unfinished basements — just hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings and smudge-proof windows. A divine design.

When we arrive, God willing, the moment will contain all the drama of an *Extreme Makeover* episode. Cheering, crying, hugging, awe and elation. But it'll be even better, because all our dearest friends and relatives will be there. And they'll stick around long after the camera crew leaves.

House beautiful, home eternal.

Christina Capecchi is a graduate student at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. E-mail her at christinacap@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL CATHOLIC RED RAIDERS!!!

Due to a computer crash, we have lost most of the data from our alumni database. If you were ever involved in the Catholic Student Center at Texas Tech University, please go to www.raidercatholic.org and download an alumni database form and return it to the student center. If you know of any other Catholic Red Raiders, please have them do the same. Thank you for your help.

Pray for Vocations

Getting to know Chaplain Mensah

Continued from p. 4

even working seven days a week and sleeping only a few hours a night, he remains cheerful and friendly. One can only gain from taking the time to talk with him; his knowledge of cultures and languages (he speaks French and Spanish, not to mention six Ghanaian dialects, and Latin), his wisdom and experience in spiritual matters and his humor and love of laughter make Chaplain Mensah a great person to get to know.

You may write to LCDR Gabriel Mensah at 112 Brandon CV, Ridgeland, SC 29936-8377.

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New vocation director implements Vocation Camp

By Cindy Brewer

After settling into his new position and learning the ropes by visiting rectors and formation faculty of Texas seminaries, the new diocesan vocation director is planning the first annual vocation camp for young men who have questions about the priesthood.

Father Dan Morales, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Port Lavaca, was recently appointed the vocation direc-

tor and assisted at the vocation discernment retreat at St. Mary Seminary in January, giving a talk on discernment and helping out with some of the discussions and activities.

Locally, he's met with Father Matthew to help the office's transition. He has attended a couple of Serra Club meetings to begin working with the Serrans



Above is the pool at Camp Stony Creek, just one of the many outdoor recreation activities available on its 290-acre site. Inset photo is Father Dan Morales, vocation director.

tor and director of seminarians for the Diocese of Victoria by Bishop David E. Fellhauer. He replaces Father Matthew Huehlefeld, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Yoakum, who had held the position for the past seven years.

Designed for young men between 15 and 21 years of age, the vocation camp is scheduled for June 18 – 21, 2007, at beautiful Camp Stony Creek, a 290-acre ranch located near Columbus, Texas.

According to the vocation brochure, discerning a religious calling is not easy. It takes time — in prayer, in discussion with others and aided by spiritual reading.

The vocation camp, the first of its kind to be organized by the Diocese of Victoria, is designed to give a retreatant an opportunity to begin, or continue, to discern if God may be calling him to the priesthood or religious life.

Time will be given for prayer, discussions, sports and other fun activities with priests and seminarians from the diocese, said Father Dan.

There will be no worries for lack of outdoor sports at this camp as it offers facilities for swimming, fishing, softball, soccer, sand volleyball and much more.

The cost of the retreat is just \$50, which includes food and lodging. A \$10 non-refundable deposit is due by May 30 to guarantee a reservation.

Father Dan said that space would be limited to approximately 25 people, including retreat staff, so he encouraged interested young men to register soon.

Since being appointed vocation director and director of seminarians in October 2006, Father Dan has visited Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas and St. Mary's in Houston, where currently the four seminarians of the Diocese of Victoria are studying.

"What I've been doing is talking to vocation directors in other dioceses and asking what works for them," said Father Dan, "We don't want to reinvent the wheel."

He has been especially interested in the Amarillo and Rockford, Ill. dioceses' vocation programs.

While at the Texas seminaries, he said he was able to attend evaluations of some of the seminarians of the Diocese of Vic-

tor and assisted at the vocation discernment retreat at St. Mary Seminary in January, giving a talk on discernment and helping out with some of the discussions and activities.

Regarding his outlook for our diocese, he said, "I'd like to be overly optimistic and say we're going to increase our numbers with new seminarians, but I have to be realistic. But God knows what he has in store for vocations in our diocese. So my only plan is to trust in God's will."

He continues, "I encourage the readers of *The Catholic Lighthouse* to continue to pray for vocations because the work of vocations belongs to us all."

Father Dan had begun a sabbatical last year doing mission work at Las Obras Sociales del Hermano Pedro in Antigua, Guatemala. But within weeks of arriving at the mission he discovered he had cancer. He had to return home for surgery and treatments.

He just got good news recently that he will have an eight month respite from having to return to MD Anderson, he had been going every three months for check ups. "This is a great break," he said regarding his respite. "I'm in very good health."

After experiencing cancer, losing his right kidney and all that was involved in his treatments, he said he was very happy to be of service at the parish and in the diocese.

"If I can do my part while I'm well and still dealing with the issues involved in having cancer, I feel very happy to be able to do that," he said.

While pastoring a parish with a school and directing vocations and seminarians, he still plans to support the missions and work with the orphanage. "I still have a real desire to support the missions and especially work with the orphanage and will continue to do that," he said. He has already returned to the mission a couple of times since having to interrupt his sabbatical.

For more information or to register, please contact the Office of Vocations, Diocese of Victoria at (361) 573-0828 ext. 50 or e-mail: OLGulf@aol.com.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations — April 29



It's coming! Watch for it!
Look for it in the next issue!



Belinda Aparicio and her children use the diocesan Library and Media Center at the chancery building in Victoria on a regular basis. Here they are looking for videos to check out. There are over 1,400 from which to choose.

Start Planning your summer around the diocesan library

By Cindy Brewer

Summer is just around the corner, and this is the perfect time to begin planning family activities to keep the children busy on rainy days or to fill the many hours with useful and educational projects.

The Diocese of Victoria has a Library and Media Center at the chancery with over 1,400 videos/DVDs and 6,000 books on Scripture, the Catholic faith, saints and spirituality for all ages, from toddlers to grown ups. "These books and videos are available for the people of the Victoria Diocese to use," said Sister Digna Vela, Director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry.

"The Victoria Diocese has much to offer families who desire to learn more about their Catholic faith," said Sister Digna. "We live in a world of images. Children of all ages spend countless hours with television, computers, movies, and magazines. It's important for parents to be aware of the impact that media has on their children's values. Why not use this medium to bring God's message and Christian values to our young people?"

The Aparicio family has already caught on to this fact and has been renting videos and checking out books from the diocese for nearly five years, and not just during the summer. Belinda Aparicio brings her four children to the chancery about once a month and lets them pick out books and videos for themselves. "They (the kids) really like them. They're wholesome videos; I don't have to worry about inappropriate scenes or language popping up," Belinda said. "It's something good for them—that supports the values we try to teach them."

Belinda and her husband, Peter, are both professional teachers. Peter works at Memorial High in Victoria as a government teacher, and Belinda is using her teaching degree to home-school their four children who range in age from two to nine years. When they come to the library, they usually leave with about five videos—one for each of them—as well as some activity books that help Belinda to teach the children their school lessons.

When preparing one of the children for a sacrament, such as penance or first Communion, Belinda especially likes to rent a video on the subject. "It's nice for them to see the ritual instead of just hearing me talk about the sacrament (when teaching

them)," she said. "I like that we can get videos for the whole liturgical calendar—Advent, Lent, Easter, Ordinary time and the feast days of the saints. And some books have activities, so we can honor the saints in a nice way."

Belinda admits that coming once a month just isn't enough; she wants to begin coming more regularly. "I want to start coming every two weeks since that's when the items are due," she said.

Isabella, who is nine years old, said, "I didn't know there would be so many



Belinda helps Joseph and Nicholas find characters in "Can You Find Followers of Jesus?" book series.

Catholic, Christian books and holy activities." Seven-year-old Nicholas said he likes watching videos about Bible characters and saints. His favorites are the videos on David and Goliath, Joseph with the Coat of Many Colors, Francis Xavier, Patrick, and other saints. Five-year-old Joseph likes to check out "Veggie Tales" videos. Matthew, two years old, waits until he can pick-out his own videos.

There is a \$1 fee for checking out videos and DVDs. Books may be checked out at no charge. Parents can go to the diocesan Web site at www.victoriadiocese.org and click on "Library" and then type in the topic they're interested in. The library computer system will provide a description of the video or book, age appropriateness, and length of video. Items may also be reserved on the Web site.

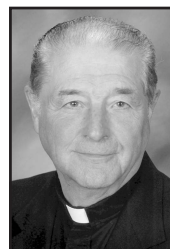
Books and videos can even be mailed to the patron's home. For more information, please call the Catechetical Office at (361) 573-0828 or come visit the library on the second floor of the chancery.

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

Question Corner

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service



Easter Duty

Q. *I am in my 70s and go to Mass whenever I'm able. I want to make my Easter duty by going to Communion, but can I do that without going to private confession? I know I have not committed any serious sins, but I still don't go to Communion as often as I'd like because I cannot go to confession easily; sometimes it's months or years. (Florida)*

A. First let's clear up your "Easter duty" obligations. According to Catholic Church laws, all the faithful who have received first Communion should receive Holy Communion at least once a year. Unless something serious stands in the way, that should be done during the Easter time, which lasts from the beginning of Lent to Pentecost (Canon 920).

The obligation for the sacrament of penance during this period is binding only if it is necessary for an individual to receive the Eucharist. The Code of Canon Law (989) states that all who have reached the age of reason are obliged to confess any serious sins once a year.

In this law, as in past similar rules, the church does not intend to impose a new obligation for confession, but merely prescribes a time within which mortal sins should be confessed so that, if for no other reasons, the Eucharist might be received. Thus the law about annual confession does not apply to someone who is not aware of an unconfessed mortal sin.

I realize many Catholics are under the same misconception as you seem to be about yearly confession being an Easter duty for all Catholics. The present regulations which I just quoted, however, are nothing new. They go back at least to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215; Chapter 21), which makes clear it is speaking of mortal sin.

The Baltimore Catechism (official revised edition No. 2), from which many older Catholics studied their faith, asks what is meant by the church commandment to confess our sins once a year. This commandment, it responds, means that we should make a good confession each year "if we have a mortal sin to confess" (Ques-

tion 293).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to Canon 989 in its explanation of the obligation for annual confession (No. 2042).

You realize, I hope, that this is not what the church recommends; it is simply the bare minimum required. Any Catholic who understands that the sacrament of reconciliation does much more than forgive serious sin, how it helps us repair our sinfulness and other weaknesses, and how it reconciles us to God and our fellow members of the human family will normally receive this sacrament more than once a year, mortal sin or not.

Please reconsider and start receiving the Eucharist whenever you go to Mass. From what you told me, nothing prevents you from doing that right now, even if some time goes by between your opportunities to go to confession.

Q. *What do the letters INRI stand for at the top of the crucifix? Sometimes the letters are IHS. I've been told that means "I have suffered." Is this true? (Ohio)*

A. The Gospel of John (19:19) tells us Pilate placed an inscription on the cross of Jesus which read "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The first letters you mention are an abbreviation of those words in Latin, "Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum."

The symbol IHS (I've never seen them on a crucifix, incidentally) are the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek. The symbol was in Christian use long before the English language developed, so it could not have an English meaning.

(A free brochure in English or Spanish, answering questions Catholics ask about baptism practices and sponsors is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 325, Peoria, IL 61651.)

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

RTJ Offers "Our Father" Insights

NEW LONDON, Conn. — *Twenty-Third Publications* and *Religion Teacher's Journal* announce the release of its catechetical activity poster. A Special Prayer from Jesus brings the spirit of the "Our Father" alive for students!

Now teachers and catechists along with their students can experience the prayer that Jesus taught like never before.

Our colorful and interactive March

Poster for Kids is called "A Special Prayer from Jesus" and it introduces children to the words of the "Our Father." It offers them the opportunity to talk about and reflect on the meaning of prayer in their lives and it displays the words of the "Our Father" with simple explanations of their meaning. Order extra copies today and invite those you teach AND their families to pray along with Jesus.

Posters include:

- FREE word puzzle and Bible activity
- Explanations of each verse of the "Our Father"
- Inspirational prayer service
- PLUS each child can personalize his/her poster!

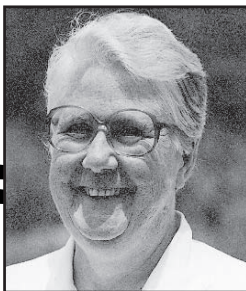
The poster may be viewed and purchased at this Web site: www.twentythirdpublications.com; click on Faith & Fun Posters. Sold in packs of 25 only; \$9.95 each. *Twenty-Third Publications* and *Religion Teacher's Journal* — your #1 resource for parish ministry and catechesis.





Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS

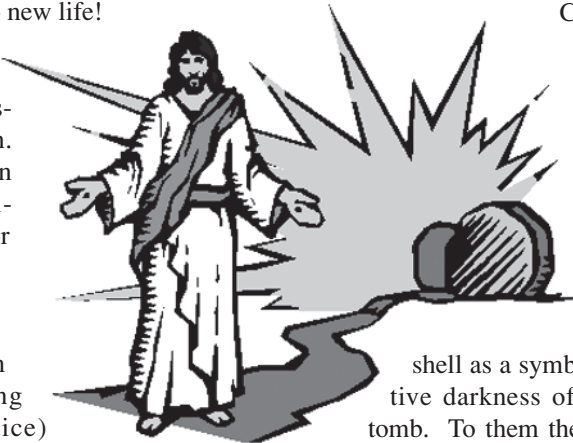


Let Us Sing "Alleluia"

The Alleluia has been released from its Lenten submission! It rings out throughout all Christendom. We rejoice because our Savior has accomplished his earthly mission. We celebrate humankind's passage in Christ through death to new life!

This is the oldest and most important Christian celebration. We Roman Catholics celebrate Easter, or Pascha (Pass-over), on the Sunday following the full moon after the spring equinox (solstice) which occurs anywhere from March 22 to April 25. Some Christians celebrate Easter on different dates because they follow calendars other than the Gregorian calendar established by Pope Gregory XIII in the 16th century.

We celebrate new life as we witness the Easter Vigil fire and the Paschal candle being lighted and blessed. We rejoice with the newly baptized as they are initiated into our Church to journey together with us. Nature, too, reminds us of the new life that we are celebrating. The fields and gardens, along with the pastures and woods, burst forth with new growth, while the birds and animals are preparing their nesting and birthing places.



The traditional Easter symbols: the cross, the lily, the egg and the bunny all illustrate some aspect of our understanding of the meaning of Easter. The cross was the means of our redemption and now expresses the essence of the Christian faith.

The egg, which in pre-Christian times was regarded as the source of life, was "baptized" by the early Christians who viewed the shell as a symbol of the protective darkness of the life-giving tomb. To them the hatching chick represents the risen Christ emerging from the tomb. The bunny, with its great reproductive ability, signifies new life. Some view the bunny as an innocent vulnerable creature that can be sacrificed, thus representing Christ being sacrificed. The lily, with its life cycle illustrates the resurrection story. The dead-looking bulb, when buried, is reborn as a glorious white flower. Its color symbolizes the purity of the Savior and the joy of the resurrection.

Let us then sing "Alleluia." Let us be filled with joy as we reflect on this greatest of Church Feasts. Let us allow all its symbolism to continue to nourish our hearts and minds.

Happy Easter!

Catholic Home Missions Appeal strengthens the American Church

The 2007 Catholic Home Missions Appeal is scheduled nationally for the weekend of April 28-29. Once again, parishioners across the United States will have the opportunity to help their fellow Catholics in rural America – from the Deep South to the Mountain West – live out their faith under difficult circumstances. Last year, the Catholic Home Missions gave more than \$3 million to the dioceses along the Gulf Coast devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Dozens of parish churches and schools in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas were destroyed or damaged. Catholic communities needed help to repair and replace buildings and to restore the pastoral programs at the heart of any parish. Catholics across the land re-

sponded generously.

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal allows more prosperous Catholic communities to support poorer ones here in America. "Home missions" are as simple as that.

The church is quite fragile in many parts of the United States where Catholics are a small minority.

In the Diocese of Victoria, the Appeal currently supports the Spiritual Renewal Center, Vocations, *The Catholic Lighthouse* and the Office of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal is administered by the Committee on the Home Missions, a division of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

CDA to celebrate 45th biennial state convention

By Henriette Jaloway
State Public Relations Chairman

Catholic Daughters of the Americas throughout Texas are preparing for the forty-fifth biennial state convention to be held at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas, April 26-29. The theme of the convention is "Women of God, Be Not Afraid."

The opening Mass will be held at Santuario de Guadalupe Cathedral on Thursday, April 26. Celebrants will be Most Reverend Charles Grahmann, bishop of Dallas, and Most Reverend Armando Ochoa, bishop of El Paso and Texas state chaplain.

The first business session will be Friday, April 27, with State Regent Olga Samaniego of El Paso, presiding. Other state officers participating are First Vice State Regent Carolyn Bachmann of Scotland, Second Vice State Regent Sheila Martinka, Pasadena; State Secretary Carolyn Malik, Shiner; and State Treasurer Peggy Rosales, Austin. Also participating will be State Parliamentarian Loraine Hilscher of Dallas and National Regent-Elect Libby Ramirez of Victoria.

Anticipated business includes proposal of resolutions, as well as proposal of amendments to the CDA bylaws, voting for new state officers, reports, and announcement of winners in various con-

tests.

Projected activities include a memorial Mass for deceased members, a Clergy/Men's Luncheon, a Past Regents' Luncheon, a Junior Catholic Daughters Mass, and some fund-raising fun.

Several workshops open to all registered attendees will be presented at the convention. Rev. Donald Ruppert of East Bernard, Texas state clergy consultant, will present a workshop on spirituality. Other workshops include membership, protocol and ceremonials, leadership and teamwork, Circle of Love forms and documentation.

Attendees are anticipating a fun time at the Hawaiian fun night on Friday as well as at the formal banquet Saturday evening. The convention will conclude Sunday morning with the Mass of installation of new officers for 2007-2009.

The last state convention was in Austin in 2005.

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas is a non-profit organization for Catholic women over the age of 18 years. Catholic Daughters engage in creative and spiritual programs that provide them with the opportunity to develop their God-given talents in a meaningful way to positively influence the welfare of the Church and all peoples throughout the world.



Parishioners from Sacred Heart Parish are treated to a barbecue at Father John Peter's home place between Weimar and Columbus. On March 13 and 14 the parish hosted residents from Hallettsville's two rehabilitation and nursing centers and parishioners over 65 years of age.

Sacred Heart pastor hosts seniors at family home for anniversary event

HALLETTSVILLE—Father John Peters, pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and its missions around Hallettsville, hosted residents of Hallettsville Rehabilitation and Nursing Center and Stevens Nursing and Rehabilitation Center from Hallettsville at his home place between Weimar and Columbus. Fifty-two residents from the two nursing homes and volunteers from Sacred Heart Church enjoyed the outdoors and a catered barbecue meal by Peters' BBQ out of Ellinger on March 13, 2007.

On March 14 he hosted another gathering at his home place for Sacred Heart parishioners who are 65 years and older. One hundred and ten senior parishioners enjoyed the farm, the catered meal by Mikeska's of Columbus and the music of

the Lost Bohemians from Hallettsville.

Sacred Heart also hosted a bingo and party at each of the two rehab and nursing centers at the beginning of March. Residents enjoyed bingo, door prizes of statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Mother, and cake and punch. Each resident received a goodie bag and a prayer card for the elderly, compliments of the parish. On March 20, the same was done at the Hallettsville Senior Citizens Center.

Chairmen of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church's 125th Anniversary for senior citizens activities during the month of March, Sandra Dierschke and Joan Janak, along with a number of volunteers, helped plan and coordinate the outings and activities.

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A strong shoulder in a difficult time.

Dear Supreme Knight:

When my husband became a Knight, we were introduced to our insurance agent, Mike Walther. We could sense right away that he thought of his career as more of a 'ministry' than a sales position. Little did I know then how much his sense of ministry would mean to me.

During our meetings, we weren't easy to persuade. Never willing to give up, Mike worked to show us that we had a need, and he was able to help us understand the value of being protected with life insurance.

My husband died suddenly last fall. His death was a shock to everyone. Although from a medical standpoint it shouldn't have happened, I guess God felt his work on Earth was done. Mike was there for me immediately. He was at the wake and the funeral, and then stayed by my side and helped with whatever I needed. He cried for my husband just like I did.

I think that in this world where everyone is focused on the bottom line, I saw what the Knights are truly about. They were there for me when I needed them the most.

— Beverly Buchanan*



*Based on an actual letter. Names have been altered to preserve anonymity.

To find your local Knights of Columbus agent, select "Find an Agent" at KOFc.org, or call

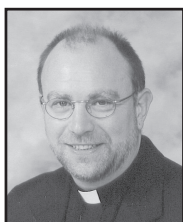
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From The Pastor's Desk

By Father Bob Knippenberg
Pastor of Sts. Cyril and
Methodius, Shiner



How God Values Marriage

That Our Lord valued marriage's four characteristics (1. a natural union of opposite sexes, 2. a permanent union, 3. an exclusive union, and 4. a union marked by a formal contract) so much as to sacramentalize them, is only the first sign to Christians of marriage's supreme importance. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, we find marriage alluded to in connection with the deepest mysteries of life and being. This begins at the story of creation, when the Man was found to be incomplete, in need of a partner. And so, with the creation of the Woman, they

became two in one flesh.

Throughout the Old Testament, the relationship between Israel and the Lord is described in terms of marriage. The prophets repeatedly denounce Israel's faithlessness as a sin of harlotry or adultery. Thus Jeremiah 3:1: "You have played the harlot with many lovers; and would you return to me?" And Hosea 4:12: "For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the harlot." And, above all, Ezekiel 15:31-32: "Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned hire. Adulterous wife, who

receives strangers instead of her husband!"

The *Song of Songs* gives us a more positive treatment of this theme. In this great poem of courtship between God and the soul, the relationship begins in love and culminates in spiritual marriage. The same theme is carried forward into the New Testament to describe God's love for his Church. St. Paul's famous passage in Ephesians 5:21-33 brings it to fulfillment: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself, without spot or wrinkle or any

such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church."

Father Bob will offer a six-week marriage class for anyone (married or unmarried) interested in better understanding *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage*. The mini-course will be conducted every Thursday evening (except April 26) from Thursday, April 12, through Thursday, May 24, at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church in Shiner. To register, or for questions, please call the rectory at (361) 594-2826.

Winner of Ladies' Rolex Watch Announced

Daughter of E.P. and Olaya Salas of Victoria wins the 3rd Annual Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament's fund-raising prize. Sharon Salas-Fuller of Las Vegas, Nevada, won the ladies' Rolex watch valued at \$12,500. The Salas' bought a ticket for each of their children and Sharon was the winner. They plan to visit her soon and deliver her prize.



David Casey of Montana (far left) joins the OLS Life Teen band during a break while the Youth Leadership Team engages the crowd in some dance steps.

Youth Spectacular wowed by Montana team

By Debbie Vanelli, director
Youth and Young Adult Ministry

The Diocese of Victoria was blessed by the presence of two incredible speak-



Break time!

ers from Montana. Doug Tooke and David Casey led the 2007 Youth Spectacular, held March 4, 2007, at Holy Family in Victoria.

Doug Tooke came into youth ministry as a youth wanting to give something to the Church. He began volunteering in



Clarissa Christiansen of Blessing and Rachel Chovanec of Ganado enjoy listening to the spiritual music.

Doug Tooke leads everyone in reflective prayer.



Guys from Hostyn listen deeply to serious talk.



Catholic parishes and took a summer job as a camp counselor at the Diocese of Helena's renowned Legendary Lodge. After a couple of years stint as a full time youth minister, Doug became the director of *Catholic Youth Rural Outreach*, a co-operative rural youth ministry in the Diocese of Helena that serves six individual parish communities.

Doug had been partnering with David Casey, his brother-in-law who is a singer, songwriter and close friend, doing traveling-youth ministry for years. The duo had already worked extensively throughout the Northwest doing rallies, retreats, conventions, etc. and in 2003 began to share their ministry on a national scale.

They have the amazing ability to share their faith and the Scriptures with youth and young adults in a way that it comes alive for them. They celebrate the Catholic understanding of the Bible and grab the attention of the young people by challenging them to answer God's call for them in the face of the world today.

Almost 500 young people, ninth through twelfth grades) and adults spent the day celebrating their faith through interactive keynotes, prayer experiences, praise and worship, liturgy and adoration.

YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 29 — Youth Leadership Training, Camp David Training
- June 3 — Rocky Mountain High, staff training and parents meeting
- June 8-10 — Camp David Staff Development
- June 10-12 — Junior High Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 13 — Elementary Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 13-15 — Junior High Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 25-28 — Discipleship Week, Spiritual Renewal Center
- July 7-15 — Rocky Mountain High at Pagosa Springs, Colorado

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

Debbie Vanelli at the Office of Youth Ministry
at (361) 573-0828 ext. 32 or e-mail at dvanelli@victoriadiocese.org
or JoAnn Martinez at ext. 50 or e-mail at jmartinez@victoriadiocese.org
Web site: www.victoriadiocese.org/youthoffice

St. Philip youth bring the 'Passion' to El Campo community

EL CAMPO—On Good Friday, April 6, forty-seven St. Philip high school youth returned to Jerusalem to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and his followers as they re-lived "The Passion of Jesus Christ." They performed the dramatic piece at the El Campo High School auditorium.

Based on the Scriptures and songs written by Adrian Snell, with accompaniment by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, each scene was meant to bring the audience closer to the realization of the awesome love of God in the ultimate sacrifice of his Son on the cross.

Third-year director, Mary Kay Price, stated, "We wanted the community of El Campo to experience Christ's passion, death, and resurrection through this presentation. Referring to the teens, she says "I am so proud of these kids, because they have put their heart and soul into this performance. They bless my soul." What bet-

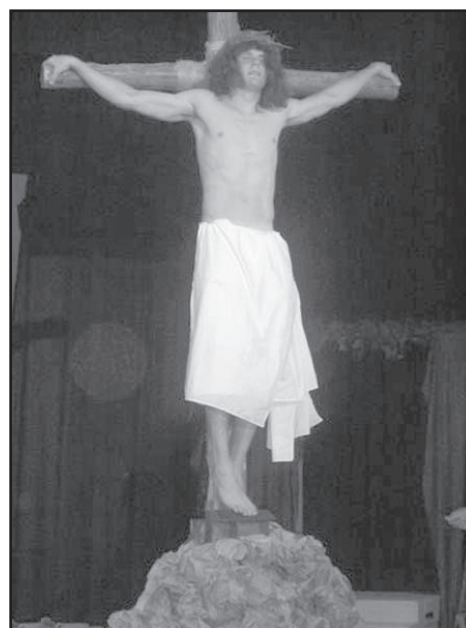
Pontius Pilate, Angela Fiala as Veronica, Stephanie Fiala as the accusing woman, Bryce Skow as Joseph of Arimethea, Jason Schoenfield as Simon of Cyrene, Lauralee Collins as an angel,



Jesus' (Thad Deiss) agony in the garden.



Peter (Travis Trochta) hears the cock crow after his denial of Jesus.



Jesus is crucified for our sins.

ter way to conclude the celebration of Good Friday than a reflection on the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Savior?

The cast of characters included: Thad Deiss as Jesus, Emily Bergstrom as Mary, the mother of Jesus, Suzanne Buzek as Mary, the mother of James, Shannon Bode as Mary Magdalene, Christopher Raun as

Courtney Janak, Anna Raun, and Linda Cerny as chief priests, Dustin Appling, Landon Appling, Cody Brandl, Justin Cox and Taylor Graham as soldiers, Katie Bode, Lauralee Collins, Alexis Cooper and Stephanie Fiala as Jerusalem women, Bryce Skow, Kenna Bubela, Travis Deiss, Stephanie Mahoney, Tyler Socha, Zach Edwards, Molly Melanson, Travis Trochta, Wes Smolik, Travis Saucedo, Chase Zalman, and Nick Gutierrez as Apostles, Brooke Altenhoff, Kyndall Priesmeyer, Kaylin Panning, Jackie Rodriguez, Torie Rachunek, Katlyn Urbanovsky, and Danielle Zalman as liturgical dancers, Travis Johnson and Madsen Raun as narrators, Clayton Hicks, Michael Matthews, Michael Orsak, Josh Sablatura, Charlie Watson, and Trey Wilson on lights/sound and Lindsey Sablatura on set design. The directors were Mary Kay Price and Terese Faas.



The Apostles watch the trial of Jesus. From l. to r.: Travis Deiss, Molly Melanson, Bryce Skow, Travis Saucedo, Stephanie Mahoney, Zach Edwards, Kenna Bubela, and Travis Trochta.



KC ASH WEDNESDAY FUND-RAISER HELPS SCHOOL—The Knights of Columbus Council 2490 of El Campo and St. Philip School teamed up to have a fish fry on Ash Wednesday. St. Philip School received \$3529.05 from the proceeds raised by the Knights' fund-raiser. Pictured l. to r.: Greg Witcher, Principal Tish McAlister, Father Gary Janak, pastor, and Grand Knight A. J. Hlavaty. Fund-raising Coordinator, Larry Staff, not pictured.



OLV PLACES IN MATHCOUNTS COMPETITION—Our Lady of Victory School's eighth-grade team of Stephanie Kasper, Andy Polasek, Jared Poland and Martin Kallus placed third in the Mathcounts competition sponsored by the local chapter of the Texas Society of Professional Engineers. Stephanie Kasper placed third in the individual competition and advanced to the state competition in Austin on March 24. Jared Poland placed fourth in the individual competition.



FRIENDSHIPS REKINDLED AND MEMORIES SHARED AT REUNION—A beautiful time was spent by over 200 pilgrims at the Pilgrim's Reunion Sunday, March 11, at St. Philip the Apostle Church in El Campo. Betty Urbanovsky hosted the reunion for all who had ever traveled with her. Her tour guide, Miro Skanski of Dubrovnik, Croatia, was also present, which made for a great reunion. Bishop David E. Fellhauer opened the reunion with a celebration of the Mass. Lunch followed with a smorgasbord of food, and memories were shared among the travelers who had become good friends. Several pilgrims spoke of their memories on previous pilgrimages. Above are two of the first pilgrims to travel with Betty and her husband, Vic. Mickey Howard (l.) went on one of Vic's pilgrimages and Elizabeth Polasek (r.) went with Betty (c.) on her first pilgrimage to Medjugorje; both women are from El Campo. Heavenly Helpers was on hand to make religious items available, thus making it feel like a pilgrimage, purchasing souvenirs and spiritual helps and reminders. Door prizes of gifts from various pilgrimage sites were awarded to lucky winners. One of the highlights, and making the reunion a true religious pilgrimage, was the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament while praying/singing the Divine Mercy with Father Gary Janak, accompanied by organist Janice Cox. It was spiritually beautiful. Many priests were on hand to promote their upcoming pilgrimages. A listing of the trips is on page 19.



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS JOIN FOR FIELD TRIP TO ALAMO—Mrs. Karen Zavesky and the Sacred Heart Catholic School fourth grade class as well as Mrs. Pam Wick and the fourth graders of St. Rose of Lima Catholic School traveled together to San Antonio to visit the Alamo Tuesday, February 20, 2007. The trip was very informative and educational. The classes listened to an educational lesson about the Alamo and toured the Alamo. After lunch the classes visited the Wax Museum located across the street from the Alamo. The students had a very eventful and enjoyable day.



YOAKUM CDA ANNOUNCES EDUCATION CONTEST WINNERS—Students from the fourth through eighth grades from St. Joseph School participated in the 2007 National Education Contest with the winners appearing at the monthly meeting of the Yoakum - Our Lady of Guadalupe Court No. 206 Catholic Daughters on March 5. The themes "The Beauty of God's Creation" and "Taking Time for Others" were depicted in categories such as art, poster, computer art, poetry, essay, music and photography. Librarian Mrs. Dorothy Harper serves as the CDA education chairperson. All first place names were forwarded to the CDA State Office for State participation and possibly nationals. Pictured above are the winners: essay-div. I – Christina Squyres 1st; Jenna Holik 2nd and Clayton Wenske 3rd; essay-div. II – Abby Hull 1st, Thomas Mabry 2nd and Christen Werland 3rd; poetry-div. I – Christopher Neubauer 1st; poster-div. I – Callie Witte 1st, Anna Kvinta 2nd and Reagan Renken 3rd; art-div. I – Jenna Holik 1st and Anna Kvinta 2nd; art-div. II – Courtney Carroll 1st; and computer art-div. I – Haley Lorke 1st. Not pictured Thomas Mabry and Courtney Carroll.



In Memory of Henrietta A. Nevlud, a wonderful wife and mother and tireless volunteer.
August 14, 1920 —
March 8, 2007

Henrietta was a dedicated volunteer with KJZT 101, The Assumption; Victoria County Czech Heritage Society; the Catholic Daughters of America Court St. Ann, No. 369; Our Lady of Victory Altar Society; and DeTar Hospital.

In loving memory from, her husband, Joe Sr., five sons, Pat, Joe Jr., Ed, Frank and Rev. Greg Nevlud, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren.



We the members of pro-life organizations wish to thank God for the life and legacy of Dorothy Stathis, a passionate and untiring worker in his vineyard for pro life, who passed away on the feast of the Annunciation, March 26, 2007. We mourn her passing and pray to God to help us live her example.

In celebration of her life,
The Gabriel Project, Life and Family Advocates and Love for Life will remember her always.



Tomorrow's media stars today

Continued from p. 1

broadcast that is seen on Nazareth Academy's classroom televisions and Victoria's Fox 19.

For this hard work and creative use of technology, Nazareth Academy won the Best Buy Teach Award for the second consecutive year. The award recognizes schools for innovative use of interactive technology. And they won a \$2,500 grant



Assistant Principal Scott Kloesel introduces Cody Gaines, Victoria Best Buy Store operations manager, to the students of Nazareth Academy March 5 to present NA's winning of the Best Buy Teach Award for the second year in a row.

to Best Buy.

"The (Victoria) store sent out over 60 applications," said Cody Gaines, store operations manager. "There were several thousand sent out around the U.S."

He said only 1,200 schools were chosen for the award, and the prizes range anywhere from a \$2,500 prize to a \$15,000 prize.

"Getting chosen is a pretty big deal. It's taking education to that next level through things like laptops, computers, TVs or cameras for classrooms."

Last year the school won a \$2,500 grant from the store for its computer lab that parents and school officials built and got running. This year's award was based on a student effort - the monthly Nazareth Academy Show.

The show is a newscast produced by the students for the students. Students like seventh-graders Dobie Drost, Shelby Hardin and Brandon Hoelscher write, film, edit and produce music for the newscast.

The students also sell advertising and

sponsorships to Victoria businesses to help with production costs. Some of the business ads are designed by the students.

"I enjoy working together with other people, and that's what we learn from the teachers," Shelby said about what she likes about working on the show.

"It is just awesome that we won this, we work really hard, I think it's a great honor," Dobie said. "It's so much fun to turn on the TV and see NA on there and see your friends doing things and getting involved in the school."

Gaines said he was impressed as he sat watching the Nazareth Academy Show and seeing first-hand the product of what the school is doing with its technology.

He watched clips from the different Nazareth Academy shows and a highlight DVD the students put together

chronicling the volleyball team's undefeated season.

"It's amazing they get to do their own show," Gaines said. "It prepares them going into high school. A lot of people struggle with this stuff. People come into our store barely knowing how to turn on a computer and here they have fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders filming and editing their own show."

Kloesel said that while he was happy with the award and proud of the students' efforts, he has high hopes for next year.

"I thought for sure we would get the \$15,000," Kloesel said to the student assembly gathered in the gym Monday for the award presentation.

A moment later he vowed to work for the top prize. "We're going to work hard and we're going to get it."

BJ Lewis is a reporter for the Advocate. Contact him at 361-580-6535 or bjlewis@vicad.com, or comment on this story at www.VictoriaAdvocate.com.



Pictured above are the winners of the Girls KC Diocesan (regional) Free Throw contest held in Hallettsville March 11. 1st place winners, 10 years through 14 (l. - r.), seated in front row: Hannah Blumrick, Callie Witte (first in state), Breanna Williams, Gabi Licerio, and Brianna Braeuer; 2nd place winners (middle row): Shannon Mikesky (not pictured), Laura Moeller, Michaela Bram, Chelsey Cinadr, Erica Serna; 3rd place winners (standing): Ashley Bridges, Paige Bartos, Ashley Anderson, Allyson Blakeney (not pictured), and Gabby Canales.



Pictured right are the winners of the Boys KC Diocesan (regional) Free Throw contest held in Hallettsville March 11. 1st place winners, 10 years through 14 (l. - r.) standing: Matt Orsak, Justin Rosenauer, Jake Kobersky, Cody Austin, Chris Walker; 2nd place winners (middle row):

Jordon Johnson, Quayde Binder (not pictured), Isaac Cardona, Jacob Christen, Kaid Brand; 3rd place winners (seated in front row): Seth Eckhardt, Kevin Brown, Jordon Glueck, Wesley Kelley, and Ben Anderson.



Yoakum girl wins KC State Free Throw Championship

HALLETTSVILLE—After placing first in the Knights of Columbus District Free Throw Contest held in Hallettsville, 11-year-old Callie Witte of Yoakum claimed first place for her division at the KC state championship at the University of Texas San Antonio March 18.

Callie made 20 of 25 free throw shots at the state tournament for Yoakum's KC Council 1582.

She was one of 10 contestants who won a chance to go to state by placing first in the girls 11-year-old division at the Knights of Columbus Diocesan (regional) Free Throw Contest held at Sacred Heart School gymnasium in Hallettsville March 11, 2007.

Thirty-three boys and 30 girls won winning places at their district competition in order to compete in the diocesan

contest.

Each contestant was given 25 free throw attempts. The contestant making the most free throws out of the 25 attempts was the winner. If a tie occurred among the top three places, a five-shot shoot-off was held until a winner was determined. Contestants were divided among age groups ranging from 10 to 14 years.

First place regional winners competed at the state tournament at UTSA. Second and third place winners served as alternates if first place winners were unable to compete.

Winners of the girls diocesan contest were: 10-year-old division: 1st place, Hannah Blumrick, Louise; 2nd, Shannon Mikesky, Schulenburg; 3rd, Ashley Bridges, Ganado; 11-year-old: 1st, Callie Witte, Yoakum; 2nd, Laura Moeller, Columbus; 3rd, Paige Bartos, Moulton; 12-year-old: 1st, Breanna Williams, Ganado; 2nd, Michaela Bram, El Campo; 3rd, Ashley Anderson, Lissie; 13-year-old: 1st, Gabi Licerio, Bloomington; 2nd, Chelsey Cinadr, Hallettsville; 3rd, Allison Blakeney, Yoakum; and 14-year-olds: 1st, Brianna Braeuer, Flatonia; 2nd, Erica Serna, Palacios; 3rd, Gabby Canales, Placedo.

Winners of the boys diocesan contest were: 10-year-old division: 1st, Matt Orsak, Moulton; 2nd, Jordan Johnson, Eagle Lake; 3rd, Seth Eckhardt, Schulenburg; 11-year-old: 1st, Justin Rosenauer, Weimar; 2nd, Quayde Binder, Weimar; 3rd, Kevin Brown, Markham; 12-year-old: 1st, Jake Kobersky, Weimar; 2nd, Isaac Cardona, Austwell; 3rd, Jordan Glueck, Alleyton; 13-year-old: 1st, Cody Austin, Harwood; 2nd, Jacob Christen, Columbus; 3rd, Wesley Kelley, Yoakum; and 14-year-old: 1st, Chris Walker, Schulenburg; 2nd, Kaid Brand, Goliad; 3rd, Ben Anderson, Lissie.

The regional contest was supervised by Diocesan Deputy Alvin Kulcak of Louise. He was assisted by Assistant Diocesan Deputy Robert Stryk and district deputies from throughout the diocese.

Holy Cross Life Teen donates to Pregnancy Center

BAY CITY—Holy Cross Life Teen and The Edge recently made a donation to the Women's Pregnancy Center in Bay City. The Women's Pregnancy Center works in the community to help teens and women in crisis pregnancies.

The high school and junior high youth groups worked hard to collect funds for this worthy cause. The teens went out in the community with baby bottles in hand to collect the money. There was a prize of \$50.00 off the teen's Steubenville South trip in June for the person who collected the most money. Miranda Barta, a senior at Bay City High School, collected the most money, bringing \$80.00 stuffed in her baby bottle.

The combined efforts of Life Teen and The Edge resulted in a \$1000.00 contribution to the Women's Pregnancy Center.

Pictured left to right: Ricky Busha, Susan Kieschnick, Norma Labuda, Leslie Breitenkamp, Terri Busha, Mark Rickaway, Kelli Ross and Zack Nicholson.



Holy Cross Life Teen and The Edge members of Bay City donate \$1,000 to their local Women's Pregnancy Center.

"No one but the Creator is the sovereign of basic human rights — beginning with the right to life" (US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 15).



Knights to Celebrate 125th Anniversary on March 29

On its 125th Anniversary, the Knights of Columbus Stands Out: Steady Growth in Contrast to Trend Among Many Other Fraternal Societies

NEW HAVEN, Conn.—As it celebrated its 125th anniversary this Thursday, March 29, 2007, the Knights of Columbus stands out among fraternal societies, having registered 35 years of uninterrupted membership growth even as many other fraternal societies have been shrinking. Supreme Knight Carl Anderson noted that, “While Author Robert Putnam famously worried that Americans were ‘Bowling Alone’ in his book of several years ago, Knights of Columbus are not only bowling together, but are doing many other things together with their families and brother Knights, in numbers that grow every year.”

Membership in the Knights of Columbus has grown nearly 50 percent, from 1.15 million members in 1972 to 1.72 million members today. In fact, membership in the Knights has increased each year since 1972, and the K of C is now the world’s largest lay Catholic membership organization.

“At a time when many fraternal organizations are finding it difficult to attract new members, our continued membership growth is a testament to our history of 125 years of faith in action,” Anderson said. “Father Michael J. McGivney founded an organization dedicated to safeguarding the faith and financial well-being of families, and our continued growth speaks volumes to the importance of those goals, which are as relevant today as they were in 1882.”

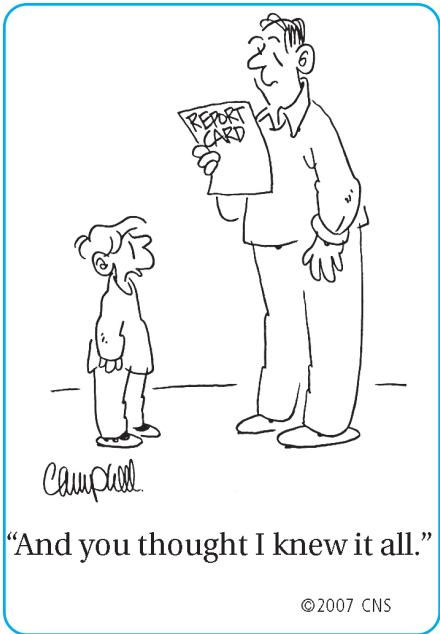
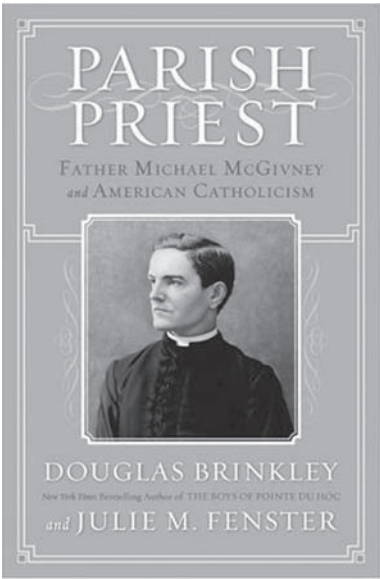
As a fraternal benefit society, the Knights of Columbus provides its members a variety of life insurance products for the financial stability of their families. One of the most highly rated insurance companies in North America, the K of C has more than \$62 billion of life insurance in force and consistently earns the industry’s highest ratings for fiscal management and ethical business practices. It is one of only four insurance companies in North America to receive the highest possible ratings from Standard & Poor’s (AAA) and A.M. Best (A++), and certification from the Insurance Marketplace Standards Association.

The Knights of Columbus has also long

been actively involved in American public life. Before and throughout World War I, the Knights ran “Army Huts” – facilities that provided recreation, snacks and comfort items to the troops near bases and near the front. The huts – whose motto was “Everybody welcome. Everything free” – were a predecessor to the USO. During the 1920s, in direct opposition to the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights lobbied President Calvin Coolidge to pressure the Mexican government to stop its persecution of Catholics in Mexico. Ultimately, the lobbying paid off, and an accord was reached between the Church and the Mexican government.

In the 1950s, the Knights of Columbus led the effort to have the words “under God” added to the Pledge of Allegiance. The organization continues to speak out on important social issues – especially in the area of the protection of human life – today. Among the many notable Knights over the past 125 years were: writers Joyce Kilmer and Miles Connolly, sports legends Babe Ruth, Connie Mack, Vince Lombardi, Floyd Patterson and Ron Guidry, and statesmen Al Smith, Henry Hyde, John F. Kennedy, Jeb Bush and Sargent Shriver. Last year, the Knights of Columbus donated more than \$139 million and 64 million volunteer hours to charity.

In honor of the Knights 125th anniversary, *Parish Priest*, the book about the founder of the Knights of Columbus, Father Michael J. McGivney, will be given away as the April Family Puzzle Contest prize.



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FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

EASTER

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

A	S	U	A	M	M	E	N	C	B	H	N	E	E	Y
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ALLELUIA
EARTHQUAKE
EMMAUS
GLORIFIED BODY
GREETINGS

LILY
LINEN
MARY MAGDALENE
NEW LIFE
PASCHAL

PETER
RISEN
SPICES
STONE
SUNDAY

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

The winner of the March Puzzle Contest is Dorothy Kollaja of St. Agnes Church in Edna. She is the winner of “Battling the Corporate Giants – the Ultimate David and Goliath Story.”

The youth contest winner was Samantha Holub, 9, of St. Rose of Lima Church in Schulenburg. She will receive a gift from Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

The winner of the April Family Puzzle Contest will receive “Parish Priest,” by Douglas Brinkley and Julie M. Fenster, published by Harper Perennial. “Parish Priest” is about the founder and founding of the Knights of Columbus in 1882. It’s a great book for American Catholic History buffs or for any Knight of Columbus member.

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 April 25, 2007, to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age. Please don’t forget your phone number and parish name.

Light One Candle

By Dennis Heaney, President
The Christophers



Hope, Humor and Easter

Easter! What a glorious season of life, joy and “Alleluia!”

But is it also a time to laugh?

Despite our happiness at coming through the somberness of Lent and the sad solemnity of Good Friday, we don’t usually associate laughter with the Risen Christ. But perhaps we should.

Think about Mary Magdalene and the other women who, mourning the loss of Jesus, went to the tomb that Sunday morning to finish the burial ritual. They were determined to honor Him in death as they had followed Him in life. What they found was the stone rolled back from the entrance and an angel who said, “He is not here; for He has been raised.” They left “quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.” (Matthew 28:6,8)

Their hearts must have been pounding. Within moments, they had gone from grief to shock to wonder. Would it really be so extraordinary for these women and, indeed, the apostles, once they learn that their beloved Lord lives, to laugh out loud

with sheer, pure, blessed relief?

The Gospels don’t say so, but I wouldn’t be surprised. After all, consider God’s own grand joke that he pulled on Satan: Death is conquered. Evil is vanquished. Jesus, Son of God and Man, lives – and through him, humankind is saved. Called *Risus Paschalis* – the Easter Laugh – this idea is actually part of an old Christian tradition which is making something of a comeback. During the middle ages, many churches continued the Paschal celebration by telling jokes and stories, even dancing and feasting on Easter Sunday afternoon and the next day. In recent years, a number of different denominations have revived the idea of stirring up a little joy and laughter the week after Easter, often calling it Holy Humor Sunday.

If you believe as I do that laughter is a gift from God, then how can we *not* believe that God himself has a sense of humor? Not only because he made kangaroos and giraffes and us, too, but because he’s the source of hope and humor springs

from hope.

Heaven knows we need to laugh as much as we need to hope! Most of us are grateful for the chuckles, giggles and belly-laughs that puncture our day – and ease the stress of our lives. Now, there are those who think they don’t need hope in God, mistakenly believing that they control their own destinies; others who don’t hope simply despair of his help. The rest of us go about our lives with a lighter spirit because we see ourselves as the frail, fallible, foolish creatures we are, at the same time we know that we’re the cherished children of our loving God.

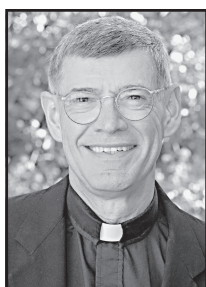
What about heaven? “Would there still be a place for humor or even laughter?” asks Paul Thigpen, editor of *The Catholic Answer* magazine. His conclusion? “Humor will continue for eternity ... an overflowing expression of gratitude to God; that is, a tiny part of that everlasting virtue, charity. It will become the occasion for looking deep into the eyes of the Father, and saying with a heart transfixed by Love Himself, ‘Thank You. Thank You!’ For saving me from my absurdity, for healing all my disordered incongruities, for loving this little speck of dust enough to become a speck of dust Yourself. I will never cease thanking You.”

Happy Easter! And be sure to smile!

For a free copy of the Christopher News Note: KEEP HOPE IN YOUR HEART, write: The Christophers, 12 East 48th Street, New York, NY 10017; or e-mail: mail@christophers.org



Why go to Mass?



By Father Oscar Lukefahr CM

Mom, Dad, why do I have to go to Mass? When children ask this question, they are really asking, "Mom, Dad, why do *you* go to Mass?" The best answer to a question about the Mass is personal witness. A person might argue about whether or not God's commandments include Sunday worship, but no one can argue with your personal experience.

So if your children ask, "Why do I have to go to Mass?" you might respond, "Let's talk about that. I want to begin by saying that Mass has been a great blessing for me. Jesus has touched me in so many ways through Scripture, Holy Communion, and our Catholic community that I can't imagine life without Mass. I want you to have such blessings." Then you could go on to discuss the reasons for going to Mass explained in this column. Here are a few more...

GOD ASKS SO LITTLE OF US

A good reason for going to Mass is that God asks so little of us. On the average, if we live to be eighty years old, we will spend about three and a half years reading, five years talking, six years getting an education, six years riding in a car, seven years eating, eleven years watching television and recreating, fourteen years working, and twenty-seven years sleeping. If we live to be eighty and spend an hour attending Mass every Sunday and five minutes praying every day, it adds up to ... six months. How can we refuse so little to a loving God who has given us so much?

MASS IS GOOD FOR US

One more reason for attending Mass is that it is good for us. Studies done at Duke University show that regular church attendance is good for physical, emotional, and mental health. The effect of regular worship on survival is equivalent to that of wearing seat belts versus not wearing them, and of not smoking versus smoking (Duke Uni-

versity Center for the Study of Religion, Web site is: www.dukespiritualityandhealth.org). God knows what is best for us!

CRUISE CONTROL

In many ways, Mass is like a car's cruise control. Cruise control keeps a car at 70 MPH whether it's going up hill or down. Christ's peace keeps us steady in the ups and downs of life. Mass is a special time to put our lives on cruise control. If we are angry or upset, Mass is a time to calm down in the gentle presence of Jesus. If we are tired and depressed, Mass is a time to be revived by the grace and life of Jesus. No matter what our mood, Christ's peace, granted at every Mass, can be a steadying influence giving us the courage we need to carry on.

WORSHIPING THE TRUE GOD

Actions speak louder than words. In no area is this old saying more revealing than in one's attitude toward worship. We "measure God" by our actions. If God isn't worth an hour on the weekend, if we refuse to give God the one gift Jesus asks — "Do this in memory of me" — our God is too small. Missing Mass is like looking through bin-

oculars from the wrong end. God, and everything else that's truly important, will be minimized and reduced to insignificance.

We may say we believe in God and think we worship God. But if the God we claim to know and worship is not worth an hour of our time each week, then we cannot be in touch with the real God. Why? Because the real God is certainly worth that hour ... and much more! If our "god" is so small that an hour at Mass seems inconvenient or unimportant, this "god" cannot be the true God, but a little "godlet" we've put on a shelf to control and use as we please.

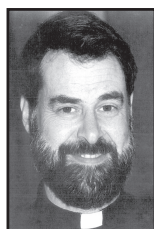
The true God made the universe, loves us with an everlasting love, and gave us our years on earth so that we might expand our horizons and become capable of seeing God face to face in heaven. Mass allows us to see God clearly, up close and personal.

So now, the big question... "Mom, Dad, why do *you* go to Mass?"

Father Oscar Lukefahr CM is a Vincentian priest who is the author of numerous books on the Catholic faith, including The Privilege of Being Catholic.

NFP Questions and Answers

with Father Matthew Habiger, OSB



Why do I need a serious reason to avoid having children?

Dear Fr. Matthew @ the Abbey,

If a couple wants to avoid having children, why must there be a serious reason for doing so? Thank you, Howard.

Dear Howard, We must examine the role of children in a marriage. What is God's plan for marriage, spousal love and family? All of these dimensions of human life are so important that we must look to our Creator, and the Designer of human nature, for their meaning and basic structure. This implies that we are not to simply reconstruct and redesign them according to contem-

porary trends and personal whims.

Children are an integral part of marriage and the spousal act. Married couples find their completion as parents. With the exception of total infertility, marriage involves a family. The child is God's greatest gift to a couple. The child enlarges their hearts, increases their capacity to give and receive love, and adds to the richness of their family life. An openness to children is a requirement for a valid marriage ceremony.

God's plan for spousal love involves making the total gift of one's self to their spouse. This

Sunday readings from April 8 to May 6

April 8 — Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord - The Mass of Easter Day	Acts 10:34a, 37-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-9
April 15 — Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday	Acts 5:12-16 Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24 Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19 John 20:19-31
April 22 — Third Sunday of Easter	Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41 Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-16, 11-12, 13 Revelation 5:11-14 John 21:1-19
April 29 — Fourth Sunday of Easter	Acts 13:14, 43-52 Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5 Revelation 7:9, 14b-17 John 10:27-30
May 6 — Fifth Sunday of Easter	Acts 14:21-27 Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13 Revelation 21:1-5a John 13:31-33a, 34-35

TV program notes — week of April 8

By Harry Forbes

NEW YORK (CNS) — Here are some television program notes for the week of April 8 with their TV Parental Guidelines ratings if available. **They have not been reviewed and therefore are not necessarily recommended** by the Office for Film & Broadcasting.

Sunday, April 8, 8-9:30 p.m. Central Daylight Time (PBS) "The Wind in the Willows." Mole, Water Rat, Badger and Mr. Toad pursue their merry adventures in an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's magical tale of animals who behave like Edwardian country gentlemen in a world gone slightly mad (TV-G — general audience).

Tuesday, April 10, 8-9 p.m. CDT (PBS) "Afghanistan: The Other War." "Frontline/World"

correspondent Sam Kiley confronts the reality of the West's struggling campaign in Afghanistan, with exclusive access to the NATO command in Afghanistan and provocative reporting from the front lines in anticipation of a major offensive the Taliban has promised this spring.

Wednesday, April 11, 7-8 p.m. CDT (PBS) "Shroud of Christ?" An encore presentation of the "Secrets of the Dead" program that claimed to reveal new evidence about the Shroud of Turin, one of the Catholic Church's most precious artifacts (TV-PG — parental guidance suggested).

"Picturing Mary" and "The Face: Jesus in Art" will be seen on many public television stations this Easter season; please check listings.



total gift of self involves one's fertility, one's makeup as a bodied person. The Church teaches us, on behalf of Jesus, her founder, that every spousal act must contain these two dimensions: 1) a unitive (love-giving) one, and 2) a procreative (life-giving) one. This does not mean that every spousal act must result in a new pregnancy. But it does mean that every spousal act must remain open to the goodness of our fertility, and to the

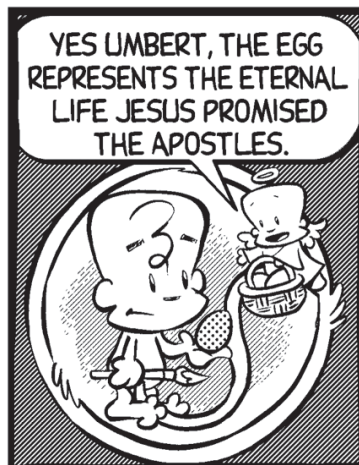
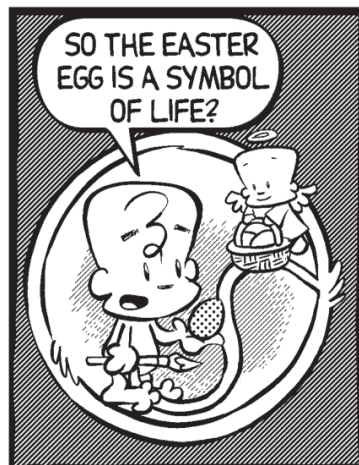
possibility that God may choose to create a new person, who will live forever.

Parents are free cooperators with God. They freely make the decisions about the spacing and number of children. But they are to use morally good means to accomplish this end. Natural Family Planning provides us with such a morally good means. And they should have serious (versus trivial) reasons for avoiding more children. What is called for is responsible parenthood: having as many children as they can responsibly care for. God knows how many children he wishes to send into your marriage and family. It is for you and your wife to discover his plan for your family, and then to welcome it.

I suggest that you read, or re-read, *Humanae Vitae*. You can find it with GOOGLE, and download it.

Cordially yours,
Fr. Matthew Habiger OSB
mhabiger@kansasmonks.org

Umbert the Unborn



by Gary Cangemi



Divine inspiration: Ohio man gives fellow travelers signs from God

By Nancy Erikson

CLEVELAND (CNS) — On the road of life, there's nothing more comforting than getting a sign from God.

Sometimes that sign is a feeling. Other times it's through Scripture. Sometimes it's a 30-foot-high billboard depicting Jesus.

Lately, getting a sign from God has become easier thanks to the efforts of 82-year-old Joe Cannon.

Cannon, a lifelong parishioner of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Cleveland's Old Brooklyn neighborhood, is the man behind the billboards around the Cleveland Diocese showing a large image of Christ as the Divine Mercy with the words "Jesus, I trust in you." He also has put up hundreds of billboards in other states.

"It's a 'wow' thing," Cannon told the Catholic Universe Bulletin, the diocesan newspaper. "It shakes you up. People don't expect to see it."

He puts his name and a toll-free number on the signs for people to call. And they do. He claims to have received nearly 1,000 calls from people across the country since he started putting up billboards five years ago.

One of the first calls he received was from a woman whose son had died two years before. She called to tell Cannon that she had been praying for a sign that her son was in heaven. Then she saw the billboard — right at the spot where her son died. Those are the calls that keep Cannon going.

"My philosophy has always been to bring Jesus out into the street," Cannon said.

Cannon was first inspired to spread the Divine Mercy message after hearing a priest talk about St. Faustina Kowalska at the Cleveland Marian Conference in 1992.

St. Faustina was a Polish nun who in the 1930s received a vision of Christ as the Divine Mercy. In the vision, Christ told her that he would show mercy to those who prayed for it and who share that mercy to others. Catholics celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday a week after Easter.

Cannon began by passing out pamphlets about the Divine Mercy in his parish. A former Cleveland councilman, he eventually helped secure Cleveland's Public Square in 1996 to display a 32-foot banner depicting the Divine Mercy image.

Since then, the banner has

been carried at parades and pro-life marches around the country. After seeing the positive response for the banner, Cannon decided to spread the Divine Mercy message via billboards. He started with 40 in Cleveland. Today, he has 570 billboards in six states. His goal is to get them in every state.

"There's a hunger for Jesus Christ out there," Cannon said. "It just has to be tapped. I think this is one of the things that will

Marians of the Immaculate Conception.

Deacon DeHaven said he speaks to Cannon regularly and that the two of them hope to spread their billboards across the United States from east and west, coming together somewhere in the middle.

"I tell him I'll meet him in Missouri," Deacon DeHaven said, joking.

Deacon DeHaven said he too receives positive response from folks who call him.

He said one of his favorite calls came from a woman who saw one of the billboards out on a remote, rural road.

"She called and said, 'I was having a hard day and I came over the hill and there's Jesus, out in the field. You made my day,'" he said. "It lifts you up when you see it."

Deacon DeHaven added the billboards also should remind folks that Divine Mercy is not just

about receiving mercy. It's also about giving mercy to others through forgiveness and performing the corporal works of mercy.

"Each day we must keep in mind that we should be merciful to others as God is merciful to us," he said. "It's for all of us. We need to spread it to others."

See page 19 for
Divine Mercy Sunday event.



OHIO MAN PICTURED NEAR BILLBOARD WITH IMAGE OF JESUS— Joe Cannon, a parishioner at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Cleveland, leads a crusade to "bring Jesus Christ to the streets" by putting up billboards of the Divine Mercy image on roads and highways in many locales, like this one behind him looming over U.S. Route 20 in Painesville Township, Ohio. (CNS photo/ Nancy Erikson, Catholic Universe Bulletin)

save the world."

Others out there agree and are putting up their own billboards.

Deacon Don DeHaven heads the Divine Mercy movement at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento, Calif., where he has put up 10 billboards. He learned about Cannon's project after seeing a story last spring in the national magazine Marian Helper, published by the Congregation of

Joyfull Catholic

By Frederick Hermann
E-mail: RH222@sbcglobal.net



You can be a new creation

If you feel stuck in the mud, burdened by your past, or desperate for a new life, you will be delighted to hear one of the most startling promises from our Lord; "Whoever is in Christ is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This is certainly one of the most appealing yet humbling ideas imaginable.

We often try to renew ourselves with new clothes, new cars, new houses, or new spouses, but sadly we remain the same inside. We need a more radical change, deep down in our souls.

How can we change so completely that we become a new creation? We cannot do it ourselves; it happens only when we are "in Christ," after we accept him as our Lord and Savior. When we turn to Christ, he runs toward us, welcoming us home with open arms. As in the parable of the prodigal son when the

father runs to welcome his long-lost son, God forgives us all our sins, unshackles us from our past, and reconciles us with him. Thus renewed in love, we need not blush with shame in darkness and misery; instead we may look upon God as he gazes upon us, radiant with joy.

So great is the change that God makes in our souls that we discover "the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." Our old thoughts and old habits pass away. God creates a new world in our souls, and all things are made new.

If you have difficulty believing this promise or experiencing your new life, you are not alone. Pray for God's grace, or consider finding a friendly priest to receive the gift of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Once we realize that we are indeed a new creation, what shall we do with our new life? Relax

The Pope Speaks

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pope says unity with pope guarantees faith is the one taught by Jesus

By Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The teaching of the bishops and unity with the pope guarantee that one's faith truly is the faith taught by Jesus to his apostles, Pope Benedict XVI said. "The true Gospel is that imparted by the bishops, who have received it in an uninterrupted chain from the apostles," the pope said March 28 at his weekly general audience.

The pope's audience talk focused on the ministry and writings of St. Irenaeus of Lyon, who died in the very first years of the third century.

"Irenaeus is most of all a man of faith and a pastor," the pope said. "As a writer he had a double aim: to defend true doctrine against the attacks of the heretics and to explain the truths of the faith with clarity." The main targets of his admonitions were the gnostics, who taught a secret, "often strange and extravagant" version of Christianity, which only the most intellectually advanced could understand, he said.

St. Irenaeus taught "that there is no secret doctrine behind the common creed of the church, that there does not exist a superior Christianity for the intellectuals," he said. "The publicly confessed faith of the church is the faith common to all," he said, and "only this faith is apostolic. It comes from the apostles and therefore from Jesus and from God."

St. Irenaeus taught that the creed contains the essential truths of Christian faith and the bishops — through apostolic succession — have been entrusted with the responsibility of guaranteeing that faith is interpreted and applied correctly throughout history.

"One must observe what the bishops say and give special consideration to the teaching of the pre-eminent and ancient church of Rome," the seat of the pope, he said.

Pope Benedict said, "Because of its antiquity, the church of Rome has the greater apostolicity; it traces its origin from the pillars of the apostolic college, Peter and Paul. All the churches must be in accord with the church of Rome, recognizing in it the standard of the true apostolic tradition, of the one, common faith of the church."

Against the secret and very diverse versions of Christianity presented by the gnostics, he said, St. Irenaeus taught that true Christian faith "is public, not private or secret," and anyone can learn it through the teaching of the bishops.

In addition, St. Irenaeus insisted there is only one Christian faith and it is the same for all, no matter what their nation, culture or language, he said.

The third quality of true Christianity emphasized by St. Irenaeus, he said, is that it is "pneumatic, or spiritual."

"Where there is the church, there is the spirit of God and where there is the spirit of God there is the church and every grace," the pope said.

and play golf or sit by the sea? These are fine activities, but there is more. In addition to making us a new creation, God has "given us the ministry of reconciliation." He has divinely commissioned us to go out into the world and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. On his behalf, he wants us to help his kingdom come, and his will to be done. He wants us to co-operate with him. As a child helps his father fix the plumbing in the bathroom, we can help our heavenly father fix the world. Like present-day disciples, we can assist in bringing God's glorious desire to fruition by reconciling all people to him and to each other. Truly our new life in Christ is a great privilege and an awesome responsibility.

"We are ambassadors for Christ," Paul says, "as if God were appealing through us." Because we are now in Christ, we can be messengers of God. He enables us to re-present him,

speaking and acting on his behalf. Transformed beyond our wildest dreams, we can speak Christ's words of reconciliation to everyone. In spite of rejection, we reach out to others to bandage and heal them, comfort and appeal to them; "we implore you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

Above all we proclaim the good news to others, so that they may discover the deepest desire of all human hearts. Thus do we find ourselves continuing the work of Christ, gently turning hearts and minds to God. He welcomes everyone, reconciles all souls in harmony, and re-creates them in his image and likeness.

So we labor in humility to make his good news known to all people. If we work diligently and listen carefully, we will hear the voice of God whispering in our ear, at an unexpected hour, "Behold, I make all things new."

Happy Easter!



Buscando Vida

Por Moises Sandoval
Servicio Noticiero Católico



¿De donde vienen los hispanos?

En 1981, el Padre Ricardo Ramírez, actualmente el obispo de Las Cruces, Nueva Mexico, fue a Hondo, un pequeño pueblo en Texas, para predicar una misión en español. La primera noche, recordó después, poca gente vino. Pero para el fin de la semana, la iglesia estaba llena. El perplejo párroco preguntó: “¿De donde vinieron todos estos Mexicanos?” Ramírez contestó: “De su parroquia.”

Pensé de eso recientemente cuando acompañé a mi hermano Elvinio, un odontólogo, a una misa en español a la Parroquia Reina de La Paz en Aurora, Colorado. Siete años atrás, cuando el Padre Guillermo Breslin, entonces el párroco, empezó la Misa en español, mi hermano asistió a la primera. “Sólo unas 20 personas vinieron,” recordó recientemente.

Pero el pueblo pronto se dio cuenta, con un resultado asombroso. En la Misa que yo asistí, un domingo a las 1:30 de la tarde, 1.500 personas ocupaban todos los bancos, también el espacio al lado de la pared y unas 100 personas se desbordaban por un amplio atrio que conecta a la iglesia.

Le hice a mi hermano la pregunta del párroco de Hondo. Contestó que la presencia Hispana es semejante en otras parroquias del vecindario. En Reina de La Paz, se ven familias enteras: Hay madres y padres con bebés, esposas y esposos con hijos más grandes, todos vestidos con su ropa mejor.

Se dice que los jóvenes adultos no van a la Misa, pero allí se ven muchos, algunos

en la ropa floja que les gusta a ellos. Hay también algunos ancianos, pero la gran mayoría de la congregación consiste de matrimonios jóvenes con niños, los padres de unos 30 a 40 años.

La fe vibrante que presencié en Aurora, un suburbio en la periferia este de Denver, suscitó memorias de una visita que hice en 1998 a la Parroquia del Sagrado Corazón en Othello, Washington, una comunidad agrícola en la parte central de ese estado. Como en Aurora, la iglesia se rebotaba para las Misas en español. La gente tenía uno de los suyos como su pastor, un sacerdote joven llamado Heliodoro Lucatero, nativo de Colimas, México.

“Para la Misa de las 11, hay espacio sólo para pararse,” dijo Lucatero. “Para la otra Misa en español, la iglesia se llena también, algo que no pasa cuando la liturgia es en inglés. Hay muchos bautizos en español, pero muy esporádicamente en inglés. Desde que vine aquí, hace dos años, no he participado a una boda en inglés y casi todo el año estoy participando a bodas en español. Los hispanos son muy jóvenes; tienen mucha vitalidad.”

En el más reciente número de la revista U.S. Catholic, Susan Vogt, autora de “Raising Kids Who Will Make a Difference” (Loyola Press, 2002), escribe sobre una encuesta de 500 ministros familiares a través de los Estados Unidos. Descubrió que el número de bodas en la iglesia ha disminuido 35 por ciento mientras que la población principal ha declinado 10 por ciento. Los hispanos, aumentando

rápidamente entre los Católicos, siguen una vía diferente.

Algunos de la corriente principal de Católicos, viendo como se rebotan los feligreses en la Misa en español en Aurora (y en Othello), podrían alarmarse, pensando que los hispanos están abrumando a la iglesia. Sin embargo, el

proceso operativo es “revitalizando.” Lo que se ve en Aurora es la fe que la iglesia siempre ha predicado — valores fuertes, respeto, creencias tradicionales sobre el casorio y la familia. Para los hispanos, en estos tiempos difíciles, la iglesia es su defensor, la voz clamando por la justicia.

Sacerdotes Por Vida

Por Padre Frank Pavone
Director Nacional



Riesgo

Una niña de 11 años que apoya a Priests for Life me mandó hace muy poco el siguiente mensaje de correo electrónico: “Mi mamá y yo tomaremos un autobús para ir a la Marcha por la Vida. Mi maestra dijo que me va a poner un cero en cualquier tarea que deje de hacer y que no podré recuperarla. Le dije que perder un día de clase para manifestar por la vida es más importante y que estoy dispuesta a sufrir las consecuencias.”

Eso es lo que más necesita el movimiento pro-vida, gente que diga “estoy dispuesta a sufrir las consecuencias.”

Los niños que en este momento viven y crecen en el vientre enfrentan un grave riesgo sin haberlo elegido. Viven en un lugar que se ha convertido en el más peligroso blanco terrorista y campo de batalla. A cada minuto sus vidas se encuentran pendiendo de un hilo. No eligieron este riesgo; otros lo han elegido por ellos.

Los que defendemos a estos niños tenemos que estar dispuestos a aceptar compartir ese riesgo. Eso es solidaridad. Asumimos voluntariamente el riesgo al que ellos están sometidos involuntariamente. Algunos preguntan que tienen que hacer para acabar con el aborto. Casi todos conocen la respuesta. Ven el próximo paso, pero están tratando de juntar el coraje necesario para darlo. Involucra riesgo y no hay forma de evitarlo. Tenemos miedo de hablar y de actuar. Quizás sea porque nuestro párroco no nos apoya, o porque tendremos problemas en

el trabajo. Quizás nuestros amigos y nuestra familia no comparten nuestra postura a favor de la vida, o pensamos que perderemos negocios o votos. Quizás tenemos miedo de que afecte nuestra salud. Continuamente calculamos en nuestras mentes y nuestros corazones y por eso terminamos paralizados en la inacción.

Siempre nos dicen las razones por las que no podemos hablar contra el aborto. Si hablamos en la Iglesia, nos dicen que es muy político; si hablamos en el terreno político, nos dicen que es muy religioso. Si hablamos en los medios de comunicación, nos dicen que hiere sensibilidades; en ambientes educativos, es inquietante. En las calles, hace daño a los niños, en el mundo de los negocios es muy controvertido; en las familias, causa división y en ambientes sociales es descortés. Pero si el aborto es algo malo, ¿adónde podremos ir a decirlo?

La respuesta es que tenemos que dejar de buscar un lugar libre de riesgo para pelear contra el aborto y ¡hablar en todos los ámbitos! Hay un cálculo hecho en el cielo que dice: “No hay amor más grande que el que da la vida por sus amigos.” Si queremos proteger a los no-nacidos, entonces empecemos a estar dispuestos a dar nuestra vida por ellos. Dejemos de calcular lo que nos costaría hablar y empecemos a pensar en lo que les cuesta a ellos nuestro silencio. El movimiento pro-vida no necesita mucha gente, necesita gente que esté dispuesta a asumir muchos riesgos.

The Three Falls / Las Tres Caídas

Continued from p. 20

is also the story of my father, Juan Garcia. He died last year on this same highway. With every step I take in the procession, I think of him. Like Jesus, I know that he walked this same path for the sake of his family.

It is also the story of men and women all over the world who undertake great burdens and dangers so the world can become a better place. A place where we look at life the way Jesus did. A place where we see ourselves and others as brothers

and sisters in the Family of God.

Father Morelo says some people believe the procession has one more Station. They believe there is a Fifteenth Station that marks the moment Jesus rose from the dead and proved the human soul can never die.

I think they may be right. Because the Procession of the Three Falls is not a story of weakness or defeat. It is a story of *esperanza* — hope.

My story. And yours.



Como reportar un abuso.

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce ha sido abusado sexualmente por un clérigo o cualquier miembro del personal de la iglesia puede registrar su queja.

- Llame a la cancillería al (361)573-0828 y pida hablar con el Obispo o su canceller; o puede llamar a:
- Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770 o a la Hna. Emilie Eilers al (361)575-7111, que son los coordinadores del Pastoral Care and Outreach;
- También puede comunicarse por escrito enviando su carta a:
Most Rev. David Fellhauer
Diocese of Victoria
P.O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903
Por favor, escriba en el sobre:
“Personal and Confidential”

También podemos ayudarle a comunicar su queja a cualquier otra diócesis donde haya ocurrido el abuso si ahora usted se encuentra viviendo en la nuestra.

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

Garza, Garza & Garza

Attorneys at Law



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Former State and
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Former J.A.G. Officer

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For the General Practice of Law



Marc Phillip Garza
Attorney at Law



Our Children and Our Seniors: Protecting Life at Every Age & Stage

By: Jennifer A. Carr, Associate Director
Texas Catholic Conference

The Texas Legislature is in full swing with thousands of bills filed so far and many more on their way in the days to come. The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) staff has been busy monitoring all bills through the lens of Catholic social teaching. As the representatives for the Bishops of Texas, the TCC works to support policies that protect all human life, at every age and stage. There are a number of bills we are supporting and opposing and these along with our recent letters and statements can be found by visiting our newly redesigned Web site at: www.tx catholic.org.

Recently the bishops issued two statements on critical statewide issues, the Governor's mandate of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine for 12 year old girls, and the proposals to build 19 new coal-fired plants. In addition to these statements, the TCC has issued several letters of concern for issues such as the Children's Health Insurance Program, elder care, and the death penalty provisions of Jessica's Law. Our positions on these issues all stem from the foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching: the protection of human life and human dignity at every age and stage.

Jessica's Law

Jessica's Law (HB 8) is a bill that seeks to increase penalties on sex offenders, including the option of imposing the death penalty on repeat offenders. While the TCC certainly supports the effort to protect our children from sexual predators we believe the bill goes too far in seeking to impose the death penalty for repeat offenders.

The bishops of Texas and the United States oppose the use of the death penalty in our country. Catholic teaching on capital punishment is quite clear: If non-lethal means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions

Capitol Comment

of the common good and are more in conformity with the dignity of the human person (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*).

Our Church fully believes that those who commit terrible violent crimes must be incarcerated, both as just punishment and in order to protect society. We stand in solidarity with victims and their loved ones. However, when it comes to matters of life and death, morality and common sense call for justice and careful safeguards. Therefore, the TCC asks for the removal of the provision in HB 8 that would impose the death penalty.

Elder Care:

Due to the high standard of living we enjoy in the United States, Americans are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. By 2030 it is expected that one in every five Americans will be 65 or older. Many of these elderly Americans are choosing to maintain independent lives in their homes with the support of personal assistants.

Personal assistants help the elderly with their daily tasks such as eating, dressing, bathing, and shopping. This relationship of reliance and trust, however, is threatened by Texas' lenient background check standards and low standards of training. Demand for personal assistance in Texas has tripled since 1980. But with high turnover rates, low wages, and little support for home care workers, Texas may not be able to meet this demand. It is our duty to secure a high quality of life for elderly Texans by ensuring that they have access to highly trained personal assistants. The Texas Catholic Conference recommends enhanced background checks, more training requirements, and competitive wages for home care workers in order to improve the quality of life for our elderly brothers and sisters.

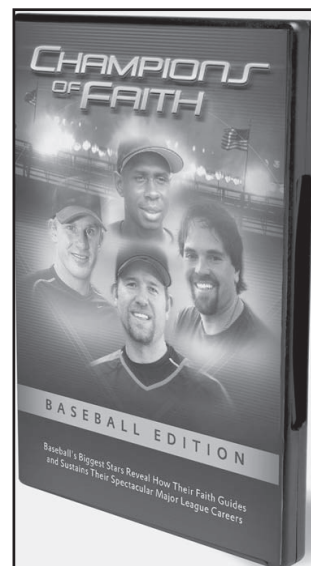
CHIP

The working poor are still trying to recover from harsh cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program in 2003. The TCC provided written testimony requesting the following solutions:

- Implement 12 months continuous eligibility for CHIP and Children's Medicaid.
- Eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks to encourage personal responsibility and help low income families achieve self-sufficiency.
- Provide adequate reimbursement for Medicaid and CHIP providers.
- Invest in outreach and education to ensure that all eligible children get the care that they need.
- Ensure that the working poor who access both CHIP and Medicaid have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

New DVD highlights Catholic faith of top baseball stars

PHOENIX (CNS) — Baseball is filled with champions who perform well on the field. But it is also packed with what Tom Allen and Jose Morales have dubbed "champions of faith." Allen, president and editor in chief of Catholic Exchange, and Morales, host of the "Catholic Exchange Today" radio program, decided to seek out Catholics in baseball a few years ago. The result is "Champions of Faith: Baseball Edition." The movie premiered March 25 in Phoenix and the DVD was to be released at the beginning of the 2007



(CNS photo/courtesy of Maximus Group)

baseball season April 1. "We wanted to make a film that would appeal to the lukewarm Catholics, the majority. The ones that are out there more intent on watching ESPN and Fox Sports than on going to confession regularly or going to Mass," Allen said at the premiere. "We're honoring God, we're honoring the Catholic Church and we're also honoring these amazing guys who speak so courageously, beautifully, eloquently and powerfully about their Catholic faith."

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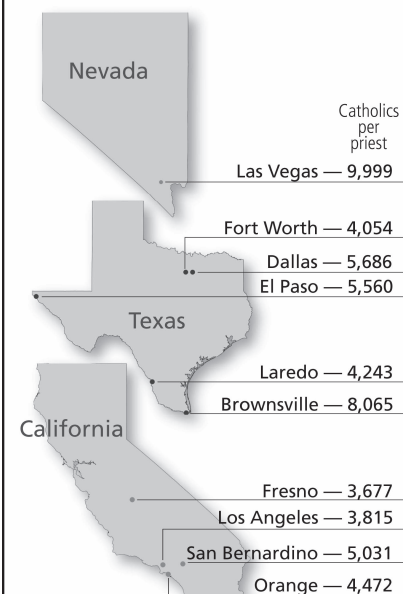
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Catholics-to-Priest Ratio

10 Latin-rite U.S. dioceses with highest Catholics-to-priest ratio:



Source: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

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According to diocesan statistics of a total of 106,797 Catholics and 64 active priests, the ratio of Catholics to priests in the Diocese of Victoria is 1,643 Catholics to each priest.



Irish, British church officials welcome power-sharing agreement

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) — Irish and British church officials welcomed the announcement that political parties in Northern Ireland have agreed to share power again.

The March 26 announcement represents “an important and welcome development in the search for a stable future for Northern Ireland,” said a statement from Ireland’s Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist church leaders. Among those signing was the Irish primate, Archbishop Sean Brady of Armagh, Northern Ireland.

The statement said the churches had worked for a devolved government for Northern Ireland, “and we trust that this is now to be realized.” It encouraged people to continue to pray for their communities.

The British section of the Catholic peace movement Pax Christi welcomed the announcement and said, “Everyone involved now owes it to the victims and suffering families of the conflict to seize this opportunity to build a lasting peaceful and just society.”

The predominantly Protestant Democratic Unionist Party and predominantly Catholic Sinn Fein agreed to set aside decades of animosity and share power

with each other to rule Northern Ireland, beginning May 8.

The power-sharing arrangement was proposed in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to end the violence between unionists, who are mainly Protestant and favor continued British rule, and nationalists, who are mainly Catholic and want Northern Ireland reunited with the Irish Republic. While power-sharing governments have been established, they have fallen apart several times, most recently in 2004.

On March 23, Pope Benedict XVI met with Irish President Mary McAleese, who told re-

porters the pope said such a power-sharing government would be “a very powerful Christian witness” for other areas where conflicts include a religious component.

The Vatican said only that McAleese’s meeting with the pope included a discussion about “the development of the peace process in Northern Ireland.” McAleese also told reporters she renewed the invitation of the Irish government and bishops for Pope Benedict to visit the nation. The pope responded, “We will have to see what is possible,” McAleese said.



Pope Benedict XVI exchanges gifts with Irish President Mary McAleese during a private audience at the Vatican March 23. The Irish president said she informed the pope about efforts to ensure that Northern Ireland’s political parties form a Catholic-Protestant governing administration by March 26. (CNS photo/Christophe Simon, Reuters)

Bishop tells Congress budget must help poor

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Budget priorities for the federal government should help families escape hunger and homelessness, find decent housing and employment and have access to quality education and medical care, the president of the U.S. bishops’ conference told members of Congress. In letters sent to senators and representatives March 16, Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., asked that priority be given to relief, development and health care, especially in Africa and the developing world, “where people live with crushing poverty and diseases.” Such an approach “will also increase our ability to assist and protect refugees fleeing violence and persecution,” Bishop Skylstad wrote. Copies of the letters were released March 19 by the bishops’ Department of Communications. “The decision you will make in setting budget priorities for our nation are not just economic policies; they are also moral choices,” the bishop told lawmakers. “Meeting essential human needs is a compelling ethical and fiscal priority.”

Vatican employees to celebrate pope’s birthday

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Vatican employees will celebrate Pope Benedict XVI’s 80th birthday with a day off from work and a fatter paycheck, said an announcement from a top Vatican official. April 16 will be a holiday for all Vatican workers, said the March 27 statement from

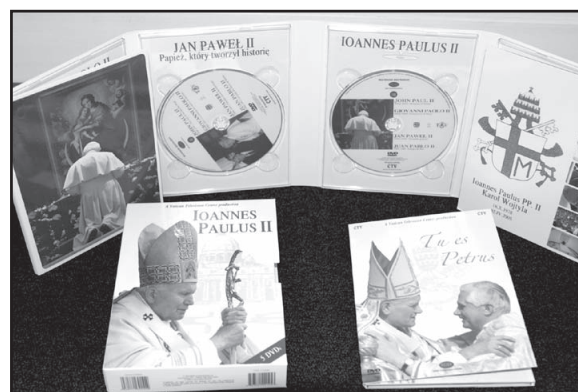
Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state. Employees also will receive about \$667 more in that week’s paycheck to mark the celebration. Pope Benedict will begin his birthday celebrations early by saying a special Mass April 15 in St. Peter’s Basilica. The Vatican also marks as holidays April 19, the day of the pope’s 2005 election, and the “name day” of the pope March 19, the feast day of St. Joseph, because Pope Benedict’s birth name is Joseph Ratzinger.

Chinese Catholics begin plans for religious needs of Olympic athletes

BEIJING (CNS) — Catholic leaders in China are making arrangements to meet the religious needs of foreign Christian athletes and visitors during the 2008 Olympic Games in China. Anthony Liu Bainian, vice chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, recently urged the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference to “provide English-language Bibles in hotels.” Liu is a member of the consultative congress, the top advisory body of China’s central government. On March 21, he told UCA News, an Asian church news agency, that his proposal aims to meet “the religious needs of foreign athletes,” since many of these visitors are Christians. The 2008 Olympic Games are scheduled Aug. 8-24, 2008. Most venues will be in Beijing. However Qingdao, a port city, will host sailing events, and Hong Kong will host equestrian events.

Vatican releases DVDs detailing Pope John Paul II, papal transition

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican released a complete catalog of DVDs documenting the life and death of Pope John Paul II, the papal transition of 2005 and the Second Vatican Council, as well as what goes on behind Vatican City’s walls. To mark the second anniversary of the death of Pope John Paul and the election of Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican television center presented a full-color, two-page catalog showcasing the seven DVD collections for sale. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said at a March 27 press conference that the collection is unique “because CTV (Vatican television center) cameramen can get close to the pope” and capture images and events that other television crews cannot. For example, the hourlong documentary, “Benedict XVI: The Keys of the Kingdom,” starts out by giving the viewer a ride in the back seat of the popemobile. The camera peers over Pope John Paul’s shoulder and shows crowds waving to him as the pope is driven home from



(CNS photo)

www.hdhcommunications.com (the official distributor of the Vatican DVDs), www.amazon.com and www.ebay.it.

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Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre poses before a news conference in Aix-en-Provence, France, March 30. The French nun believes she was healed from Parkinson’s disease through the intercession of Pope John Paul II, who also suffered from the disease. The healing could be the miracle needed for the late pope’s beatification. (CNS photo/Serge Pagano, Reuters)



French nun says life has changed since she was healed thanks to JP II

By Catholic News Service

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France (CNS) — The French nun who believes she was healed of Parkinson’s disease thanks to Pope John Paul II said her life had “totally changed” since that night two months after the pope’s death.

Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, 46, is working again, now in Paris at a maternity hospital run by her order, the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood.

She met reporters March 30 in Aix-en-Provence during a press conference with Archbishop Claude Feidt of Aix, the archdiocese where the cure took place.

“I was sick and now I am cured,” she told reporters. “I am cured, but it is up to the church

to say whether it was a miracle or not.”

However, she said, she knows she is well and that she must continue her work “to serve life and to serve the family.”

Diagnosed with Parkinson’s in 2001, she said that watching Pope John Paul deteriorate from the effects of Parkinson’s disease “I saw myself in the years to come.”

Pope John Paul died April 2, 2005, and as Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre’s condition began to worsen, all the members of the Little Sisters of Catholic Motherhood in France and in Senegal began praying to Pope John Paul to intervene with God to heal her.

By June 2, the religious has said, she was struggling to write, to walk and to function normally.

She said she went to bed that night and woke up very early the next morning feeling completely different.

“I was sure I was healed,” she said.

In a March 29 statement, Archbishop Feidt said that after hearing about the alleged healing of Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre he decided to conduct “a thorough investigation” to determine whether it might be the miracle needed for Pope John Paul’s beatification. In general, the church must confirm two miracles through the intercession of the sainthood candidate before canonization.

The archbishop said the investigation took a year to complete.

The postulator of Pope John Paul’s sainthood cause, Msgr. Slawomir Oder, said the investigation included testimony from theologians and canon lawyers, physicians, a psychiatrist and a handwriting expert, since the legibility of a patient’s handwriting is used as an indicator of the progress of Parkinson’s disease.

Archbishop Feidt and Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre planned to attend the April 2 ceremony in Rome marking the end of the diocesan phase of Pope John Paul’s cause and to attend the memorial Mass Pope Benedict XVI was to celebrate to mark the second anniversary of his predecessor’s death.

While in Rome, Archbishop Feidt was to deliver all the documentation regarding the nun’s case to the Congregation for Saints’ Causes, which will conduct its own investigation into the alleged healing.



Priests For Life

By Father Frank Pavone
National Director



Risk

An 11-year old girl who is a supporter of Priests for Life sent me the following email very recently: "My mother and I are taking a bus and will be coming to the March for Life. My teacher said that I will receive zeroes on any work that I miss and it can't be made up. I told her missing a day at school in order to stand up for life is more important and I'm willing to suffer the consequences."

That's what the pro-life movement needs most — people who say, "I'm willing to suffer the consequences."

The children living and growing in the womb right now endure a great risk without having chosen it. They live in a place that has become more dangerous than any battlefield or terrorist target, and their lives hang in the balance at every moment. They did not choose this risk; someone else chose it for them.

We who defend these children have to choose to accept a share in that risk. That is solidarity. We bear willingly the risk that they bear unwillingly. Many ask what they need to do to stop abortion. But most know the answer already. They see the next step they can take, but are just trying to muster up the courage to do it. Risk is involved, and there's no way around it. We're afraid to speak and to act. Perhaps it's because our pastor is not supportive, or we might get in trouble at our job; perhaps it's because family and friends may not like our pro-life stance, or because it may lose business or votes; perhaps we fear it will impact our health. We make a continuous calculus in our minds and hearts,

and often end up in paralyzed inaction.

We are always told of reasons why we can't speak up against abortion. If we speak in Church, we're told it's too political; if we speak in the political arena, we're told it's too religious. If we speak in the media we're told it's too disturbing; in the educational realm, it's too disruptive. On the public streets, it's too distressing for children; in the business world it's too controversial, in the family it's too divisive, and in social settings it's just impolite. So if abortion is wrong, where do we go to say so?

The answer is that we have to stop looking for a risk-free place to fight abortion, and speak up in all those arenas! There is a calculus in the heavens that says, "Greater love than this nobody has, than to lay down his life for his friends." If we want to protect the unborn, then let's be willing to give our lives for them. Let's stop counting the cost for ourselves if we speak up — start counting the cost for them if we are silent. The pro-life movement does not need a lot of people; it needs people who are willing to take a lot of risk.

New booklet by Archbishop Gomez looks at end-of-life teachings

IRVING, Texas (CNS) — "A Will to Live: Clear Answers on End-of-Life Issues," a booklet by Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of San Antonio, is the second offering in "The Shepherd's Voice Series" from Basilica Press. The archbishop collaborated with experts in the fields of medicine, science and theology in writing

By Fr. Juan Molina, O.Ss.T.
Catholic Relief Services, Advocacy Program Coordinator

In the waters of baptism we begin our life in God as members of the community of faith we call the Church. The water flowing from the baptismal font is blessed at Easter to baptize those entering the Church. This Church of God that welcomes us also tells us that we enter a universal church—a community of sisters and brothers all over the world. Thus, we are called to be in solidarity with church members in even the most remote areas of the world.

I recently visited Kenya in Eastern Africa to visit Catholic Relief Services (CRS) funded projects to help the poorest of the poor. One day we visited the cathedral of the Diocese of Meru in the north-central part of Kenya which is still under construction but with a recently completed sanctuary. Within the sanctuary area was the baptismal font. The design was simple: a square with a small

waterfall-like area from which water flowed. The idea is that one is given life from the flowing waters of baptism.

We also visited a water preservation project in a nearby poor community called Embu. The community is not even a small village but a group of houses



Villagers and visitors gather at the water fountain in the Embu community project to draw water and carry it to their homes to be used for cooking and drinking.

fairly distant from one another—about 1.5 or 2 miles. The community had come together to work on the water preservation project because during the dry season the residents had difficulty finding water. There is no electricity or running water for at least 10 miles from this community. The little creek that runs through the area usually dries up quickly after the rains stop. CRS has funded the design and building of the project to allow these families to enjoy water for most of the year.

We explored the surroundings while our guide explained to us the mechanics of the little dam, the use of natural water filtration systems, and natural vegetation to avoid water evaporation. I noticed that at the end of the piping where the water faucet is located and water is collected that there was also a small waterfall-like area exactly like the one at the cathedral. That is, the same square area serves the purpose of holding the water containers that allow these poor villagers to live. This is water for life. I was touched. There were no designs or anything else that made this small square area fancy. But it served its purpose, just like the one at the church. I realized that our faith community is given life through water so that we can also provide water for life.

Amnesty International UK endorses policy to campaign for abortion

LONDON (CNS) — The British section of Amnesty International has endorsed a policy in support of legalizing abortion which could change the human rights group's global neutral policy on abortion. The Amnesty International UK move, which formally adopted the legalization of abortion in cases of rape, incest, sexual assault and when the mother's life is at risk, came despite the results of a year-long consultation which showed that the majority of regular members did not want to abandon the neutral position. The board pushed through the motion at a March 23-25 meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. The International Executive Committee of Amnesty International will decide as early as next month whether to change the current position. If the committee decides there isn't sufficient support from its branch members for a revision, the British section's stance would be moot.

CRS funds many projects like this one. Many Catholic organizations like the National Council of Catholic Women specifically fund water projects in poor communities around the world as most women and children bear the brunt of walking long distances to fetch water because their husbands or fathers are in the city trying to make a living for their families. It was humbling—and painful—to see children and women walk along the dirt roads with jugs of water on their backs, or on their heads, coming to and from the water holes.

Before the water conservation project, these people had to walk up to six hours to fetch water. Now they only have to walk two hours at most (still quite a time but not as much!). I realized that I am not only blessed, but I also have a responsibility to share with my brothers and sisters my own blessings. CRS will continue to advocate for people like the villagers in Embu, by engaging legislators to support funding for projects like this and by sharing with our Catholic faithful the plight of the poor. Will you join me in giving thanks for the waters of life and helping others obtain water for life?

Father Juan Molina, O.Ss.T., is the Advocacy Program Coordinator for the Southwest Region of Catholic Relief Services. He is responsible for outreach to dioceses, religious and civic organizations, coalitions, and institutions in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, in an effort to educate and inform Catholics and others on global issues and to provide opportunities for active engagement on legislative and policy matters as well as in other CRS activities including the organization's Fair Trade Program, Global Fellows, Parish Homily, and Peace building Initiative.

Father Juan is a Trinitarian Priest and has served at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria.

Immigrant communities provide a growing percentage of the vocations to the priesthood and religious life as well as lay leadership at the service of the Church in the United States.

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Feast of Divine Mercy—Sunday, April 15



The Feast of Divine Mercy will be celebrated at St. Mary Church, Victoria, on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 15, from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m., including

Mass at 4 p.m. Confessions will be heard from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

The Divine Mercy Novena may be prayed from Good Friday, April 6, through Saturday, April 14, in preparation of the feast.

For more information, please contact Bertha McDowell at (361) 578-4673, evenings and weekends. Everyone is invited to attend.

For those unable to attend the feast at St. Mary's in Victoria, please check to see if there will be a special celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in your parish.

Special Collections

Holy Land (Good Friday) April 6

Operation Rice Bowl — Easter Day April 8

Collection For Home Missions — May 6

Ongoing Events

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

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

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 2007 are: June 22-24, Sept. 28-30, and Nov. 30-Dec. 2. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 56. A date cannot be reserved for any couple unless a cashier's 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—Marriage Encounter weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. For more information or to register, write or call Milton and Diane Rejcek, 2512 Hillcrest, Bay City, Texas 77414; (979) 245-0323; register@mevictoria.org www.mevictoria.org

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

The Beginning Experience — An international ministry that helps divorced, separated and widowed individuals resolve their grief surrounding the loss of a marriage partner, announces their 2007 BE Weekend schedule. Weekends will operate May 18-20; Aug. 17-19; and Nov. 2-4 and are held in San Antonio. For more information, please go to this Web site: www.beginningexperience.org; e-mail: sanantonio@yahoocom; phone: (210) 734-2146; or The Beginning Experience of San Antonio, P.O. Box 790882, San Antonio, Texas 78279-0882.

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—For more information see the ACTS Web site at www.actsmissions.org.

Natural Family Planning—For English or bilingual sessions of the **Sympto-Thermal Method (S-TM)** in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. For information about the Sympto-

Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella DeLos Santos (361) 573-2624. Introductory presentations on the **Creighton Model Ovulation Method** are offered in Wharton at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and in East Bernard at Holy Cross Catholic Church. Please contact Melissa Morse at (979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

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

Picnics, Activities, etc.

April

Beasley—St. Wenceslaus 45th Annual Bazaar April 15 at the CCD building on the church grounds. A barbecue-beef, chicken and sausage dinner will begin at 10:30 a.m. along with a drive-thru for plates-to-go. There will be music and entertainment for all ages.

When & Where

Yoakum—St. Ann Mission Church, Petersville area, will have barbecue chicken plates-to-go on April 15 at the Yoakum Community Center. Plates-to-go at \$6 p/p can be picked up from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Co-sponsored by KJZT No. 37.

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

Victoria—Texas Tunes presents Horizon Friday, April 20, at Schroeder Hall with proceeds to benefit Our Lady of Victory School Educational Opportunities. Underwriter opportunities are available with the underwriters pre-dance beginning at 7:00 p.m. Also, reserved seating and grazins for underwriters during the dance. Underwriters remit check to: OLV-Texas Tunes, 1311 E. Mesquite, Victoria, Texas 77901. Pre-sale dance tickets (\$10) may be purchased at OLV School Office, High-Brehm, Cavender's and Harley Davidson and \$12 at the door. For more information call (361) 575-5391 or visit: www.texastunes.org.

Victoria—St. Mary's Altar Society Annual Games Party Tuesday, April 24 from 12:00-4:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served. A country store with homemade goods, crafts, embroidered and crocheted items, a raffle and many door prizes will be available. Admission is \$6 p/p. For reservations, call Ann Carver at (361) 575-2050 or Geraldine Jurica at (361) 573-3949.

Chicago and San Diego—3rd National Catholic Singles Conference: April 27-29, 2007, in Chicago, Ill. and June 29-July 1, 2007 in San Diego, Ca. More than 500 singles are expected at each event with social events and dynamic international speakers on the single life. Register at this Web site: www.NationalCatholicSingles.com or call (815) 828-5094. Sponsored by the Theology of the Body International Alliance (TOBIA), CatholicMatch.com, Ave Maria Singles, and CatholicSingles.com, TheologyoftheBody.net and the Diocese of San Diego.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations — April 29

Weimar—St. Michael Annual Spring Festival April 29 at the Veterans Memorial Park. A fried-chicken and sausage dinner begins at 11:00 a.m. at \$6.50 p/p. Drive-thru plates-to-go will be available at St. Michael Family Center only. The auction starts at 1:30 p.m. There will be games, cakewalk, music walk, refreshments and music during the day (11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) by Dujka Brothers (11-1) and Czechaholics (1-5) and music at night by the Red Ravens 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Bloomington—St. Patrick's Annual Spring Barbecue - April 29 at the parish hall. Barbecue-brisket and sausage dinner will be served beginning at 8:30 a.m. with plates-to-go with dine-in beginning at 11:00 a.m. There will be an auction (start-

PILGRIMAGES—Holy Land Pilgrimage from San Antonio with Father Mary David Hoyt, CSJ, and Deacon Tom & Mary Jane Fox; June 4 – 15, 2007. Contact (210) 521-3377 or trust@catholic.org.

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Medjugorje and Dubrovnik with Betty Urbanovsky; June 15–25. Contact (979) 543-2333 or burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

Shrines of the U.S. and Canada Fall Foliage; August/September. Contact (979) 543-2333 or burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

Shrines of France, Spain and Portugal; Oct. 1-16. Contact (979) 543-2333 or burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

Shrines and Monasteries of Switzerland, Germany and Austria from San Antonio with Father Carlos Velazquez and Deacon Tom and Mary Jane Fox; Oct. 22 – Nov. 2, 2007. Contact (210) 521-3377 or trust@catholic.org.

A Pilgrimage in the Steps of St. Paul (Turkey) with Msgr. James C. Brunner, visit the seven churches of the Book of Revelation; Nov. 5 – 16, 2007. Contact (361) 573-4328 or stmaryvic@suddenlinkmail.com.

Holy Land with Father Michael Lyons; November. Contact (979) 543-2333 or burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

ing at 11:30 a.m.), cakewalk, raffle, activities for kids, pot-of-gold game and country store.

Upcoming Events

Plantersville—Texas Renaissance Festival auditions May 5 and May 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. by appointment only. For more information visit www.texrenfest.com or call the office at (800) 458-3435.

Hostyn—Holy Rosary Mayfest May 6 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.

Victoria—Holy Family Festival May 6 at the community center. A barbecue-beef and sausage dinner will be served from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with curb service available for plates-to-go. There will be a country store, cake wheel, children's games, and more. Auction begins at 1:00 p.m.

Lake Dallas — Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House announces its Hispanic Ministry Workshop May 7-10. A workshop specially designed for parish and diocesan staff, pastors and their associates, directors of religious education, and those working in organizations that serve the growing Hispanic population to promote growth in cultural awareness among people responsible for the Hispanic Ministry in the Church. The conference will be presented principally in English. The cost is \$360, for a single room, or \$300 if you can share a double room. This includes all conference materials, lodging at Montserrat, and meals, starting Monday evening, May 7, and continuing through lunch on Thursday, May 10. Space is limited. Your space is reserved with your \$100 registration deposit. Credit cards accepted/checks payable to Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House at P.O. Box 1390, Lake Dallas, TX 75065. Questions? Contact: Rev. Nathan Stone, SJ, nstonesj@yahoo.com; Luz Restrepo, Retreat1@airmail.com, (940) 321-6020. Web site is www.montserratretreat.org

Wharton—Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church Annual Bazaar and Barbecue Dinner May 20 on the church grounds at 506 S. East Ave. A barbecue dinner of chicken and sausage will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Plates are \$6.50 p/p and will be available for dine-in or drive-thru serving lines. Tickets for the raffle may be purchased at the rectory during office hours and after weekend Masses. There will be an auction at 1:00; raffle, live music, Mt. Carmel Folklorico Dancers, games, cakewalk, pastry and food booths, plant walk and much more. Day of fun for the whole family.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser May 20 at the KC Hall. The price is \$5 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Hallettsville—Sacred Heart Parish Spring Festival May 27 at the KC Hall. A fried-chicken and stew dinner will be served from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Music throughout the day and night. The auction begins at 1:00 p.m. There will be games, entertainment and a train ride for the children.

Shiner—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Spring Picnic May 27 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.

St. Mary—St. Mary Parish Picnic June 10 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.

Victoria—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser June 17 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.

Dubina—Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish Picnic July 1

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

Notre Dame, Ind.—Catholic Divorce Ministry 2007 International Conference, July 5 – 7. For more information, please go to University of Notre Dame Center for Continuing Education at <http://cce.nd.edu>.

Moravia—Ascension of Our Lord Parish Picnic, July 15

Frelsburg—Sts. Peter and Paul Annual Festival, Aug. 5

Yoakum—St. Joseph Parish Picnic, Aug. 5

Palacios—St. Anthony Shrimporee, Aug. 5

Weimar—St. Michael Harvest Feast, Aug. 12

Praha—St. Mary Parish Picnic, Aug. 15

Do You Have A When & Where Item?
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A Mexican Easter tradition seen through the eyes of an immigrant girl in the United States.

by L.E. McCullough
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On Good Friday, Mexican Catholics traditionally march through the streets in a public re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross called *Las Tres Caídas* (The Three Falls). In areas of the U.S. where many Mexican immigrants exist in a shadow society of “the undocumented,” this procession detailing the pain and suffering of Christ mirrors their life experiences as a marginal and exploited population.

My name is Essie — short for Esperanza, which in Spanish means “hope”.

That was my name when we lived in Mexico, where I was born twelve years ago. Here in the United States, where I live now, people call me Essie. It is easier for my teachers to say than Esperanza. And better for our family, says my mother, until we get our residence papers in order.

For the last two months our family has lived in a motel on a busy highway outside a large city in the Midwest. Soon we will be moving to a state in the Northeast or maybe to Florida. Wherever we go, we will live in a motel like this one.

If you were driving by on the highway, you would probably not notice this motel. Or care to stay there. The lights on the front sign are broken, and the outside walls need new paint. There is no swimming pool, and there is no room service. The rooms are small and most of the windows have cracks. To most Americans driving by, this motel looks like a tired old person in dusty gray clothes taking a nap.

But this motel has a secret. It has an entire Mexican village tucked away inside.

In the room next to us is a *panadero*, a baker, who makes delicious tortillas. A *costurera* lives in that room and can sew anything you want from any piece of cloth you give her. Luis on the corner is a fine performer of the guitarron who plays music for our parties. Señora Valdez is a midwife who helps the women in the motel who cannot see a doctor when they are pregnant. The man who was the mayor of our village in Mexico lives across the courtyard. He repairs computers part-time, and his two sons work for a landscaper, also part-time.

More than one hundred Mexicanos live in this motel. They are busboys and cooks, maids and janitors. They pave driveways and dig ditches. They cut lawns and scrub dirt from the fountain at city hall. They take care of other people’s babies and pets and grandparents.

They are the people you see every day but never notice for more than a few moments. After work they disappear into the shadows, into motels like this all across America. For a few hours they can rest and dream they are back in Mexico.

This afternoon, everyone who is not away at their job is here standing in the

courtyard. Today is a holiday for the people in the motel. It is Good Friday, the day we Catholics believe Jesus Christ died for the sins of all people for all time. We honor this brave deed by marching in La Procesión de las Tres Caídas — The Procession of the Three Falls.

The procession follows the Stations of the Cross, fourteen places on Christ’s journey as he carried his heavy cross uphill to be crucified. At each station we pause to pray and remember his suffering and his love for his people.

In Mexico, the procession winds down the main street of our village to the church plaza decorated with flowers and pictures of saints. There we would hold a fiesta with music and dancing and laughter. Here

A migrant falls after trying to board a moving train heading to the border city of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, May 5. Each day migrants from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Mexico use Mexican trains to travel to the U.S. border. (CNS photo/Carlos Barria, Reuters)



Migrants travel on a cargo train heading to the Mexican border city of Nuevo Laredo May 5. (CNS photo/Carlos Barria, Reuters)

in America, we walk along the highway past shopping centers and gas stations and office buildings, heads bowed and eyes watching out for broken glass and tire ruts. We are quiet and try not to disturb anyone.

Father Morelo is the young priest leading the procession. “Some people say Las Tres Caídas is old-fashioned,” he tells us. “They ask what a story from two thousand years ago has to do with living today. We answer: if you walk with Jesus on this last day of his life, he will walk with you every day of your life.”

We hold the First Station in the muddy courtyard, which in our imagination has now become the grand palace of Pilate, the Roman ruler of Israel. We see Jesus standing before the authorities in his battered sombrero, faded camisa and pantalones, his shredded huaraches falling off his feet. His face is worn with care and sorrow, his hands and body bloodied and bruised from a lifetime of hard work upon the land. As Pilate tells Jesus the government is taking away his small farm, Jesus humbly accepts the sacrifice he must make for the sake of his family and village. He will leave his homeland and go to El Norte, north to the United States.

The Second Station we mark at the entrance to the highway. We see Jesus begin his long trip to the border. We see him being cheated by merchants, beaten by thugs, giving his last centavos and bits of food to those even more poor than he. We see Jesus teach others the lesson of the Cross: that the road to salvation is filled with much sacrifice.

At the Third Station Jesus suffers his First Fall. After wandering in the desert above Big Bend for three days without food and water, he is captured by Border Security and sent back to Mexico. For the first time, Jesus is troubled by doubt. He wonders if he will be able to make this journey for his people.

Fourth Station. As he waits for night, Jesus fears he has not the courage to attempt another crossing. He hears a gentle voice call his name. He turns and sees in the darkness the shining face of his



Day laborers wait for prospective employers to arrive at a day labor hiring area in Laguna Beach, Calif., July 14, 2006. (CNS photo/Lucas Jackson, Reuters)



Fidel Castaneda, 52, a fieldworker from Mexico, harvests watermelons in the early morning of May 19 at a Pasquinelli Produce Co. field about 30 miles east of Yuma, Ariz. (CNS photo/David Maung)



During an immigration protest in Arizona, a man carries crosses representing some of those who have died in 2006 while attempting to cross the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. (CNS photo/Jeff Topping, Reuters)

Mother, Maria, who died of a fever when he was a little boy. All through his life, whenever he was most discouraged, Jesus drew strength from thinking of his mother. Now she tells him, “Do not worry, mi hijo. I will always be by your side.”

Fifth Station. We pass a man hitchhiking, and we think of Jesus walking for many miles along the interstate. A truck driver named Simon stops and offers him

a ride. “I can take you far as San Antonio,” says Simon. “There’s a labor camp in the woods by Sea World. You might could get a job cleaning out the tanks.”

The Sixth Station is the mini-mart where men stand each morning in hopes of being chosen to do some kind of odd job or physical labor. Jesus tries for several days to find work, any kind of work. Sick and weak from hunger, he is seen by Veronica, who has just dropped her children off at day care. Though she is late for her job at the laundromat, she takes him to an emergency clinic that will treat those without health insurance.

We walk by an expensive restaurant, the Seventh Station where Jesus suffers his Second Fall. He is fired from his dishwashing job, accused of stealing leftover food. Jesus knows who has stolen the food, but he will not accuse the other worker.

The Eighth Station is the homeless shelter where Jesus finds a group of women crying bitter tears. One of them, a young mother, has seen her new baby die. Jesus forgets his own problems and talks with them, telling them their burdens will grow lighter in the days to come.

We come to the Ninth Station, a shabby, windowless tavern next to the check-cashing store. This is the Third Fall of Jesus. Overcome by loneliness and despair, he seeks comfort in the temporary pleasures of this world.

The Tenth Station is the playground where several teenage boys playing basketball mock and jeer as Jesus walks by. “Go home, you lazy wetback!” they shout. “You don’t belong in this country!” Despite their taunts, Jesus says a prayer for them.

Our procession moves ever more slowly as we mark the Eleventh Station, the meatpacking plant where Jesus is nearly arrested in a raid by La Migra — the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. The sky above has become very dark, and we feel the first drops of cold rain.

We pause to lay a wreath at the Twelfth Station, a small white cross on the side of the highway. This is where Jesus was struck by a car and killed riding home on his bicycle. As his earthly life bleeds away onto the pavement, Jesus opens his heart to the whole world. He asks that God forgive the sins of all people and teach us how to love God with all our hearts.

Thirteenth Station. We stand outside the police station, where Jesus’ body is taken to be examined. Some of his friends from the motel have come to identify him, even though they themselves may be arrested. “Yes,” they say proudly. “This is our friend, Jesus, who gave his life so others might live with justice and dignity.”

The Fourteenth Station is here at the county cemetery. Jesus’ family cannot afford to have his body sent back to Mexico. So they come to America, crossing secretly with the help of relatives. After Jesus is buried, they decide not to return home. They see that the death of Jesus has given them the chance for a new life. Even in their sadness, they see the promise of eternal joy.

And so ends the Procession of the Three Falls. It is not just the story of Nuestro Señor, Our Lord Jesus Christ. It