

# The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 20, NO. 10

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

February 2007

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CNS photo/Bill Wittman

### PALMS BURNING FOR ASHES TO BE USED AT START OF LENT

Palms are burned for ashes used to mark the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 21. The penitential season of Lent calls Christians to prayer, fasting, repentance and charity.



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## Kickoff of 125th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church begins

HALLETTSVILLE—The Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday, Jan. 7, was a very special day in that it signified the kickoff of the 125th Anniversary Celebration of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School.

As a beginning to the yearlong festivities that are being planned, the kickoff started Sunday with the celebration of the first year anniversary of the adoration chapel.

A eucharistic Holy Hour was presided over by Most Rev. David Fellhauer, bishop of Victoria, along with Father John Peters, pastor, and Father Bryan Heyer, parochial vicar, both of Sacred Heart Parish.

Father Peters opened the services with the introduction and welcome of Katy Pfeffer of Houston, who spoke briefly re-



Bishop David Fellhauer is assisted by Father Bryan Heyer, parochial vicar, and Father John C. Peters, pastor, during Benediction at the kickoff celebration of Sacred Heart Parish's 125th anniversary held January 7, 2007.

garding the inception of the adoration chapel. Exposition of the Blessed Sacra-

ment followed, along with prayers, a Gospel reading and reflection, and benediction presided over by Bishop Fellhauer.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy was

## Father Juan Vazquez Rubio installed at OLS

By Cindy Brewer

After losing their long-time pastor, Father Victor Scocco, when he was elected minister provincial of the U.S. Province of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria once again has a leader. As minister provincial, Father Victor appointed Father Juan Vazquez Rubio to replace him as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Bishop David E. Fellhauer installed Father Juan as the pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows at a Sunday morning Mass accompanied by the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus January 14, 2007.

Father Victor was in attendance at the installation along with other Trinitarian priests: Father Alberto Rodriguez, parochial vicar at Sorrows; Father Kurt J. Klismet, secretary and treasurer of the Trinitarian Province; Father Juan Molina, with CRS International in San Antonio; and Father Albert Anuszewski, pastor of St. James and the Incarnation on the East Coast. Father Gabriel Otoo, parochial vicar of Sorrows, also concelebrated the Mass.

Father Juan thanked the bishop for giving him a chance to share his faith with the Sorrows' community and addressed his parishioners: "I feel like I'm going back home, since I studied here (in formation). I know you'll be praying for me, (for) you know it's not easy to serve at such a wonderful, active parish, primero Dios (but with the help of God)."

Father Juan was ordained at Holy Trinity Seminary in Baltimore on August 15, 1999.

He had first joined the seminary in the

Diocese of Zamora, in Michoacan, Mexico, but while there he attended a liturgy seminar in Guadalajara, and by chance happened to meet Father Juan Raul Rendon of the Trinitarian Order (Father Raul once was pastor of OLS and has since died). As a seminarian, Father Juan Rubio had always wondered about religious life in a community so he talked with Father Raul Rendon about it.

After meeting Father Raul, he decided to join the Trinitarians and came to Victoria to the Trinitarian's house of formation where he stayed for two and a half years. He then went to Baltimore and then to India for one year where he did his novitiate.

He came back to Baltimore and studied at the University of Maryland and then at Washington Theological Union, part of the Catholic University of America. He took his solemn profession as a religious Trinitarian brother on June 7, 1998, and then was ordained to the priesthood in 1999.

Prior to coming to Our Lady of Sorrows, Father Juan had been associate pastor for four years at St. Lawrence Martyr in Jessup, Md.

Father Juan, who will be 39 years old upon celebrating his birthday, February 5, has one sister and six brothers, one of whom has since become a diocesan priest for the Diocese of Zamora.

Regarding the position as pastor at OLS, Father Juan said, "I think it's a great opportunity as a priest and a religious. I can put into practice all I've learned. It's a



Bishop David Fellhauer congratulates Father Juan Vazquez Rubio after he installs him pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Victoria.

See Kickoff of 125th anniversary, p. 4

## Our Catholic Story ... continues with 2007 DSA

By Cindy Brewer

During the middle of February the Diocese of Victoria kicks off the 2007 Diocesan Services Appeal, which is an annual fund-raising campaign that provides virtually all the funds needed for the operation of the diocese.

The chancery office and its volunteers will begin processing DSA packets to be mailed to every parishioner in the diocese on the weekend of February 17. If you've moved in the past year, it is very important to let your parish know of your new address.

The theme of this year's DSA is "Our Catholic Story, How will it continue? We tell it, We preach it, We teach it, We pray it and We live it. Invest in our Catholic Story, it's worth every dollar."

The offices that are supported by the DSA include the Annual Appeal Office, Audio-Visual Library, Bishop's Office, The Catholic Lighthouse, Chancellor/Tribunal, Charities, Dues and Support of the Holy See; Contingency Fund, Disciples on the Journey, Finance and Business Office, Liturgical Commission, Occupancy Expense, Pastoral Institute, Permanent Diaconate, Religious Education, Retired and Infirm Priests, Safe Environment, School Office, Seminarians, Spiritual Renewal Center, Vocation Office, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Bishop David E. Fellhauer agreed with the theme, stating, "Only with your help can we continue our story."

Please be generous.

See Father Juan, p. 2





## Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

### February

- 9** 5:30 p.m., Reconciliation service, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
- 10** 6:30 p.m., Mass, St. Joseph Church, Moulton
- 11** 6:30 a.m., Mass, St. Joseph Church, Moulton  
9:00 a.m., Mass, St. Joseph Church, Moulton
- 12** 2:00 p.m., pronounce words for Spelling Bee, 3rd through 8th grades, Our Lady of Victory School, Victoria  
7:00 p.m., Diocesan Liturgical Commission meeting, Chancery Office
- 16** 6:30 p.m., Reconciliation service, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
- 18** 4:00 p.m., Mass, Fourth Degree Assembly 1131, Ladies night, St. Andrew Church, Hillje
- 21** 4:30 p.m., Diocesan building Board, Chancery Office
- 25** 3:00 p.m., Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 26** Chancery Staff retreat
- March**
- 4** 4:30 p.m., Mass, Youth Spectacular, Holy Family Church, Victoria
- 6** Texas Catholic Conference Department of Judicial Vicars conference, Oblate Renewal Center, San Antonio
- 7** 10:00 a.m., Presbyteral Council meeting, Chancery Office
- 9** 8:05 a.m., School Mass, St. Michael Church, Cuero  
1:00 p.m., golf tournament benefiting St. Michael's School, Cuero
- 11** 12 noon, Pilgrims' Reunion, St. Philip Church, El Campo
- 13** 11:30 a.m., Mass, Admission to Candidacy for Ordination, St. Mary's Seminary, Houston

## Father Juan Vazquez Rubio installed at OLS

*Continued from p. 1*

challenge, he's (Father Victor's) done a lot here, but at the same time, it's a great opportunity to grow."

Father Juan looks forward to working with a Hispanic community, since he hasn't worked with one since becoming a priest. "I will get to practice a lot of the culture that I grew up with," he said.

### By Cindy Brewer

Msgr. Eustace Hermes turned 90 years old January 20, 2007. He and his family celebrated his birthday with a small Mass at Holy Family Church's chapel, concelebrated with Bishop David Fellhauer, and Father Greg Korenek, pastor of Holy Family in Victoria.

Following the Mass, a catered luncheon birthday party, organized by good-family-friend Mary Beth Kenworthy, was held at the activity center for Msgr. Hermes and about 36 of his family members and close friends.

In his homily, Bishop Fellhauer, who presided over the Mass, said he chose the Mass for priestly vocations to honor Msgr. Hermes' many years with the Serra Club and picked the readings for priests in gratitude to God for Msgr.'s service.

The bishop said he chose the reading from 1 Thessalonians because of his gratitude and admiration of Msgr. Hermes who is such a role model and is admired among the priests.

The Book of Luke was chosen as the Gospel reading, the bishop said, because Msgr. Hermes reflects so well the reading, "He came to serve; not to be served." He said that because of Msgr. Hermes' "service in so many aspects, a kingdom will be conferred upon him in due time — perhaps in 20 to 25 years" — implying and hoping that Msgr. Hermes will be with us for a long time.

"As we were judged worthy ... not trying to please men ... using flattering words ..." is certainly characteristic of Msgr. He preached the Gospel whether convenient or not convenient," the bishop said.

In closing his homily, Bishop Fellhauer addressed Msgr. Hermes, "I'm grateful for

## Official Appointments By Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

Effective February 1, 2007, the following priests have been appointed to the offices of Dean, Consultor and Priests' Personnel Board:

Rev. Msgr. Michael Harrold  
Rev. Timothy Kosler  
Rev. John C. Peters  
Rev. Gary W. Janak  
Rev. Charles Dwomoh  
Rev. Kirby Hlavaty

Likewise, members of the Priests' Personnel Board and College of Consultors are Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin and Msgr. James C. Brunner.

## Msgr. Hermes turns 90 years "young"

all you do for the diocese. God bless you and may you have many more years."

Msgr. Hermes, who celebrated 65 years of priesthood June 12, 2006, continues on a daily basis to maintain the database of



Msgr. Hermes, who celebrated his 90th birthday on Jan. 20, rides 16 miles daily on his stationary bike.

church property records for the Diocese of Victoria; is the world's longest serving Serra Club chaplain, celebrating 46 years this year; and rides 16 miles per day on his stationary bike.

While pastor of Our Lady of Victory Church in the mid 1960s, Msgr. Hermes purchased a raffle ticket from a Nazareth Academy student hoping to win the first-place prize of a television set. He didn't win first place, but instead won second place, a bicycle. The odd thing was, the morning before he had won the bike, his doctor had told him he should start exercising.

He taught himself how to ride the bike in the church parking lot after hours, when every one had gone home. Since winning the bike, he has logged over 105,000 miles of riding throughout Victoria and the surrounding area. He has settled down to using a stationary bike in his home now. Because he loves his sweets, he said he must ride 16 miles a day to "prevent my belt from getting too short."

Having been born and raised on a farm in Koerth, Texas, he continues to "farm" his backyard garden of broccoli, cabbage, lettuce and onions. He and his cousin, Beth Hoffer, have shared a home for the past 35 years.

Msgr. Hermes was ordained in 1941 at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio by Archbishop Robert Lucy. He has served in Victoria at St. Mary's, Our Lady of Lourdes, and Our Lady of Victory, St. Rose of Lima in Schulenburg, and retired from Assumption Parish in Ganado June 12, 1976.



**LANDMARK CHAPEL OF THE INCARNATE WORD BEING RESTORED—**  
The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word closed the Chapel of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, January 2, 2007, while Father Ed Kelly and the Sisters blessed the 20 construction workers who participated in Phase II of the renovation of the 100-year-old San Antonio landmark. Before beginning the renovation, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word decided that the high-tech and architectural upgrades in the chapel should be so magnificent and the craftsmanship done so well as to last another 100 years. The 10-foot tall angels will also get a facelift since they are, after all, 100 years old and have taken a beating from hail, lightning and wind. The chapel will re-open in mid-February. On May 27, 2007, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word celebrate the closing of the Centennial Year of the Chapel of the Incarnate Word with a glorious liturgy to thank Jesus, the Incarnate Word, for the gift of the chapel for the past 100 years. Sister Elizabeth Riebschlaeger of Cuero is a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

## 2006 DSA Monthly Report

The 2006 Diocesan Services Appeal closed on January 15, 2007. The final amount pledged was \$847,116 and the total paid amount was \$840,793 contributed by 4,716 households.


Congratulations to the 10 parishes who met or exceeded their goal. Any excess money will be returned to their respective parish. Parishes that did not reach their goal through their parishioner's contributions will make up the difference from the parish funds.

Stewardship involves the conscientious, firm decision, carried out constantly in action; to conduct one's self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost. Thank you for your continued support of this vital appeal.

Jeri Joseph, Diocese of Victoria  
Business Office

### Stewardship Thought:

As we begin Lent, let us make a conscious effort to give God the first fruits of our time, talent and treasure as a gift of gratitude.



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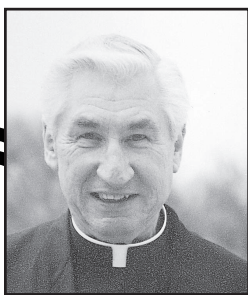




## Faith Point

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

For past articles: [www.stmaryvic.com/desk.htm](http://www.stmaryvic.com/desk.htm)



### "Imagine"

The late John Lennon wrote a song in 1971 titled "Imagine." In it he imagined a secular utopia with no heaven or hell, people living for today, no religion, no possessions, but "all the people sharing all the world." When people join his utopia, "the world will be as one."

Lennon is not alone in thinking that religion is a problem. Elton John thinks religion creates "hateful lemmings" who are not "compassionate" and thinks religion should be banned. Other secularists see in religion the cause of wars.

Pat Fagan of the Heritage Foundation has recently written an article in which he studies the effect of religion on families in the real and not the imaginary world. He found that religious practice makes family life better and stronger and therefore improves society which is the sum total of its families. Without religion just about every indicator of human misery would be off the charts.

Fagan cites countless studies to show that religion provides beneficial results for marriage, divorce, child-rearing, drug/alcohol abuse, out-of-wedlock births—even mental and physical health.

As for marriage, a University of Texas study found that couples who acknowledged a divine purpose in their marriage were more likely to collaborate, to have greater marital adjustment, to perceive more benefits from their marriage, and were less likely to use aggression or come to a stalemate. Men who attended religious services weekly were more than 50% less likely to commit an act of violence against their partners than peers who attended once a year or less.

Numerous studies have shown that religious practice is accompanied by a decline in divorce. Marriages in which both spouses attend religious services frequently are 2.4 times less likely to end in divorce than marriages in which neither spouse worships. Those who think religion is "very important" are 22% less likely to divorce than those for whom religious beliefs are only "somewhat important." David Larson of Duke University found religious attendance to be the most important predictor of marital stability, confirming studies as far back as fifty years ago.

The likelihood of divorce is further reduced when husbands and wives share the same religious commitment. Such couples have a greater sense of well-being and satisfaction in their marriages. They are less likely to commit acts of domestic violence or argue about financial matters. One-third of separated spouses with the same religious affiliation reconciled compared with less than one-fifth of those with different religious affiliations.

Religious practice not only stabilizes marriages but improves their quality. Brad Wilcox of the University of Virginia found that the more frequently husbands attended religious services the happier the wives were with the level of affection and time their husbands spent with them. Very religious women were found to have greater satisfaction with their sex lives than did moderately or non-religious women.

A great current problem is cohabita-

tion prior to marriage. Couples who live together before marriage are 59% more likely to divorce than those who do not cohabit. Those who attend religious services infrequently and those who consider religion to be of low importance are more likely to cohabit as young adults. Those whose mothers frequently attended services were 50% less likely to cohabit than peers whose mothers were not actively religious.

Religious practice has beneficial effects on family relationships. Compared with mothers who did not consider religion important, those who deemed religion very important rated their relationship with their children significantly higher. When mothers and children share the same level of religious practice they experience a better relationship with one another. Mothers who became more religious throughout the first 18 years of their child's life reported a better relationship with that child, regardless of the level of their religious practice before the child was born.

Something similar happens to fathers. Compared with fathers with no religious affiliation, fathers who attended religious services frequently are more likely to monitor and spend time with their children. Fathers' frequency of religious attendance was a stronger predictor of paternal involvement in one-on-one activities with children than were employment and income, the most frequently cited factors in academic literature on fatherhood.

Religion offers good news with respect to adolescent sexual behavior. Fagan notes that traditional values and religious beliefs were among the most common factors teens cited to explain why they abstain from sex. Religion affects out-of-wedlock childbearing: Compared with those who consider themselves "very religious" those who were "not at all religious" are two to three times more likely to have a child outside of marriage.

Religion benefits individuals. Fagan writes, "In the vast majority of studies reviewed, an increase in religious practice was associated with having greater hope and a greater sense of purpose in life." Additionally religiously active people are at a lower level of risk of depression and suicide. They tend to live longer.

All this is counterintuitive if religion is the source of human ills. Why do good things happen in marriage, families, societies, and individuals as religious practice increases and horrible things happen when

it is eliminated? Religion was not the source of the problems in Communism, which effectively extirpated religion. Antireligious Communism has produced the worst oppression in human history. Communists according to Lennon's dream were to have "no possessions" and were to share everything. They ended with equal shares of misery—except for the governing elite. Lennon imagined a world with no possessions but spent much time and energy acquiring a lot of them. Perhaps he was saving them for a time when, in his imagination, "all the people would share all the world." After Communism ousted religion the world did not become "as one." Many braved electrical fences, armed guards, mines, and dogs to flee that brotherhood.

Perhaps Lennon and his secularist friends had it all wrong. If increased religious practice results in good things and declines in it result in evil things, it is possible that religion is not the problem but the solution.

In an earlier article I made the point that religion is responsible for advances in civilization such as respect for all humans, abolition of slavery, and civil rights. Maybe celebrities should refrain from exploiting their fame by propagating secularist doctrines that work only in their imaginations, but in real life crash to the

ground in flaming ruin with many attendant casualties. They should heed Laura Ingraham's advice, which she made the title of a book: *Shut up and Sing*. Instead of fighting religion and falling down violently ill at some chance encounter with religious expression in the public arena, they should promote religious practice, the one thing that produces good in the real world.

Meanwhile those really interested in increasing the quality of life in the world and especially in their families should increase the quality of their religious practice.

Long before Lennon was born Jesus set the parameters for human brotherhood since God is our Father and we are all brothers and sisters including the unborn and those incapacitated by age. Those in need deserve assistance because Jesus has identified himself with them. To the extent that people lived this vision there was a basis for true brotherhood. Greater religious participation would make the vision come true.

Imagine.

*On a personal note I plan to conduct a pilgrimage to Turkey which will include visits to the seven churches of Revelation, Antioch, Tarsus, Ephesus, and Mary's House. The dates are November 5-16, 2007. Call (361) 573-4328 for details.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Dear Editor

I just wanted to take a moment and thank everyone who has supported us during our twin daughters' battle with cancer. We could not have made it through without the support of all of you. As you know, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition came and built us a new, safe home for Tara, who was still recovering from the bone marrow transplant she had in October of 2005 because of her leukemia relapsing in May. The 17<sup>th</sup> of January will mark a year that Extreme Makeover knocked on our door! How do you thank someone for saving our lives? I realize I will never be able to adequately express how much your support, before and during the build, has touched us. I hope everyone knows how greatly moved we have been and how much it meant to us. A special thank you to the wonderful people of Royce Builders and their subcontractors, etc. who gave freely of their precious time, talent, and sleep to help a family in dire need.

A year ago we were desperately trying to survive. We had no idea where our lives were going. We were dealing with recurring fevers from low blood counts, as all cancer patients do, paralyzing fear of our second twin, Sara, relapsing, and sorrow from losing loved ones, not to mention the financial woes. We always tried to walk in faith, as God would lead us through it, as He promised, but were weary.

I don't know why God chose to answer our prayers in such a big way. There are so many deserving people out there who are still in need. I only know that we are so grateful and count our many blessings daily.

Tara has been able to go back to school. She has not had a fever since we've been in the house and she has been weaned off of her mask. Her first yearly exam showed no signs of leukemia and she is still 100 percent donor bone marrow (which is the goal of treatment). She looks forward to playing baseball in the spring. Sara's check ups have been going well and she is happy to have her twin sister back in class with her in the 2nd grade. Kelly is enjoying the 5th grade. Brady is now living with us and enjoying his junior year.

John and I are enjoying everything!

We now face our challenges with renewed hope and courage, knowing that God is going to be there during our journey. We do not know what lies ahead, but know that whatever happens, God will see us through it. We pray that God will keep you in His loving care, and bless your lives, just as our lives have been blessed by your prayers.

Sincerely,  
John and Monica Kubena and family

### Did Mary Suffer In Childbirth?

"The Nativity" movie has many redeeming qualities but private interpretation was incorrect in two areas. Showing Mary as a typical rebellious teenager was pure Hollywood but showing her having birth pains was just bad theology.

The Church has taught the truth about Mary's perpetual virginity from ancient times.

After Adam and Eve fell, women inherited the pain of childbirth labor because of original sin. But Mary, the new Eve, was allowed by God to be conceived immaculate. Therefore, baby Jesus had a sinless mother. And why wouldn't he protect his mother from all sin? After all He is God.

So if Mary remained a virgin, how did Jesus come out of the womb? I would guess by the same way He went in. Jesus also came out of the intact tomb and again he appeared to His apostles through locked doors.

Because Mary was without sin she did not have to die but was assumed into heaven.

There are some theologians who believe that Mary suffered labor pains because Jesus was going to suffer pain. But that does not follow, because the hardest thing Mary ever had to do was to agree to the crucifixion of her Son. To stand at the foot of the cross and see your own son crucified has to be unbearably painful.

Sincerely  
Wm. Paul Tasin  
Victoria, Texas

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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 January 25, 2007	TOTALS
<b>— St. John the Baptist Church, St. John Burse</b>	
<b>No. 2 — In Honor of Rev. Brian Crookes</b>	
Previously reported	\$4,126.00
In memory of Leona Berger by:	
Forrest and Ann Dittrich	20.00
Elreed and Lillie Dittrich	5.00
Albert and Dorothy Olsovsky	10.00
Alvin and Bernice Hollas	10.00
Anton J. and Georgia Kalich	10.00
Verner and Diana Sokol	5.00
Milton and Joyce Dittrich	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,196.00</b>

<b>— Rev. Sean Donohue Burse No. 2</b>	
Previously reported	\$1,880.20
In celebration of Jerome and Vlasta Kovar's 65th wedding anniversary by Bernard and Madeline Rother	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,905.20</b>

<b>— St. Mary Church — Praha Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$4,160.00
Gift to the burse by	
St. Mary Church — Praha	1,060.00
In honor of Rev. Edward Bartsch by	
St. Mary's Church Altar Society	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,270.00</b>

<b>— Rev. John C. Peters Burse No. 3</b>	
Previously reported	\$11,596.00
In Thanksgiving by	
Deacon Sonny and Elaine Rogers	50.00
In memory of Benita Pavlu by	
the K.J.Z.T. No. 2 Hallettsville	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,671.00</b>

<b>— Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$8,054.50
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy by:	
Albert and Doris Anadel	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,074.50</b>

<b>— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik &amp; Rev. Vincent Verdame Burse</b>	
Previously reported	\$7,890.00
In memory of Robert Schaefer by	
Rita Drozd	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,915.00</b>

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**



Sister Christine Garcia, vocation ministry director of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Dallas, explains "A Missionary's Experience" to Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca, students by telling of her mission to Pakistan.

## 5th graders experience Vocation Awareness Days

On January 9 and 10, 2007, the fifth graders from the Catholic Schools in the diocese attended Church Vocation Awareness Days at Incarnate Word Convent in Victoria. The students heard a number of religious and priests talk about their own experience of religious life and the priesthood. They competed in a "Meet the Religious" game and visited the Gift Shop

and the Hall of Memories at the convent. The day culminated in a prayer service that highlighted the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Vocation Awareness Days are sponsored by the Vocations Office of the Diocese of Victoria, the Serra Club, Knights of Columbus Council No. 1329 and the Catholic Daughters of Court St. Ann No. 369.

# Church Leader=YOU

**1 Timothy 3 says that CHURCH LEADERS should be good examples of what Christians are to be like. They should be RESPECTABLE, GENEROUS, GENTLE, and NOT be LOVERS OF MONEY.**

**CHURCH LEADER—Priests, Brothers Sisters**

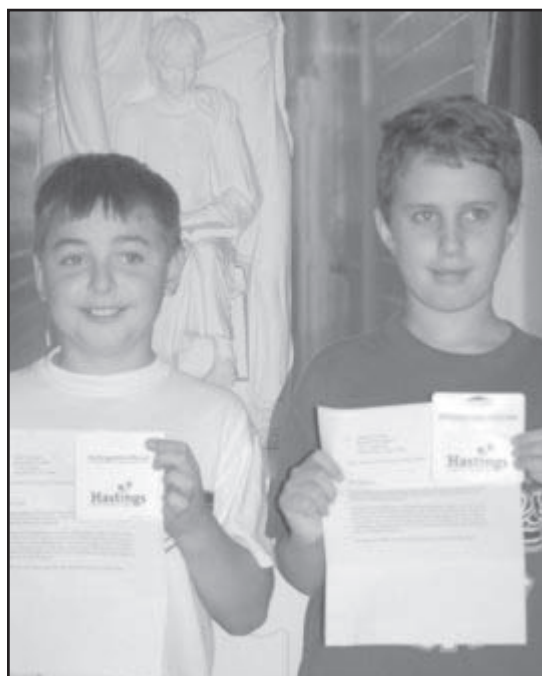
**If YOU possess these qualities, God may be calling you. LISTEN CLOSELY !!**

**1st Runner-up in Vocation Art Contest**

Artwork by Dylan Grahmann • 4th Grade  
Sacred Heart School, Hallettsville

*Consider the Religious Life!*

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



**SACRED HEART STUDENTS WIN IN VOCATION ART CONTEST** — Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School students recently participated in the art contest sponsored by the Victoria Diocese Vocation Office. The theme of the artwork was fostering Church vocations: priests, brothers, deacons and sisters. The contest winners were announced during National Vocational Awareness Week (January 7-13, 2007). Congratulations to 4th grader Nicholas Hadash (r.) for winning first place and 4th grader Dylan Grahmann (l.) for being the first runner-up in the art contest. Nicholas is the son of Phillip & Nanci Hadash and Dylan is the son of Allan & Jami Grahmann.

## Kickoff of 125th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church begins

*Continued from p. 1*

sung, offering the congregation a prayerful meditation. Organist for the occasion was Mrs. Lou Kubena.

Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament was conducted by Bishop Fellhauer.

Following the service, a beautifully catered reception was held at the Sacred Heart Family Center. Those in charge of the occasion, Mike and Paulette Frisina and Charlene Bradbury, did a wonderful job.

The decorations were quite elegant,

thanks to Jonell and Frank Janeczek and Donna Kossa, and the delicious food was catered by Pam Dolezal. The background music, provided by Denise Drozd, was just right. Altogether, the affair was quite a success. Many thanks go to all those, too numerous to mention, who were involved with making this celebration such a huge success.

As previously mentioned, yearlong plans are being made to recognize this anniversary in some special way each month.

## In Memory of ...

### Steve Borowicz, father of Deacon Steve Borowicz

Steve J. "Pa" Borowicz, 89, passed away Wednesday, January 24, 2007.

He was born December 26, 1918, in Brenham to the late Ed and Mary Borowicz. He married Helen Przyborski on January 15, 1946, at St. Mary Catholic Church in Brenham. He was stationed by the U.S. Army in several locations before moving to Victoria in 1963 after 22 years of active service. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve for another 16 years. He was a veteran of WWII and Korea and retired from the military after 38 years of service to God and country. He was a charter member of Holy Family Catholic Church and a fourth degree member of Knights of Columbus Council 9088. After retirement, he enjoyed gardening, his grandchildren, K of C activities and dominoes.

He is survived by: his wife of 61 years, Helen; two sons, Deacon Steve Borowicz and wife Su of Victoria and

Dennis Borowicz and wife Phyllis of Cuero; two sisters, Vera Bennett and Theresa Lipinski; seven grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by: two sons, David and Tony Borowicz; four brothers, Stanley, Louie, Peter and Frank Borowicz; and four sisters, Annie and Sophia Borowicz, Martha Bednar and Mary Vierus.

Mass of Christian Burial took place Saturday, January 27, at Holy Family Church, the Rev. Greg Korenek and Deacons Steve Borowicz officiating. Burial with military honors was at Resurrection Cemetery.

Pallbearers included Jason Borowicz, Matt Brown, Brandon Borowicz, Zachary Gaskin, Julio Dwiggs, Carl Przyborski, Michael Przyborski and Greg Jenkins.

Memorials may be made to Holy Family Church or Hospice of South Texas.

### 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.





## Youth activist expands message to reach adults

By Carol Zimmermann  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Craig Kielburger, the longtime youth activist who has worked to improve conditions for young people around the world, is now taking his message to a broader audience: adults.

Maybe that's because Kielburger, who started the group Free the Children, an international organization to fight child labor, when he was just 12, has run into adulthood himself at age 24. But as he puts it, it has more to do with the fact that young people have a lot of ideas, but "they don't live in isolation."

He is convinced that to tackle the overwhelming problem of world poverty young people need support, cooperation and also a fair amount of inspiration from their parents, youth leaders and educators. They also need to do simple things on an everyday basis to make tangible changes around them.

That's the message behind the new book written by Craig and his brother, Marc, "Me to We: Finding Meaning in a Material World," published in 2006 by Simon & Schuster.

The book includes plenty of anecdotes, including some from famous people such as Oprah Winfrey and retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa about what it means to make a difference in someone's life. It also is loaded with suggestions on everyday actions that can make a difference for a neighbor or a stranger on the street and ultimately change the attitudes of those doing the good deeds.

The Catholic brothers, who have led Free the Children for 12 years, primarily through the support of youth volunteers and their donations, have seen their initial vision of wanting to improve child labor conditions mushroom into huge undertakings: building more than 450 schools all over the world and providing health care clinics and services in remote areas of Africa, China, Latin America and Sri Lanka.

The organization has set up alternative income projects for those in poverty, sponsored entire villages, and provided systems for clean water and sanitation. The group also runs a youth leadership training program.

The brothers, who frequently speak at youth conferences and gatherings, have long relied on young people to help them with their work and have succeeded despite a perception that today's young people are not concerned with the global issues of poverty and social justice.

"There are a lot of factors why young people care," Kielburger told Catholic News Service in a Jan. 12 phone interview from his home in Toronto just days after returning from the site of a future water project in Kenya. He said his own generation came of age when 24-hour news and the Internet were part of everyday life.

"We are truly a global generation," he said, noting that many young people see what's wrong in the world and want to act. Over the years, young people continue to be the main force behind Free the Children, but at the same time, the group also gets plenty of calls from educators and youth leaders wondering how to inspire youths.

To get to youths who do not realize they can make a difference and should, Kielburger calls on the grown-ups.

He realizes adults can be overwhelmed by all the problems in the world and might want to protect and shelter their children from violence and hardships, but he also sees danger in that. "Young people see the problems anyway and if they close their eyes to them, they might close their hearts too," he warned.

He advises adults to help young people

acknowledge the troubles that exist and then give them simple ways to help, including writing letters to soldiers far from home or collecting food and volunteering at shelters. "Yes, we live in a world with poverty, violence and fighting," he said, but in that environment parents cannot afford to raise "passive bystanders."

As an example, he points to his own mom, a teacher. He said she was always teaching, not just in the classroom. He remembers that when he was little she would always stop and talk with homeless people who would ask for money.

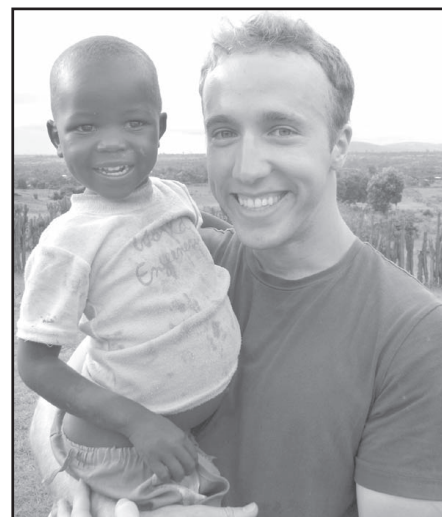
Kielburger, who at the time wanted to move on, said he always thought she was doing this for the homeless; he realized later that she also was doing this for her sons, to show them how to treat others.

Kielburger also thinks church youth leaders have a key role in shaping youths who want to make changes because they can directly tie in their work with the church's call to social justice. He said his own faith influenced his work in "unexpected ways" because he did not initially go out to help others based on his faith, but instead came to a deeper understanding of his faith from that experience.

When he visited the poor in other countries, he said, the Gospel stories he had grown up hearing about feeding the poor made more sense to him. "For the first time, I saw what faith meant, that it's more than going through the motions," he said.

He also has seen a lot of faith-filled people who look at problems in the world and wonder why God does not directly intervene and change things.

Kielburger said there is divine intervention. "God works through us," he said.



CNS photo/courtesy Free The Children  
Craig Kielburger, the longtime youth activist who has worked to improve conditions for young people around the world, poses with a Kenyan boy in 2006. Kielburger and his brother, Marc, have written a book titled "Me to We: Finding Meaning in a Material World," published in 2006 by Simon & Schuster.

### Looking for Mission Work?

Heart's Home, an international Catholic organization committed to promoting a culture of compassion, is currently accepting applications for volunteers. Heart's Home provides an opportunity for young people to dedicate at least 14 months of their lives to serve the most suffering people in the world. Founded in 1990 by Father Thierry de Roucy, the organization has 35 communities located in 20 countries, in addition to having recruited and trained more than 1,100 missionaries from 18 countries. Young Catholics interested in this opportunity should visit the Web site at [www.heartshomeusa.org](http://www.heartshomeusa.org), or contact the office at (718) 901-1276.

### CUTTING EDGE

## It can't be Lent already

By Sister Margie Lavonis, CSC

I don't know about you, but it seems to me like we just took down our Christmas trees and put away our decorations!!! Can it really be time for Lent already? Before we know it, the Easter Bunny, not Santa, will be coming to town.

All joking aside, the season of Lent is a very important time for Catholic Christians. Each year the Church, in her wisdom, gives us forty days as a kind of annual retreat to reflect on our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. Lent is a yearly opportunity to slow down and take stock of how we are living our faith. It is also a good time to examine our actions and determine how well we are doing in our attempts to live the Gospel message of Jesus. It is a call to conversion.

Our Catholic tradition suggests that we use the disciplines of prayer, fasting and alms giving to renew our spiritual lives during Lent—actually not just in Lent, but throughout our lives.

What about prayer? You might evaluate how much quality time you give to the Lord. Maybe your prayer life is limited to Mass on most Sundays and a quick prayer before meals, when you remember or are brave enough to do it in front of friends. Maybe you ordinarily pray only when you want something from God, like the miracle of passing a test you didn't study for!!! Or maybe you have put in for a promotion in your job when down deep you know you don't deserve it because your performance has been only mediocre. Perhaps this Lent you can give more attention to prayer other than petitions.

No relationship grows unless we are

willing to listen and share ourselves with the other person. God is no exception. During Lent, begin to set aside ten or fifteen minutes of your quality time each day for prayer. Make it a special "God and me" time. Try to find a quiet place where you can just be with God and let God love you. Read and reflect upon some Scripture each day and get to know the Lord better. Don't call upon God only when you are in trouble or want something!

Fasting is another important part of our Lenten experience. Most people think that fasting is primarily giving up some kind of food, like candy or ice cream or not eating in between meals, but there are other, and maybe more beneficial, ways we can fast. Only you know what type of fasting would best help your spiritual life grow. Maybe it would be more beneficial for you to fast from gossip or negative words rather than chocolate chip cookies. Or perhaps you could try to talk less and become a better listener, especially to people who could use some of your attention. It can be a real discipline to focus on the other person and truly hear what he or she says.

For many, almsgiving means giving money to a charitable cause. That is an important part of it, but it is often much easier to give our loose change to an organization than to give the precious gifts of our time and talents to people in need. Lent calls us to give of ourselves, not just our financial and material resources. This Lent you might think about the people who could use some of your quality time? Who would most benefit from your gifts and talents? In what ways can you get out of

yourself and think more of the needs of others?

Besides personal time, another thing one may be called to give during Lent is forgiveness. Who in your life—whether living or dead—do you need to forgive for some hurt done to you? Or of whom do you need to ask forgiveness? I think this is a very important way to give alms and is a sacrifice pleasing to our God. It can be difficult but it brings a lot of peace to those involved and, after all, it is what Jesus tells us to do!

During this Lent let us try to slow down and be more reflective. Let us set aside, if we don't already, some regular time for the Lord. Let us also try to raise our awareness of the needs of others and not focus primarily on ourselves. This might be a good time to do some charitable work that you can continue even after Lent is over!!!

Don't let this opportunity to deepen your spiritual life slip by you. Classes, papers, committees, projects, spring breaks, etc. will pass away, but our relationship with God is forever. Get to know and serve God better during these days when we prepare for Easter. Don't let this be just another forty days of the year.



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## Natural Family Planning (NFP) announces classes

Couples worldwide are choosing Natural Family Planning (NFP) for its healthful and marriage-building qualities, as well as its usefulness to plan or postpone pregnancy. Many couples are also grateful to use a family planning method that is in harmony with their religious beliefs.

### About CCL

The Couple to Couple League (CCL) is an international, interfaith, non-profit organization dedicated to teaching Natural Family Planning (NFP) to married and engaged couples. It is essentially a volunteer organization because services are provided by professionally-trained volunteers who are supported by a relatively small staff at the international headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. Local chapters of the organization consist mainly of certified Teaching Couples and Promoters, along with other supportive members.

### Origins

When Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the traditional Christian teaching against unnatural forms of birth control in 1968 through the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, he recommended that married couples help other married couples with Natural Family Planning. In response, John and Sheila Kippley founded the Couple to Couple League in 1971.

With the assistance of Konald A. Prem, M.D., then a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, a plan was developed to meet those needs. The CCL concept has proven successful, not only in the U.S., but in countries throughout the

world. Each year sees new areas opening up to being served by CCL.

### Methods Taught

CCL teaches the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP. In this system, a couple uses cross-checking signs of fertility: cervical mucus, waking temperatures, and changes in the cervix itself. The woman may also use secondary signs of fertility such as ovulation pain and others.

The League also teaches the world's oldest form of natural child spacing — ecological breastfeeding. This is a form of breastfeeding that typically provides over a year of natural infertility after childbirth.

The Sympto-Thermal Method is distinctly different from the Calendar Rhythm Method as well as single-symptom approaches such as the Mucus-only or Temperature-only methods. CCL believes that couples should be free to choose the natural method with which they feel the most comfortable based on their own experience. Therefore, CCL instructs couples in all the common signs of fertility and infertility. However, if a couple, after being adequately informed about all the signs of fertility, decides to rely exclusively on one sign, that is certainly their right. CCL teachers and counselors will support that couple within the limits of the system they choose.

There is more to NFP than the mere physical aspects of understanding and working with your fertility. The moral practice of NFP involves a way of life, not just a method of birth regulation. Therefore, CCL instruction provides insight into a host of values and moral principles that

are involved in responsible parenthood and the decision to use NFP.

### CCL Today

CCL has grown to be the largest NFP provider in the United States, and has a presence in 23 foreign countries. In fiscal year 2004, the League had 25,455 active members, 966 active certified volunteer Teaching Couples, and 623 certified volunteer Promoters. A total of 7,957 couples learned NFP through either a local class

series or the *Home Study Course*. Since 1971, CCL has taught NFP to 166,106 families and have sold over 371,000 copies of *The Art of Natural Family Planning*.

The first of a four course series starts Sunday, March 11, 2007, at Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall in Victoria from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The instructors are Wilma and Rene Galvan from Palacios, Texas. For more information and registration call Estella and Rudy De Los Santos at (361) 573-2624.

## Cheers for Our Bishops!

### By David Barnes

I have just read through the publication "Married Love and the Gift of Life" recently issued by our bishops here in the United States explaining the Church's teaching on the value of marriage and the destruction that contraception creates in a marriage. This new statement by the USCCB should be praised by the loudest voice from the tallest steeple in the country. Cheers for our bishops! And to them I say, "Thank you."

I am convinced that the widespread use of contraception among Catholics is the most important spiritual battle of these times. I believe it to be even more important than the battle over abortion. Catholics, we will never be able to lead the way out of this culture of death in which we live, so long as we ourselves are actively engaged at frustrating God's work of creating life in our own bedrooms.

I have no formal training in moral theology. But like those men whose short boxed quotes are scattered throughout "Married Love and the Gift of Life," I have a story. My wife and I were both raised in Protestant homes and married in a Protestant church. Neither of us thought of contraception as something evil when we were first wed. It was just what all young married couples who "wanted time alone before having children" used. We were clueless to the destruction that we brought into our marriage from its very outset. Folks today often say that marriage spats are always about one of two things — money or sex. My young wife and I rarely fought about money. But when I did not get my way in the bedroom, I pouted like a spoiled child. And when pouting did not change my lot, I turned to near rage.

The first light that allowed me to see

the selfishness that contraception introduced into my marriage was turned on for me by a fellow Protestant. An article in the June 2003 edition of *Chronicles Magazine* titled "Hating Babies, Hating God" by Aaron D. Wolf floored me. Mr. Wolf laid out for me, for the first time in my life, the highest purpose of my marriage — union with God and submission to his will. He also explored the history of the Christian position on contraception. I was shocked to find out that, before conceding to the views of this pagan world, my own Protestant tradition had once held firmly to the teaching that the use of contraceptive "birth control" was inherently a sinful matter. It was shortly after reading that article that my wife and I threw away all contraceptives; and as Robert Frost wrote, "That has made all the difference."

A little later following our decision to stop using contraceptives, I began to explore Catholicism. To me, the Church appeared to be the only fortress of truth and stability in a world that eventually concedes on everything that is good in order to cater to its own desires. Because I am a product of this work, I am convinced that God uses Catholic men and women who are courageous and willing to share the fullness of the Catholic faith by word and example, without shamefully concealing or making excuses for the Church's teachings. He uses ordinary men and women sharing their faith in their ordinary situations and relationships with others as family, friends, students, teachers, and so on. And he uses bishops who faithfully guide their flocks and bishops who demonstrate that the Church is that pillar of Truth to which I ran for protection almost three years ago.

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

[www.catholicnews.com/movies](http://www.catholicnews.com/movies)

### Job Opening

The Catholic Student Center serving Louisiana Technical University and St. Thomas Catholic Church seeks Campus Minister for their Campus Ministry Program. For job description and information, contact St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church/Tech Catholic Student Center (318) 255-2870.

## Diocese of Victoria Library & Media Center

### Book of the Month

**Behold Your Life: A Pilgrimage Through Your Memories** by Macrina Wiederkehr is a wonderful resource for a healing retreat — during Lent or whenever the Spirit urges us to embrace our memories and discover the goodness hidden in our wounds.

### Other Books

- *Reconciliation: Mission & Ministry in a Changing Social Order*
- *Choosing Joy for Lent*
- *Chocolate for Lent*
- *The Tale of Three Trees*
- *That You May Have Life*
- *Inviting God In: Scriptural Reflections and Prayers Throughout the Year*

### Video of the Month

**A Lenten Journey** In this four-part series, Fr. Michael Himes uses the Lenten Sunday liturgical readings and their rich symbolic language to bring us to renewal and conversion during the Lenten season. Each video is approximately 27 minutes.

### Other Videos

- *The Way of the Cross*
- *Lent: A Time for Renewal*
- *A Walk Through the Mass*
- *Death No More: A Look at the Death Penalty*
- *Saint's Gallery Vol. III (St. Valentine)*
- *The First Valentine*

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

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

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## DIOCESE OF VICTORIA PASTORAL INSTITUTE

*Extended Program Classes*

### Sacraments of Initiation (Sacraments II)

**Sr. Frances Cabrini Janvier, IWBS – Instructor (Victoria Center)**  
**Rev. Bob Fisher, SVD – Instructor (Wharton Center)**

Reconciliation and anointing of the sick, signs of God's healing of body and soul, are called "sacraments of healing." The rich meaning of these sacraments will be explored in this course.

Both the commitment to marriage (a commitment to human life) and the commitment to the mission of the Church (a commitment to the life of the Church) are seen as fundamental calls to service and love.

### VICTORIA CENTER

Chancery Building  
1505 E. Mesquite Lane  
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### WHARTON CENTER

Holy Family Church  
2011 Briar Lane  
**Mondays:** Feb. 19-March 26  
7:00 - 9:15 p.m.

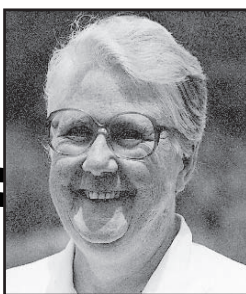
Through the Pastoral Institute, Bishop David E. Fellhauer is committed to making adult religious education a high priority in the Diocese of Victoria. For more information or to register, call the Catechetical office at 361-573-0828 or e-mail [calvarez@victoriadiocese.org](mailto:calvarez@victoriadiocese.org). You can also register the first night of class. Classes are \$15.00 per six-weeks.





## Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



### We Can't Afford Death

"Death" was the punishment given in a recent local high-profile criminal trial. As a consequence, every one of us will suffer.

The most tangible way that the death penalty punishes all of us is financially. We may not be aware that the local county has to foot the bill for the appeal process associated with the death penalty, a process that will probably cost over a million dollars, money that could be better spent for services for the citizens of the county. In the end, the taxpayers will suffer the injustice of paying higher taxes and receiving fewer services — services that could enhance the quality of our lives.

On the spiritual level, as a state — and nation — we have slipped deeper into the "culture of death" which had so distressed our late Pope John Paul II, who, in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life* and the revised *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, stated that our society has adequate alternative means today to protect society from violent crime without resorting to capital punishment. The universal Catholic Church opposes the use of the death penalty, not just for what it does to those guilty of horrible crimes, but for how it affects society. Pope John Paul II specifically spoke to Americans in his apostolic exhortation *The Church in America*. In calling us to respect the dignity of every person, he says, "Nor can I fail to mention the unnecessary recourse to the death penalty when other 'bloodless means' are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons. Today, given the means at the State's disposal to deal with crime and control those who commit it, without abandoning all hope of their redemption, the cases where it is absolutely

necessary to do away with (execute) an offender 'are now very rare, even non-existent practically.' This model of society (death penalty) bears the stamp of the culture of death and is therefore in opposition to the Gospel message."

Likewise, our American bishops in their letter *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics* said "Our witness to respect for life shines most brightly when we demand respect for each and every human life, including the lives of those who fail to show that respect for others. ... It is time to abandon the death penalty — not just because of what it does to those who are executed, but because of how it diminishes all of us. We ask all Catholics — pastors, catechists, educators and parishioners — to join us in rethinking this difficult issue and committing ourselves to pursuing justice without vengeance. With our Holy Father, we seek to build a society so committed to human life that it will not sanction the killing of any human person."

Furthermore, regarding the right for society to take the life of a fellow human, the scriptures can offer guidance. The first capital offence is recorded early in the human story. We find that after Cain killed Abel, he was not executed; rather, he was banned from society. "Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is too great to bear. Since you have now banished me from the soil, and I must avoid your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, anyone may kill me at sight.' 'Not so!' the Lord said to him. 'If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged sevenfold.' So the Lord put a mark on Cain lest anyone should kill him at sight." From this example, we learn that while wrong-doers must be punished and isolated in order to

protect society, they are not to be killed.

The Ten Commandments forbid killing. The prophet Ezekiel tells us, "As I live, says the Lord God, I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, but rather in the wicked man's conversion, that he may live."

Some people use the passage "an eye for an eye" as justification for the death penalty. However, that law was given as a safeguard to ensure that the punishment would not be exacted in vengeance and

would not exceed the crime; it was not an endorsement of capital punishment. Furthermore, Jesus cast new light on the topic of stoning (method of capital punishment in his time) in his intervention in the case of the woman caught in adultery. In this example we see Jesus' stance regarding punitive action — the taking of another's life.

Yes, the Scriptures, the Church and our bishops are right. The death penalty diminishes all of us. Let us join in efforts to abolish it!

### Christella Alvarez installed as chair for TCC-RE

Sister Digna Vela, IWBS

Christella Alvarez, associate director of the Office of Catechetical Ministry for the Diocese of Victoria, was installed as chair, (president) of the Texas Catholic Conference Religious Education Department (TCC-RE) at the mid-winter meeting held at St. Anthony Retreat Center in San Antonio January 9-11, 2007. Other officers installed were Rita Minkley, chair-elect, Archdiocese of San Antonio; Charlene O'Connell, past-chair, Diocese of Austin; Michael Way, secretary, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; and Sister Gloria Rodriguez, treasurer, Diocese of Laredo.

TCC-RE seeks to promote the catechetical ministry in the state of Texas through: establishing a common identity and promoting the concerns of its members; communicating and collaborating with one another and with the bishops of



Christella Alvarez

Texas; providing opportunity for professional and spiritual development and response to common concerns and issues.

Religious Education Department directors and associate directors from thirteen of the fifteen dioceses of Texas were present at the annual meeting. Dr. Margaret Langford, associate professor of management at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, presented an all day workshop titled "Techniques for Middle Management in a Ministry Setting." Dr. Langford guided the participants through a variety of experiences to help them better understand effective communication techniques. She illustrated useful principles in managing others for more productive work and explained the concept of servant leadership.

#### Puzzle Contest Winner

The winner of the January Puzzle Contest is Jean Bochat of St. Joseph Church in Moulton. She will receive the book on a Texas family's Czech heritage, *The Lamp Beside the Golden Door* by Leon F. Pesek Sr. More contestants tried to win this book than any other in *The Catholic Lighthouse's* contest history — nearly 70 contestants. Thank you for trying. The book may be purchased from the author at 13 Cincywood, Texarkana, TX 75503 — hardback copies/\$22; paperback/\$15. This month's puzzle is larger than normal, but a very valuable book will be given as the prize. It is featured on page 13 along with the puzzle. The children's contest winner will be announced next month.

#### Ten Star All Star Basketball Camp

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

Past participants include: Michael Jordan, Tim Duncan, Vince Carter, Jerry Stackhouse, Grant Hill, and Antawn Jamison.

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

Camp locations include: Commerce, Texas and many more places throughout the United States. There is also a Summer Camp available for boys and girls ages 6-18 for all skill levels. For a free brochure, call (704) 373-0873 anytime.

### Common Practice of Penance for Lent

Dear Friends in Christ:

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 21. All Christ's faithful are obliged by Divine Law, each in his or her own way, to do penance.

"Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin" Ezech. 18:30.

However, so that all may be joined together in a certain common practice of penance, days and seasons of penance are officially prescribed by the church. On these days, Catholic people are, in a special way, to devote themselves to prayer, to engage in works of piety and charity and to practice self-denial especially by observing the fast and abstinence regulations prescribed by the Church, namely:

1. Fasting and abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
2. Abstinence from meat on all Fridays of Lent. The law of abstinence from meat is required of all those fourteen years of age and older.
3. The law of the fast means that only one full meal may be taken during the day; two light meals are permitted in addition. The consumption of solid food between meals is prohibited, but liquids may be taken at any time.
4. The law of fast binds those between the ages of 18 and 59.

Those who by reason of their young age are not bound by the laws of fast and abstinence, should be taught the true meaning of penance.

Apart from the special Lenten activities of individuals and parishes, Lent affords a special opportunity for families. Penitential practices and devotions should be conducted on a family basis. Families are encouraged to remove the distractions to works of piety and reintroduce family prayer, Scripture services, and other appropriate devotions.

May this holy season of Lent be a time of conversion and renewal for all.  
Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin, V.G.  
Chancellor, Diocese of Victoria

#### St. Paul High School, Shiner, Honor Roll: 2nd - 9 weeks

9th Grade

**High Honors:** Brandon Pesek, Justin Pesek and Michael Pesek  
**Honors:** Kyla Schacherl and Curtis Shields

10th Grade

**High Honors:** Allie Hoerig, Ashley Kloesel, Hannah Kocian, Jessica Schwab, Carissa Sciba, Austin Whitescarver

**Honors:** Michelle Caka, Rachel Dupler, Gil Hodges, Kendall Kusak and Hannah Marcak

11th Grade

**High Honors:** Thom Raabe and Maria Wenske

**Honors:** Sarah Azar, Jimmy Blackman, Beau Broussard, Kelsey Knesek, Kurt Knesek, Shalane Matula, Stephen Novosad, Gregory Siegel and Megan Zella

12th Grade

**High Honors:** Zachary Beal, Brooke Broussard, Christina Iley, Bryan Molina, Jamie Pilat, Jordan Schaefer and Cassidy Tucker

**Honors:** Amy Coldeway, Chad Kloesel, Joshua Ornelas, Brittany Pohler, Calli Schacherl, Nicole Schwab and Regina Turnini

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## YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**February 17**—NET Retreat at St. Joseph in Moulton  
**February 18**—NET Retreat at Holy Cross in East Bernard  
**February 20**—NET Retreat at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria  
**February 21**—NET Retreat open date – contact the office to schedule your retreat.  
**February 22**—NET Retreat at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria  
**February 23**—NET Retreat at St. Anthony in Columbus  
**February 24**—NET Retreat at Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca  
**February 24**—Basic Youth Ministry Certificate Class – Justice and Service: 8:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. at the chancery – pre-registration is required  
**February 25**—NET Retreat at Our Lady of Victory in Victoria  
**February 26 - March 2**—Diocesan Directors in the Archdiocese of Galveston - Houston  
**February 27-28**—NET Retreat at Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Shiner  
**March 4**—Youth Spectacular at Holy Family in Victoria

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

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

## Teens aren't just waiting on the world to change

By Karen Dietlein Osborne  
 Catholic News Service

I like John Mayer's music, but I'm not a fan of the message put forth by his newest single. In "Waiting on the World to Change," he sings that he and his friends "feel like we don't have the means to rise above and beat" the terrible things happening all over the world. So, he says, "we keep on waiting for the world to change."

I've met people who prove that young people aren't just waiting for the world to change, they're changing the world.

Meet Heather Flood and Kyle McElhoney, students at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. They were this year's organizers of Charity Week at the school. They created and ran a week's worth of fundraisers — team trivia nights, soup dinners, auctions and penny drives — to raise money for an inner-city soup kitchen and outreach center.

This year Charity Week raised a grand total of \$12,000, a record for the school. The money will help hundreds of poor and underserved residents of downtown Albany, N.Y., to get food, clothes and a leg up in the world.

Flood and McElhoney aren't superheroes. They're ordinary college students who organized these events in between studying for tests, going to classes and pursuing a normal social life. Nor were the students that participated in Charity Week all wealthy; many gave a little — what they could.

I went on the Internet and discovered tales of other Floods and McElhoneys. All over the country teens are doing what they

can to change their world. They borrow their parents' hammers and build Habitat for Humanity homes. They collect coats in the winter months for those who can't afford to buy them. They write letters to their legislators. They do service projects sponsored by churches, Scouts and 4-H.

They volunteer at food pantries and soup kitchens. They teach adults to read and instruct the unemployed in computer skills. They coordinate care packages for soldiers in Iraq, rescue stray and unwanted pets and tutor underprivileged kids in math and science. What's more, they're inspiring their friends to do the same.

They're just like the man in the proverbial story, who was throwing beached starfish back into the sea before they perished in the sun. A passerby, seeing the thousands of starfish and the one single man, told the man he couldn't possibly "make a difference" because there were too many starfish. The man just kept on with his task, saying only that his actions would "make a difference to this one."

A food pantry volunteer once told me that even if teens have one hour a week to spare, someone out there will be changed because of what they do with that hour. A child will understand long division better because someone took time to explain it. A homeless person will eat for the first time in days because someone peeled a bag of potatoes that morning.

We may not solve world peace by ourselves, but we can bring peace to one single person in one single hour.

Every teen has the ability to throw more than a few starfish into the sea. The problems of the world can seem overwhelming from our individual perspectives, but teenagers do have the ability and energy to make a difference in their communities. They don't need to wait for the world to change.

Mr. Mayer, young people do have the means to "rise above." We don't have to wait.

*Editor's Note: Please read "Youth Activist" on page 3.*

## Girl Scout Cookie Program begins

On Saturday, January 13, thousands of girls in the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council began their great tradition while gaining valuable skills and earning money for their troop's activities and service projects.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program, an integral part of Girl Scouting's Business and Economic Literacy initiative for girls ages 6-17, provides finance, marketing, and public speaking skills, along with valuable experiences that build girls' self-confidence and help them develop their own personal leadership style.

"Participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program has definitely made me more confident," said Girl Scout Lindsey Westmoreland from Troop No. 4226. "I know I am learning things that will help me when I go to get a job."

Thin Mints, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwiches, Shortbread, Thanks-A-Lot, Cartwheels, Caramel DeLites and the delicious new Lemonades are the eight varieties of cookies offered this year. The price for a package of cookies is \$3.50. All varieties of Girl Scout cookies are now "zero trans fat per serving." This change was made because, like most successful businesswomen, Girl Scouts listen to their customers.

Girls began selling their Girl Scout Cookies door to door January 13. Beginning February 23, girls will be offering the cookies at cookie booths outside of grocery stores and other retail venues. The sale ends March 25. There is also a toll-free cookie hotline at 1-888-GS-COOKIE for those who want to purchase cookies.

## Don't let our high-tech toys isolate us

By Matthew Terra  
 7th grader from Moulton, Texas

Have you ever wondered if people are becoming socially isolated from their friends and family?

Imagine it's your family's summer vacation. You're at the beach. It's a perfect day, the soft sound of waves gently hitting the shore, the distant cries of seagulls high above. But you hear neither as you listen to some music on your new iPod.

Dad's on his cell phone talking with someone back at the office, Mom is busy e-mailing her sister with trip updates, and last but not least, don't forget your little brother or sister watching movies on their portable DVD player.

Sound about right? Sad but true. Today's families are spending less and less time together and more time alone. Each in their own little cyber world.

Technology is wonderful — don't get me wrong — however, it has also affected how people spend time together. It's no longer people spending time with people. It's people spending time with machines.

The average, American household has three televisions, three radios, two VCRs, two CD players, one video game console and one computer. Most American children have a television in their room, and more than half of families have the television on during mealtimes.

Healthy communication is talking to each other. Today's technology is quite the distraction and makes it easy for us to spend less time talking to each other. The result is increased isolation from friends and family, ignoring family responsibilities and substituting computers for friends.

Not convinced? Tell me if you haven't seen or even done one of the following yourself: Been out with friends, but instead of talking to each other, they have conversations with people on cell phones as if the friends were not even there. Or go to your kid's game only to occupy all your time checking your e-mails on your cell phone or laptop and miss the winning score your kid just made.

How about surfing the Web hours at a time? Or online computer games with someone you don't even know on the other side of the world, while your family sits in the next room dying to spend time with you?

Psychologists have studied the effects and use of the Internet. Scientists have discovered cases of Internet abuse that have been the cause of many problems: depression, weak social ties and even divorce.

People are becoming more reclusive than ever. The idea of going out to meet people or expand themselves and their interests is becoming a thing of the past. No plans this weekend? Just mess around on your computer or play your favorite game to pass the time. With this comes virtual friendships, chat and online gaming. From this point on, you're only more isolated.

Even I like playing on the computer, but it can never replace playing or talking with a friend or family member. Spending hours watching a movie or playing a game may expose you to some incredible stories, but heading out and seeing something completely new has more value in the long run.

People can wrap themselves in technology for only so long before this begins to affect them and their social interaction skills. Like any trait, these skills can erode without practice.

We must all make a conscious effort not to wrap ourselves up in technology. Most things are good in moderation, and the important thing is to find a balance between the real world and technology.

Today's technology was never meant to adversely affect our social lives. Life isn't a spectator sport, nor has it ever been. Turn off your computer, your cell phone, put down your iPod and portable DVD player and enjoy the soft sound of waves gently hitting the shore, the distant cries of seagulls high above, before you miss that whole experience.

*Editor's note: Matthew Terra, a seventh grader and a member of Boy Scout Troop 220 and St. Joseph Parish in Moulton, is the son of Mary Alice Lewkoski. Matthew won first place in the Modern Oratory category of a Universal Interscholastic League (UIL) competition with this article he wrote and had to present by memory to judges. He then sent the article into The Victoria Advocate newspaper as a project for a Boy Scout merit badge in communication. Dr. R. A. Stevenson of Victoria saw the article in the Oct. 26, 2006 issue of The Victoria Advocate and was so impressed with it that he sent it into The Catholic Lighthouse.*

## 2nd Annual Catechism Contest begins in February

The Knights of Columbus Council 9088 has scheduled the Second Annual Catechism Contest for the Holy Family (Victoria) CCD program. The classroom portion of the contest will be held during the regular CCD class periods on Wednesday, Feb. 14 and Sunday, Feb. 18; finals will be held Saturday, March 3, 2007, beginning at 9 a.m. in the auditorium. The finals portion has been expanded to include competition in each of the grades, one through ten, while grades eleven and twelve will compete together. Cash awards will be presented to the winner of each of these competitions.

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## Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2007

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



*The Good News in Education*

### St. Rose of Lima Catholic School – The Place To Be!

**St. Rose of Lima Elementary, Schulenburg**  
**Established 1890**

**Principal: Mrs. Rosanne Gallia**

“Good News in Education” that’s just what Catholic Schools are, literally. This year’s theme for Catholic School’s Week is a great reflection of the purpose of Catholic Education. Catholic schools are capable of doing many good things—educating young minds, offering a variety of specialized courses and extra curricular activities. Classrooms are filled with good news of learning experiences and superior teaching moments daily. Just these things are more than worthy of a weeklong celebration. But it is the real “Good News” that is to truly be celebrated – “The Good News of Jesus Christ.” In a world where religion is becoming a controversial topic, our nation’s Catholic Schools are keeping Christ in education and Catholicism growing. This makes every Catholic School a special place to be.

St. Rose of Lima Catholic School in Schulenburg is special too. There is a dedicated and de-

termined faculty and staff that provides wonderful academic experiences a child could ever want or need. From core curriculum to Spanish, band, technology programs, yearbook, choir, drama and athletics, students are immersed in a world of individual and cooperative learning.



During Red Ribbon Week (Drug Awareness and Prevention), faculty and students created a special picture of themselves to add to the bulletin board.

From three years old through the 8th grade, students are called to learn, explore and above all, be witnesses and Disciples of Christ. Parents who believe that Christ’s message of love and compassion should be a daily part of their child’s educational experience support faculty and students. But, St. Rose of Lima isn’t just special because it is one of many Catholic Schools offering children an excellent education in a Christian environment. St. Rose of Lima School is special because of what we know. We know that as teachers, students and parents, when we walk these halls we are not alone. Christ walks with us here daily, and we show it in our worship, work and play. Educating in a Catholic school is special, but truly being the living “Good News” — what a special blessing!

### Why Catholic Schools Week?

**Bro. Stanley Culotta, CSC**  
**President, Holy Cross of San Antonio**

You might also ask “Why have a birthday party?” Or, “Why have a graduation party?” The reason we have these celebrations is to emphasize the significance of the event and to make the event more memorable. And this is why we celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> and Christmas Day. They both offer lessons in achievement, in struggles before success; courage and perseverance.

What reasons are there to celebrate Catholic Schools Week? Were there struggles? What was achieved? Do Catholic schools represent courage and perseverance? Whenever we attempt to explain an event we try to give the history of the event. In the classroom we recall the concepts that preceded the question being asked. Then, what is the relevance between the history of Catholic schools and Catholic Schools Week?

Although no specific date can be given for the beginning of Catholic education, it is a fact that as early as the time of St. Benedict and during the third century the monasteries were providing education. This precedes by far the first public school in the United States, the Boston Latin School founded in 1635.

During the last four centuries there has been a large influx of Catholic immigrants from Eastern and Western Europe. Most of them were uneducated. In response, Catholic schools were established throughout the United States. With the availability of sisters, brothers and priests, Catholic schools and Catholic education were readily accessible to these newcomers. Catholic immigrants rapidly rose above the poverty class because they were able to attend Catholic schools. If not, they would have had to attend public schools and face discrimination.

For whatever reasons, there was an attempt to put an end to or to make it difficult for Catholic elementary and secondary schools. In 1875, U. S. Rep. James Blaine as the Speaker of the House attempted to introduce an anti-Catholic amendment into the U. S. Constitution. His amendment was to ban any tax money collected for education from being shared or given for the support of students attending religious schools. This attempt failed but

*See Why Catholic Schools Week?, p. 20*

## Sacred Heart Catholic School celebrates 125 years of service (1882 – 2007)

**Sacred Heart Elementary and High School, Hallettsville**  
**Established 1882**

**Principal: Mr. David Smolik**

On January 5, 1882, Mother St. Claire Valentine arrived in the small town of Hallettsville with three Sisters from the Victoria community to found the fifth house of the Order in Texas. The request had come from Bishop John C. Neraz of the San Antonio Diocese.

The three foundresses were Mother Mary Louise Murray (Superior), Sister Mary of the Cross of Murray and Sister Martha Lopez. The community was blessed in the first year with three young women, later known as Sister Mary Theresa Donnelly, Sister Mary Rose Brown and Sister Mary Gertrude Turner.

In 1885, a postulant, Lucy Agnes Whitaker (Sister Mary Agnes), arrived from Dublin, Ireland. Vocations continued to increase with postulants arriving from abroad, as well as from the Hallettsville area.

The Sisters began teaching classes on January 6, the day after their arrival. There was a boarding school for girls and a day school for boys and girls, which was also attended by non-Catholics. Sacred Heart Academy is listed in the *History of Lavaca County Schools* as the first public school taught within the city limits of Hallettsville. When the academy opened for its first full school year in September of 1882, there were 180 pupils.

The devotedness and zeal of their pastor, Father Anthony Forest (later Bishop Forest), contributed much to the steady progress made at the convent of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in Hallettsville. The original school consisted of two separate three-story buildings built in 1883, and 1891, and later connected with a

four story barrel-shaped dome surmounting it in the middle. Prior to this, the Sisters had only a small convent that had been built for them on the land they had purchased in 1877. Later construction included a new boys’ school in 1892, and a three-story Music Hall built in the late 90s.

High academic standards were kept up from the beginning. In the *History of Lavaca County*, Paul Boethel reports that, “Besides the primary and intermediate departments, instruction was given in the regular



*Sacred Heart School in its early years.*

high school studies, together with music, Latin, Spanish, French and German.” The Bohemian language was also taught, as well as piano, organ, violin, guitar, vocal music, painting and drawing, the making and arranging of flowers made with wax, hair, beads and other artificial flowers. Plain sewing, tapestry and ornamental needlework were also among the skills the Sisters shared with their students.

Though the Sisters moved their Motherhouse and Novitiate to San Antonio in 1926, they continued to teach the elementary grades in what became Sacred Heart Parish School. However, the high school grades were again added in 1948.

Building kept pace with the times and needs. A new school was completed in 1950 and the upper floors of the old school were taken down. The first floor continued to be used though it had to be moved to allow for expansion of the new school in 1959, and moved again to make room for a new cafeteria in 1997. Finally, the last section of this old picturesque building, begun in 1883, was replaced. The old Music Hall, torn down in 1936, finally had a successor when the Band Hall was dedicated in 1976, and a vocational arts building and gym were added to the school campus in 1981. New high school and elementary library media centers were completed in 2000.



*Sacred Heart Elementary and High School as it stands in 2007.*

In 2007, Sacred Heart Catholic School continues to serve the people of Hallettsville and the surrounding area teaching about 300 students from pre-school through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. A lay principal and staff, which still includes three Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Congregation, pass on the faith and continue the tradition of excellent academic education. The majority of their graduates go on to higher education. The large

number of Sisters and priestly vocations from this parish and school is a living legacy of the fidelity with which the faith was handed on at Sacred Heart.

Thirty-eight young women entered the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Order from Sacred Heart Parish and/or school. In pioneer days two other young women from the parish entered other religious orders. Also eight priests, including two bishops, and one member of the religious Order of the Christian Brothers grew up in Sacred Heart, Hallettsville.





## Catholic Education – Making Jesus Known — An interview with Father Dan Morales

**Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca  
Established 1996**

**Principal: Mrs. Theresa M. Dent**

When Father Dan Morales arrived at Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca in 1995, the parish had no Catholic school. A building for religious instruction or Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) existed next to the church and the CCD program was overseen by a Divine Providence sister. Contrary to popular belief, Father Dan was not sent to OLG to start a



*Our Lady of the Gulf students spend free time with their pastor, Father Dan Morales.*

Catholic school. He was, in fact, encouraged to think long and hard by many pastors already involved with Catholic schools. They cited financial troubles and other stresses that would make opening a school difficult. Father Dan reminisced that “Everyone assumed we would be open one year or less.” But he had been at other locations that had Catholic schools both as a seminarian and a priest and he felt they brought a unique life to those parishes. “Having kids here brings spontaneity to the daily life of the parish.”

A group of parents also approached Father Dan when he arrived at OLG con-

cerned for their children’s education and moral and religious formation. Father Dan was able to convince the School Sisters of Saint Francis to travel from Panhandle, Texas, to Port Lavaca to start a school at OLG with the permission of the diocese. Thus after only one year in Port Lavaca, Father Dan and the Franciscan Sisters opened Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic School in August of 1996.

His biggest concern for the school since its establishment has been enrollment. “You can’t run a school without children,” he says. Since having a Catholic school is still relatively new to the parish, he worries about the resistance that exists in regards to making a religious commitment toward educating the whole child, going beyond academics. He understands that he has two options – give up or keep trying and as he puts it, “I’d rather keep trying.” He did not have the opportunity to attend a Catholic school growing up and thus had no experience with Catholic schools until he became a seminarian. He was excited to see education and faith combined.

Father Dan reflected that with the accomplishments of the first ten years the school can now be comfortable in its identity. “We have been accepted by the local and diocesan community that we are here to stay.”

Looking to the future, he sees the need for renovations to keep buildings usable and to expand while continuing to offer a solid faith-based education. On the national level, it appears that the strong schools are getting stronger and the weak schools are disappearing. Demographics will have a big impact on Catholic schools especially with the poverty gap getting bigger. Yet in facing such a situation Father Dan continues to hold to his personal philosophy to “make Jesus known.” He believes that Catholic education is “the single greatest tool to make that happen. Outside of the individual family and the sacraments, it is the best tool we have to make him known and loved.”

*Sister Laura Toman, IWBS, and the faculty and students of St. Michael School prepare for the balloon launch at the school’s celebration of being named a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School of 2006.*



## No Child Left Behind — Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon School 2006 — Saint Michael Catholic School

**St. Michael Elementary School  
Established 1890**

**Principal: Sister Laura Toman, IWBS**

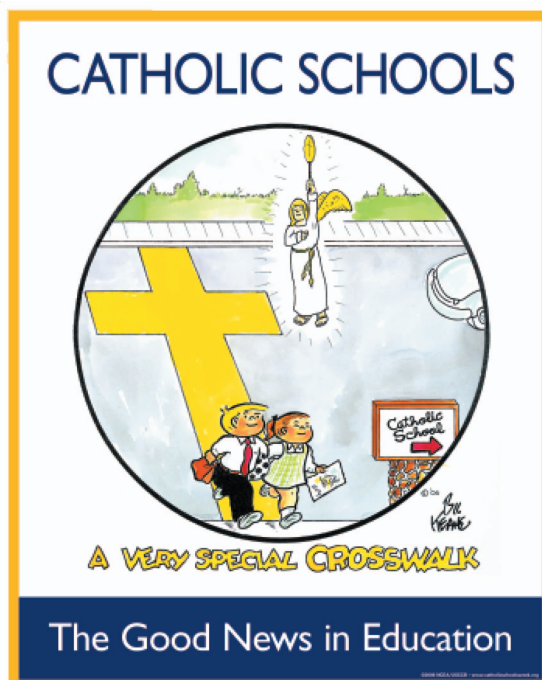
Green has turned to BLUE for St. Michael School in Weimar for the school year 2006-07 and BLUE will always be a special color there. Since September 22, 2006, when St. Michael’s received word that it was named a NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL for 2006, blue ribbons appeared all over the campus. Classroom doors as well as the hallways were decorated in blue, and Christmas trees were all decorated in blue.

The BLUE Bell Ice Cream Company treated all the schoolteachers and students to Blue Bell Ice Cream, two new buses were donated to the school in honor of the school receiving this national award, a \$5000 donation was made to the school by the local Knights of Columbus and great things just keep happening.

At the school’s celebration on December 7, 2006, the band played, the choir sang, and the students did a choral reading about the history of St. Michael School to a large crowd of dignitaries, Church and city officials as well as parents, supporters and friends after which refreshments were served and an array of over two hundred BLUE balloons were sent to the skies with the

message announcing the celebration of St. Michael’s honor.

What exactly was the school celebrating? A national recognition awarded by the Department of Education for its outstanding solid, basic curriculum, high student achievement, teacher, staff and parent backing, its volunteer program, the local community’s generous support, and a student body that, day by day, strives to live the school’s Mission Statement: “To Be Friendly, Respectful, Responsible, and Christ-like.”



## New Technology at Shiner Catholic School

**St. Ludmila Academy and St. Paul High, Shiner  
Established 1897**

**Principal: Mr. Robert Whitworth Jr.**

Shiner Catholic School has made great strides in its Technology Advancement Project over the past year. During the 2006 – 2007 school year we have been able to purchase a mobile computer lab including thirty laptop computers at St. Ludmila Elementary School, video-conferencing equipment at St. Paul High School, and a new phone / intercom system that links the whole campus. In the near future, we will also be purchasing a laptop computer for each teacher. It is an exciting time for both teachers and students at Shiner Catholic School.

The mobile computer lab operates on a wireless network. This allows students to take a laptop computer to their desk and have full access to our network, including our soon to be implemented CompassLearning

Odyssey software. The students have enjoyed learning some new skills and teachers are looking forward to having some technological tools to help them differen-

tiate instruction for the various types of learners they have in their class.

Sixteen (16) seniors and ten (10) juniors took college courses and earned a cumulative total of ninety-four credit hours via our dis-



*Shiner Catholic School students use their new mobile computer lab in their own classrooms.*

tance-learning program with Victoria College. All the college credit was earned without ever leaving the St. Paul High School campus. One course was taught by

a member of the St. Paul High School faculty and the other two were taught by instructors from Victoria College. The class

was broadcast via our new video-conferencing equipment, which allows students to not only watch their instructor, but to interact with him. The students performed remarkably well and have recently begun this semester’s college classes.

*Even kindergarten students work on computers.*

The new phone / intercom system has greatly enhanced our ability to communicate. Teachers can now pick up a phone in their rooms and contact the office in a matter of seconds. The office can immediately contact all the teachers on campus or just the individual needed at the time. Parents can leave their child’s teacher a voicemail. Once the teachers get their new laptops they will also be able to communicate via e-mail.

God has been remarkably good to Shiner Catholic School, but it is not necessarily the technology for which we are most grateful. All of this progress was made possible through countless hours of volunteer work and the generosity of individuals and foundations. The talent and commitment of parent volunteers has been the driving force behind what has been accomplished. We are very appreciative of those who have written grants, contributed monetary support, installed computer networks and software, or offered some other form of expertise to see these projects through to fruition. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful community.

### House unanimously approves resolution honoring Catholic schools

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution Jan. 23 praising Catholic schools “for their ongoing contributions to education and for the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for this nation.” The vote was 428-0 in favor of H.R. 51, sponsored by Rep. Daniel Lipinski, D-Ill., and co-sponsored by 73 other members of the House.





Saint Anthony School second graders Marcus Olivarez, Cason Warschak, and Ryan Neisner buddy up right before showing their school spirit in the Colorado County Fair Parade held this past fall.



## St. Anthony School enjoys Catholic Schools Week

**St. Anthony Elementary School, Columbus**  
**Established 1955**

**Principal: Mr. John R. O'Leary**

The students and faculty at St. Anthony School in Columbus held a full week of events to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, which took place January 28 - February 3. This year's theme was *"The Good News in Education."* A Mass held on Sunday, Jan. 28, kicked off the week's events. Immediately after Mass, an Open House was held at the school for students, families and anyone wishing to see what St. Anthony School is all about.

Monday, Jan. 29, SAS students showed off their school spirit by wearing orange, the color of the St. Anthony Saints. On the same day, SAS students visited community shut-ins and assisted them with yard work needed around their homes.

On Tuesday, Jan. 30, students participated in the *"I'd rather be..."* dress up day. This day brings out everything from football players to doctors, and fuzzy slippers to camouflage! Some students would rather be spelling ... in the spelling bee held that day as well!

National Appreciation Day for Catholic Schools Week was held on Wednesday, Jan. 31, SAS students wore red, white and blue to school and sent a care package to soldier Matt Muzny (and his company) who is stationed in Iraq. Students sent letters and pictures along with plenty of prayers to this husband of a former SAS student. The highlight of the day was the much-anticipated Talent Show. Students

entertained the crowd with a variety of acts.

A school-wide rosary was prayed on the morning of Thursday, Feb. 1, immediately followed by Field Day. This fun-filled event found 10 teams (made up of students from grades 4K-8) competing in silly games such as "dress the teacher" and potato sack races. The annual Sandy Barta Fun Run is also held during Field Day with monies being raised for local health care. The PTC treated the students to an ice cream party just before the 8<sup>th</sup> grade took on the faculty in the annual volleyball match.

An 8 a.m. Children's Mass took place on Friday, Feb. 2, prior to the team lunches for the Field Day teams. A school-wide wrap up party was held in the cafetorium as students enjoyed popcorn and the movie *"Cars"*. Immediately following the movie, an awards ceremony was held.

The week came to a close on Saturday, Feb. 3, with the PTC's annual Gala. This year's theme was *"An Evening With the Stars - Celebrating 50 Years"* and was held at the KC Hall. The evening included a semi-formal social, dinner and dance with the band Tin Star. The Gala goes enjoyed the friendly competition of the super silent auction.

In this exciting anniversary year, the St. Anthony School family remains strong, reverent, and thankful for the many blessings bestowed on the school in recent and past years. The continuing care and support of the parish and the community has enabled students in the Columbus area to receive *"The Good News in Education!"*

## St. Philip the Apostle thanks its community

**St. Philip the Apostle Elementary**  
**Established 1949**

**Principal: Mrs. Tish McAlister**

St. Philip the Apostle Catholic School in El Campo celebrated Catholic Schools Week from Sunday, January 28, 2007, to Friday, February 2, 2007. The theme this year was *"Catholic Schools - the Good News in Education."*

This week allowed the school to thank all those who help make Catholic education possible in our community. This year's talent show was conducted at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The KCs provided concessions to the many parents and grandparents who attended this event. During the week, students showed visitors the web-based curriculum which extends instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and the Diocese of Victoria Curriculum. The twenty-two-station computer lab on the campus and a computer lab at the

Northside, Learning Center across from the school, provide individual instruction so that students can master the curriculum at their own pace. Students also use



A St. Philip Catholic School student works in one of the computer labs available to the school.

Power Point to present school projects and the eighth grade language arts class uses publishing software to produce the school yearbook.

## St. Joseph celebrates Catholic Schools Week

**St. Joseph Elementary, Yoakum**  
**Established 1895**

**Principal: Mr. Michael Fisher**

St. Joseph Catholic School in Yoakum took the theme of Catholic Schools Week, *The Good News in Education*, to heart. The activities planned for every day of Catholic Schools Week illustrated how St. Joseph Catholic School is a community model of quality Catholic education. The activities addressed the importance of a Catholic education to the parish, to community, to students, to our nation, for vocations and to the teachers and staff.

Sunday's theme addressed the importance of a Catholic education in our parish. January 28 started with a Mass and intentions for Catholic Schools at St. Joseph Catholic Church. The celebration of the Mass included speeches by alumni of St. Joseph and its importance in their lives. This was followed by a school open house. Student essays that related to the topic, *"St. Joseph School - Building a Strong Foundation through the 6 R's,"* were recognized.

Monday demonstrated the importance of a Catholic education for our community. Alumni delivered to the local newspaper, articles that discussed the importance of a St. Joseph Catholic School education and its effects on the community. Seventh and 8th grade students were involved in the community - from working in businesses to visiting nursing homes. The other grades also had projects that involved our partnership with the local H.E.B. grocery store.

The importance of a Catholic education for our students was the theme for Tuesday. Students went to a local radio station to talk about the significance of a Catholic education at St. Joseph's. The students also received numerous signs of appreciation that included a no homework night.

The focus for Wednesday was *The Good News in Education* for our nation. This was a Red, White, and Blue day for

St. Joseph Catholic School. Many prayers and intentions were answered by the presence of our guest speaker, Capt. Jeff Pesek. He is the husband to one of our teachers, Anne Pesek, and has just returned from Iraq. He spoke to the student body about the importance of a Catholic education to our nation and our students. This was fol-



St. Joseph's Kindergarten Class taught by Mrs. Hull shows off their *"I Like Me"* books donated by the local Rotary Club of Yoakum. Rotary members are pictured with the students. Each student has a book written with their name and their best friend's name in it.

lowed by a concert by the Yoakum High School Jazz Band.

Thursday was reserved for vocations. Students wrote cards of thanks and appreciation to retired priests. Likewise, they also wrote letters of support and encouragement to those pursuing religious vocations in seminaries. Parents and students had lunch together. Sister Dawn Ochs spoke to the students about the importance of religious vocations and the need to listen to God's call.

The importance of our faculty and staff in quality Catholic education was the keynote for Friday. Eighth grade students honored the teachers by teaching a morning class for them. Teachers were also honored with a brunch from the students and received tokens of appreciation from the students in recognition for their commitment to their vocations of being Catholic School teachers.

Catholic Schools Week ended as it began, with a Mass thanking God for all that he has done for us to make us leaders in education for our parish, community, students, nation, vocations and faculty and staff. St. Joseph Catholic School will continue to strive to be a leader and model in *The Good News in Education*.



## St. Joseph High School provides opportunity to students in Victoria

**St. Joseph High School, Victoria**  
**Established 1868**

**Principal/President: Mr. William "Bill" McArdle Jr.**

St. Joseph High School provides more than 370 students a value-centered education and extracurricular opportunities for young men and women in Victoria. Students at STJ are offered excellence in instruction, the opportunity to explore their faith and provide service to our community, and the chance to participate in various extra-curricular activities.

The traditions of St. Joseph High School are deeply rooted and have proven to be a wise investment for many former students. In 2006, 100 percent of STJ's graduating class was admitted to a college or university and 75 percent of the students were awarded at least one college scholarship.

For more information about opportunities at St. Joseph High School please call (361) 573-2446 or visit [www.STJvictoria.com](http://www.STJvictoria.com). You'll love the journey!





## Nazareth Academy celebrates 140 years

**Nazareth Academy (Elementary),  
Victoria**

**Established 1987**

**Principal: Mr. Carmen "Duke" Alicardi**

Nazareth Academy is celebrating 140 years of education, having opened its doors on January 7, 1867, by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, who continue to own and operate our proud school. To commemorate this historic event the speech class will give a performance documenting the history of our school during Catholic Schools' Week. Other activities celebrating Catholic Schools' Week include a Talent Show, a concert by Our Lady of Sorrows Life Teen Band and a community service project.

Service, in fact, is a large part of the curriculum at Nazareth, especially service that benefits the community. Students are encouraged to come up with ideas for service projects, and two such ideas are the adopt-a-sister and clothing collection programs.

Adopt-a-sister involves students "adopting" a sister living at Incarnate Word Convent. Students visit their sister monthly to share conversation, letters, cards and even homemade gifts. Twelve-year old student Clara Allen crafted and coordinated this idea, which has been a success for all involved. The clothing collection idea involved our students donating clothing to the Texas Department of Human Services to benefit Victorians in need. Nazareth student Hannah Garza formulated this excellent idea. A final service project, coordinated by Sr. Mary Jean Bludau, was a bake sale to benefit children in Kenya, Africa.

While service projects give meaning

to life, extracurricular activities serve to promote school spirit. In what have become annual events for our school, the band, cheerleaders, drill team, and Choir of Angels participated in Victoria County's Veterans' Day parade and program, as well as the Victoria Christmas parade. This year we are proud to announce that the Choir of Angels' float won "Best of Show!" in the Christmas parade. Further, our volleyball team finished the season as the undefeated District Champions.



*Nazareth Academy's students hold a bake sale to benefit children in Kenya, Africa. Teacher Sr. Mary Jean Bludau, IWBS, coordinated the sale. The IWBS Sisters provide services and schooling in several African villages.*

Nazareth also knows the value of student involvement within our school. With this in mind, a monthly 30-minute television show is being produced and directed by our own students. The Nazareth Academy Show, which our students also star in, highlights the events and successes of our school.

Finally, we welcome Mr. Ralph Nance as our new music teacher. Mr. Nance has already become an integral part of our school by organizing a student member faith based jazz band.

We dedicate this school year in memory of Mrs. Pam Kusak who served 21 years at Nazareth as a teacher and school organization sponsor.

*St. Michael second graders in Cuero begin researching the country of Spain for their Catholic Schools Week projects.*



## St. Michael, Cuero, shows what makes a difference

**St. Michael Elementary School, Cuero**

**Established 1877**

**Principal: Mrs. Judy Roeder**

When asked what makes a difference at St. Michael's Catholic School in Cuero, students will tell you that it's not just the academics; it's the fact that we get to show our faith throughout each and every day. During Catholic Schools Week, students were proud to show their academic achievements as they proclaimed the "Good News" of St. Michael's School.

Students researched the community of Cuero and learned the history of the city. Classes took field trips to City Hall and the Chamber of Commerce and made displays for area businesses. In addition, each class researched one country to learn about their culture and customs. The results of

their research were on display in their classrooms.

Catholic Schools Week began with the students celebrating the "good news" of the school by participating in the Sunday liturgy. On Tuesday, the students gathered for a prayer service for unity, particularly among the countries they studied. On Wednesday, students created a living rosary to pray for peace. Students gathered again on Thursday to pray for religious vocations. To end the week, students gathered once again to celebrate the light that Jesus brings to our lives.

What makes a difference at St. Michael's School? Students live each and every day giving praise to God and proclaiming the good news that we are all loved by God.



Our Lady of Victory Spanish students show their weather board project to their Spanish teacher, Señor Soto.

## "Hola" from Our Lady of Victory School

**Our Lady of Victory, Victoria**

**Established 1957**

**Principal: Sister Leonita Barron, IWBS**

Our Lady of Victory School embarked on a new journey this school year. With Victory's ever present desire to provide its students with a curriculum that will serve them for their high school years and beyond, we added the study of Spanish for 5K through 8th grades. Mr. Frank Soto, a state certified Spanish teacher, joined our staff.

Kindergarten, first and second graders are learning greetings, colors, days of the week, months, numbers, as well as songs and prayers. In addition, third through sixth graders are learning the family vocabulary and animals. Seventh and eighth graders add the conjugation of regular

verbs, adjective agreement, gender of nouns and the translation of simple sentences. They also complete a family tree project that utilizes their understanding of family vocabulary words.

Students walking to and from the Spanish classroom can be heard singing their songs or greeting Señor Soto and others with their new phrases. On warm, sunny days, the sounds of Spanish drift out of Señor Soto's room as students finetune their new language.

We know that providing this new, challenging curriculum will supply our students with another tool to tackle their upcoming high school and college careers, and for those who continue their study of the language, an added advantage in the competitive world of business.

## Holy Cross School family enjoy activities

**Holy Cross Elementary School,  
Bay City**

**Established 1940**

**Principal: Sister Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS**

Some highlights of Holy Cross School enjoyed by the school family during Catholic School Week were the community family dance held at the KC Hall where students demonstrate specific skills learned in P.E. Each class did a unique dance for family and friends. Some musical selections for 2007 were "We're not going to take it," "O'Mickey," "Sharp Dressed Man," "Footloose," "Holiday,"

house to view unique projects and work on displays. Decorated doors and halls, as well as the Book Fair, encouraged families and prospective families to spend time at Holy Cross.



*Students practice their dance steps in preparation for the community family dance held during CSW.*



*(above) The Holy Cross students diversified their Christmas giving this year by reaching out to others instead of exchanging gifts. Grades 6, 1, Pre-K, and students in general purchased a goat,*

*a trio of rabbits, several flocks of chickens, geese and ducks and a beehive through Heifer International. Grades 5, 4 and Pre-K adopted local families. Grades 3 and 2 continue educating Anne C. in a Catholic mission in Africa through their sacrifices.*

**A Catholic School Education Brings Endless Possibilities.**





## Book review and Puzzle Contest prize: “Our Daily Bread”

Review by Father Kevin Shanley, O. Carm. of *The Explorer*, Diocese of Joliet, IL

One of the experiences that add to the joy of both Sunday and weekday Masses for many is a well-prepared and well-delivered homily. It is a “breaking open the word of God” for those attending Mass and also giving them thoughts from Scripture to reflect on during the day. One of the difficulties for many priests and deacons is the lack of preparation time for composing and delivering good Scripture-based homilies, and especially for the weekday Masses.

Author James H. Kurt has gone a long way towards offering a remedy for this situation. In his excellent book (*Our Daily Bread*), he offers a page of meditation and exhortation for all the Masses of all the cycles of the liturgical calendar for Sundays, weekdays, as well as other feast days. The book thus becomes not only an excellent resource for priests and deacons but also for the laity and all who hunger for the meaning of the Word of God.

Subtitled as the “Exposition of the Readings of the Catholic Mass,” the book is also a challenge to all who want to delve more deeply into the Scripture presented at each Mass. This is especially important when the varied readings, especially at Sunday Mass, seem to be unrelated to each other. For all believers, the Scriptures are both the source and summit of their lives as Christians. Even those who are unable to attend weekly or daily Mass due to infirmity or other reasons can find a great source of inspiration and comfort in the Scriptures and excellent commentaries.

The author is a self-described “hermit in the city” who has been writing about Catholic Christian

## FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

### Catholic Schools Week Word Find

Find the words in the grid. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

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

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ACHIEVEMENT	FAITH	MASS
BELIEFS	FAMILY	RELIGION
BIBLE	FUN	SACRAMENTS
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	GOD	STUDENTS
COMPASSION	GOODNEWS	SUCCESS
DEDICATION	HONOR	TEACHERS
EDUCATION	JESUS	TRADITION
EXCELLENCE	LOVE	UNIFORMS
		VALUES

topics for more than 20 years. His writing and teaching background bring much richness to this book.

**Editor's Note:** “Our Daily Bread: Exposition of the Readings of the Catholic Mass” has the imprimatur of Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, N. J. The book retails for \$24.95 and is available from the publisher at [authorhouse.com](http://authorhouse.com) or 1-888-280-7715.

Please send completed puzzle to Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903 by Feb. 25 for a chance to win this book.

Announcement of the winner of the January Puzzle Contest is on page 7.

## Catholic By Grace

By Denise E. Bossert



### Bringing Them Home

During Lent a few years ago, somebody ran a television campaign which encouraged Catholics to “Come Home for Easter.” Those ads were so well done that they made even me want to “come home” – and back then, I was still a strong evangelical Protestant. I think it’s time we put together another television campaign. This time, I think we need to throw the net out even further.

What if we decided to invite *everyone* to come home this Easter. What if we sent an invitation to the Baptists and the Presbyterians and the Lutherans. Maybe we could cast out even further and invite those of other faiths – and those with no faith.

I have heard many Catholics commiserating about how many young people they have lost to other churches. “How do we keep our young people Catholic?” Maybe you’ve said those words yourself.

Here’s an idea. Why not try to reach those zealous, turned-on, deep-in-love-with-Jesus Protestants and encourage *them* to become Catholic? Not possible, you say. I have an idea, and I think it just might work. But be ready to stand back, because the RCIA classes at your local parish will be so large that they may have to move to the fellowship hall or a nearby auditorium. Maybe it will be a great Protestant exodus and all we need is one Moses – or about 690 of them – to lead the way.

According to the Coming

Home Network International, over 690 Protestant clergymen have converted to the Catholic faith. It’s time to get the word out. If it is possible to put together another quality ad campaign, we will not only stop the hemorrhage of young people to Protestantism, we will help our separated brethren come home en masse.

Just imagine: The scene opens with a close-up on Dr. Scott Hahn. He smiles and says, “Hello, I’m Scott Hahn, a former Presbyterian minister.”

From another angle: “I’m Alex Jones, and I’m Robert Rice, and we’re former Pentecostal preachers.”

“I’m Doug Gonzales, former Nazarene preacher.”

“And we’re David Twellman, Mike Franklin and Paul Thigpen, former Methodist ministers.”

“I’m Peter Holmes and I’m Noah Lett, and we’re former Lutheran ministers. And so am I (the camera widens to include Fr. Richard John Neuhaus).

“My name is Al Kresta, a former non-denominational pastor.”

“We’re John Scott and Steve Wood, former Presbyterian pastors.”

“My name is Jeffrey Bail; I’m a former Baptist pastor – and so are we,” says Father Gray Bean and countless others.

“And we’re former Episcopalian and Anglican priests (Michael Cumbie and others).”

“I’m Larry Dimock, former

United Church of Christ pastor.”

The camera employs a wide-angle to reveal a room filled to capacity. One gentleman stands in front of the group of nearly 690 people. He smiles, with that kind, gentle, pastoral smile we converts have come to love and respect deeply. “And my name is Marcus Grodi. I am a former Presbyterian minister. And all of us here today have a few things in common. First, we love Jesus Christ with every part of our being, and we have a deep, sincere, and very personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. We all also happen to be . . .”

In unison, and with a great triumphant chord, they all say, “. . . Catholic.”

“Yes, we are all Catholic,” Marcus Grodi says. “Won’t you consider coming home to the Catholic faith? Isn’t it time you found out what the Catholic Church really believes?”

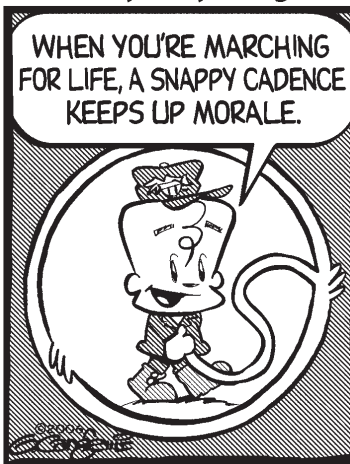
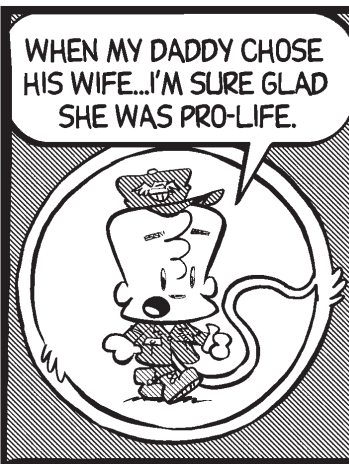
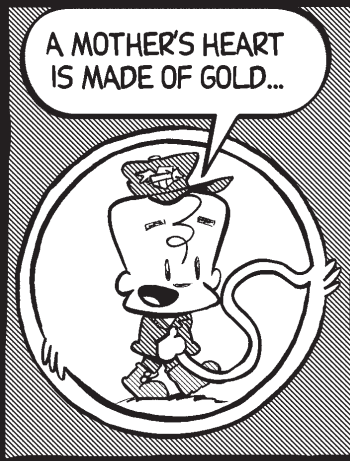
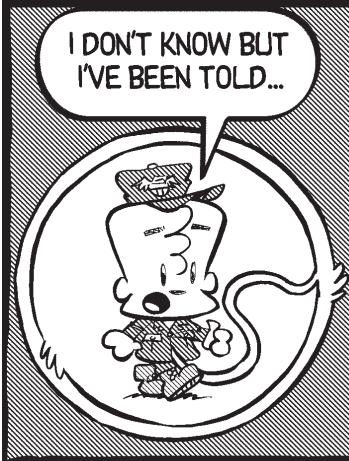
As a former Protestant, I can honestly say the Protestant viewers will be stunned. And many will begin the journey home. What’s more, the cradle Catholics sitting beside them in those Protestant churches will take notice, probably even break out in a cold sweat and sprint home to the nearest Catholic Church.

Consider doing something to help make this possible. Cut out this article and send it with a dollar or two (or as much as you can send) to: The Coming Home Network International; P.O. Box 8290; Zanesville, OH 43702.

*Author’s note: You may wonder if I am affiliated with the Coming Home Network. I am not. They were instrumental in my conversion, however, and for that I will be eternally grateful. I am confident that they will be the impetus for bringing tens of thousands more home to Mother Church.*

## Umbert the Unborn

by Gary Cangemi







## Your Family

By Bill and Monica Dodds  
Catholic News Service



### Going to extremes

Odds are two monks of the early church would have a thing or two to say about some recent reality television.

Perhaps you've seen one of the programs that features two women — moms and wives — who "switch" households for a couple of weeks.

Needless to say, with a little prodding from the show's producers, tension and tears rein.

What gives the show its zip are the women chosen for a particular episode. Each is always a person who firmly believes in whatever it is she believes in. Whether it's keeping a spotless house or allowing dozens of pets to roam the household, sleeping in until noon or always rising long before dawn, working long hours to support a family business or (apparently) having no concern other than herself, the chosen candidate is — in a word — EXTREME.

Each week it's oil and water mixing it up.

So what would two monks — and theologians — have to say about the show? Let's start with John Cassian (d. 433). He notes:

"There is an old saying — 'akrothes isothtes,' i.e., extremes meet." No matter which end of the spectrum the woman may be on, her choices make her life — and the lives of those around her — very hard.

Cassian has some advice for all of us, no matter where it is that we tend to go a little overboard. He uses, as an example, someone who eats very little (who goes without food as a form of penance) and someone who eats a lot (who never met an unlikable calorie):

"Excess of fasting and gluttony come to the same thing," he explains. Why? Because if we eat too little, we get too weak to accomplish anything. And if we eat too much, we become too ill to accomplish anything. In a sense, whether we head out clockwise or counterclockwise, we end up at the same place.

That's a good point to consider during Lent. A sacrifice, a penance, has to have some bite to it, but it can have such sharp teeth it quickly does us in. Moderation in eating and drinking, in computer time and TV time, in

time alone and time with others, in work and play, lead not only to a happier life for us but for our family too.

What about the second monk? Anthony of Egypt (d. 356) advised his disciples that a wise person is a temperate person because "the more a man uses moderation in his life, the more he is at peace, for he is not full of care for many things — servants, hired laborers and acquisition of cattle."

And "when we cling to such things," he added, "we become liable to vexations arising from them and are led to murmur against God."

Twenty-first-century translation: We complicate our lives and then get mad at God because our lives are complicated!

Ask the Doctor (of the Church):

St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) on "Moderation":

— "Moderation is always good in all exercises, except in that of loving God."

— "This is the height of virtue: to correct immoderation moderately."

On the Web: "On Gentleness Toward Ourselves"

If you've never read St. Francis de Sales, you're in for a treat. His "Introduction to the Devout Life" includes advice on how to be kind to yourself. Go to: [www.ccel.org/ccel/desales/devout\\_life.v.ix.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/desales/devout_life.v.ix.html).

## The Pope Speaks

Pope  
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

### Pope discusses church defense of marriage, commitment to God's plan

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Catholic Church defends marriage as the permanent bond of a man and a woman because matrimony corresponds to human nature and to God's divine plan, Pope Benedict XVI said.

When a man and a woman enter into a Catholic marriage, their commitment to each other surpasses their feelings at the moment and becomes a commitment to maintaining the bond God has created between them, the pope said Jan. 27 in his annual meeting with members of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, a Vatican court dealing mainly with marriage.

Despite a society that often considers "marriage simply as a social formalization of affective ties" and a contract that should end if the affection weakens, Pope Benedict said the church continues to insist that matrimony is more than a public pronouncement that two people love each other at that moment.

When a man and woman decide to marry, he said, "the union occurs by virtue of the plan of God himself who created them male and female and gave them the ability to unite forever the natural and complementary dimensions of their persons."

Pope Benedict told the Vatican court judges that their task was one of "service of the truth in justice," not only for the good of a couple seeking an annulment, but also for the defense of the sacrament of matrimony through which God ensures the good and fulfillment of each of the spouses.

The pope said the court provides a pastoral service to the church when it defends the church's traditional teaching on marriage, despite the fact that many people in the church seem to think that a lifelong marriage is an ideal most couples cannot live up to or that annulments are simply a bureaucratic procedure needed to enable access to the Eucharist for couples who have or want to contract a second marriage.

prayers I couldn't say while I was working.' I had time to pray for my family, for my friends, for people all over the world." He found a silver lining in the darkest cloud.

So many things had changed when he was freed that Walsh was a literal Rip Van Winkle. Mass was now celebrated facing the people, not the altar. It was in the vernacular, not Latin. Priests no longer wore cassocks all the time. He eased into the

new ways. That some missionaries were leaving did not unduly trouble him. "God does not abandon his work," he told the Maryknoll Sisters. His life followed a script he had written long before: "Sanctity is the easiest way because it is the straightest road; and being the easiest way, it is for most of us the only way, since the average man is not looking for hard and unusual ways to perform this or any other stint."

## Wanted: More small miracles!

Do you know a small miracle? Most people do, if they really think about it. Not necessarily something major-league, like turning water into wine, but rather the everyday stories that let us recognize the presence of God.

Several years ago, I wrote a book titled, "Small Miracles, the Extraordinary Stories of Ordinary People Touched by God" (Zondervan, 1996). It told stories of people who responded to a letter just like this one.

Since God continues to touch our lives I think it's time for a sequel. So I'm again inviting people to share their small miracles. It might be something that seems unimportant ... except to you ... perhaps a healing, an insight, an opportunity or an event that let you know God came close when you least expected it.

If your small miracle is included in the book, I'll send you a copy. And even if it's not used, you'll know that just by sharing it, you'll be helping to proclaim the presence of Lord.

Please send your story to:  
Tom Sheridan  
15771 SW 16th Terrace,  
Ocala, FL 34473  
or by email to:  
[tomsheridan@cfl.rr.com](mailto:tomsheridan@cfl.rr.com)

## Seeking Life

By Moises Sandoval  
Catholic News Service



### The holiness of suffering

Maryknoll recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of Maryknoll magazine. Since I was once its editor, the first layman, I was invited to the Mass and luncheon. The celebration stirred memories of the many men and women I met and wrote about in the 30 years I worked there. The most remarkable was Bishop James Edward Walsh — for his odyssey, the superb craft and wisdom in his writings, his candor and deep faith.

Bishop Walsh was legend by the time I arrived at Maryknoll in May 1970. I had read about his many years in China, his refusal to leave when the communists seized power in 1949, his arrest in 1958 and, at age 68, the 20-year sentence to prison in 1960. No one expected him to survive. But suddenly, on July 10, 1970, Walsh, a frail, white-haired 79-year-old holding a small bag, walked across the railroad bridge at Lowu, ending in the British colony of Hong Kong.

I wrote the special eight-page section in the magazine on his release and met him when he returned a few days later to Maryknoll. I was then living temporarily at the seminary while my wife sold our home in Ohio and moved the family to New York. We chatted in the hallways,

as he took solitary walks on the campus and in the seminary refectory. After lunch one day he filled and lit his pipe, and, chuckling, told of a missionary whose brand of tobacco was Blue Nun. For a decade afterward I often wrote about him. In one article, published in Canada, I quoted from his talk to the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick in 1945: "The bandit who took the town — with me in it — told me he had come to establish peace in the place. And when the government soldiers came and laid siege to retake the town, he asked me to go out and talk peace with them. I agreed to take the message. 'Go away slowly and come back quickly,' he said in the polite Chinese phrase as I was leaving. I fear I was less polite than he was, for I took care to reverse his suggestion. I went away quickly and did not come back at all. My poor Robin Hood friend made his peace with the hangman."

In another talk, in 1973, he said: "During my 12 years in prison I was not unhappy a single day. I woke up one morning and found myself in prison. I had been taken there the night before — handcuffed, surrounded by six guards. When I woke up, I thought: 'This is what I've dreamed of — time to say all the

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## Making A Difference

By Tony Magliano  
Catholic News Service



### Marching for life all year long

As I write just days before the 34th annual March for Life, I'm hoping to participate in the Washington, D.C., demonstration with my 15-year-old son Joe. There we will protest against America's deadly assault upon unborn human life.

Having gone to about 20 of these marches, I have a good idea what to expect. Before the march actually begins, friends of the unborn will gather on a grassy area near the back of the White House. There we will hear prayers, spiritual music and numerous speeches.

On stage will be about 15 Catholic bishops and several other Christian and non-Christian religious leaders. Seated with them will be several members from both houses of Congress. They will condemn the horror of abortion and express their desire to end it. President Bush is likely to speak to us via telephone hookup.

Then, after prayers, songs and speeches, more than 100,000 of us will walk from the White House to the Capitol.

I always try to work my way close to the front of the march because I want to see from the top of Capitol Hill the sea of caring people who have come from all parts of the nation. It's a real pro-life shot in the arm!

On the other hand, it's rather depressing. My goodness! We have been doing this for 34 years! And even should the U.S. Supreme Court overturn "Roe v. Wade" (not likely anytime soon), it would be left to each state to determine the status of abortion.

As it now stands, nearly every state would permit abortion under certain circumstances. Some would allow it to continue as it is now: abortion on demand.

Besides the deadly assault of abortion, the unborn now face added threats to their lives in the form of embryonic stem-cell research and cloning.

We still have a long road to march. But it could become much shorter if every Catholic took on the cause of the unborn. March for Life founder Nellie Gray once told me, "If just Catholics alone stood up and demanded an end to abortion, it would end!"

The annual March for Life in our nation's capital — and other state capitals — is much like caroling at nursing homes just before Christmas. It's very nice, but what about the rest of the year?

It is important not to let the anniversary of abortion's legalization in the U.S. pass by without strong objection, but it's even more important to learn, volunteer, teach, preach, organize, advertise, lobby, demonstrate and pray throughout the entire year!

For assistance, visit the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Web site at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) and click on "life issues."

There are certainly deeply committed persons laboring all year to protect our most vulnerable unborn brothers and sisters. And many of them also work to help women dealing with difficult pregnancies.

But those of us who are somewhat active can do better here. And the tens of millions of American Catholics who do almost nothing to end abortion can begin to realize that the silent holocaust of abortion will not be stopped without their help.

### Hope Lodge: Helping and Housing Cancer Patients

CINCINNATI—When an adult with cancer lives far away from treatment, the thought of leaving home and finding a place to stay can be overwhelming. As a relief to people in such situations, the American Cancer Society has founded 22 Hope Lodges across the United States ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)). Hope Lodge was established in 1970 in Charleston, South Carolina, by Margot Freudenberg, a 99-year-old survivor of the Holocaust. It provides free, temporary housing on a first-come, first-served basis to patients and their companions during treatment and is supported entirely through donations.

The story of these facilities is featured in the February issue of *St. Anthony Messenger* and is titled "Hope Lodge: Home Away From Home for Cancer Patients." Author Ann Tassone—with additional reporting from Assistant Managing Editor Mary Jo Dangel—writes of Hope Lodge, its history and its Catholic connections. The article is posted at this Web site: [www.AmericanCatholic.org](http://www.AmericanCatholic.org).

**"Not as man sees does God see  
... the Lord looks into the heart."  
1 Samuel 16:7**

## USCCB president joins several bishops' Conferences urging solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land, peace for Israel and Palestinians

WASHINGTON— In a communiqué released today in Jerusalem from bishops' conferences representing the United States, Canada and Europe, Catholic bishops concluded an annual meeting in the Holy Land with a collective call for inter-religious dialogue and an appeal for peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

Bishop William S. Skylstad, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, signed the communiqué from The Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church in the Holy Land, which was founded in Jerusalem at the request of the Holy See in 1998.

"Our belief in one God compels us to work for the welfare of two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, and members of three religions — Jews, Christians and Muslims — who belong to one family of God," the communiqué said. "As bishops and pastors, we affirm our Holy Father's recent address to the diplomatic corps in which he said, 'The Israelis have a right to live in peace in their state; the Palestinians have a right to a free and sovereign homeland.'"

Representatives from the bishops' conferences visited parishes and communities throughout the Holy Land from January 11-18 to understand more deeply the current realities, frustrations and hopes of the people in the region. In a meeting with Israeli Vice Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the delegation emphasized that "bold gestures are needed to break the cycle of Israeli fear and Palestinian anger that dominate the current situation," according to the communiqué.

During a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, the delegation noted the stories of "suffering and deprivations that Palestinians experience on a daily basis," while also emphasizing the need for "restraint of violence and the recognition of the state of Israel by all elements of Palestinian society."

The delegation described the Christian presence in the region as "a moderating influence" that "is essential to achieving peace."

Bishop Skylstad toured several projects in Gaza, Bethlehem and other Palestinian territories operated by Catholic Relief Services, the official international relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic community. This included a visit to Aboud, a traditionally Christian town a few miles from Jerusalem that is in the path of an expanding Israeli security barrier, and also to Nahaleen Village, an area outside of Bethlehem surrounded by four Israeli settlements.

"A visit to the Holy Land is at once an occasion of great joy and a time of profound sadness," Bishop Skylstad said. "This land is holy to three religious tradi-

tions that are united in their belief in one God, but is divided by conflict, violence and division between two peoples. As a bishop and pastor, I am absolutely committed to the right of Israel to exist as a state in peace and security. At the same time, I am absolutely committed to the right of Palestinians to have a viable state of their own, living in peace with their neighbor Israel."

See the complete text of the communiqué released by The Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church in the Holy Land at [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org); as well as more information at: [www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/mideast.htm](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/mideast.htm)

## Raise federal minimum wage, Catholic bishops urge Congress

WASHINGTON—The U.S. bishops' called for an increase in the federal minimum wage in a January 8 letter to Congress.

"The minimum wage needs to be raised not just for the goods and services a person can buy but for the self-esteem and self-worth it affords," said the letter signed by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, chairman of the bishops' Domestic Policy Committee.

Bishop DiMarzio said that the bishops as pastors see many working people who need realistic salaries.

"We serve too many families where men and women work full time and still live in destitution," Bishop DiMarzio said. "Congress needs to make budget and policy choices that will ensure adequate funding to help families escape joblessness, move beyond welfare, choose decent education for their children, gain needed health care coverage, and overcome hunger and homelessness."

The entire letter is at this Web site: [www.victoriadiocese.org](http://www.victoriadiocese.org).

### Religious leaders urge renewed Israel-Palestine peace initiative

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Nearly 40 U.S. religious leaders called on President George W. Bush to launch a new Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative. "We ask that you make Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace initiative, an urgent priority for your administration," the leaders said in a letter delivered to the White House Jan. 23 and to all members of Congress Jan. 25. Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., chairman of the international policy committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was among the five chief signatories on the letter.

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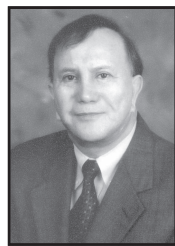
- Llame a la cancillería al (361)573-0828 y pida hablar con el Obispo o su canciller; o puede llamar a:
- Rev. Gary Janak al (979)543-3770 o a la Hna. Emilie Eilers al (361)575-7111, que son los coordinadores del Pastoral Care and Outreach;
- También puede comunicarse por escrito enviando su carta a:  
Most Rev. David Fellhauer  
Diocese of Victoria  
P.O. Box 4070  
Victoria, TX 77903  
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For the General Practice of Law





## We Begin School Choice Initiative

As I've spoken to Texas state legislators the past few months, I've noticed a common theme in the conversations I've been having. Every single legislator, from both parties, has asked me what the legislative priorities for the Bishops will be for the 80<sup>th</sup> Session. It is a fair and welcomed question and I always respond by saying that the Texas Catholic Conference will be working on the various life issues, immigration issues, advocating on behalf of the poor, school choice, but before I can say anything else the legislators stop me and ask why the Bishops have made school choice a priority.

The first couple of times I was asked that question, I have to admit I was a bit surprised. But let me share with you why this is a priority for the Church. It's really very simple; it is a matter of justice.

The formation and education of our children is a responsibility that begins with and primarily rests with us as parents. Whether you are a mom who earns a six-figure salary or a dad who has to work three jobs to make ends meet, parental involvement in a child's education is a fundamental matter of critical importance and it is the proper role of government to support the autonomy of parents. Although there seem to be several educational choices here in Texas — public schools, charter schools, private or parochial schools, and home schooling — these choices are meaningless if parents are unable to choose the education that is best for their children simply because of financial reasons.

We all pay taxes, especially the poor, but the sad truth is that it is most often the poor who are not getting the benefit of their hard earned money when it comes to public education. That is not to say that all public schools are bad, in fact a lot of them are wonderful, but moms and dads with limited incomes do not have the option of sending their kids to the wonderful public schools. And, this isn't a recent phenomenon; public schools that serve low income neighborhoods have been failing families for decades.

When I was a boy, we'll just say a long time ago, my parents decided to send me and my younger sisters to Catholic school right as I started the sixth grade. We lived in a barrio populated by several gangs and the local junior high school was famous for fights and drug transactions. The school had such a horrible reputation that my parents, who could not afford to send us to private parochial school decided to do so no matter the cost. My father worked two jobs and my mother got a job working the graveyard shift at Motorola, and I can still see the two of them sitting at the dinner table trying to figure out which bills not to pay that month so there would be enough for tuition for the four of us at Sacred Heart. I can also remember the morning when they came to repossess our station wagon because we had gotten so far behind on the car payments. But my mom and dad always paid our tuition because they said it was better to lose a car than a child.

As the decades have gone by, I have seen other parents living in barrios and inner-city neighborhoods facing the same

situation as my mom and dad. It is wrong not to help those parents by giving them choices they need for their children's education. Simply saying that we will give

more money to public schools, especially after so many decades of giving more money to public schools, is just another way of saying we will

do nothing to help low income families. This is a matter of justice that must concern us all.

I am also shocked whenever I hear someone argue that they oppose school choice because it will take money away from public schools. Once I hear that argument I know the person has never been to an inner-city school in Texas because if they had then they would know that in our state the dropout rate among African-Americans is over 50 percent and among Latinos the dropout rate is over 60 percent. That means thousands of low income minority students leave school every year and the public schools they drop out of lose millions of federal dollars right now. It is anticipated that school choice could cut the dropout rate in half, thereby returning millions to the public schools. So, rather than bemoan the lost revenue public schools go through annually, let me offer up the notion of worrying about how to get those students back in school, the school that is best for them.

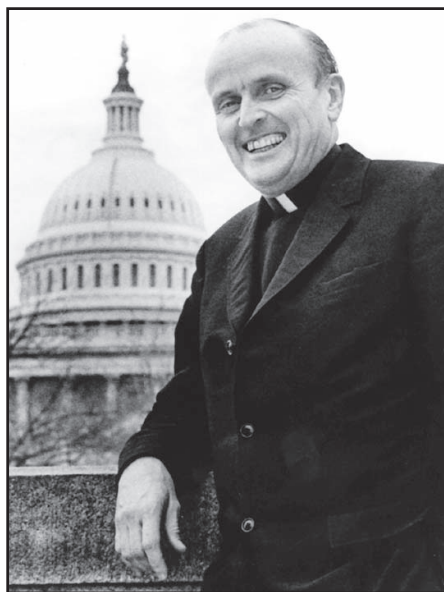
I am also dumbfounded when I hear opponents of school choice say the reason they oppose school choice is because the money would go to upper middle class or wealthy families who do not need it. It makes me wonder if the people who argue this have ever been to East Houston, or South Fort Worth or any of the other low income neighborhoods in Texas. If they had they would then see the Catholic schools in those areas serving disadvantaged students and providing them with a quality education. Of course there are Catholic schools who serve wealthy communities, and God bless them for the work they do, but the school choice program that the Texas Bishops are supporting is a pilot program where the available vouchers will be targeted first only to low income families in need.

Let me also say this again because it bears repeating, the school choice initiative the Texas Bishops are supporting should target low-income families, first and foremost. The Church's objective is to help low income moms and dads give their children the quality education—an education that is currently denied them because of cost. And, isn't that what our tax dollars are supposed to be used for, helping families help themselves and break the cycle of poverty?

If you agree, then please help us as we work to pass a school choice bill this year in the Texas legislature. Please call or write your state senator or representative and ask them to support the bill that is designed to help low and moderate income families. Please call or write the governor and ask him to support the bill. And, please attend the school choice Education Freedom Rally at the Capitol at 11 am on February 7th, especially if your children are in parochial school. And if anyone asks you why you are supporting school choice, tell them it is a matter of justice.

## Capitol Comment

By Andrew Rivas  
Texas Catholic Conference



CNS file photo

**FATHER ROBERT DRINAN PICTURED IN FRONT OF U.S. CAPITOL**—Jesuit Father Robert F. Drinan, a longtime Georgetown University law professor who served in the House 1971-81 as a Massachusetts representative, is pictured in front of the U.S. Capitol in this undated file photo. Father Drinan died Jan. 28 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington. He was 86 years old. He suffered from pneumonia and congestive heart failure for 10 days before he died.

### Bush's new plan for Iraq draws support, criticism

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Catholic Army chaplain who was stationed in Iraq and a Christian Iraqi-American military adviser said they stand behind U.S. President George W. Bush's most recent plan to send more troops to Iraq. But three international policy experts contacted by Catholic News Service sharply criticized the plan and questioned whether it can succeed. "If this is what the leaders are asking for, then that's what they need," said Father Brian Kane, who served as an Army chaplain for the 67th Area Support Group at Al Asad Airfield, in the Iraqi Al Anbar region. Pauline Jasim, a military bilingual and bicultural adviser in Baghdad, Iraq, said it was "about time Washington realized the (number of) troops were never enough, and more troops are needed in Baghdad." Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, editor of the national Catholic magazine America and director of the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace 1991-98, said the plan "seems to me too light on the troops" to achieve the goal of sufficient security for a transition to Iraqi control. More importantly, "it ignores the diplomatic elements altogether," he said. Maryann Cusimano Love, a professor of politics at The Catholic University of America, Washington, and an expert on terrorism, said Jan. 11: "This is primarily a political battle about winning hearts and minds. And the military measures that he presented last night don't do anything to address the underlying problems in Iraq and, I'm afraid, are unlikely to succeed." Gerard F. Powers, director of policy studies at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for Peace and head of the bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace 1998-2004, said there "are some positive proposals" in the Bush plan and "the stated goal is the right one — a united, stable, nonsectarian government." But he said the "modest increase in troops" announced by Bush is another case of "willing the ends but not the means."

### Bishop lauds Bush's desire for comprehensive immigration reform

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration applauded President George W. Bush's advocacy during his Jan. 23 State

of the Union address for comprehensive immigration reform. "I welcome the remarks of President Bush," said Bishop Gerald R. Barnes of San Bernardino, Calif., in a Jan. 25 statement. "Comprehensive immigration reform is clearly a high priority for our nation and should be high on the agenda of the 110th Congress," he added. "The issue of immigration reform is ripe for federal action." Bush, in his address, asked Congress for "a serious, civil and conclusive debate so that you can pass — and I can sign — comprehensive immigration reform into law." Bishop Barnes said, "In part because of inaction at the federal level, states and localities are moving to adopt their own laws in this area. Americans throughout the country strongly desire that Congress solve the problem of illegal immigration." He added, "As the recent raids on meatpacking plants demonstrate, families are subject to separation and dislocation. As a moral matter, our nation can no longer accept the work and taxes of migrant laborers without offering them legal protection."

### Congress starting from scratch on making new national media policy

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The previous Congress never got to vote on a full-scale rewrite of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Some in the Republican-run House had hoped for a vote during the post-election lame-duck session, but the shift of power to the Democrats scuttled that possibility. Now, with Democrats in charge, what could a new telecommunications bill look like? There is the possibility of including language guaranteeing equal access to the Internet by content providers, a concept known as "net neutrality." Net neutrality — short for network neutrality — is the policy of keeping the Internet open to all lawful traffic by requiring that cable and telephone companies operate their Internet networks in a nondiscriminatory manner. It bars those companies from prioritizing Internet traffic to benefit their own content. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops came out last year in support of net neutrality. So did an estimated 1.5 million others who feared Internet service providers would charge Web sites extra to guarantee speedy access for users. With no safeguards for net neutrality, the USCCB and other church and community groups fear non-commercial religious and other speech on the Internet is threatened.

### U.S. urged to follow church example and improve relations with Cuba

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The U.S. government should emulate the Catholic Church and look for a dramatic way to improve relations with Cuba, said a U.S. lawmaker after returning from a fact-finding trip to the Caribbean island. Rep. James McGovern, D-Mass., cited the 1998 trip to Cuba by Pope John Paul II and said it had a "dramatic impact" on improving the church's situation in the communist-ruled country. "The pope's visit opened things up for the church," said McGovern at a Jan. 23 panel discussion in Washington on U.S.-Cuban relations. "We should learn by that example," he said. McGovern was part of a bipartisan delegation of House members that visited Cuba in December to check out the political situation caused by the lengthy hospitalization of Cuban leader Fidel Castro after intestinal surgery. Because of his illness, Castro temporarily transferred the presidency last July to his brother, Raul Castro, and has yet to return to power. The panel discussion was sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, an independent think tank based in New York.

## Lent Begins Feb. 21





## Pope notes difficult road toward Christian unity, also sees progress

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The search for Christian unity is a long and difficult journey because it is a process of repentance and humility, Pope Benedict XVI said. At the same time, he said, over the past 40 years God has given Christians “broad spaces of joy, refreshing pauses, from time to time allowing us to breathe freely the pure air of full communion.” At his weekly general audience Jan. 24, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Benedict offered a list of the ecumenical encounters he had in 2006 which he said provide proof of progress in the search for unity among Christ’s disciples. The pope listed his meetings with leaders of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Baptist Alliance and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as his meetings and prayer with the spiritual leaders of the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church of Greece and his visit in Turkey with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

## World Social Forum participants pledge to strengthen global campaigns

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — World Social Forum participants passed resolutions pledging to strengthen the campaign against poverty, the global trade imbalance and gender inequality. Nearly 50,000 representatives from social movements, faith-based and Catholic organizations, trade unions and nongovernmental organizations passed the more than 100 resolutions at the end of the Jan. 20-25 forum in Nairobi. The forum provided a global platform of meetings, debates and marches to address international policies that exploit the poor, women and children, and the environment. The forum’s theme was “Another World Is Possible.” Participants denounced the amount of money nations spend on military buildup. They said those funds should be used to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which call on richer countries to commit resources in order to halve global poverty by 2015. They also pledged to vigorously campaign against foreign military bases and nuclear weapons.

## Pope hopes 2008 synod helps Catholics note value of Bible

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said he hoped the preparation for and celebration of the 2008 World Synod of Bishops would help Catholics realize how important the Bible is in their lives and the life of the church. The synod, to be held Oct. 5-26, 2008, will focus on “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.” Pope Benedict met Jan. 25 with the synod’s preparatory council at the end of a meeting to draft an outline that will be sent to bishops’ conferences around the world for comment.

The pope said it was important for the church to focus on the Scriptures because the life and mission of the church are based on the word of God.

## Vatican secretary of state defends Pope Pius XII’s wartime actions

ROME (CNS) — Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, strongly defended Pope Pius XII’s wartime actions and said he had coordinated church efforts that saved the lives of many Jews. Cardinal Bertone spoke Jan. 24 at the pre-

sentation of the Italian translation of the book “The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust,” by Martin Gilbert. The cardinal said the book illustrated how people of many faiths, including Christians and Muslims, had risked their lives to save Jews from Nazi persecution and death in concentration camps. He said the Catholic Church as an institution played a part in this effort, working under Pope Pius and following his directives. The church aided all during World War II, but specifically sought to defend and save persecuted Jews, he said. “The story of Catholic ‘righteous’ therefore is entwined with the action of Pius XII,” he said. It is a story of understanding, dialogue and appreciation among Jews for the actions of the church and the pope, he said.

## Pope hosts Vietnamese prime minister in move toward normal relations

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Signaling continued improvement in Vatican-Vietnamese relations, Pope Benedict XVI hosted the first ever visit of a prime minister from Vietnam’s communist government. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and a nine-member government delegation, including the head of the government Commission for Religious Affairs, arrived at the Vatican Jan. 25. The Vatican said the meeting marked “a new and important step toward the normalization of bilateral relations,” which have improved in recent years along with “greater spaces of religious freedom for the Catholic Church in Vietnam.”



CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano

**POPE PEERS INTO CRYPT IN BASILICA OF ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS**—Pope Benedict XVI looks into the crypt area of what church officials have identified as the tomb of St. Paul in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome Jan. 25. The pope celebrated an ecumenical prayer service in the basilica with representatives of Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran churches.

## Chinese government, Catholics welcome outcome of Vatican meeting

HONG KONG (CNS) — The Chinese government said it appreciates the Vatican’s willingness to have “constructive dialogue” with China, as expressed in a statement issued after a Vatican meeting to discuss the status of the Catholic community in mainland China. Catholics in China also welcomed the idea of a Vatican commission to monitor the church on

the mainland. Responding to reporters’ questions on the Jan. 19-20 Vatican meeting and subsequent statement, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said China always has regarded improvement of ties with the Vatican as important and has made unremitting efforts in this regard. In a regular press conference Jan. 23, he said China appreciates the Vatican’s willingness to dialogue so as to normalize bilateral relations, reported UCA News, an Asian church news agency.

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## Guatemala's 'angel of the garbage dump' dies in car crash

GUATEMALA CITY (CNS) — Hanley Denning, known in Guatemala as

"the angel of the garbage dump" because she helped poor children escape garbage picking as a livelihood, died in a car crash in Guatemala. Five days after her Jan. 18 death at age 36, a documentary featuring Denning was nominated for an Oscar. Denning died from injuries suffered when the car she was in collided with a bus on

a mountain road outside of Guatemala City. She was a native of Yarmouth, Maine. With help from a \$10,000 grant from the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton, Ohio, Denning founded Safe Passage in 1999, an educational reinforcement program for children whose parents take

them daily to Guatemala City's garbage dump to look for recyclable articles that



Hanley Denning, *Safe Passage* director (CNS photo/Joseph J. Delconzo)

could be sold. On Jan. 23, "Recycled Life," a documentary in which Denning commented on the lives of garbage pickers was nominated for an Oscar in the category for best documentary short by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

## EWTN Network to air special Lenten programming and new series

Irondale, AL— EWTN Global Catholic Network will air special Lenten programming, a dynamic new series and much more in its February lineup, according to Doug Keck, Senior Vice President, Programming and Production for the network.

EWTN begins its Lenten offerings with the Ash Wednesday Mass, celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI (2/21 11 a.m. LIVE from Rome). The Mass is followed by "Ash Wednesday Mediations," by Father Benedict Groeschel (2/21 12:30 p.m.) and a Lenten parish mission, hosted by Father William Casey (each Sunday of Lent at 10 p.m. and Tuesday at 2 p.m.).

According to Keck, in February, EWTN regular Dr. Scott Hahn will host a new series, "Letter and Spirit" (Monday 9 p.m.). "Dr. Hahn, one of the most renowned biblical scholars, will present an insightful, invigorating approach to scripture study," Keck said, "He looks at the vital connection between the Bible and the Liturgy, showing how the human family has been swept into the dramatic story of redemption by the direct intervention of

God."

As the liturgical season passes from Ordinary Time into Lent, Keck says EWTN's programming will provide the faithful with quality spiritual nourishment.

Its live shows will feature guests including Oregon State University's baseball coach, Pat Casey on "Life On The Rock," and the president of Human Life International, Fr. Tom Euteneuer and Archbishop Joseph Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas on "EWTN Live."

Other special programming that will air on EWTN in February includes, "Bernadette: Her Vision Became a Legend" (2/10 8 p.m. & 2/15 1 p.m.), shot on location in France, which tells the remarkable story of a young peasant girl to whom Our Lady appeared, and "Project Amazon" (2/19 – 2/23 6:30 p.m.) that follows 20 lay Catholic missionaries, with medical and other skills, into the heart of the Amazon jungle as they seek to provide for those in need.

All programs are listed in Eastern Standard Time.

### Special Collections

**Aid to Church in Europe (Ash Wednesday) — Feb. 21**  
**Operation Rice Bowl — Sundays of Lent and Easter Day**

### Ongoing Events

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

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

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

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

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

**Engaged Encounter**—Register as soon as you have contacted your pastor due to limited space. **It is strongly recommended that you attend an encounter weekend four to six months prior to your wedding date.** For a registration form, contact your pastor, visit the **Web site at [www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm](http://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: April 27-29, June 22-24, Sept. 28-30, and Nov. 30-Dec. 2. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 56. A date cannot be reserved for any couple unless a 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**—The next Marriage Encounter weekend is scheduled for: March 9-11, 2007, 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](mailto:register@mevictoria.org) [www.mevictoria.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.beginningexperience.org); e-mail: [sanantonio@beginningexperience.org](mailto:sanantonio@beginningexperience.org); 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](http://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.** See story, pg. 6.

**Victoria**—The first of a four-course series teaching the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning starts March 11 at Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The instructors are Wilma and Rene Galvan from Palacios, Texas. For more information and registration call Estella and Rudy De Los Santos at (361) 573-2624. See page 6 for article on NFP

## When & Where

**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. **Upcoming events: see the Web site at [www.presidiolabahia.org](http://www.presidiolabahia.org) for more information.**

### Picnics, Activities, etc.

#### February

**Irving**—Live-in weekend Feb. 8-11 at Holy Trinity Seminary for young men ages 18-28. For more information go to [www.diogh.org/VocationOffice/htsliveinweekend.htm](http://www.diogh.org/VocationOffice/htsliveinweekend.htm).

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

**Victoria**—Nazareth Academy invites you to the annual Town and Country Dinner/Dance on Feb. 17, Knights of Columbus Hall on Ben Wilson. Social at 6:00 p.m.; dinner at 7:15 p.m. provided by the Holy Family Knights of Columbus 9088 and dance to Southern Express from 8:30 p.m. to midnight. Dinner music will be provided by Ralph Nance. Contact the school office at (361) 573-6651 or any NA parent for more information.

**Victoria**—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Feb. 18 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.

**San Antonio**—2nd Annual Catholic Men's Conference to be held Friday evening (5:00-10:00 p.m.) Feb. 23 through Saturday, Feb. 24 (7:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.) at Pedrotti's North Wind Ranch in Helotes, Texas (on loop 1602 outside of San Antonio). Speakers and topics include Deacon Harold Burkes-Sivers "Working at Prayer: Living Every Day with a Eucha-

ristic Heart" and "Ora et Labora: Living a Vibrant Faith in the Workplace;" Father Scott Traynor "First Things First: A Life of Prayer" and "Discernment and Christian Manhood;" Marco Roman "The Marriage Vocation: Putting on the Armor of God;" Fr. Glenn Sudano, CFR, "Making a Christian Commitment in a Crazy World;" Fr. John Jesus Maloney "Fatherhood in the Light of St. Joseph;" and the Rosary, Mass, Divine Mercy and the Angelus. Register prior to Feb. 16 for \$55 per person; includes conference packet and meals on Friday and Saturday (after Feb. 16, \$65). Contact The Pilgrim Center of Hope (210) 521-3377; [trust@catholic.org](mailto:trust@catholic.org) or [www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org](http://www.pilgrimcenterofhope.org).

### Upcoming Events

**Hungerford**—KJT Society No. 79 and KJZT Society No. 57 will be hosting their annual barbecue and sausage dinner March 4 at the community center. Serving begins at 10:30 a.m. at \$7 p/p. Plates to go will be available. There will be an auction, free dance until 5:00 p.m. with music by Bobby Jones Czech Band.

**Blessing**—Knights of Columbus Council 4307 will sponsor their annual fish fry March 4. It will be held in St. Peter Church Parish Hall. Fried catfish with all the trimmings will be served from 10:30 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. at \$7 p/p (includes dessert and drink). An auction will also be held during the event. Everyone is cordially invited to come to Blessing and enjoy a fine meal of fried catfish. The proceeds will benefit Knights of Columbus scholarships and charities.

**San Antonio** — Women Speak 2007, March 9 – 11, San Antonio Convention Center. Presenters include Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., Joyce Rupp, Immaculee Hibaziza – to share her story of survival of the Rwandan Genocide, Paula D'Arcy, author of Red Bird and Sacred Threshold, and many more multicultural and multigenerational speakers from many nations and creeds. Music—Drama-Dance-Small Group Discussions / [www.womenspeak2007.com](http://www.womenspeak2007.com)

**New Taiton**—St. John's Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner (fried-chicken and homemade dressing) March 11 at the Taiton Community Center. Serving begins at 11:00 a.m. with dine-in or plates-to-go available. There will be also an auction, cakewalk country store, kiddie area and more.

**Victoria**—Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser March 18 at the KC Hall. The price is \$5 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

**El Campo**—KC Spring Picnic March 25 at the KC Hall (Hwy. 71 and Armory Road). A chicken-barbecue dinner-serving begins at 11:00 a.m. There will be an auction, cakewalk, free dance and much more.

### World Day Pray for Vocations — April 29

**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 who 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 with Monday evening, May 7, and continuing through lunch on Thursday, May 10. Space is limited. Your space is reserved with your \$100 registration deposit. Checks payable to Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House/ credit cards accepted. Questions? Contact: Rev. Nathan Stone, SJ, [nstonesj@yahoo.com](mailto:nstonesj@yahoo.com); Luz Restrepo, [Retreat1@airmail.com](mailto:Retreat1@airmail.com), (940) 321-6020. [www.montserratretreat.org](http://www.montserratretreat.org)





(left) Grand Knight A. J. Hlavaty awards Ricky Priesmeyer Knight of the Year.

(below) Leonard Goerig, family director, presents Johnny and Betty Corbett with the Family of the Year award; Grand Knight A. J. Hlavaty stands with them.



## El Campo Knight and Family of the Year announced

El Campo—The Knights of Columbus Council 2490 in El Campo announced their Knight of the Year and Family of the Year on Saturday, January 13, at the local Knights of Columbus hall during the Annual Ladies' Night Appreciation Dinner.

Johnny and Betty Corbett were recognized as Family of the Year for 2006. They have been active in the Knights of Columbus for 51 years. Johnny has served in

several council and state offices. They, as well as their family members, are very active at St. Philip Catholic Church.

Ricky Priesmeyer was selected the Knight of the Year. He has been a very active member of the council since joining in 2003 and is active at St. Philip Church and in the community. Grand Knight A. J. Hlavaty presented him with a jacket and plaque.



Pictured are some of the members of the Militia of the Immaculata, which was founded at Holy Cross Parish in Bay City in June of 2006. Front row: Delores Droz, Mary Anne Smith, Ruth Whitman, Grace, Daniel, Ryan, Laryssa and Marcus Rubio. Back row: John Ascota, Joe Koliba, Twyla Busha, Helen Littlefield, Mamie Tijerina, Ruby Zbranek and Jerry Lipinski.

## Militia of the Immaculata formed in Bay City

BAYCITY—Members of Holy Cross Parish in Bay City have organized a Militia of the Immaculata (MI), under the name St. Anthony Village, in its parish. Currently there are 32 members of the MI which was founded at Holy Cross on June 13, 2006, and is under the spiritual direction of the parish pastor, Father Casimir (Casey) Jarzombek. Members wear the scapular medal and work diligently for pro life.

According to a brochure put out by the Militia of the Immaculata, the organization is a worldwide evangelization movement founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe in 1917. It encourages a total consecration to Mary Immaculate as a means of spiri-

tual renewal for individuals and society.

As the brochure describes, Marian consecration in the MI is a formal act of self-giving that does not stop at Mary, but is Christ-directed. It is really consecration to Jesus. The MI motto is "To lead every individual with Mary to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus."

The organization employs prayer as the main weapon in the spiritual battle with evil. The goals are personal sanctification, the conversion of the world and ultimately the universal reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

More information on the Militia of the Immaculata may be found at [www.consecration.com](http://www.consecration.com).

### Prayer for Vocations

*Heavenly Father, if it is your divine will, inspire many of our youth to say "Yes" to your special calling to be priests, sisters and brothers. Amen.*



Photo By Darlene Tise — Jackson County Herald-Tribune photo

**CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS DONATE TO HOSPICE**—St. Theresa of the Little Flower Catholic Daughters Court 1350 in Edna donated \$1,500 to Hospice of South Texas. "We believe they provide a necessary service to families who need them," said Elsie Myers, regent. Proceeds were from the Daughters annual strudel bake. From left are, Gladys Orsak, treasurer; Myers; Amanda Smalley, community relations for Hospice; and Mary Lou Faas.



(below) Grand Knight Bob Bryarly awarded Revis Abshire the Knight of the Month and the Knight of the Year awards, assisted by Dennis Lockstedt, deputy grand knight.



(above) Bob Bryarly, grand knight, presented Otto and JoAnn Bleier with the Family of the Year Award; Dennis Lockstedt, deputy grand knight assisted in the presentation.

## KC Council 9088 presents awards

Holy Family KC Council recently selected its Knight and Family of the Year.

Knights of the Year are selected from the Knights of the Month from the past 12 months. The Knights of the Month are chosen for their service to the council and church. Revis Abshire was voted Knight of the Year from the group of monthly Knights, which included Rivas, Jerome Janak, Edwin Stryk, Fred Kubesch, Tommy Treybig, Paul Vesely, Jerry Uptmor, Emory Migura, Leo Repka, Rex Mayes, Paul McCoy and David Heyer.

Family of the Year is voted on by the membership from the year's Family of the Quarter. The Family of the Quarter is selected on the basis of service to the church

community by both the Knight and his wife. Families of the Quarter for 2006 include Dan and JoAnn Jalufka, Emory and Betty Migura, Otto and JoAnn Bleier and Lester and Mary Ann Hoerig.

Special awards were presented to Otto Bleier for the Christmas hams project, Lester Hoerig for the Thanksgiving fundraiser and to Bryan Ellis and Dennis Lockstedt for co-chairing the fishing tournament which benefits Nazareth Academy. An award was given to Bob Leach for past grand knight.

Service awards were given to members with 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 55 years of service. Awards were given also to honorary members and honorary life members.



**A CHILD WAS BORN**—On Dec. 6, 2006, St. Joseph of Yoakum 1st through 10th grade CCD students gathered as shepherds, angels, wise men and even St. Nicholas to welcome Mary, Joseph and the newborn King. Each student experienced again that first holy Christmas when Jesus was born.





The Gabriel Project Angel Appreciation Banquet was held January 13, 2007, at Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall in Victoria. Pictured are guest speaker Christie Aaronson, founder of Annunciation Maternity Home; Gabriel Project President Esther Trevino, Treasurer Barbara McCain, Msgr. James C. Brunner, diocesan director of pro-life concerns; and Father Celestino Say, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes who was instrumental in forming the Gabriel Project in the Diocese of Victoria.

## Gabriel Project Angel Recognition

By Cindy Brewer

The third annual Gabriel Project Angel Appreciation Banquet was held Saturday evening, January 13, 2007, at Our Lady of Sorrows Trinity Hall in Victoria. Upon receiving a dinner provided by Knights of Columbus Council 8388, guests heard from special speaker Christie Aaronson, founder/administrator of Annunciation Maternity Home in Georgetown, Texas.

Christie's husband, Mike, and she began Annunciation Maternity Home in 2001 after having heard so many times as an "angel" on a crisis pregnancy hotline that so many young women were abortion minded because they would be forced to become homeless if they carried out their pregnancy.

"God put this on our hearts," Christie said. Now they have a 5,000 sq. foot home on five acres that can provide housing for up to 15 girls and their babies. They serve women in the Austin Diocese, as well as throughout Texas and from out of state. They just had their 100th client and baby in their 6th year.

According to their brochure, Annunciation Maternity Home is a free, full service home for young homeless women and teens who are experiencing crisis pregnancies. They offer long-term care that begins when the resident arrives and continues up to two years after the baby is born. Young mothers who have already deliv-

ered their baby are also welcomed, as well as women who just need a "cooling off" period with their family upon finding out they're pregnant. Besides housing, other services such as education, access to medical care, prenatal education, abstinence, parenting, life skills, counseling and job assistance are offered.

They charge their residents nothing for their services. All of their operating funds come from charitable foundations, such as the Diocese of Austin, Elizabeth Ministries and generous individuals.

They just recently accomplished a long goal and dream by welcoming three young religious to their staff on Dec. 8, 2006. The Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy will live on the property and staff the home along with lay persons.

More can be learned about the maternity home by going to this Web site [www.thematernityhome.org](http://www.thematernityhome.org).

The evening continued with honor going to three members who had passed away in 2006: Madeline Duck, Port Lavaca, Pamela Kusak, Holy Family, Victoria; and Henry Postel, Our Lady of Sorrows, Victoria.

Gabriel Project president, Esther Trevino, presented appreciation plaques to former officers Paul Tasin and Barbara McCain, as well as volunteer Sam Valdivia. Past officers Emily Yeary and Dorothy Stathis were unable to be present, yet received plaques.

## 2007 March for Life focuses on end of life issues

By Cindy Brewer

About 150 supporters of pro-life issues weathered the cold and drizzling rain in the annual March for Life Thursday evening, January 18, 2007, that went from Templo Jerusalem Baptist Church on Mockingbird Street to the First Assembly of God Church on Ben Jordan Street in Victoria.

Following the march, Judy Gillespie introduced Rev. Johnny Knight, the pastor of the First Assembly of God, who welcomed the guests into the warm sanctuary. Bishop David E. Fellhauer pre-

Will (1975) was devised by the America Euthanasia Society of 1938 and marketed by the Society for the Right to Die. It focused on older hospital patients with incurable diseases who were rendered unable to take care of themselves and had six months or less to live. Mullins said, "The Living Will is useless at best and dangerous at worst."

Now since the Texas Legislature passed the Advanced Directives Act in 1999, a patient's surrogate may make life-ending decisions on the patient's behalf. Mr. Mullins said you better know your sur-



Photo by Cindy Brewer

Even during a drizzling rain, citizens of Victoria show their support for pro-life activities in the 2007 March for Life held January 18.

sented the welcoming address by introducing the new United States Catholic Catechism for Adults and sharing a section titled "Respect Human Life."

The principal speaker was Lt. Col. Jack Mullins, a retired Army Judge Advocate experienced in settling medical malpractice claims. He addressed the plight of patients in Texas hospitals who have requested life-sustaining treatment, while the attending physician thinks treatment is inappropriate. He explained that if the doctor thinks treatment is inappropriate, then the case is elevated to a hospital ethics committee; and each hospital sets its own determinations.

He spoke of how nutrition and hydration are often called medical treatment. Mullins said, "Calling food and water medical treatment is absurd," and explained that 180 years ago doctors fed gunshot victims through a tube.

He explained that the so-called Living

rogate and his/her intentions well.

The measure also allows Texas hospitals to disconnect patients from life-sustaining systems if a physician, in consultation with a hospital bioethics committee, concludes that the patient's condition is hopeless.

Mr. Mullins suggested citizens contact Texas State Senator Glenn Hegar and Representative Geanie Morrison asking them to repeal the statute that was enacted in 1999 and amended in 2003 and order investigations of the practices by all the hospitals under the Act. Then request that upon the completion of the investigations, set about crafting a new statute that protects the right to life of the patient.

The representative can be contacted at: Texas House of Representatives; P.O. Box 2910; Austin, TX 78768; The Texas senator at: Texas Senate; P.O. Box 12068 – Capitol Station; Austin, TX 78711

## Why Catholic Schools Week?

Continued from p. 9

the spirit of his amendment was added or introduced to current and future states' constitutions. Some states have removed this wording from their constitutions. But still, the intent of that amendment continues today in 14 states. Texas is one of those 14 states.

A second serious threat to the existence of Catholic schools is known as The Oregon School Case. This case was to challenge the Compulsory Education Law that had been passed. To take effect in 1926 this law would require that students between the ages of 8 years and 16 years receive their education in public schools only. It was challenged by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Successful in their struggle, the Supreme Court sided with the Sisters and nullified this requirement. As a result, Catholic schools were allowed to continue and students would not be required to attend public schools. A struggle, yes! Courage, yes! Without the strong stand taken by the Sisters there would be no Catholic schools today; no reason for Catholic Schools

Week.

These events took place as much as 75 and 100 years ago. Are these events relevant to us today? Are there any struggles or hardships today? Again, explaining what is happening today requires that we present the facts and happenings that have preceded and shaped today's situations. Two very significant, history shaping events were presented above.

Since 1957, 24 Catholic elementary schools and 9 Catholic high schools have closed. The number of students in the remaining Catholic elementary and high schools has decreased from 37,041 to 14,234 students. Is there any particular reason for the decline in both schools and enrollment? Absolutely yes! It is finances.

Elected officials are still levying taxes for education. But once parents attempt to exercise their right to send their children to a non-public school, a Catholic school, a right guaranteed by the Oregon School Case, they must forfeit their share of these education taxes. The government has tried to justify this denial by referring

to their state constitutions that specifically ban tax funds from going to religious institutions. Remember, this anti-catholic ban originated with the push to include the equivalent of a Blaine amendment in each state constitution.

Catholic schools once served all Catholics and non-catholics regardless of income. Today, without the availability of dedicated sisters, brothers and priests, a Catholic education is practically limited to those who can afford the ever increasing tuition. It is not available to everyone. In addition to the large number of Catholics desiring but not able to afford the cost of a Catholic education, we are still an immigrant nation. Most of the immigrants from the South and the Pacific Rim are Catholic. Unlike the Catholics from Europe in previous years, these new immigrants will not have the advantage and availability of a Catholic education.

Our Catholic teaching is that parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, they must have the right to choose the kind of education they wish for

their children. This means that as Catholics we support all schools: public and non-public, Catholic, military, private, home school and so forth. This is more American than those who support only one kind of school as you find in Cuba or in the former Soviet Union.

While we are celebrating Catholic Schools Week, it is important that we recall what has led us to this level. We must recall the dedication and commitment of the Religious who staffed our Catholic schools. We must develop the courage, determination and leadership demonstrated by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in securing the right of parents to send their children to Catholic schools without suffering any financial penalty.

Some relevant reading on the history of Catholic Schools:

1. Supreme Court decisions: <http://www.ncea.org/public/USSupremeCourtDecisions.asp>
2. The Blaine Amendment <http://blaineamendments.org/>