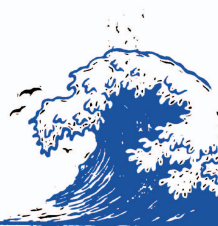


The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



VOL. 20, NO. 11

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

March 2007

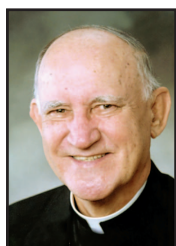
In This Issue

Vocation Story, pg. 4

Teens, pg. 9

School Choice ... A Parent's Decision?, pg. 7

Lent: A Time for Prayer, Reflection and Giving, pg. 13



Bishop Grahammann



Bishop Ferrell



Bishop-elect Provost

Dallas bishop retires, successor named; bishop named for Lake Charles, pg. 17

Project Moses, pg. 19

Finding God in Goliad, pg. 20



File photo by Regina Matus-Janak

Pay a celebrity to play this hole at Colony Creek Country Club. Celebrity Fun Hole No. 16 will feature former Dallas Cowboy linebacker D.D. Lewis and Bishop David Fellhauer. For fun and to help raise funds for the multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center, they will do the hitting and putting for golfers willing to pay a price.

Ladies' Rolex watch is latest fund-raising item for Spiritual Renewal building

Hurry, the clock is ticking on the latest fund-raising campaign for the diocesan youth/multi-purpose building at the Spiritual Renewal Center.



Time is winding down towards the March 30, 2007, drawing for the ladies' beautiful Datejust diamond bezel Rolex watch. This gorgeous timepiece, valued at \$12,500 has a two-toned jubilee bracelet as well as diamond bezel and diamond hour markers on the dial. Tickets are available at each parish office or by contacting the Diocese of Victoria at (361) 573-0828. The price of the chance is \$10.00 each or 6 for \$50.00.

The drawing will take place at the

Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament sponsored by KC Council 9088 in Victoria. Although the Knights of Columbus are sponsoring the tournament, 100 percent of the proceeds will benefit the youth/multi-purpose building. The golf tournament currently has a full playing field, but hole sponsors are much appreciated. If you are interested in being a hole sponsor, please contact Monroe Rieger at (361) 578-0797. In order to ensure that your name is prominently displayed on the course as a sponsor, please submit sponsor requests as soon as possible; deadline is March 23. In addition to your sponsor sign at the tournament, sponsors will be given a commemorative cap and will be invited to the seafood gumbo feast immediately following the tournament.

Groundbreaking is scheduled to take place on this much anticipated youth/multi-purpose building in January of 2008. Over five thousand people annually attend retreats at The Spiritual Renewal Center near McFaddin, Texas.



Photo by Cindy Brewer

Bishop David E. Fellhauer addresses the Poor Clare Sisters in his homily at the 20th anniversary Mass for the monastery in Victoria. Sitting from left is Sister Katherine Vallone, Sister Gabriel Zwiener, Sister Beth Lynn, from the Monastery of St. Clare in Minneapolis; Sister Angela Chandler, abbess of St. Clare Monastery in Brenham, Texas.

Poor Clares prepare to leave Victoria

Two remaining nuns say their time in local monastery 'a gift'

By Aprill Brandon
Victoria Advocate

The 20th anniversary of the Franciscan Poor Clare Sisters of Victoria marked both a giant landmark of their monastery and a sad farewell. The 20th anniversary Mass on Friday was their last anniversary here; the sisters are moving to a new location.

"We won't be actually leaving until around May and will still be having Mass until then, but there will be no more anniversaries. We're moving to the monastery in Omaha, Neb.," said Sister Gabriel Zwiener, one of the original founders of the Victoria monastery. "It just simply became too much for us. There are only two of us here now, and we have been doing the job of six sisters. It was a difficult decision. These 20 years have been a gift."

THE BEGINNING

Feb. 2, 1987, marked the formal beginning of the monastery. The founding sisters included Sister Gabriel from Omaha, Sister Antoinette Madden from Evansville, Ind., and Sister Clare Adam, who stayed for six months of the first year.

In 1991 Sister Katherine Vallone joined from South Florida, who, after being married and raising a son, decided to devote her later years to God as a Poor Clare. Sister Antoinette died in 2001, leaving just Sister Gabriel and Sister Katherine to carry on the work at the monastery.

"Dealing with leaving Victoria has been hard. I always said I'd leave this monastery in a box," Sister Katherine said. "It's the people I'm going to miss the most. I found them to be a wonderful, friendly kind of people. And the men are such gentlemen, rushing ahead to open doors. Chivalry is definitely not dead in Texas."

THE PURPOSE

According to Sister Gabriel, the monastery was founded to provide a "contemplative presence among the poor of the city." Having originally bought a house near Our Lady of Sorrows, the monastery purchased and moved to their present location in Old Victoria on Depot Street in 1990.

As a means of support, the sisters began a bakery, each day making pies, cakes, cookies and quick breads. According to Sister Gabriel, 69, it was through the bak-

See *Two remaining nuns*, p. 8

Pilgrim's Reunion – March 11

By Cindy Brewer

EL CAMPO—Betty Urbanovsky, long time religious pilgrimage tour director, is hosting a pilgrim's reunion Sunday, March 11, at St. Philip the Apostle Church and Parish Hall in El Campo. All who have ever gone on a pilgrimage with Betty are invited to come, as well as anyone who might be interested in going on a pilgrimage in the future.

Previous reunions have had from 200 to 400 pilgrims in attendance. It is a chance to reacquaint with fellow travelers who have become good, pilgrim friends.

Many priests will be there to share their experiences while on pilgrimage with Betty including Fathers Gary Janak, John Peters, Michael Lyons and Msgr. James

See *Pilgrim's Reunion*, p. 2



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

March

- 11** 11:00 a.m., Mass, Pilgrims' Reunion, St. Philip Church, El Campo
- 13** 11:30 a.m., Mass, Admission to Candidacy for Ordination, St. Mary's Seminary, Houston
- 16** 5:30 p.m., Reconciliation Service, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
- 17** 5:30 p.m., Mass, Girl Scout Religion Awards, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 20** 6:30 p.m., Catholic Daughters of the Americas and Knights of Columbus 1329, Clergy and Religious appreciation dinner, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria
- 21** 8:15 a.m., School Mass, St. Joseph Church
- 10:30 a.m., Blessing of the new mausoleum, Yoakum
- 3:00 p.m., Diocesan Finance Board meeting, Chancery
- 4:30 p.m., Building Board meeting, Chancery
- 22** 7:00 p.m., Confirmation Mass, St. John the Baptist Church, Hungerford
- 24** 11:15 a.m., Mass, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women retreat, St. Joseph Church, Yoakum
- 5:30 p.m., "Friends of the Fort" events, Presidio La Bahía, Goliad
- 25** 11:00 a.m., Confirmation Mass, Holy Cross Church, East Bernard
- 30** 1:00 p.m., Knights of Columbus Council 9088 annual Bishop's Charity Golf Tournament, Colony Creek Country Club, Victoria
- April**
- 1** 9:00 a.m., Mass, Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 3** 10:00 a.m., Chrism Mass, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 5** 6:30 p.m., Mass of the Lord's Supper, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
- 6** 12:15 p.m., Way of the Cross, Holy Trinity Chapel
- 7** 8:00 p.m., Easter Vigil, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral

Pilgrim's Reunion – March 11

Continued from p. 1

Brunner. Bishop David Fellhauer, one of Betty's former pilgrims, will be the main celebrant at the reunion's 11 a.m. Mass.

My husband and I went on pilgrimage with Betty in the summer of 2002. We went to Saint Padre Pio's canonization at St. Peter's Square; Assisi; San Giovanni Rotondo; Loreto; and Medjugorje. It was a trip of a lifetime. Besides just traveling and seeing so many European sites, it was the spiritual experiences that were the highlights of the trip.

I remember walking through St. Peter's Basilica. I got about halfway down its main aisle before breaking into tears of joy thinking of the many, many saints who had walked the same steps as I. It was unbelievable. Of course seeing Pope John Paul II ride in his Jeep just a couple of feet in front of me after the canonization Mass was a beautiful experience. We then went to Assisi, where I was honored to be the lector for the Mass said at St. Francis'

Passion Play to be performed in El Campo

The Passion of Jesus Christ will be presented by St. Philip high school youth on Good Friday, April 6, 2007, at 7 p.m. in the El Campo High School auditorium located at 600 W. Norris in El Campo. A free-will offering will be accepted.

Official Appointments By Most Rev. David E. Fellhauer

Effective February 1, 2007, the following priests are appointed to the Presbyteral Council as Representatives of their respective Deaneries:

Rev. Michael Petering, Cuero
Rev. Samuel Appiasi, Edna
Rev. Dominic Antwi-Boasiako, El Campo
Rev. Charles Sonnier, Hallettsville
Rev. Robert Guerra, Schulenburg
Rev. Juan Vazquez, OSST, Victoria

Also effective February 1, 2007, the Bishop's Appointees to the Presbyteral Council are:

Rev. Roger Hawes
Rev. Bryan Heyer

tomb. What a blessing! We went to the woods and caves where St. Francis would stay and pray. We then went to the tomb of St. Philomena. I never knew I would have the chance to spiritually meet the child saint from the Roman persecutions. The pilgrimage continued to so many places and surprises: St. Pio's tomb and parish; Loreto, to where the Holy Family's Nazareth home is reportedly now located; Lanciano, to see one of the Eucharist Miracles; and then to Medjugorje, where it is reported the Blessed Mother has been appearing for the past 25 years.

The pilgrim reunion will be a chance to hear so many stories of blessings, healings and experiences.

Registration will be from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m.; Mass at 11:00 a.m.; covered-dish dinner at 12:00 p.m.; 1:00 p.m. entertainment from the Little Christian Dancers; 1:30 p.m. priest speakers; 2:45 p.m. go to the church for the 3 o'clock Divine Mercy Hour led by Father Gary; and then back to the hall for the rest of the evening sharing with old friends. For more information, please contact me at (361) 573-0828 ext. 31 or Betty at (979) 543-2333 or e-mail her at burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net.

In memory of Father Ty Bazar's grandmother

Laura Irene Obsta, age 88, of Victoria, died Monday, Feb. 19, 2007, in Victoria. She was born Feb. 17, 1919, in Ordway, Colo., to the late Walter Ralph and Mary Jane Martin.

Irene graduated at Beeville High School. She graduated beauty college in San Antonio. She married Nealy Adam Obsta in George West in 1941. They moved to Victoria in 1945. She was a homemaker. She was a beautician and worked at Tolbert's Dairy Treet for many years. She enjoyed cooking and sewing.

She was a member of Our Lady of Victory Cathedral and a charter member of its Altar Society and Catholic Daughters Court St. Ann No. 369.

She is survived by her daughter, Jamie Leigh Bazar and husband Ernest of Victoria; her sisters, Barbara Brown of Missouri, Ruth Dillaha of Arkansas, Gene Dooling of Plano, and Nellie Rousseau of Henderson.

She was preceded in death by her husband; son, Alan Obsta; granddaughter, Shannon Marie Obsta; brothers, Alton Martin, Julius Martin, Grady Martin; and her sister Luella Johnson.

The Funeral Mass was celebrated Friday, Feb. 23, 2007, at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral; the Rev. Ty Joseph Bazar presiding. Burial followed at Resurrection Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Troy Bazar, Scott Bazar, John Obsta, Paul Obsta, Jon Malek and Mitch Malek.

Memorials may be made to the Our Lady of Victory Cathedral Televised Ministry Fund or the Diocese of Victoria General Seminary Burse Fund.

Thank You Note

Dear Bishop Fellhauer:

Thank you for your diocesan check for \$35,627.83 which has been deposited in the Retirement Fund for Religious account. This brings your total diocesan contributions for all of the years of the collection to \$381,712.63. The money has been recorded as part of Appeal XIX for 2006.

Your generosity surely helps religious address the many challenges they face as they age. Religious today, as always, continue to make an impact on our society. Even as they age, their commitment to the ministry of their community, their prayer and spiritual life are vibrant testimony to the faithfulness they promised so many years ago. Your commitment to them is a heartfelt testimony to their faithfulness. Each religious, young and old, are grateful for your support!

Your support and the support of your Retirement Fund for Religious coordinator, pastors, parish priests and deacons are essential to the fund's continued success. We is most grateful for all you do! You can surely rely on the prayers of the over 38,000 religious now over age 70 and the ever increasing numbers of religious who will be retiring very soon. May God bless you as only he can!

Gratefully,

Sister Andréé Fries, CPPS
National Religious Retirement Office
Executive Director

Dear Bishop Fellhauer:

I write on behalf of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), to thank you and your parishioners in the Diocese of Victoria for your generous contribution of \$28,276.33 from your 2006 CCHD collection.

Last year, the incidence of poverty in our country rose for the fourth consecutive year, with most of the increases occurring among the working poor. Without the safety net provided by safe and adequate housing, reliable transportation, functioning schools, steady employment and dependable health care, even more people will slip into an intolerable existence. Through the support of parishioners in dioceses across the country, we were able to grant nearly \$9 million in 2006 to anti-poverty, social justice projects in forty-nine states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

In his World Day of Peace Message for 2006, Pope Benedict XVI challenges us with these words: *Peace thus comes to be seen in a new light; not as the mere absence of war, but as a harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good is also achieved, to the extent possible, for each of them.*

Your support of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development helps achieve "the good" for families and communities struggling in poverty. We are grateful for your leadership and the invaluable efforts of your diocesan director, Rev. Dan Morales. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Gratefully yours in Our Lord,
Timothy F. Collins
CCHD, Executive Director


Where Are You!!

If you've moved to a new location or are in the process of moving, it's important that you furnish your Parish with any updated information. Membership in the diocese varies quite often as families move in and out of the area. We want to be able to keep in touch with our households.

Diocese of Victoria
Business Office
P. O. Box 4070
Victoria, TX 77903-4070

or

(361) 573-0828 M-F
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(361) 573-5725 FAX
E-mail: mpearson@victoriadiocese.org



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DEADLINE IS THE THIRD TUESDAY OF THE PRECEDING MONTH.

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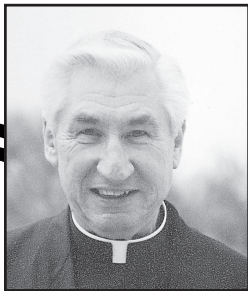
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Faith Point

By Rev. Msgr. James C. Brunner
Vicar General, Diocese of Victoria
For past articles: www.stmaryvic.com/desk.htm



Christian Fascists

In a recent article in the *New York Times*, Chris Hedges identifies persons belonging to the Christian Right as fascists in biblical disguise. This is a new addition to at least eight recent hysterical screeds by secularist writers producing exposés of alleged Christian extremism. The charge in all these Chicken Little writings is that the Constitution is falling and conservative Christians intend to establish a theocracy in America. This is an article of the secularist faith. Howard Dean asks, "Are we going to live in a theocracy?" Al Gore compared George Bush's Christian faith to Saudi Wahhabism. Noted philosopher Rosie O'Donnell on ABC claimed that radical Christianity is just as threatening as radical Islam. When they speak of "radical religion" they are not talking about bomb-throwing Islamists but Christians. These Christians are the future fascists, the jackbooted future Brown Shirts, says Hedges. Hedges even hints darkly that Christians want to evangelize. News flash, Chris! Christians have been doing that for 2,000 years. Most shocking of all, Christians believe that they have the right to bring their values into the public arena.

I bet you never realized that you were so great a menace to the republic.

Why would seemingly sane persons engage in slander and moonbatter of this sort? I think it is because Christians oppressed by a militant secularism in self-defense have come out of the closet and have become politically active. Christians who follow traditional Judeo-Christian principles are a threat to the secular utopia. The secular garden of Eden includes approval of sodomy either single or marital, killing of human embryos for research, killing of unborn human beings at any point of gestation even as they emerge from the womb, decriminalization of narcotics, and affirmative action for feminists and other groups pronounced as victims. The secularist world order would be governed by people like Kansas abortionist, Dr. Tiller the baby killer, radical feminists, global warming whackos, and Brokeback Mountain veterans.

One might chalk this up to hysteria of secularists who are known to live in a parallel universe, but ideas have consequences. If fascism is ever to overtake America it will not be led by Bible-quoting Christians but by secularists quoting Marxist multiculturalism also known as political correctness. Secularists have already made progress in establishing a fascist secular state.

Here are two recent instances. Homosexual employees of the city of Oakland used the city's bulletin board, e-mail and other forms of communication to promote their agenda. In response other employees used the same communications media

to invite others in discussing the "natural family, marriage and family values." The city ordered that announcement to be removed because it constituted "hate speech" and contained "statements of a homophobic nature" and promoted "sexual-orientation-based harassment." In another case, a federal court decision held that the police had the right to arrest a group protesting at a public homosexual festival because the group had "a contrary message." According to that logic it would seem that Democrats could be arrested at a public Republican rally if they voice "a contrary message."

Legal pressure is applied to compel

Catholic agencies to place adoptions with homosexual couples, to provide contraceptives in employee health plans, to have Catholic health facilities provide abortions, and to make medical professionals and druggists supply "morning after" abortifacient pills in opposition to their consciences. Recently William and Mary College removed the Wren Cross from its chapel but allowed "A Sex Worker's Art Show," paid in part with student funds. It featured sex workers and their devices if not art. The justification was that

it was not the province of the university to censor controversial items—unless of course the item is a cross. There is insufficient space to mention the large amount of litigation relative to removal of crosses, crèches, and replicas of the Ten Commandments from public spaces.

Secular control of college campuses has changed them from institutions where all ideas are discussed to places where politically incorrect ideas are punished. Christian clubs are defunded unless they abandon their principles and permit atheists as officers in their clubs. Conservative college newspapers are burned with impunity if not outright approval of the administration. Conservative speakers invited to speak on the campus are prevented from speaking by hecklers or pranksters setting off fire alarms. Campus security is strangely impotent in their case. Liberal speakers are not subjected to this sort of abuse. The Nazi Brown Shirt thugs are secularists, not Christians. Students and

professors who challenge the reigning secularism are denied tenure or expelled. Academia which is controlled mostly by secularists is the closest thing in the United States to a police state where even certain words or ideas are forbidden to be spoken.

Hedges, that paragon of tolerance, says that the Christian right "should no longer be tolerated" because it "would destroy the tolerance that makes an open society possible." It is Hedges who wants to ban books and gag his opponents. To fight fascism, Hedges would like to establish censorship and punish political incorrectness with prison sentences. Secularists promote tolerance by intolerance of opposing views. That is rather like running a brothel to protect chastity, but then irony is lost on the secularists who are comfortable with many double standards in their creed. But for double standards secularists might not have any at all.

What should Christians do in the face of the slanderous attacks by the likes of Chris Hedges who is by no means alone in his anti-Christian vitriol?

Become educated in your own Christian intellectual heritage. Secularism is not new and many Christian thinkers have given solid answers to it in the past.

Christians must be involved in the culture. Intellectuals may write books, but the masses are swayed more by motion pictures, music and television. That is where Christians should put their emphasis. A good motion picture has more impact on

a society than many scholarly books.

Above all, Christians must be involved in the political process to make certain that Supreme Court Justices will not enact legislation without Constitutional foundation based on the secularist premise that human beings have no inherent worth. Secularists in our nation not only sympathized with Marxism, but aided and abetted it by spying for Russia and by propagating Communist propaganda while hiding the horrors of the Communist gulags and the show trials. Marxism today is a discredited ideology, but not on our college campuses. Most people learn from the consequences of their errors. Secularists are incapable of this because it would undermine their ideology.

Christians are accused of being threats to freedom, but for 200 years in our country when Christians were in the ascendancy, they produced a governmental system that allows for the greatest amount of human freedom ever experienced in human history. Ideas promoting atheism were permitted expression even if they ran counter to the prevailing culture. Under the tyranny of relativism, certain ideas may not even be expressed and attempts to do so will be punished or shouted down by secularist thugs. Secularism, not Christianity, is a threat to freedom in this nation. The current secularist writings falsely warning of Christian fascism reflect the fascistic patterns they themselves are following and are autobiographical in nature.

Lost Tomb of Jesus denounced

The Discovery Channel presented a program called "The Lost Tomb of Jesus" on Sunday, March 4. The claims made in the program have already been roundly denounced by biblical scholars and archaeologists, by no means all of them Christian. The following Talking Points, prepared by the USCCB Office of Media Relations and done in a "claim vs. fact" format, are meant to address some of the principal assertions in the program. They are largely derived from the Catholic News Service story "Biblical scholars reject filmmakers' claim about tomb of Jesus," which is on the Conference Web site: www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0701131.htm

CLAIM: The filmmakers suggest they have discovered something new, a tomb that was the burial site of Jesus and his family.

FACT: The tomb was discovered nearly 30 years ago in Jerusalem. The Israeli archaeologist who wrote the original excavation report on the site calls the claim

"nonsense."

"In their movie they are billing it as 'never before reported information' but it is not new," said Amos Kloner, professor of archaeology at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. "I published all the details in...1996, and I didn't say it was the tomb of Jesus' family."

Dominican Father Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, a biblical archaeologist and expert in the New Testament at the French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, who was interviewed for the film, said Kloner had written about the findings a decade ago, and though it was all out in the public domain, nobody had been interested. "It's a commercial ploy that all the media is playing into," Father Murphy-O'Connor said.

CLAIM: The filmmakers claim that by using new technology and DNA studies they have determined that among the 10 ossuaries-burial boxes used in biblical

See *Lost tomb*, p. 16

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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 February 27, 2007

	TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse	
Previously reported	\$74,359.00
In memory of Alfred Ramirez by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Florian Stavinocha by Daniel & Bernice Ulbricht	15.00
In memory of Angie Tomanek by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Lee Payne by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by M/M Bob Bochat	25.00
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Bobby and Mary Orr	20.00
Total	\$74,494.00

— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Burse No. 3	
Previously reported	\$6,422.50
In memory of Alfred Ramirez by KC Victoria Council 1329	100.00
Total	\$6,522.50

— Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree Victoria Assembly No. 1128 Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$750.84
In memory of Rudy Simper by KC 4th Degree No. 1128	150.00
Total	\$900.84

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

— Catholic Daughters of America Court of St. Ann No. 369 Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$4,585.00
In memory of Steve Borowicz. and Alfred Ramirez by Randy and Gina Janak	10.00
In memory of Alfred Ramirez by Ben and Estela Matus	15.00
Total	\$4,610.00

— Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy Burse	
Previously reported	\$8,054.50
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Michael O'Shaughnessy by Albert and Doris Anel	20.00
Total	\$8,074.50

— Sister M. Barbara Konvicka, IWBS Burse	
Previously reported	\$80.00
In memory of Laddie Konvicka by August & Laverne Madala	10.00
Total	\$90.00

— St. Mary Church — Praha Burse	
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
Total	\$5,270.00

— Holy Rosary Church — Hostyn Burse No. 2	
Previously reported	\$135.00
In memory of Derek Muras by Henry & Verlene Kuntschik	50.00
Total	\$185.00

— Rev. John C. Peters Burse No. 3	
Previously reported	\$11,596.00
In Thanksgiving by Deacon Sonny and Elaine Rogers	50.00
In memory of Benita Pavlu by the Catholic Family Fraternal Of Texas K.J.Z.T. No. 2 Hallettsville	25.00
In memory of Alfred Ramirez by Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Sacred Heart No. 797	25.00
Total	\$11,696.00

— Josephat R. Janak Burse	
Previously reported	\$14,648.77
In memory of Laura Irene Obsta by Evelyn Janak and Family	10.00
Total	\$14,658.77

— Rev. Theophil Okruhlik & Rev. Vincent Verdame Burse	
Previously reported	\$7,890.00
In memory of Robert Schaefer by Rita Drozd	25.00
In memory of Marie DeBault by Willie and Tina Hubenak	20.00
Total	\$7,935.00

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

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



**Seminarian
Gabriel Espinosa
March 31**

Theology IV
St. Mary's Seminary
9845 Memorial Drive
Houston, Texas 77024

*Gabriel is from
Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Shiner*

Getting to know Chaplain Mensah

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

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

In a busy place like Parris Island, S.C., it is all too easy to be so focused on the task at hand that opportunities to get to know the people we work with are often passed up. Lieutenant Commander Gabriel Mensah, the chaplain of the Recruit Training Regiment, has a story so unique and interesting that all should have the chance to hear it.

For starters, there is his name.

Most Marines and sailors have a first name, a middle name, a last name, and a rank. Chaplain Mensah's designation is a bit more complex. When he was born, 52 years ago (he'll be 53 on March 25, 2007), into the Ashanti tribe in the West African nation of Ghana, he received the name that all male Ashantis who are born on a Tuesday receive, Kwabena. Like all Ashantis, Kwabena's left cheek was marked with a small cut, the mark of the Ashanti. Since his parents were Christians, he was baptized soon thereafter and given a Christian name. His parents chose Gabriel because he was born on the Catholic holy day of Annunciation, which celebrates Archangel Gabriel's visit to Mary. Even the name "Mensah" has an interesting story: in many West African nations, last names are not passed from father to child but chosen by the parents. "Mensah" simply means "third-born son" — which is the case for Chaplain Mensah. Finally, there is the question of whether to address him

as "Sir," "Lieutenant Commander," "Chaplain" or "Father." He certainly rates all of these terms.

But that is only the beginning.

Chaplain Mensah is neither large nor loud. He does not stand out in a crowd. There is no reason to pick him out as someone whose life story might be exceptional, intriguing, and admirable. Furthermore, he does not act like he is any different from the rest of us. When conversing with Chaplain Mensah, the main impression one gets is that he is full of humor, determination, and zest for life. When he talks, his hands fly about him, accenting his words, and if he is standing, as when giving sermons, his entire body gets involved in conveying his message.

I start our interview with basic questions — name, age, place of birth. The answers to these standard questions were not as simple as I had expected, and by the time I get the answers, I have learned quite a bit about a foreign country, people, languages and culture! The Republic of Ghana is located between Cote D'Ivoire and Togo. Ghana covers 92,100 square miles (about three times the size of South Carolina). The Ashanti are only one of many tribes in Ghana. In his elegantly clipped English, Chaplain Mensah describes his ethnic group: "Ashantis have traditionally been warriors; we are a very direct people, and we have a lot of pride." No wonder he fits in with Marines!

But the third-born, born-on-a-Tuesday Ghanaian has come a long way from his Ashanti origins. If there is one person he credits for this, it is his childhood role model, Father Vincent Murphy. Young Gabriel admired the Irish priest for having left his home and family to live among a foreign people. He lost no time in following in the missionary's footsteps: "I knew very early that I wanted to be a priest. I was twelve when I went to Seminary." After studying philosophy at St. Peter's

See Getting to know, p. 12

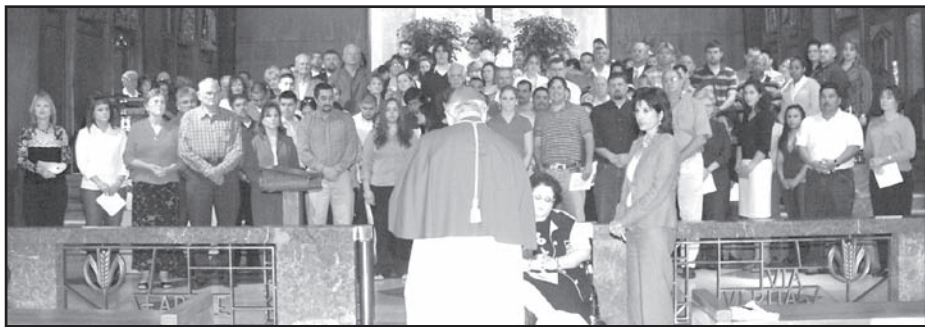


Photo by Cindy Brewer

On the first Sunday of Lent, Feb. 25, 2007, catechumens and candidates are presented with their godparents and sponsors to Bishop David E. Fellhauer, the bishop of the Diocese of Victoria, at the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. Forty-five catechumens from ten parishes and 67 candidates from eight parishes are planning to enter the Catholic faith on the Easter Vigil. Above are the candidates and their sponsors being presented to the bishop at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral in Victoria.

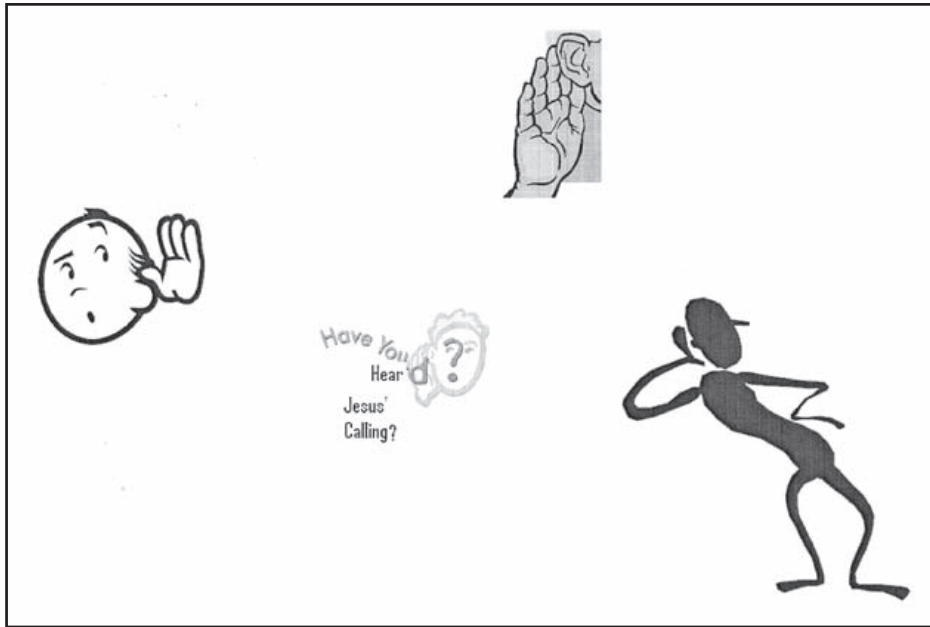
Reporting Abuse

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.



Vocation Art - 2nd Runner-up

Artwork by Aaron Weishuhn • 6th Grade
St. Anthony School, Columbus

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— The adventure — An Ignatian Experience for Ages 19-26 May 17-20, 2007

Four centuries ago, when he was twenty-six, St. Ignatius went through a profound experience that changed his life forever. When all was said and done, he made a few notes in a book known as *The Spiritual Exercises*. He firmly believed: "If I can do it, you can do it." This is about Christian discipleship. It's how we become *men and women for others*.

The *Exercises* can be successfully made at most any stage, but they are specially designed for that proud, bold time in your life when virtually all life-determining options and life-derailing mistakes are made.

The Adventure is a new program at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, intended to recreate the Ignatian experience. It is a personal guided tour of the heart, in silence. Don't come if you just want to hear nice things about God. Do come, if you want to put your life on the line, make decisions and get involved.

This will become, for you, an identity-defining opportunity. Sinners are welcome, of course, but this *Adventure* is not for hypocrites. So much has happened. You've seen the world, and learned a lot. It's time to get back on base, find direction in your storm and reason in your chaos.

The first retreat will be May 17-20, 2007, at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House at 600 N. Shady Shores Dr. in Lake Dallas, Texas. If you are between the ages of 19 and 26, you may sign up by calling Montserrat at (940) 321-6020, or by writing to Carol Ackels e-mail, montcarol@centurytel.net. Cost is \$35. Questions can be directed to Father Nathan Stone, SJ, nstonesj@yahoo.com.

Pray for Vocations

On The Cutting Edge

By Sister Margaret Mary Lavonis, CSC

Does the "c-word" scare you?

For many people, especially young adults, the thought of making a permanent commitment seems to give them goose bumps down their spines. If not goose bumps, at least some anxiety. Promising to do something—anything—forever seems to go against the grain. Does this describe you?

Perhaps part of the reason many young people hesitate to make serious, lifetime commitments is due to a lack of role models. Faithfulness and longevity just do not seem to be the "in" thing these days.

The statistics are staggering. Recently I read that two out of four marriages will end in separation or divorce. It is not uncommon that when a serious problem occurs in a marriage, instead of seeking counseling and trying to find a solution, many take out the yellow pages and look for a lawyer!!!

Unfaithfulness is not limited to the married state. We see it among priests and religious. Why then are we surprised that young people today hesitate to make permanent commitments? Some think it isn't

By Joan Kurkowski-Gillen
Catholic News Service

FORT WORTH, Texas (CNS) — Tarek Saab became an instant celebrity after appearing on NBC's "The Apprentice," one of the most highly rated and critiqued shows on network television.

He spent 10 weeks on the reality show last year before hearing the words "you're fired" from the program's executive producer and host, Donald Trump.

While the 27-year-old lost a chance to work for the high-profile financier, he gained valuable insight into the power of fame and its impact on society.

He feels the culture "is totally, undeniably addicted to entertainment." He urges

young people to spend less time on entertainment and more on the world around them.

"It's no mystery that those in the entertainment world have a strong voice with youth. I'm trying to do something positive with the voice that's been given to me," he told the North Texas Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

A Maronite Catholic and daily communicant, Saab uses his business acumen and new visibility to advance pro-life causes across the country.

The show opened doors for him, he said, "and gave me a platform from which to speak about faith to other young people," he said.

He is the CEO of his own company in Fort Worth called Lionheart, which sells Christian apparel for men. He co-founded it with David Colletti, 27, a practicing attorney and Lionheart's chief operating officer. The two met as students at The Catholic University of America in Washington.

Saab spoke in mid-January at the Life Revival Youth Rally 2007, which drew more than 375 teens and their parents.

Selected as a cast member for the fifth cycle of "The Apprentice" after a production crew visited his office at Texas Instruments in Dallas, Saab told his audi-

ence that he was surprised to find himself showered with attention just days after the first show aired.

"Every day I'd go on the Internet and see my face splattered on the screen and people talking about me on blogs," he explained. "There were different articles in the newspapers too. ... People are really captivated by reality TV, and that's a little bizarre."

Saab, who does not own a television

set, advised his listeners to stop spending so much time on entertainment and start thinking about what's really happening in the world around them.

"There's a lot going on out there (that) we need to know about," he said. "In

the past 50 years, there's been a complete disregard for the dignity and sanctity of life."

Besides abortion and teen pregnancy rates having an effect on society, he said, there are other issues young people need to study, including infanticide, euthanasia and embryonic stem-cell research.

"Why do we need to know about these things? Because, as my father used to say, 'Evil happens when good men do nothing,'" Saab continued. "And the only way to stop evil starts with a change of heart and a change of behavior."

"One of the ways we protect those around us from evil in today's environment is to change the way we act," he pointed out. "Pornography and how we look at and treat women is part of that. We need to recognize that some of the entertainment we're addicted to, and some of the things society tells us are perfectly fine, are really not good for us."

He called women the heart and soul of the family and the world.

Commitments take work. We don't say forever once and get it over with. To be true to a vow or commitment we have to be willing to say yes over and over again. We need to recommit ourselves and strive to deepen our commitments as time goes on.

As I reflect upon the seeming lack of willingness to make life commitments, I think another problem—besides not enough role models—is the fear that we are going to fail. We forget to count on God's help and faithfulness to us. God's abundant grace is there to help us live out our commitments. God must be in the center of every marriage and every religious vocation.

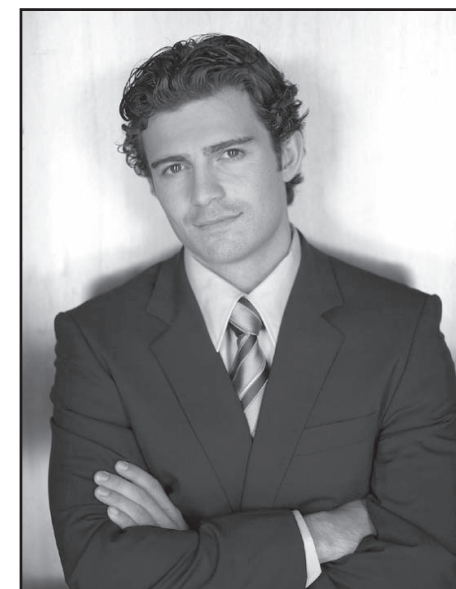
It is true that sometimes things do not always work out and commitments can be damaged or abandoned, but this should be the exception, not the rule.

To become whole persons we must dedicate ourselves to some one or some thing. Commitment requires one to go out of his or herself. A person who is self-centered usually finds commitments difficult.

Commitments challenge us to grow and become better people. They stretch us into becoming what God wants us to be.

God is our ultimate role model. God made a covenant with his people. No matter how much they sinned, God never abandoned them. That still holds true today. That is the message of Jesus. God is committed to us for the long haul.

He counseled the teenage girls in the audience to show their respect for life



Tarek Saab

through chastity and respecting the physical nature of womanhood.

He also urged his young listeners to study and know their Catholic faith, read the lives of the saints for inspiration and receive Christ in the Eucharist.

Lionheart, launched last August, produces T-shirts and ball caps that incorporate Christian symbols with brief, sometimes one-word, messages from Scripture — such as a black T-shirt with a white cross and the single word printed beneath it: "Testify."

All of the items are made in the United States, are sweatshop-free and are made from materials that come from countries where religion is not oppressed, according to Colletti, Saab's partner. In addition, the company donates 10 percent of its profits to pro-life causes.

In a recent interview with *The Catholic Standard & Times*, newspaper of the Philadelphia Archdiocese, Saab and Colletti said they expect to expand the line to include ties, long-sleeved T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts.

They also will launch a women's line this spring, under the name Maris Stella, in honor of the Mary's "Star of the Sea" title. It will include maternity wear.

"We want to promote life," Saab said. "What's more beautiful than a pregnant woman?"

"I don't see how you can be a man and not be pro-life," said Colletti, who grew up in Philadelphia and attended Catholic high school there.

"One of the greatest things God called men to be is defenders of women and children. We're called to defend life, especially innocent life," he said.

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A Culture of Life

By Christopher West



The Church Speaks for God

Does the Church actually believe she speaks for God and knows “the truth”? That’s so arrogant!

Yes, the Church actually believes she speaks for God and has been granted by Christ a share in his own infallibility. That’s an amazingly bold claim with which we all must seriously reckon. We can draw only one of two conclusions: Either the Church is extremely arrogant—or, just maybe, she’s right.

In the end, there’s no middle ground. If the Church is right, then we will see her as a great blessing from God, and we will want to conform our lives to what she teaches. Even when we may not understand a certain why behind a teaching, we will trust that it will come to light in due time. On the other hand, if the Church is extremely arrogant, then we should not even want to be associated with the name Catholic.

We live in a culture that rejects objective truth. “That may be true for you, but not for me,” people say. Or, “Anybody’s opinion is just as valid as anyone else’s.” We’ve all been affected by these attitudes.

But Jesus taught something very different. He taught that he is the truth (see Jn 14:6), and he established a Church that he promised would teach the truth (see Jn 16:13). He calls us to accept that. We are free not to accept it. But it’s a terribly weighty decision that we dare not take lightly.

How can the Church claim to teach without error? History shows that the Church has made lots of mistakes and done some horrible things. What about Galileo, the Crusades, and the Inquisition?

In 2000, John Paul II publicly sought God’s mercy and forgiveness for the past sins committed by members of the Church. As this gesture so clearly indicates, the Church doesn’t claim that all her members and leaders throughout history have never spoken in error or never made mistakes. The charisma that protects the Church from error applies to her definitive teachings on matters of *faith and morals*.

Certainly members of the Church, including some priests, bishops, and popes, have not always lived according to the teachings of their own faith. They have

made mistakes. At times, terrible things have been done in the name of “the Church.”

This is scandalous and can weaken people’s faith in the Church. Yet the fact that the Church has endured so much corruption and is still standing after two thousand years also bears testimony to Christ’s words when he founded the Church upon Peter: “The powers of death shall not prevail against [the Church]” (Mt 16:18).

Why has there been corruption in the Church? First of all because the Church is made up of people such as you and me. As the saying goes, the Church is not a “hotel for saints,” it’s a “hospital for sinners.” Yes, we’re all called to be saints, but we don’t reach perfection in this life. Meanwhile, as Christ said, both wheat and weeds will be growing in the Church until the harvest (see Mt 13:24-30).

But the good news is this: even when individual members of the Church have been unfaithful, even when in certain times of history the weeds have seemed more plentiful than the wheat, Christ has never abandoned his Bride. While members of the Church have made mistakes, the Church has never erred in those teachings on faith and morals that she has proclaimed in a definitive manner, and she never will. This is God’s own promise.

Christopher West is a research fellow and faculty member of the **Theology of the Body Institute** in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Reprinted from *Good News About Sex and Marriage: Honest Questions and Answers About Catholic Teaching* (rev. ed.) © 2004 by Christopher West, St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1-800-488-0488. Syndicated by www.OneMoreSoul.com.

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It is updated each weekend.

Families & Faith Workshop coming to Victoria

A workshop based on the new book *Families & Faith: A Vision and Practice for Parish Leaders* and sponsored by the Generations of Faith Project and the Center for Ministry Development (CMD) will be held in 21 cities throughout the United States and Canada, including an April 17 workshop in Victoria, Texas.

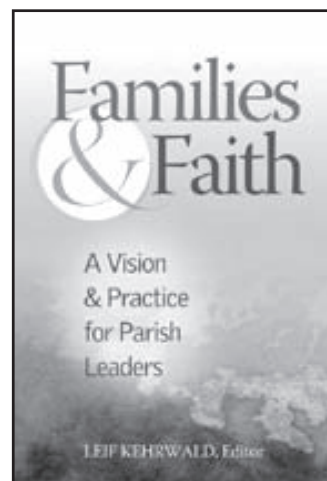
This workshop raises the bar for parish leaders, as well as families and households, to make a stronger commitment to exploring faith at home. It is designed for all parish leaders: pastors, DREs, youth ministers, pastoral ministers, Generations of Faith teams and anyone whose ministry touches the lives of families.

The workshop will cover four topics: realities facing families and households today; Christian vision of family and household life with implications for how to help families become intentional about their desire to grow in faith; connecting life and faith through the introduction of a

four-step process that helps families and households recognize God’s activity in their lives and grow in faith together; and specific tips, strategies, and innovations for helping families integrate Catholic faith and values into the fabric of home life.

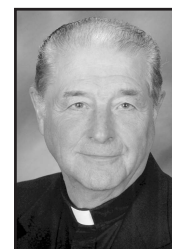
The Families & Faith workshop will be held at Holy Family Parish, 704 Mallette Drive off Loop 463 in Victoria from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. It will be presented by Mariette Martineau, CMD project coordinator and contributing author of *Families & Faith*. Workshop fee is \$39 per person, which includes lunch, refreshments and workshop materials.

A selection of family and intergenerational resources will be available at reduced cost, including the two new books: *Families and Faith: A Vision and Practice for Parish Leaders* and *Your Catholic Family*.



Question Corner

By Father John Dietzen
Catholic News Service



When Jesus got angry

Q. We know that Jesus as God could not sin. But in his humanity did he have some imperfections? For example, when he drove the money changers out of the temple, there seemed to be a righteous violence; at least some artists picture the scene that way.

Also, while usually sympathetic and kind to sinners, he seems to act harshly in some cases, saying for example that those abusing children would be better not having been born or having a millstone around their necks and drowned. The religious leaders of his community who mislead the people receive similar treatment. How are we to understand these seemingly harsh acts? (Ohio)

A. Anger is not automatically bad; it’s how we react to anger that is critical. When we or someone we love is being injured or abused, anger is good. It is part of the equipment nature provides to give us strength to combat whatever evil is happening.

This was true with Jesus. He was angry, for example, with religious leaders who misled people, even urged them to reject Jesus and his message.

Jesus did not sin, but that does not mean he did not have normal human tendencies and passions, even weaknesses, which make human beings human.

From the Gospels, it appears quite clear that Jesus had to learn how to use such human powers. Luke tells us that, as he developed into adulthood, Jesus “advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man” (Lk 2:52).

The letter to the Hebrews tells us Jesus was “beset by weakness” as we are and “learned obedience” through his suffering

(Heb 5:2, 8).

This implies no taint of sin in Jesus, simply that while he was truly God, he was also, as we believe, truly human, a real human being.

(A free brochure answering questions Catholics ask about receiving the Eucharist is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Box 5515, Peoria, IL 61612.

Holy Trinity Seminary Auxiliary to Host Lenten Reflection

IRVING — A “Lenten Reflection” will be held Sunday, March 25, at Holy Trinity Seminary, 3131 Vince Hagan Drive, Irving, Texas, from 1-3 p.m. in the chapel.

Rev. Msgr. Michael G. Duca, rector, will present the mini-retreat “Christ Behind Me, Christ Beside Me, Christ in Front of Me,” sponsored by the Trinitarian Auxiliary, an organization which supports and encourages seminarians through prayer, sacrifice and service.

The reflection will be followed by a reception in the Student Lounge. There is no charge for the event, but space is limited. Anyone interested in making reservations should call Rita Backus, auxiliary president, (972) 438-2212, Ext. 500.

Holy Trinity Seminary is a Roman Catholic seminary dedicated to the education and formation of men for the diocesan priesthood.

For additional information and a map for directions, please see the Web site: www.holytrinityseminary.com.

Diocese of Victoria Library & Media Center

Book of the Month

Three Saints: Women Who Changed History This book gives insight into the lives of Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, and Genevieve of Paris and how they overcame cultural barriers that restricted women of their time.

Other Books

- *A Shower of Blessings*
- *A Century of Catholic Converts*
- *In My Brother's Image*
- *Bringing Home the Gospel*
- *What's Happening to Home? Balancing Work, Life, and Refuge in the Information Age*

Video of the Month

Holiness FamilyStyle An empowering video designed to help parents feel comfortable with their faith and confident in their ability to share it with their children. 40 minutes.

Other Videos

- *The Proud Tree*
- *St. Patrick*
- *St. Patrick (Saints Gallery)*

On DVD

- *With You Always: A Reflection featuring the song "Mary Did You Know"*
- *To Sing is to Pray Twice: The Rosary*

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

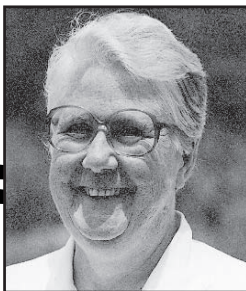
If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or to a law enforcement agency within 48 hours of the time you suspect the child had been or may be abused or neglected.

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Sisterly Thoughts

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



Lent – Springtime in the Church

The word “Lent” is derived from an old English word “Lenten” which meant “springtime.” In the Church this springtime – which we English-speaking people call Lent – developed in the early Church from the period of intense preparation of catechumens for Baptism at the Easter Vigil. The length of this season of preparation is based upon the time that Jesus spent praying and fasting in the desert.

Let each of us use this liturgical springtime to prepare for Easter, and to grow spiritually as we place greater emphasis on prayer, fasting and penitence. As to prayer, there are numerous occasions on which we can turn to God in prayer. Setting aside some time for quiet personal prayer will get us in touch with whom we are to become as creatures made in the image and likeness of God. Joining with the parish community in public worship and prayer will strengthen us in our spiritual growth. One of the Church’s favorite devotional exercises, especially during Lent, is praying the “Stations of the Cross,” as we focus our prayer on representations of fourteen scenes of Christ’s passion. These scenes or “Stations” – as we call them – can be reflected on by an individual in private prayer or by a group in public prayer. This practice began in the early Church in Jerusalem when early Christians visited sites which they believed were the places where Jesus suffered and died. Over time, Christians who could not travel to Jerusalem wanted pictorial representations to assist them in this

kind of prayer, so the idea of shrines or “stations” was developed. Most Churches have weekly “Stations” – or the “Way of the Cross” during Lent; so let us participate in this ancient prayer tradition.

Throughout the history of the Church, prayer, especially during Lent, has been accompanied by fasting. Fasting from food and abstaining from meat on the Fridays in Lent should be under girded by fasting from anything that gets between God and us. Each of us has a habit, an attachment, or something that may be disrupting our relationship with God and one another. Let us each declare our special area of fasting! That fasting can be part of the penitence that the season represents. This penitence can also be manifested through our prayer as well as through sacrifice and almsgiving done in the name of our Suffering Savior. As we share ourselves and our resources with others, we prune ourselves and prepare ourselves for renewed spiritual growth. Let us then, bud forth during this liturgical “Springtime.”

**By Margaret McGettrick,
Director of Education for the
Texas Catholic Conference.**

On Wednesday, February 7, 2007, over five thousand advocates gathered at the Capitol here in Austin to persuade the State Legislators to support a school choice bill during this legislative session. Among those gathered were representatives of many varied religious, ethnic and socioeconomic groups who shared the common goal of seeking the best possible education for all children throughout the state, including the principals and superintendent of the Diocese of Victoria Catholic schools.

Here in Texas, public school choice gives students in low performing schools the opportunity to transfer to another public school but less than one percent of eligible students actually do so. Unfortunately schools are not required to accept transfers leaving parents and students no choice but to stay put. Charter schools provide another form of school choice that has shown promise, but has failed to reach all of the students who need it, largely because of a legislative cap limiting their numbers. While these choices have contributed to increased achievement for a relative few, they are insufficient to meet the needs of all Texas students. The time has come for parochial and private schools to be included as viable choices alongside public and charter schools if all parents, regardless of finances, are given the responsibility of educating their child.

One of the speakers at the School Choice Rally was reporter John Stossel who spoke eloquently about his recent documentary “Stupid in America” which aired on ABC last month. He compared the educational system here in the United States to the failed attempts at monopolies in the former Soviet Union.

“American schools don’t teach as well as schools in other countries because they are government monopolies, and monopo-

Locals earn honors from Catholic Life Insurance

SAN ANTONIO—Victoria Diocesan residents were honored recently by Catholic Life Insurance, the nation’s 9th largest fraternal benefit society.

The Scardino Agency, led by Michael Scardino, FIC, was honored as one of the top “General Agencies of the Year” in the company.

Royce Shimek, FIC of Schulenburg, and Geraldine P. Martinez, FIC of Bastrop, each earned the prestigious Catholic Life Insurance “Twelve Apostle” award as leading producers of life insurance and retirement annuity sales. Shimek also received a twenty-year service award while Martinez received a fifteen-year service award.

The individuals were honored during a special awards ceremony held January 20, during the 2007 Leaders Conference in Austin.

Other associates honored for their ser-

vice include Albert Smaistrle, FIC, of East Bernard; Wendy Janak, FIC of Hallettsville; and Patrick Klokik, FIC of Shiner; Chris Merta, FIC, of Nada; Steve Labay Jr. of Ganado; Calvin Pfeil Jr., FIC, of El Campo; Patsy Wiley, FIC, of Kingsland; Ed Sula, FIC of Fayetteville; Karen Kutac of Weimar; Bert Kenna, FIC of Yoakum; Charles Leopold of Hallettsville; Linda Holubec of College Station; Margie Janecka of Weimar; Renee Talas of East Bernard; and Cynthia Beseda of East Bernard.

Founded in 1901, Catholic Life Insurance is the nation’s 9th largest fraternal life insurer. The San Antonio-based company offers life insurance, retirement annuities, IRAs and fraternal benefits to individuals, families, and businesses. The company is financially strong with assets exceeding \$650 million and insurance-in-force surpassing \$1.69 billion.



Michael Scardino, FIC

Sacred Heart School receives grants

HALLETTSVILLE—The Sacred Heart School in Hallettsville received \$121,050 in a grant from the Dickson-Allen Foundation. The funds will be used towards the expenses for the construction of a multi-purpose activity center (\$73,000), purchase of new technology equipment (\$35,750), and the general operation fund (\$12,000).

Actual cost of the construction of the activity center is \$83,000, of which they

the school has received through a \$10,000 grant from the Kenedy Foundation. The activity center will involve constructing a metal building over the existing concrete slab on the east side of the campus.

The school administration asks its supporters to keep the Dickson-Allen Foundation and their board of directors in your prayers, for they have been very kind and generous to Sacred Heart over the past 10 years.

School Choice ... A Parent’s Decision?

lies don’t have much incentive to compete. In Belgium, by contrast, the money is attached to the kids – it’s a kind of voucher system. Government funds education – at many different kinds of schools – but if a school can’t attract students and perform well, it goes out of business. When monopolies rule, there is little choice, and little gets done. In America the phone company was once a government-supported monopoly. All the phones were black and all the calls were expensive. With compe-

tion, things have changed for the better. We pay less for our phone calls. If we’re unhappy with our phone service, we switch companies. **Why can’t kids benefit from similar competition in education?**

Competition inspires people to do what we didn’t think we could do. If people got to choose their kids’ school, education options would be endless. There could

See School Choice, p. 8

Corrected Advertisement



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2007 Pilgrimages with Betty Urbanovsky

Shrines of the United States May — Ground Zero/Statue of Liberty/St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (First American Saint)/Immaculate Conception Cathedral/St. John Neumann and much more...

Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Medjugorje and Dubrovnik June 15 - June 25 — See the beautiful lakes in Croatia/Medjugorje/St. Blaise

Shrines of the United States and Canada Fall Foliage — August/September: National Shrine of Divine Mercy/St. Anne of Beaupre/St. Joseph’s and much more...

Shrines of France, Spain and Portugal (Fatima Anniversary, October 13) October 1-16 — Santiago de Compostella/Garbandal/Lourdes/Fatima/Lisbon

Holy Land November — Father Michael Lyons

For more information or to reserve your place, please contact Betty at:
911 Fahrenthold, El Campo, TX 77437; (979) 543-2333; or e-mail:
burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net

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From The Pastor's Desk

The Catholic Lighthouse will occasionally feature "From the Pastor's Desk" by Father Bob Knippenberg, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Shiner. Currently his topic is on the sacrament of marriage. To read each week's message, please go to the parish Web site at www.shineratholicchurch.org.

"From the Pastor's Desk" – Feb. 4, 2007

Over the next few months I want to reflect with you on the Sacrament of Marriage. Why? First, our parish mission statement says that "We provide spiritual growth to all and service to the parish and community through evangelization, education and stewardship." Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation titled "The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World" (1981), said that "the Church ought to apply herself to understanding the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today, in order to fulfill the Church's task of serving. This understanding is, therefore, an inescapable requirement of the work of evangelization."

Second, I believe that marriage is the forgotten vocation. Let's be honest, when we hear the word "vocation" we think of priests and religious. Yet marriage is obviously the vocation of most people in the Church! Oh sure, we mention marriage in our weekly prayer for vocations after each Mass but is Catholic Christian marriage really anymore seen to be and lived as a response to a call from the Almighty God who created the universe ... or has it become little more than something we do because "we, oops, accidentally fell (whatever that means??) in love?"

Third, marriage and family life as we have known it and as God intended it, is disappearing from Western culture. It's not just disappearing; it is undergoing a full frontal assault. The Second Vatican Council, in its pastoral constitution titled "The Church in the Modern World," said: "The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of the community of marriage and the family." We cannot stand by without so much as a whimper and watch marriage and family life ... human and Christian society ... be destroyed!

Nationwide, approximately 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. Locally, last year in Lavaca County approximately 120 marriage licenses were issued. Last year, 67 divorce decrees were granted. That means that 56 percent (greater than the national average!) of marriages in Lavaca County are ending in divorce ... the well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of the community of marriage and the family." This is not someone else's problem somewhere else. It is our problem.

It is my hope and prayer that by focus-

ing our attention on marriage we can help our children recapture the beauty and meaning of the sacrament by which the life of the Holy Trinity is made a concrete reality in our Church and in our lives. May God grant us the grace to seek the light of his truth and to live it with bold courage!

"From the Pastor's Desk" – Feb. 11, 2007 Natural Institution and Sacrament

Matrimony is unique among the sacraments in that it is a natural institution raised to the sacramental level. This alone tells us how valuable and important marriage must be in God's design. What are its essential characteristics?

First, marriage is a natural union of opposite sexes, one man and one woman. This union surpasses any other kind of union, including unnatural unions, which ape marriage without possessing its essential qualities.

Second, marriage is a permanent union, dissolvable only by the death of either spouse. Because of its contractual character, many cultures allow the public authority to dissolve the marriage contract, but this necessarily creates an unfortunate tension, for by its very nature marriage is permanent, as is clearly reflected in the vows. Third, marriage is an exclusive union. It both demands and depends upon the fidelity of the spouses to each other alone. It is opposed to every kind of casual sharing or group distribution of spousal privileges.

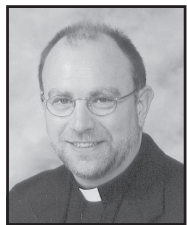
Fourth, the permanence and exclusivity of marriage are guaranteed by a formal contract. As such, the character of marriage is both higher and deeper than any informal and temporary arrangement, such as mere "living together" or concubinage.

Father Bob to offer six-week marriage class

SHINER—If your children today asked you, "Mom, Dad: What is God's plan for a successful marriage?" would you be able to give them an answer? If "yes," GREAT! If not, you might consider participating in "God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage."

Father Bob Knippenberg, pastor of Sts. Cyril & Methodius Church in Shiner will offer a six-week mini-course for anyone (married or unmarried) interested in better understanding God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage. This six-week mini-course will be conducted every Thursday evening (except April 26, 2007) from Thursday, April 12, 2007, through Thursday, May 24, 2007. Sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. and end promptly at 8:00 p.m. Sessions will be held in the parish hall (next to the parish gym). Childcare (ages 1-10) will be provided free of charge in the parish activity center.

Please call the rectory to register for the mini-course (so sufficient supplementary materials may be ordered—\$7 charge for supplemental workbook) and to let us know whether or not you will be using the childcare services. For more information, please call the rectory at (361) 594-3836.



Father Bob
Knippenberg

School Choice ... A Parent's Decision?

Continued from p. 7

soon be technology schools, science schools, virtual schools where you learn at home on your computer, sports schools, music schools, schools that go all year, schools with uniforms, schools that open early and keep kids later, and, who knows what else. If there were competition, all kinds of new ideas would bloom."

One of the country's greatest advocates of school choice, Milton Friedman, said that the beauty of competition is that we can get rid of the bad private schools as well as the bad public schools. Then we would be left with only high performing and effective schools from which parents could choose to send their children. Among the research for those who have participated in school choice programs that enable students to transfer to another public, parochial or private school, tests scores have been higher, special education students are less bullied, schools are less racially segregated and students exhibit stronger civic values.

I believe that one of the challenges we face in any new endeavor is that many people fear change of any kind. As a prin-

cipal of an elementary school in Corpus Christi in the mid eighties I remember having countless meetings with parents and school groups over a period of several years before we took the "leap" to have a yearly educational calendar. After its implementation it was exciting to see the school grow in programs and numbers but most especially in student achievement and overall personal growth. Likewise in the middle school I was privileged to lead, the implementation of gender separate classes benefited the students academically as well as socially. As we go through life new territory can be unfamiliar and daunting but it can also be full of wonderful surprises.

The bishops of Texas support an expanded school choice initiative that will improve academic outcomes for all Texas students, will increase racial integration, and will help to reduce the inequities faced by students of various socioeconomic backgrounds. It is our hope that a fair and just public policy will empower our parents to choose what is best for their children.

Two remaining nuns say their time in local monastery 'a gift'

Continued from p. 1

ery that they met many people, essentially turning it into a means of ministry for the sisters.

"People would come into the bakery and tell us their needs. We found them to be so warm and gracious. We met all kinds of people and it's them that we are going to miss the most," she said.

THE JOY

In the years that they've lived in Victoria, the sisters said there have been many highlights during their time here.

"We are silly sometimes and have had a lot of fun in this monastery. I don't think a lot of people know that, but nuns can be fun," said Sister Katherine, who jokingly added that her age was 26. "Probably one of the biggest highlights for me was getting my book published."

Katherine spearheaded an effort to collect the stories of different Poor Clare sisters, gathering almost 100 stories of the lives and vocations from sisters around the world. Sister Katherine compiled the book and it was published in 1994.

For Sister Gabriel, who had spent 33 years of her life at her monastery in Omaha before spending another 20 years in Victoria, one of her biggest highlights was

watching Sister Katherine take her solemn vows in 1998.

"As a sister, first you make your first vows and then you make your solemn vows, which is for life. You take the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and enclosure and it was a truly joyous occasion when Sister Katherine took her vows."

THE PATRON

St. Clare of Assisi was born in 1194, the eldest daughter of noble parents. At the age of 18, she left her privileged life, according to Sister Gabriel, to become the first woman follower of St. Francis of Assisi and later founded the Order of Poor Ladies (now known as the Poor Clares).

St. Clare is known for embracing poverty after the example of Jesus' self-emptying. Currently, the order has 20,000 members throughout the world, Sister Gabriel added.

The sisters are busy right now going through the process of selling the monastery before they leave but said they will continue to go about their daily lives as usual until they leave. For more information on the monastery or the life of St. Clare, go to their Web site: www.poorclaresvictoria.org.

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El Campo K of C Spring Picnic

Knights of Columbus Council 2490

Sunday, March 25

at the K of C Hall located at Hwy. 71 and Armory Road

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Entertainment
for the family



Antique
Tractor Show

A Chicken-Barbecue Dinner
Dine-in or Drive-thru

Serving begins at 11:00 a.m.

Free Dance!
Music provided by
Bobby Jones Polka Band
1:00 to 5:00 p.m.



TIP OF TEXAS GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL HOLDS RETREAT—Eighty-eight girls and 22 adults attended the Girl Scout Share God's Love retreat held at the First English Lutheran Church in Victoria January 26-27. This is the 25th year the retreat has been offered to the Girl Scouts. Lutheran College students called the YARPs (Young Adult Resource People) attended the retreat and taught the girls about sharing God's love and forgiveness. Activities completed were crafts, songs and games. The retreat is a non-denomination sleepover for girls of all faiths, age 5 through 17.

Super Youth Extravaganza 2007

By Debbie Vanelli, director
Youth and Young Adult Ministry

While many people chose to spend Super Bowl Sunday consuming way too many calories and arguing about which company had the best commercial during

Michael Huseman, O.S.F., kept the audience captivated as they spoke about God's plan for each of us and how his plan has manifested itself in their lives. To help reinforce the message, each parish in attendance was given lesson plans that could



Diocesan youth try to catch footballs thrown by religious.

the game, 700 young people and adults filled the Holy Family Activity Center for an inspirational event that has many still talking. Was it the one-handed somersault that Father David Berger did on stage or the five hundred footballs that were thrown into the audience by a dozen religious men and women of the diocese that has everyone talking?? Well that certainly is part of it, but the bigger part of the conversations involve the riveting message regarding everyone's personal call to holiness.

Fathers Dan Morales, Bob Knippenberg, David Berger, Bryan Heyer, Kirby Hlavaty and Sister Mary

be used in religious education programs that resonated with the theme.

Throughout the day the young people



Father Bob Knippenberg speaks about our relationship with God.

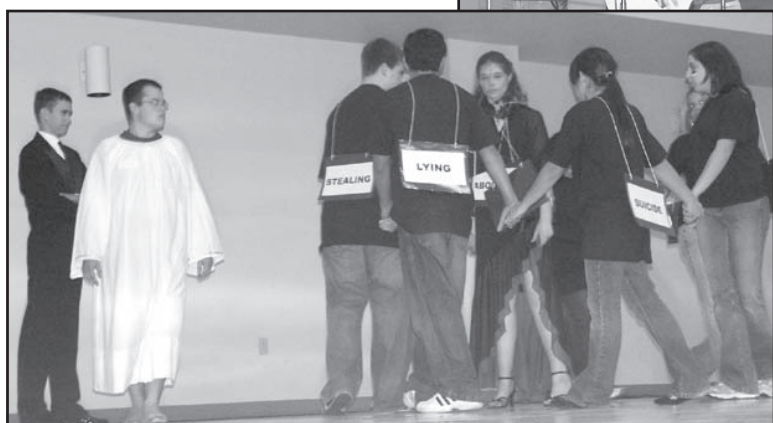
(below) Jose Ortega and members of the youth music ministry at Our Lady of Sorrows entertain the youth.



Priests and youth leadership team lead the teens in a praise and worship song.

with icebreakers, games and skits.

The students in attendance also participated in Souper Bowl of Car-ing, by donating 772 cans of food to those in need in our diocese. The day culminated with Liturgy celebrated by Most Reverend David Fellhauer, and concelebrated by Fathers Dan Morales, Greg Korenek, Kirby Hlavaty, Bob Knippenberg, Bryan Heyer, David Berger, Michael Petering, Samuel Appiasi, Msgr. Peter Agbenu, Deacon Douglas Tromblee and Deacon Luan Van Tran.



Adam Beard plays Jesus searching to help Kelsey Hudson whom the devil, Ethan Chamberlain, tempted.

YOUTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 11 — Confirmation Retreat at St. Michael's in Cuero
- March 25 — Confirmation Retreat at St. John's in New Taiton
- March 30 — Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament for the Youth/Multi-purpose Building Fund
- April 29 — Youth Leadership Training, Camp David Training
- June 3 — Rocky Mountain High, staff training and parents meeting
- June 8-10 — Camp David Staff Development
- June 10-12 — Junior High Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 13 — Elementary Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 13-15 — Junior High Camp, Spiritual Renewal Center
- June 25-28 — Discipleship Week, Spiritual Renewal Center
- July 7-15 — Rocky Mountain High at Pagosa Springs, Colorado

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

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

Coming of Age

By Erick Rommel
Catholic News Service



Going beyond the Bible's greatest hits

As a fan of the music group U2, I found it interesting to learn that the Church of England will incorporate the band's music into religious services as a way to bring people to their faith and raise money and awareness for anti-hunger and anti-poverty efforts around the world.

The ties to religion in U2's lyrics are not difficult to find, especially if you know that several members of the band searched for their own religious path early in their careers.

In thinking of my favorite U2 songs, a random question came to mind that each of us should ask ourselves: When was the last time I read the Bible?

I am sure the connection between the biggest rock band in the world and a question about the best-selling book in the history of the world isn't readily apparent, but follow my train of thought. When you think of a band, you think of its most popu-

lar songs. But if you are a fan, your favorite songs are often those that don't receive the most radio airplay.

For many of us, the same is true about the Bible. We hear the lector every week at Mass, meaning we are exposed to "the greatest hits," but we rarely go deeper into the catalog, to use a phrase from the music industry.

Many of us know Psalms 23, "The LORD is my shepherd, there is nothing I lack," but how many of us know that "Keep me the apple of your eye" comes from Psalm 17 or that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" comes from Psalm 111.

If we allow it, the Bible can entertain, educate and make us better people; something neither John Grisham nor J.K. Rowling can do. Yet, we embrace their works while keeping the Bible at arm's length.

To overcome this obstacle, we need to read the Bible in the way it was intended, not as one book but as many. When approached in this manner, the Bible becomes much more approachable and entertaining.

Perhaps you will want to start with the shortest book of the Bible, the Third Letter of John. If you can't find it because it is so short, look immediately after the Second Letter of John or immediately prior to the Book of Jude.

The Third Letter of John is less than 500 words, shorter than this column. In it he offers words of encouragement to Gaius and requests continued support in spreading the young faith.

Once you have completed the Third Letter of John, a task you could complete during the commercial break of your favorite TV show, turn to the shortest book in the Old Testament, Obadiah, which contains a battle cry against an enemy of Israel: "Though you go as high as the eagle, and your nest be set among the stars, from there will I bring you down, says the LORD."

And to think many say Stephen King writes the best thrillers!

When the Bible no longer intimidates, you will learn aspects of your faith that may amaze you. As you leave church and reflect upon your newfound knowledge, stop and listen to the radio for a moment. You may find the lyrics of U2 reflecting the word of the Lord. As Bono sings in "Gloria" and Paul writes in his letter to Colossians, "Only in you I'm complete."



Sacred Heart celebrates “SHCS: A Call Through Five Centuries”

HALLETTSVILLE—Sacred Heart Catholic School was surely in the mind of God from the beginning, but on Sat., Jan. 27, 2007, the pageant, “Sacred Heart Catholic School: A Call Through Five Centuries,” portrayed the story beginning in 16th century France. The cast included students, faculty, parents, alumni and friends of Sacred Heart School. After the final curtain call, several hundred people mingled as they shared the excitement of the production.

The pageant written by Deacon Gabriel Espinosa and Ida Bludau, directed by Ruth

Barton and assisted by Sister Emiliana Grafe and Candy Hines was brought to life with the sound and lighting expertise of Bob and Lois Weiss. More than 40 costumed characters added to the beauty and entertainment.

Elaborate 16th century French dress highlighted the story of Jeanne de Matel, born in 1596. Her ‘yes’ to God was the beginning of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament who eventually came to Hallettsville to establish the school, which was the first public school in town, open to all children. The story,

from her birth to death, gave everyone an appreciation of how worthwhile accomplishments are built on the life and work of others.

Act II, told the story of Sacred Heart School and provided a glimpse into the early days of the Hallettsville community. As a farm family met the Sisters and shared their value of hard work, they discovered they could open new doors for their children through education and that they could pay the Sisters by sharing milk and eggs or doing some needed work around the school.

Progress through the years showcased the curriculum with little girls sharing the Latin, French, Spanish, Czech and German they studied in school. Many ‘recognized’ Msgr. Morkovsky as he directed the ongoing building program. Current students emphasized the accomplishments of Sacred Heart School today proudly carrying trophies and awards for academics,

the arts, sports, and for being the overall winner of TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools) for five years.

The final scene reminded all that the



Nick Barton, Kayla Bludau, Kasey Bludau, James Hemmi performed in “Sacred Heart Catholic School: A Call Through Five Centuries.”



After Bishop Fellhauer blesses the new Texas Vocational Schools’ Welding School, founder H. E. Boone cuts the ribbon at the grand opening of its new location at 1414 N. Laurent Street in Victoria.

Bishop blesses new welding school

By Cindy Brewer

Bishop David E. Fellhauer was asked to bless the newly relocated Texas Vocational Schools’ (TVS) Welding School at its grand opening February 1, 2007, since the first school, built in 1967, had been blessed by a bishop from the Archdiocese of San Antonio, perhaps Archbishop Robert Lucey or Auxiliary Bishop Stephen A. Leven. The staff at the school wanted Bishop Fellhauer’s blessing since the last blessing “lasted 40 years.”

He blessed the facility during the grand opening celebration prior to the ribbon cutting by H. E. Boone.

The TVS Welding School was founded in 1967 by H.E. Boone and the late Angie

S. Boone. It was originally located at 201 E. Rio Grande in Victoria and had 18 welding booths. The new building, occupying 8,400 square feet and holding 32 welding booths, is located at 1414 N. Laurent and is one of the largest welding schools in the state of Texas.

The Texas Vocational Schools also offers business courses: accounting/office assistant; legal office specialist; medical office specialist; and paralegal/legal assistant.

TVS has provided hands-on training and work skills to students for 40 years in the Victoria/Crossroads area and provides qualified, trained employees for the Texas and national workforce.



TREE DEDICATED TO OUR LADY OF VICTORY—A tree was planted in front of the Our Lady of Victory Convent in memory of Our Lady of Victory School principal Sister Leonita Barron’s deceased father. At a Friday morning service, Feb. 16, 2007, with the entire student body and faculty present, Father David Berger, parochial vicar of OLV Cathedral, blessed the live oak tree in honor of Ysabel Barron. Sister Leonita’s mother, Rafaela Barron, was also present for the service. Sister Leonita lives at the convent which is located next to the OLV elementary school.



Young dancers from the Keller Academy of Performing Arts perform a jazz number for the Celebrate Life concert held at the old East Bernard high school gymnasium January 27, 2007. The KAPA dancers were just one of over a dozen performing groups and soloists that performed in the eighth annual, multi-denominational Celebrate Life concert.

Celebrate Life concert brings a line-up of 85 praising the Lord

EAST BERNARD—The East Bernard old high school gym was the place to be Saturday evening, January 27, 2007, for a free concert celebrating every aspect of life.

Entire families ... babies and grandparents were in attendance! Close to 300 attended the eighth annual “Celebrate Life” concert that provides the surrounding area with quality Christian entertainment by various local groups coming together in song and dance to celebrate all life.

Performances included ballet and jazz from Keller Academy of Performing Arts; a skit from the CDA Saint Bernadette Court 1108; the Holy Cross Catholic Church Youth Choir; soloists Linda Kutach, Melody Kirschke, Miss Sarah Sims, Corinne Mica, Christa Simpson, Jerry Boettcher accompanied by Christa Simpson on the keyboard, and Nate Pope accompanied by Tommy Pryor; The Christian Ballet Angels of East Bernard Dance and Tumbling; the Christian Ballet Dancers; a matrimony skit featuring as bride and groom Walt and Jady Boettcher; “A Cup of Blessings” story by Bobby and JoAnn Cowan reminding guests not to

wait for special occasions to visit elderly family members and friends; and personal testimonies from Cindy Garza, Makenzie Pope and Mary Garza of the positive outcomes of the True Love Waits program. True Love Waits, now in its 11th year in East Bernard, is a free ministry offered to area teens and their parents with its four-weekend program beginning March 3 this year.

As a closing prayer, the Grand Finale number was an a cappella hymn, “Hallelujah,” presented by the entire concert cast.

“I was blown away by this year’s performance. The singers, dancers, speakers and skit members absolutely outdid themselves. Months of hard work paid off with the most outstanding performance yet!” Mrs. Terrie Vacek, coordinator of the annual event stated.

“This concert brings together all religious denominations for a joint celebration of life, love, thanksgiving and friendship.”

It was an evening of prayerful petitions, thanksgiving, laughter and surprise under the umbrella of spiritually wholesome family entertainment.



Sacred Heart celebrates wedding anniversaries

HALLETTSVILLE—The 125th Anniversary Celebration of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hallettsville continues. At the Feb. 10 and 11 Masses there were special tributes for all the married couples of the parish. With the assistance of several couples, a special presentation of a marriage meditation – “Hands of Matrimony” – was presented during each Mass. Thanks to Mark and Karen Janak, Tom and Sharon Wick and Donald and Joyce Strauss for participating.

Also during the Mass, certificates were presented to the couples attending each Mass that are celebrating 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50 and above years of marriage during the year of 2007. A total of 158 couples fit into these various categories this year. At the Saturday

evening Mass, a special certificate and statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus were presented to Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Kocian, who are the longest married couple in the parish; they will be married 73 years this year.

At the end of each Mass, a prayer card was given to each married couple in attendance and a chocolate candy was presented to each person attending in remembrance of this special recognition of married couples.

A special thanks goes to the Wicks who were the coordinators for this tribute to the married couples of our parish. They were fortunate to have the help of several other parishioners, especially Ed and Peggy Scherer and Frank and JoNell Janeczek, who also volunteered their time and effort to make this a very special time.



Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Kocian are honored as the longest married couple in Sacred Heart Parish in Hallettsville



HOLY FAMILY PARISH RECOGNIZES 25TH ANNIVERSARY—Father Greg Korenek, pastor of Holy Family Parish in Victoria, dedicated a beautiful statue of Jesus, Mary and Joseph on the feast of the Holy Family, December 31, 2006. The white marble statue was hand-carved in Italy and purchased by the Ladies' Altar Society in honor of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the parish. The statue is located on the north side of the church. Pictured are Msgr. Peter Agbenu, Marjorie Tasin, Millie Petrusek, Jo Ann Jalufka and Father Greg Korenek.



ST. JOSEPH ELEMENTARY PUTS ON COMMUNITY PLAY—The Yoakum St. Joseph School (pre-k through 8th grade) presented The Bethlehem Project, a children's Christmas Musical, at the Yoakum Community Center Dec. 14, 2006. The play was directed by Mary Sue Ferrell and Susan Kelley. Joseph was played by Jeremy Kelly, Mary was played by Brandye Jemelka and baby Jesus was Leah Therese Muenich.



BAY CITY KJT SOCIETY NO. 139 DONATES TO HOLY CROSS SCHOOL—

A matching grant of \$250 was made to Holy Cross School in Bay City. Society No. 139 in Bay City held a bake sale fund-raiser on December 27, 2006. A total of \$447 was raised during the bake sale which made for a grand total of \$697 for the school. At the presentation of the grant on January 28, 2007, were (left to right): Society sales representative Dan Stavina, Principal of Holy Cross School Sister Geraldine Pavlik, Society Secretary/Treasurer Vincent Nemec, Society President James Engbrock, Society Chaplain Rev. Casimir Jarzombek and Society Vice-President August Svatek.

ST. ANTHONY BOYS BASKETBALL NORTH ZONE CHAMPS—

The St. Anthony Saints 'A' Boys Basketball team from Columbus was recently named 2006-2007 Diocese of Victoria North Zone Champions. Top: Dillon Matus. Standing l. to r.: Coach (and school principal) John O'Leary, Zachary Tesch, Jimmy Shih, Matthew Rodriguez, Harley Hartigan. Kneeling l. to r.: Jordi Theut, Jordan Glueck, Matthew Delgado, Jacob Christen.



Nazareth Academy Volleyball team goes undefeated

The Nazareth Academy Volleyball Team is the 2006-2007 Victoria Diocese Champion. The team completed an undefeated season, going 14-0. After their run through the South Zone, the Lady Jets took on a tough Sacred Heart team in the championship game, but managed to pull out the win for the title.



Championship teammates included seventh graders: Maddy Buhler, Emily Conti, Dobie Drost, Shelby Hardin, Meghann Hawes and Kate Tucker and eighth graders: Brittany Engelbart, Maddison Franklin, Meagan Hybner, Jordan Klesel, Kaylee Naranjo, Brianna Shimek and Brittany Turley. The team was led by coaches Diana Stastny, Joyce Hawes, and Donna Conti.

The Nazareth Academy Lady Jets Volleyball team celebrated their undefeated season by creating a Volleyball Highlights DVD chronicling their season of hard work, success, and perfect season.



ST. ROSE STUDENT NAMED YOUNG POET—

Haley Nidey, a fifth grader at St. Rose of Lima Catholic School has recently been notified of her selection to be published in the Creative Communication, Inc.'s anthology, “A Celebration of Young Poets.” Her poem was selected from among thousands of entries and chosen for publication. “The fact that you have a student accepted makes a strong statement about your school. Being published represents talent, hard work and dedication from teachers and students,” Thomas K. Worthen, Ph. D., and editor, stated in his letter informing of Nidey's selection.





Puzzle winner to receive “Battling the Corporate Giants – the Ultimate David and Goliath Story”

Whether you are an entrepreneur, a mid-level manager, or just starting out in the workplace, you may find it useful to study the strategies of successful underdogs.

The premise of *Battling the Corporate Giants: The Ultimate David and Goliath Story* by Daniel L. Lowery is that there are certain strategies the powerful always use against their weaker opponents. Rather than finding the best ways to combat these factors, those in the inferior position generally play into their larger adversaries' strengths. Their inadequate response normally leads to failure and the conclusion that their loss was inevitable. There are, however, strategies the less powerful can pursue that work – strategies that actually put their bigger rivals at the disadvantage.

All of us, at one time or another, will be cast in the underdog role. If we respond typically, the stronger entity will overwhelm us with its power. If we are wise, though, we neutralize and overcome its superiority.

In his book, Lowery uses the biblical story of David and Goliath to explain how the big corporations (Goliath) try to crush

the small businesses (David) and then how David's strategies can work for the small businesses in combating the Goliathan strategies.

In a very readable style, with each chapter just one to three pages long, he covers advertising, franchises, arbitration,

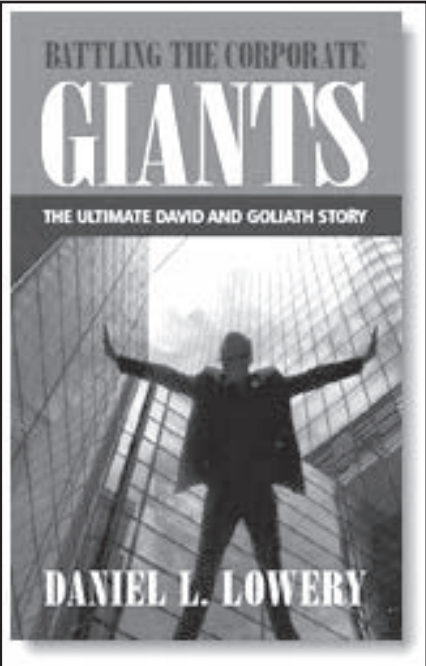
price wars, super structures, control of supplies, monopolies, legalities, patents, contracts and more. This book is a great book for anyone in business, but especially for small business owners.

The winner of the March puzzle contest will win a copy of *Battling the Corporate Giants*.

If the winner isn't a business owner, I suggest they read it anyway because the story's wisdom and psychology can help in many areas of life,

but then pass it on to a family member or best friend who owns a small business. It could be the best thing you did for their business.

If you're not the winner of the contest, “Battling The Corporate Giants” may be purchased at www.lowerybooks.com for \$19.99 plus \$3.95 S&H. Or the author will personally autograph a copy for anyone who orders through him at (805) 637-9857.



THE VIRTUAL ST. JOSEPH ALTAR

CYBERSPACE — In the tradition of the Sicilian St. Joseph Altars of New Orleans, our Virtual St. Joseph Altar made its online debut in February of 1999. Our 2006 Altar was the biggest yet, with over 9,000 visitors and over 200 offerings. The 2007 Altar is now open.

The penitential nature of Lent makes finding inspirational family activities somewhat difficult. Forty days is a very long time to the smaller members of our household. One bright spot in our Lenten journey is the March 19th Feast of St. Joseph. In the tradition of the St. Joseph Altars of New Orleans, we prepare our own small altar on the dining room table in honor of St. Joseph for his feast day each year.

The St. Joseph Altar is Sicilian in origin. During a terrible famine, the people of Sicily pleaded to St. Joseph, their patron saint, for relief. St. Joseph answered their prayers, and the famine ended. In gratitude, they prepared a table with foods they had harvested. After paying homage to St. Joseph, they distributed the food to the less fortunate.

The altar is set up in three tiers, representing the Holy Trinity. A statue of St. Joseph is placed on the top tier, usually surrounded by flowers, greenery and fruit.

No meat is prepared for the altar. This is probably because St. Joseph's feast falls in the Lenten season and also because meat was a rarity to the Sicilian peasants. Breads, cakes and cookies, baked in symbolic Christian shapes, are prepared for artistic placement on the altar. Pastries in the shapes of monstrances, chalices,

crosses, doves, lambs, fish, bibles, hearts, wreaths and palms adorn the tiers of the altar. Symbols of St. Joseph - such as lilies, staffs, sandals, ladders, saws, hammers and nails - are also used. There is symbolism in many of the items on the altar. Breadcrumbs represent the sawdust of St. Joseph the Carpenter. Twelve whole fish represent the apostles. Wine is symbolic of the Miracle at Cana.

The altar is a medium of petition and thanksgiving. Petitions of the faithful are written on pieces of paper and placed in baskets on the altar. Photos of deceased relatives & friends may decorate the altar as well.

As with any tradition, our St. Joseph Altar has evolved and gathered life from each member of our family. Children have certain cookies or cakes they prepare each year. In addition to our traditional dining room table altar, we now have the first and only interactive St. Joseph altar on the worldwide web – the Virtual St. Joseph altar. A few adaptations have been made, but the Virtual Altar still offers many of the basics, not to mention a clean kitchen.

St. Joseph is our good friend. He has answered our prayers many times and I am confident that he will continue to do so. Viva San Giuseppe!

For more information on the St. Joseph Altar tradition, visit The Virtual St. Joseph Altar at www.politickles.com/thankevann/stjoseph/.

Evann Duplantier is a homeschooling mother of six, and webmaster of The Virtual St. Joseph Altar.

FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

TOUR OF A CATHOLIC CHURCH

www.wordgamesforcatholics.com

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ALTAR

AMBRY

APSE

BAPTISTRY

CANDLE

CHOIR

CRUCIFIX

GROTTO

KNEELER

LECTERN

NAVE

PEW

SACRISTY

SANCTUARY

TABERNACLE

Puzzle Contest Winners

The winner of the February Puzzle Contest is Sharon Taylor of Holy Cross Parish in East Bernard. She will receive “Our Daily Bread: Exposition of the Readings of the Catholic Mass” by James H. Kurt published by authorhouse.com.

The youth contest winner was Melanie Mamerow (13) of Saint Andrew Parish in Hillje.

Two youth won January's contest; they were Mikayla Hollmann (9) of St. Roch in Mentz and Kyle Winkler (11) of OLV in Victoria.

The winner of this month's Family Puzzle Contest will receive “Battling the Corporate Giants – the Ultimate David and Goliath Story.” See review on this page.

If you have not won the puzzle contest within the past six months, please send completed puzzle, name, address, phone number and parish name by March 26, 2007, to: Family Contest, *The Catholic Lighthouse*, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age. Please don't forget your phone number and parish name.



St. Patrick was born in Briton (Britain) in the latter part of the fourth century. At age 16, he was captured by Irish raiders who took him to Ireland and sold him into slavery.

During his years of slavery and isolation as a sheepherder, prayer became his companion. After six years of slavery he escaped his master and returned to Briton. He later became a priest and then was ordained a bishop for the people of Ireland. St. Patrick's life story may be read at www.newadvent.org/cathen/11554a.htm.

Getting to know Chaplain Mensah

Continued from p. 4

Major/College Seminary in Ghana, Gabriel Mensah was sent to the U.S. to study theology at St. Bernard's and St. Anthony-On-Hudson seminaries in New York. In 1983, he was ordained a Catholic priest and started serving at St. Joseph Church in Yoakum, Texas.

I asked him how he came to join the

Navy. “I was happy as pastor of my parish. I had a big parish and a school to run. But I needed a challenge.” In 1994, he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy.

To be continued in the April 2007 issue of The Catholic Lighthouse



Lent: A Time for Prayer, Reflection and Giving

By Elizabeth Martin

After many years of work with Catholic Relief Services, Lent, and its seasonal period of reflection, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, grows more meaningful to me year after year. It's not just because of the stories I hear about the help that CRS provides to those who are suffering. It is the fact that with each season of Lent we are coming closer and closer to the realization of a global community – of one human family.

Each Lent we come together as a Catholic family to pray for

No Alleluia During Lent

Alleluia is a combination of two Hebrew words meaning, "Praise the Lord!" Ever wonder why we do not sing the Alleluia during Lent?

In a way, the Church asks us to fast from the Alleluia during Lent because Lent is looking forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing, a hope that cannot be disappointed.

If the Church refrains from singing Alleluia during Lent, it is not to have us robed in sadness, but to deepen our joy and to cause the Resurrection Alleluia to burst out more vibrantly and endlessly reverberate from one assembly to another to the four corners of the world on the night (Holy Saturday) when Christ appears bathed in light. (Reprinted from Shiner's Sts. Cyril & Methodius Parish 2006 bulletin.

those suffering from poverty and injustice. As we pray for peace this year, I think about our work with the world's refugees, our brothers and sisters who are enduring violence and civil strife in their native lands. They may not be in the news every day, but they are our companions. We should walk with them and pray for them this Lent.

We should pray for people like Jenita Lopesa, a 13 year-old girl who, because of continued fighting in her native Angola, did not receive immunizations for polio. She contracted the disease in 2001. The Polio Project, a joint endeavor between CRS and the Angolan Ministry of Health, is helping to build polio vaccinations campaigns around the country to ensure others will not be infected with this crippling disease. We are also working with those like Jenita to help them live full, happy and healthy lives.

As we fast this Lent, we fast in solidarity with our brothers and sisters overseas who do not have enough food to feed their families. We work to feed the hungry. We work to make sure farmers have enough water to grow their crops. Many of them will not be fasting out of sacrifice, but we will be with them as we do so during Lent.

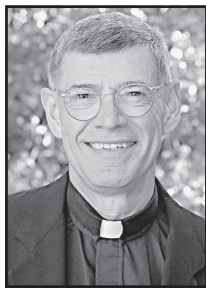
We are also asked to give whatever we can to help those less fortunate during Lent. Every little bit helps – small sums can add up to provide significant help to those who need it overseas. Here at CRS, we work with our local partners to provide eco-

nomie opportunities for women who need a source of income to support their families or to help farmers grow their crops and their farms. When we make a contribution during Lent, we help men like Ek Sakhorn, who participated in an agricultural improvement group sponsored by CRS and its partners in his Cambodian village. As a result of what he learned, he is now making enough money to not only grow crops for his family but to sell at the market. With the added income, he built a new home, paid for treatment of his wife's illnesses and is sending his children to school. Whether we make a small gift or contribute to a large collection, we recognize that helping people like Ek is the reason we all give.

As we enter Lent this year, I hope that we will be able to see and feel the powerful experience of global solidarity that comes with helping others. As somebody who is privileged to work with CRS, I see this connection every day. It is my hope that this season of giving will last well past Easter, and inspire us all to follow Jesus' example, to "love our neighbors."

Elizabeth Martin is the Senior Program Manager for Operation Rice Bowl, CRS' annual Lenten program, through which Catholics in the United States pray, fast and give in accordance with the themes of Lent, as they learn more about our global community. For more information, please visit <http://orb.crs.org>.

Lenten Practices



By Father Oscar Lukefahr CM

Country magazine carried an item from a lady who had a rosary prayer group meet weekly at her house.

One day as they were walking up to the house, her little daughter called out, "Here come the sinners, here come the sinners!" She obviously had been listening to the prayer, "pray for us sinners." The rosary prayer group laughed and said, "Yes, that's us...all sinners."

We are sinners, and Lent prepares us to celebrate the events that give victory over sin, Christ's death, Resurrection, and Ascension. During Lent we dedicate ourselves to the traditional practices of prayer, penance, and works of charity to open our hearts to Jesus. In my last column, I offered a brief explanation of the meaning of Lent and of these three practices. Here I'd like to make some practical suggestions for prayer, penance, and works of charity ...

PRAYER

- Attend Mass more frequently, daily if possible, and receive Christ in Holy Communion. This should be our first priority in Lent, which prepares us for the celebration of Christ's Death and Resurrection. Mass brings Christ's Death and Resurrection and the Real Presence of the risen Lord into our lives each day.

- Spend extra time in prayer alone, with your family, and with members of your parish.

- Pray the Stations of the Cross often, meditating on Christ's love in accepting suffering and death for our salvation.

- Read the Bible daily. Talk to Jesus often during the day.

- Be attentive to Mary, who shared so intimately in Christ's sufferings. Pray the Rosary daily, paying particular notice to the Sorrowful Mysteries.

- Pray for those preparing to be received into the Church at Easter. If your parish prints the names of candidates in the weekly bulletin, you might clip the notice and place it on your refrigerator or bulletin board as a prayer reminder.

PENANCE

- Penance is not just turning

away from sin, but a positive turning toward Christ and the Church. The Sacrament of Penance is the means given us by Jesus (see John 20:19-23) to reconcile us with God and with the Church. Receive this sacrament at least once during Lent.

- Examine your conscience each night and make a sincere act of contrition, asking God for grace to do better the next day.

- Abstain from meat on Friday. Fast especially from things like unhealthful foods, harmful habits, and trivial TV shows. Avoid eating between meals. Let any craving for food remind you of our hunger for God: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

- A penance good for body and soul is exercising when we don't feel like it.

- Jesus teaches us to take up the cross each day and follow him. Every day brings its share of inconveniences, physical ailments, and difficulties in getting along with others. Lent offers us an opportunity to reflect on these daily crosses, and our way of dealing with them. If we are in the habit of indulging in self-pity

See Lenten Practices, p. 18

Sunday readings from March 18 to April 8

March 18 — Fourth Sunday of Lent	Joshua 5:9a, 10-12 Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
March 25 — Fifth Sunday of Lent	Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 Philippians 3:8-14 John 8:1-11
April 1 — Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion	Luke 19:28-40 Isaiah 50:4-7 Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24 Philippians 2:6-11 Luke 22:14 — 23:56

Sunset on April 5 to Sunset on April 8
The Paschal Triduum of the Death, Burial and Resurrection of the Lord

April 5 — Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper	Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14 Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15
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Traditional Scripture reading at the nightwatch is from the book of Job, the book of Lamentations, and from the "Great and Final Discourse" of the Lord Jesus, chapters 14 to 17 of John's Gospel.

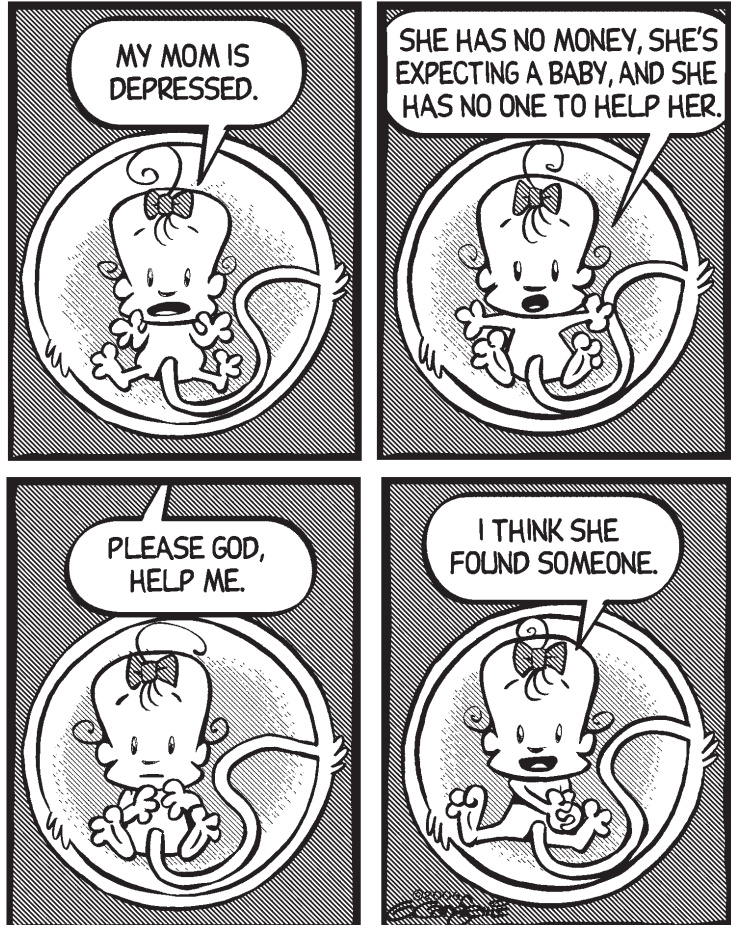
April 6 — Good Friday	Isaiah 52:13 — 53:12 Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25 Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 John 18:1 — 19:42
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April 7 — Evening Nightwatch of the Lord's Resurrection — Easter Vigil Reading 2	Genesis 1:1 — 2:2 Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35 Genesis 22:1-18 Psalm 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11 Exodus 14:15 — 15:1 Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18 Isaiah 54:5-14 Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13 Isaiah 55:1-11 Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 Baruch 3:9-15, 32 — 4:4 Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11 Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28 Psalm 42:2, 3, 5; 43:3-4 Romans 6:3-11 Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Luke 24:1-12
Reading 3	
Reading 4	
Reading 5	
Reading 6	
Reading 7	
Epistle	
Gospel	

April 8 — Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord - The Mass of Easter Day	Acts 10:34a, 37-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Colossians 3:1-4 John 20:1-9
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Umbert the Unborn

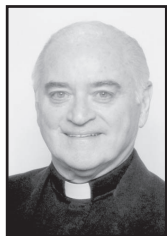
by Gary Cangemi





Spirituality for Today

By Father John Catoir
Catholic News Service



On self-absorbed approaches to spirituality

The pagan philosopher Zeno started a cult in Athens, Greece, around 308 B.C. His teaching became known as Stoicism because he held his classes on a great big porch (the Greek word “stoa” means porch). Stoicism is the belief that the most noble way to live is to be unmoved by joy or grief.

It is important to know that this approach to spirituality never came from Jesus Christ.

Christians absorbed this thinking when they moved down to Greece and began confusing Stoicism with the Christian virtue of self-denial. Jesus never intended that we embrace self-denial (and the cross) as an end in itself. He never encouraged the repression of our emotions.

In fact Jesus was emotional: He wept at his friend’s tomb; he was thrilled when his disciples returned jubilantly from their first mission; he sweated blood in the agony of the garden. On the cross Jesus shouted out in exasperation, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

Jesus said, “In this world you will have troubles, but take heart for I have overcome the world” (Jn 15:33). He wanted us to carry on with courage, but he never told us to bury our feelings.

Stoicism is like Buddhism in some respects. Centuries before Zeno, around 500 B.C., the Buddha taught his famous Four Noble Truths, which encouraged his followers to extinguish all selfish desire. This led to some extreme bodily and emotional discipline.

Here again we find self-control being taught as an end in itself, as a way of attaining nirvana or self-realization. This is very different from Christian charity.

Jesus taught us to be ready to suffer in serving our neighbor. The cross is not as an end in itself; it is a symbol of the sacrifices we ought to make in the name of love. Love is the fundamental Christian motivation. Self-denial in itself can easily become a self-centered enterprise.

I expand on these ideas in my

book “World Religions.” (For a copy write to my book club, Box 480134, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 33348, \$15 postpaid).

The uptight, unemotional approach to spirituality usually produces more ulcers than it does charity. The essential thing in Christianity is the supreme law of love. Jesus invites us to express our joy and our grief, just as he did. All that he did, he did in the name of love.

He taught us to take up our cross in order to live a life of service. Service leads to sacrifice, and sacrifice leads to the cross. He encouraged us to endure pain if necessary in caring for those in need.

When we stand up for the underdog, we know we will be attacked. When we care for the sick, we know it will drain us of energy. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta said we’ll know our love is real when it begins to hurt.

There are many joyless Christians who believe that self-abnegation is the goal of Christian living. Jesus never called us to become self-absorbed, always tending to our private, spiritual garden.

The real challenge of Christianity is in realizing Christ’s claim over us and obeying him. He calls us to recognize his presence in every single human being, born and unborn, to respect life and to realize that the Holy Spirit always leads us in directions we would not have chosen for ourselves.

Still, there were others, some who came from Ireland, Presbyterians who felt oppressed by the Church of England. And some from Scotland and France and Germany.

Methodists and Wesleyans. French Huguenots and Lutherans.

Each one deciding at some point to stop going to Mass, to give up the Eucharist, and to break with centuries of Church Teaching. Each of those ancestors were at the mercy of their times, their lives culminating in a colorful Protestant legacy that was full of zeal. I inherited it all, including the cacophony of conflicting voices on truth, salvation, justification and grace. Into this mix, I was born. And the search for a Truth that is both absolute and real led to my conversion and reconciliation to the Roman Catholic Church. By the Grace of God, I found my way Home, and I must admit, I’ve wondered if I might be the only family member to find refuge in the loving arms of Mother Church.

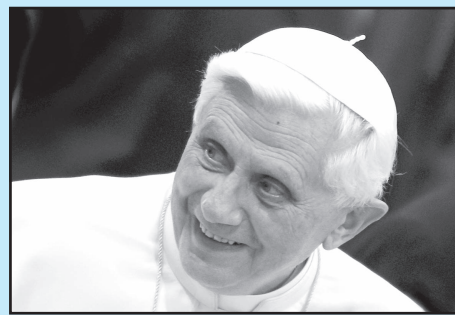
I have prayed (and still do) for the conversion of those I love. I have wondered who would be first to join me at Our Lord’s Table. Now, I know.

On March 18, the last will be first. My youngest child will join me. When the Eucharist is raised before her and the priest proclaims to her, “Body of Christ,” she will reply with confidence, “Amen.”

And my soul will dance with joy.

The Pope Speaks

Pope
Benedict XVI



CNS photo from Reuters

Pope says Christian nonviolence means countering evil with goodness

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Christian ideal of nonviolence does not mean standing by in the face of evil, but countering evil with goodness, Pope Benedict XVI said.

In his midday Angelus address Feb. 18, the pope praised the heroism of those who spread God’s love even at the cost of their own lives.

He also asked for prayers for the people of Guinea, in West Africa, where general strikes and political tensions have led to violence and martial law, with government troops being accused of harassment, rape and pillaging.

“The bishops of the country have told me of their concern for the situation of social paralysis with general strikes and violent reactions, which have claimed numerous victims,” the pope said.

“In asking for respect for human and civil rights, I assure my prayers so that a common commitment to following the path of dialogue will lead to overcoming the crisis,” he said.

In his main Angelus address, Pope Benedict said it is normal to wonder exactly what Jesus had in mind when he told his disciples to “love your enemies,” something that seems to be impossible for most people.

However, the pope said, “the proposal of Christ is realistic because it takes into account the fact that there is too much violence, too much injustice in the world and, therefore, it would be impossible to overcome this situation without more love, more goodness.”

“This ‘more’ comes from God,” Pope Benedict said, and it is the only way to tip the balance in the world from evil to good, “starting from that little and decisive ‘world’ that is the human heart.”

Pope Benedict said the command of Jesus to love one’s enemies is the “Magna Carta of Christian nonviolence,” which is not simply turning the other cheek, but responding to evil with goodness in order to break the chain of injustice.

“For Christians, nonviolence is not simply a tactical behavior, but rather is a way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of the love of God and his power, that he is not afraid to face evil with only the weapons of love and truth,” the pope said.

Love of one’s enemies and nonviolence, he said, are part of the “Christian revolution,” which is not based on strategies of power, but is a revolution of love, which can change the world.

Special rosaries provide support for deployed soldiers and funds for cancer research

BALTIMORE, MD—American Catholics now have a way of making a significant donation to support either breast cancer research or our troops in harm’s way . . . while praying the rosary.

The Bead Peddler®, a bead and rosary parts supply company located in Baltimore, is offering special rosaries—yellow to honor those serving in the military overseas and pink to commemorate those suffering from breast cancer—with 10 percent of the sales of the yellow rosaries going to AnySoldier.com®, while 10 percent of the purchase price of the pink rosaries will support the American Cancer Society.

“We believe in giving back,” said Sandy Paluzzi, owner of The Bead Peddler®. “My heart goes out to our military men and women. Many deployed soldiers receive no mail or care packages. AnySoldier.com® provides a gateway for American citizens to communicate with those soldiers. While our troops need our emotional support, they also

need our prayers. What better way to show support for our troops than to pray on a rosary that commemorates them?”

As for the pink rosary, Paluzzi said “It gives me great pleasure to offer something that appeals to peoples’ spirituality and also increases cancer awareness. When people are diagnosed with cancer, they ask God for strength. Praying on a rosary made especially for them may give them great comfort.”

Both five-decade rosaries include miraculous medal centerpieces and metal crucifixes. Fiber optic beads of the principal color are used for the Hail Marys and clear beads with an appropriately colored ribbon are used for the Our Fathers.

The Bead Peddler is a privately held company located in Baltimore, Maryland. All business, both wholesale and retail, is conducted by mail order and through their Web site www.beadpeddler.com; The Bead Peddler; P.O. Box 10975; Baltimore, MD 21234.

Catholic By Grace

By Denise E. Bossert



The last shall be first

The dress is purchased and hanging in the closet. The invitations are ordered, the menu is set, and I am crazy with excitement. Parents throughout the world are getting ready to celebrate their child’s First Holy Communion. I realize this is nothing new. While it is always a blessed event, this year something wonderful is happening in a quiet, sleepy town West of St. Louis, Missouri.

In a town with just one four-way stop, one gas station, and no grocery store, a Catholic parish is preparing for First Communion. One little girl in the second grade PSR class will join the others on March 18, 2007, to receive Our Eucharistic Lord. She is my daughter, my youngest child. And her faith journey is intricately intertwined with my own.

My youngest child has attended Mass with me for just twelve months. She has been enrolled in PSR for just over a year. But she goes with me each week, and dips her fingers in the holy water and crosses herself, she genuflects and kneels to pray, and she joins in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist as one who has always

been Catholic.

It brings tears to my eyes.

What I have struggled to find, the Truth that has come only through hard (at times painful) searching, the long and winding journey to the Eucharist — it is all hers with easy acceptance, and she embraces it with child-like faith.

At times in my struggle to conversion, it was like I had to make some heavy reparation for the generations that came before me, all those members of my family tree who had moved further and further from the Catholic Church.

The ancestors in England who must have felt the weight of King Henry the VIII and responded by leaving the Catholic Church to join the Church of England. Still other ancestors who didn’t agree with the King, and rather than return to the Catholic Church, they sought fellowship with another Christian group and fled to Maine (just eleven years after the Mayflower landed at Plymouth Rock). Those Puritans and Quakers were my great-great-great-greats, and they lived for centuries in New England.



Un hombro fuerte para apoyarse en un momento difícil.

Estimado Caballero Supremo:

Cuando mi esposo se hizo Caballero de Colón, nos presentaron a nuestro agente de seguros, Mike Walter, e inmediatamente nos dimos cuenta que Mike se ocupaba de su carrera como si fuera un “ministerio” en vez de un cargo de ventas. Nunca me imagine en ese entonces lo que ese ministerio habría de significar para mí.

Durante nuestras reuniones, no fuimos fáciles de persuadir. Mike nunca se dio por vencido y siempre buscó la forma como demostrarnos que la necesidad existía. Nos ayudó hasta que por fin pudimos comprender el valor de contar con la protección de un seguro de vida.

Mi esposo murió repentinamente el otoño pasado. Su muerte fue un golpe para todos nosotros. Aunque desde el punto de vista médico no debería haber sucedido, me imagino que Dios pensó que había cumplido con su labor en esta tierra. Pude contar con Mike de inmediato. Estuvo en el velorio, asistió al funeral y permaneció a mi lado para ayudarme en cuanto fuera posible. Lloré por mi esposo igual que yo.

En este mundo en donde todos se preocupan sólo de las ganancias, presencie lo que los Caballeros son verdaderamente capaces de hacer. Pude contar con ellos cuando más lo necesité.

— Amber Díaz*



*Basada en una carta verdadera. Los nombres se han cambiado para que se mantengan anónimos.

Para localizar un agente de Caballeros de Colón, visite KOFc.org y haga clic en “Encontrar un agente”, o bien llame al 1-800-345-5632.

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Como reportar un abuso.

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

- Llame a la cancillería al (361)573-0828 y pida hablar con el Obispo o su 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
Por favor, escriba en el sobre:
“Personal and Confidential”

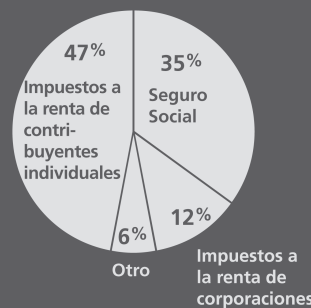
También podemos ayudarle a comunicar su queja a cualquier otra diócesis donde haya ocurrido el abuso si ahora usted se encuentra viviendo en la nuestra.

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

Propuesta de Presupuesto Federal

El president George W. Bush propuso un presupuesto de \$2.9 trillones para el año fiscal 2008.

DE DONDE VIENE EL DINERO...



A DONDE VA EL DINERO...

	(en billones)
Defensa Nacional	\$609
Seguro Social	609
Ingreso de seguridad	377
Medicare	348
Salud (otros)	290
Interés neto	261
Transporte	87
Veteranos	87
Educación, trabajos, servicios sociales	87
Otro	145

Fuente: Oficina de Presupuesto
y Gerencia de la Casa Blanca
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The Texas Catholic Conference has distributed the Texas Bishops' statements on the Human Papillomavirus Vaccine and Proposed Texas Coal Plants. Below is a copy of the HPV statement. Due to its length, the Coal Plant statement may be accessed at the Diocese of Victoria Web site, www.victoriadiocese.org.

Texas Catholic Bishops Statement on the HPV Vaccine Mandate

On Friday, February 5, Governor Perry issued an executive order requiring the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to adopt rules requiring the new Gardasil vaccine for girls entering sixth grade as of September 2008. The vaccine is designed to protect girls against some strains of the human papillomavirus, or HPV, that cause most forms of cervical cancer.

The Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas appreciate the seriousness of this healthcare issue; HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world and in the United States. The HPV vaccine is currently recommended by the CDC Committee on Immunization Practices and the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) considers HPV vaccination to be a morally acceptable method of protecting against this disease.

However, we find the Governor's executive order to be problematic in several ways. Although the NCBC considers HPV vaccination to be morally acceptable, it has also recommended that civil authorities should leave this decision to parents and not to make such immunization mandatory at this time. Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics has judged that school-based mandatory HPV vaccination is premature and should await several years of practice before mandates are considered. The HPV vaccine is a new vaccine that has only been tested among girls 16 and older. While results from those tests have been encouraging, clinicians have very little experience administering the vaccine to 12 year old girls and the general public has very little knowledge of any of the possible negative side affects.

While the HPV vaccine offers hope for reducing the number of women developing cervical cancer, it is not a magic bullet and is only one avenue for disease prevention.

HPV is primarily spread through sexual contact which includes, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse. The prevalence of HPV among those of reproductive age makes exposure to the virus possible, even in a monogamous marriage, due to the possibility of a spouse's exposure prior to marriage. Furthermore, we live in a society where non-consensual sex remains a threat to young women who deserve to be protected from the effects of exposure to HPV. Consequently, the Church recognizes that the most effective way to

avoid contracting the virus is for men and women to abstain from sexual relations before marriage and to remain faithful within marriage.

In light of these realities, we the Catholic Bishops of Texas call on the Governor to rescind his executive order and allow the public debate to go forward on this important healthcare issue.

Approved by The Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas:

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, San Antonio; Archbishop Daniel N. DiNardo, Galveston-Houston; Bishop Gregory Aymond, Austin; Bishop Edmond Carmody, Corpus Christi; Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio, S.J., Tyler; Bishop David E. Fellhauer, Victoria; Bishop Charles V. Grahmann, Dallas; Bishop Curtis J. Guillery, S.V.D., Beaumont; Bishop Armando X. Ochoa, El Paso; Bishop Raymundo Peña, Brownsville; Bishop Michael D. Pfeifer, O.M.I., San Angelo; Bishop Placido Rodriguez, Lubbock; Bishop James A. Tamayo, Laredo; Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Fort Worth; and Bishop John W. Yanta, Amarillo.

times to house the bones of the dead which were found in the cave in 1980 — are the ossuaries of Jesus, his brothers, Mary, another Mary whom they say is Mary Magdalene, and "Judah, son of Jesus."

FACT: The names found on the ossuaries "are a combination of very common names," according to Fr. Murphy-O'Connor. "Fifty percent of all Jewish women in the first century were called either Mary or Salome. It doesn't mean much at all. You can prove anything with statistics." Fr. Murphy-O'Connor said the DNA tests could "only prove that they are human" but "certainly did not prove any familial connection."

CLAIM: The filmmakers claim the ossuaries were not identified as belonging to Jesus' family when they were first discovered because present day knowledge and scientific tools were not available.

FACT: Jesus' family was from Galilee and had no ties to Jerusalem, casting serious doubt that they would have had a burial cave in Jerusalem. Kloner said the names on the ossuaries were common during that time and their presence in the tomb was coincidental.

CLAIM: The filmmakers say the so-called "James Ossuary," which came to public attention several years ago and was purported by its owner, Oded Golan,

Dallas bishop retires, successor named; bishop named for Lake Charles

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI accepted the resignation of Bishop Charles V. Grahmann of Dallas March 6 and named Auxiliary Bishop Kevin J. Farrell of Washington to succeed him.

The pope also named Msgr. Glen John Provost, a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette, La., as the new bishop of Lake Charles, La. He succeeds Bishop Edward K. Braxton, who was transferred to Belleville, Ill., in March 2005.

The Lake Charles Diocese had been without a bishop just nine days short of two years. Bishop-designate Provost is to be ordained a bishop April 23 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles.

Archbishop Pietro Sambi, apostolic nuncio to the United States, announced the changes in Washington March 6.

Bishop Grahmann, who turned 75 last July, has headed the Dallas Diocese since 1990. In the intervening years it has grown from 212,000 Catholics in a population of 2.5 million to just under a million Catholics in a population of nearly 3.5 million.

Bishop Farrell, 59, who has lived in Spain and Mexico, is fluent in Spanish and has ministered to numerous Hispanic communities. He will be installed as bishop of Dallas May 1.

At a press conference in Dallas, he said one of his first tasks will be "to get to know the people."

"The greatest resource of any diocese is the faith of its people," he said.

Born Sept. 2, 1947, in Dublin, Ireland, Kevin Joseph Farrell joined the Legionaries of Christ in 1966.

He was ordained a priest Dec. 24, 1978, after studies at the University of Salamanca in Spain and the Pontifical Gregorian University and Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

He left the Legionaries in 1984 to become a priest of the Washington Archdiocese and was ordained a bishop Feb. 11, 2002.

Charles V. Grahmann was born July 15, 1931, in Hallettsville, Texas. He was ordained a priest of the San Antonio Archdiocese March 17, 1956.

He was named auxiliary bishop of San Antonio in June 1981 and was ordained a bishop Aug. 20 of that year.

He was made first bishop of Victoria, Texas, in 1982. In December 1989 he was made coadjutor bishop of Dallas and on July 14, 1990, he became bishop of Dallas.

Glen John Provost was born Aug. 9, 1949, in Lafayette, La. He was ordained a priest of the Lafayette Diocese June 29, 1975. He speaks French, Italian and Spanish.

The Lake Charles Diocese has about 78,000 Catholics in a population of 278,000.

Panelists call for social, legal remedies for violence against women

NEW YORK (CNS) — Violence against women, both in the United States and around the world, is on the rise and must be addressed with a potent combination of social, legal and economic remedies, said a panel of speakers Feb. 27 in New York. "Addressing Violence Against Women" was the topic of a panel discussion at the Church of the Holy Family. The program was the second discussion in a series called "The Human Dignity of Women in Contemporary Society," sponsored by the Holy See Mission to the United Nations, the Path to Peace Foundation and the Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John's University. "It seems ironic that, at a time when the sensitivity for women's issues appears stronger than ever, the world is now obliged to confront new forms of violence and slavery directed especially at women," said Archbishop Celestino Migliore, papal nuncio to the United Nations. "The mistreatment of women is a long-standing reality in many places and a disregard for the age and vulnerability of young girls in particular is especially repugnant," he continued.

Social ministry central to church life, social ministry leaders told

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The church's social justice mission is an integral part of its life, and "this is a time for mission," John Carr, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' secretary for social development and world peace, told a national gathering of Catholic social ministry leaders Feb. 12. Carr noted that several national figures in Catholic social ministry will be leaving the USCCB staff in coming months as a result of the bishops' recent decision to downsize their national offices. "The USCCB is not broken, but frankly it is a little shaken," Carr said. But he added, "Even if there are fewer of us, the mission hasn't changed. ... The question is not who occupies the boxes, the question is how the mission gets done." He said the mission remains — to "bring good news to the poor" and to "set the down-trodden free."

Protect poor, common good in acting on global warming, bishop says

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Congress should heed the warnings of a recent report on global warming, with priority given to how climate change will affect the poor, the chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy urged. In a Feb. 7 letter to congressional leaders, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., said the recently released report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has clearly and compellingly outlined the case for urgent

See *Protect poor*, p. 17

Lost Tomb of Jesus denounced

Continued from p. 3

to have belonged to the brother of Jesus, was also from the tomb, and that a forensic technique was used to determine this.

FACT: In 2003 the Israel Antiquities Authority declared the inscription on the James ossuary a forgery. Golan is currently on trial for forging the inscription.

Also, the Catholic League re-

minds readers that no other religion is subjected to such intense scrutiny as Christianity. They ask readers to go to their Web site to learn how Christianity has been treated by members of the cultural elite during the Lenten season in recent times. See their site at: www.catholicleague.org/linked%20docs/christianity_targeted_Lent.htm

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Protect poor, common good in acting on global warming, bishop says

Continued from p. 16

action to address the potential consequences of climate change. The letter urged the U.S. government to base responses to global warming on the common good “rather than the demands of narrow interests,” and to place priority on the poor “who will bear the greatest burdens and pay the greatest price for the consequences and costs of climate change.” In a June 2001 statement, “Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good,” Bishop Wenski noted, the bishops said climate change “is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest-group pressures. It is about the future of God’s creation and the one human family.”

Ethicist sees mounting challenges to Catholic values in health care

CHICAGO (CNS) — The question about Catholic health care is not so much whether the church should do it as how the church can do it, according to the final speaker at a conference on “Catholic Health Care Ethics: the Tradition and Contemporary Culture.” Michael Panicola, vice president for ethics at SSM Health Care in St. Louis, spent much of his talk on the challenges to Catholic health care discussing the myriad issues that make it difficult for institutions to provide health care in accord with Catholic values in contemporary American society. Challenges include working in a “morally diverse” society where even many Catholics do not understand church teachings, especially on the beginning and end of life; a growing anti-Catholic sentiment, in which Catholic health care institutions have been attacked by groups that support a right to abortion and state attorneys general; and an aging population that will require more care combined with a trend toward lower reimbursements for providing that care, Panicola said.

Cardinal urges House to close loophole in genetic discrimination bill

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities is urging the House to amend legislation forbidding discrimination on the basis of genetic information to include unborn children, unimplanted embryos and those in the process of being adopted as “family members” under the bill. Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia said the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, H.R. 493, contained “one very unfortunate and apparently unintentional loophole” by limiting the children identified as family members of an individual to those who are “born to or placed for adoption with the individual.” But the legislation does not address “discrimination against families based on the preimplantation or prenatal genetic testing of their child, or genetic testing performed on an adoptive child before an adoption is completed,” he said. The House Education and Labor Committee approved the legislation on a voice vote Feb. 14, without the specific amendment supported by the bishops. An amendment offered by the committee’s chairman, Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., extended protection to children in the womb, but did not address the preimplantation or adoption gaps.

Christ is with us. Whether recognized or not, he is present, even when nothing seems to suggest it. By Br. Roger of Taizé

Australian cardinal launches countdown to World Youth Day 2008

SYDNEY, Australia (CNS) — Cardinal George Pell of Sydney launched the 500-day countdown to World Youth Day 2008 and encouraged pilgrim groups to register online early for the event. “It’s a long way to Australia from other parts of the world, you can’t just get on a bus in Warsaw and drive here,” Cardinal Pell said at the launch March 2 in front of St. Mary’s Cathedral in Sydney. A giant digital clock in front of the cathedral will count down the days until Sydney hosts World Youth Day in July 2008. “Our wish is to avoid a situation as occurred when Rome hosted World Youth Day (2000) and three quarters of a million pilgrims decided to come in the last three weeks,” Cardinal Pell said. Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney, the chief organizer of World Youth Day 2008, said most come to the approximately five-day events as members of diocesan pilgrim groups, religious movements and youth groups. He said online registration of groups had been opened up four months earlier “to capture information” on expected numbers, language groups and special needs.

Ghanaian government takes over reins of CRS food aid on 50th anniversary of independence

ACCRA, Ghana—Catholic Relief Services (CRS), one of the largest aid agencies in Ghana, is celebrating 49 years of development support in the country and is turning over its food aid programming to the Ghanaian government as it marks its 50th anniversary of independence.

“With U.S. food aid resources being cut back, CRS is handing over the reins of our food aid programming throughout the country to the Ghanaian government with confidence,” said Jean Marie Adrian, CRS’ West Africa Regional Director. “Fifty years since Ghana became independent, the country is ready to directly provide food assistance to those most in need.” Due to Ghana’s gains over the last 50 years, USAID has removed the country from its priority list for food aid. The bulk of CRS’ food aid programming will be taken up by the Ghana National School Feeding program. CRS will continue to provide development assistance to Ghana including conflict transformation programs, support for people living with HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation projects, and agribusiness programs. CRS is also actively pursuing additional funding to support child survival programs aimed at immunization, nutrition and neonatal care.

Pope says living in society means recognizing others’ rights, beliefs

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When the church calls for adherence to basic values to promote the common good, it is not placing the individual second, but reflecting the truth that being human means having a relationship with others, Pope Benedict XVI said. Pope Benedict said the modern world seems to be losing touch with the fact that living together in society requires an acknowledgment of the rights, needs and beliefs of others. “The reflection and action of authorities and of citizens must be concentrated on two elements: respect for each human person and the search for the common good,” the pope said during a Feb. 10 meeting with mem-

bers of the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. “Subjectivism, according to which each person tends to consider himself as the only reference point and believes that only his ideas have the character of truth,” threatens peaceful coexistence and true progress both for individuals and for societies, he said.

Cardinal: Antichrist tempts Christians to place dialogue above Jesus

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians tempted to set aside their belief in Christ as the only savior in order to promote dialogue with others are being tempted by the Antichrist, retired Italian Cardinal Giacomo Biffi told Pope Benedict XVI. Cardinal Biffi, who has been leading a Feb. 25-March 3 retreat for the pope and top Vatican officials, cited as “prophetic” a warning about the modern guises of the Antichrist presented in the work of Vladimir Solovyev, a 19th-century Russian philosopher. While the Vatican has not published Cardinal Biffi’s talks to the pope, Vatican Radio provided a daily summary and some quotations from his presentations. The cardinal, who wrote the introduction to an anthology of Solovyev’s work, said the philosopher’s most important message was that Christianity cannot be reduced to a collection of values. In one of the philosopher’s works, Cardinal Biffi told the pope, “the Antichrist presents himself as a pacifist, ecologist and ecumenist. He convokes an ecumenical council and seeks the consensus of all the Christian confessions, conceding something to each one.”

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Project Moses rescuing Ten Commandment monuments

By Cindy Brewer

Project Moses is a national non-profit organization working to reverse the moral backsliding of this great republic through the restoration of respect for the Ten Commandments. How is the project doing this? By placing large Ten Commandments monuments on private property but for PUBLIC viewing - largely on church properties, right out front by the street. So far it's placed more Ten Commandments monuments in 30 months than the ACLU has removed, via litigation and intimidation, in the last 30 years!

One individual, John Menghini Sr. a member of Ascension Parish in Overland Park, Kansas, founded Project Moses (PM) four years ago. The removal of the Commandments from the Kansas City courthouse lawn in 2000 so alarmed Mr. Menghini that he tried to think of a constructive way to fight back. Using his business acumen, he chose to get involved, not in the political battles over the Commandments, but through speaking with many



places, but when you look at where monuments to the Commandments will have the greatest viewing and impact on peoples lives, they need to be on our own places of worship, religious schools and private properties. The added benefit to placing the Commandments in these locations is that anti-religious-symbol civil liberty groups will be unable to do anything about it.

In 30 months, PM has been responsible for just over 250 Ten Commandments monuments (64" tall x 42" wide x 24" deep made of marble from Mt. Sinai) placed in 34 states.

It was assumed that evangelicals would lead the way in the placement of these monuments, but, in reality, it has been the Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus who are erecting Ten Commandments monuments at an unbelievable pace!

Joe Worthing, executive director of PM, is quoted frequently as saying, "If the first place someone sees the Ten Commandments is a court house, that's probably why he is there!" The Ten Commandments should be on all religious properties, not just for it's church members, but also the community the church resides in, as a whole, he continued.

In 2004, the city of Duluth, Minn., provided a great example of the power of PM. The ACLU was attacking the city because of a Ten Commandments display at city hall. Mr. Worthing was invited to speak at a non-denominational event about PM. While the city council caved in to the ACLU, the fruits of Mr. Worthing's meeting produced the placement of over six monuments on the busy streets in and around Duluth.

"These monuments will never be removed and are lit 24/7 for everyone to see," said Worthing.

The Catholic Bishop of Duluth, Bishop Schnurr, spoke with him later and said, "Joe, it is amazing, I have talked with people who have lived here for more than 60 years and they didn't even know the Commandments were at city hall. Now the Commandments are in the papers every week and thousands of people drive by them daily - God is good!"

Please go to www.projectmoses.com too learn more about the project and to view the Ten Commandments monuments, the projected national monument, as well as smaller desk size and yard size monuments for personal purchase; or phone: 1-888-MOSES-10 (1-888-667-3710). Because the monuments are produced with the choice of the St. Augustine, King James or Jewish numbering tradition, PM has been able to work across denominational lines.



religious leaders from Jewish, Catholic and Protestant faiths about embarking on a plan to erect beautiful, prominent monuments depicting the Ten Commandments on Jewish and Christian properties.

Proceeds from these large monuments will go toward the funding of the construction of the National Judeo-Christian Memorial to Moses and the Ten Commandments on private property in Washington, DC - similar in scope to the Jefferson Memorial - hich will forever provide a place in our nation's capitol where the Ten Commandments can be learned and revered, and the role they have played in the founding of the country can be protected from historical revisionists.

A 6.5 acre site on private property in Washington, D.C., has been identified and made available to Project Moses; however, the National Park Service has been contacted in an effort to secure a site on the National Mall. No matter which site is chosen, Project Moses and the memorial organizers hope to have the national memorial ready for visitors by 2010. The centerpiece of this memorial will be an 18- to 24-foot bronze statue of Moses and an enormous stone slate of the Commandments.

It is the hope of PM to establish 7,000 Ten Commandment monuments at churches, synagogues, religious schools and private properties to fund the completion of this \$10 million memorial.

Mr. Menghini has often said that we rightly get upset when the Commandments are wrongfully removed from our public

Priests For Life

By Father Frank Pavone
National Director



Persons, not Products

On February 22, 1987 - that is, twenty years ago - the Catholic Church gave our society a tremendous gift, and it's time to open it again. It was a clear trumpet blast of truth and compassion, a ray of Gospel light on problems that continue to be some of the most vexing of our time.

The gift was a document called "Donum Vitae" (Latin words that mean "The Gift of Life"). Issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the document's fuller title is "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation: Replies to Certain Questions of the Day."

The document is not long; it can easily be read in a single sitting. It talks about the tiniest human beings: who they are and how they come to be. It talks about how we treat zygotes and embryos - two categories to which each of us reading this article once belonged. It emphasizes the fact that each person has both a right to life, and a right to come into life in the proper way - not as the result of a scientific project in the lab, but as a result of the union of two people lovingly united in body and soul.

Among the questions the document tackles are the following: What is the relationship between science and ethics? Must the embryo be treated as a person? Is every human being a human person? Is pre-natal diagnosis morally acceptable? Is experimentation on human embryos and fetuses morally acceptable? What is the Church's objection to in-vitro fertilization and surrogate motherhood? May embryos be frozen? How does the Church look upon infertile couples? In what way may medical science assist the act of procreation? What is the responsibility of lawmakers toward the human embryo?

The document does not simply lay down "dos and don'ts," and it is not a condemnation. Rather, it places these teachings in the context of our personal relationship with God, who loves us. Donum Vitae says, "It is out of goodness - in order to indicate the path of life - that God gives human beings His commandments and the grace to observe them: and it is likewise out of goodness - in order to help them persevere along the same path - that God always offers to everyone His forgiveness. Christ has compassion on our weaknesses: He is our Creator and Redeemer."

The document reminds us that every human being, from fertilization, must be treated as a person both inside and outside the womb. "How could a human in-

dividual not be a human person?" the document asks. Even "human embryos obtained in vitro are human beings and subjects with rights." And in regard to the Church's absolute prohibition on procured abortion, Donum Vitae declares, "This teaching has not been changed and is unchangeable."

In short, children are a gift, and therefore can neither be discarded nor demanded. They are persons, not products. Let's learn anew the message of Donum Vitae!

The full text of Donum Vitae is available at: www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/donumvitae.htm

Comments on this column? Email us at mail@priestsforlife.org, Priests for Life, P.O. Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314; Tel: 888-PFL-3448, 718-980-4400; Fax: 718-980-6515; Web site: www.priestsforlife.org

When do we change our clocks?

Starting in 2007, daylight time begins in the United States on the second Sunday in March and ends on the first Sunday in November. On the second Sunday in March, clocks are set ahead one hour at 2:00 a.m. local standard time, which becomes 3:00 a.m. local daylight time. On the first Sunday in November, clocks are set back one hour at 2:00 a.m. local daylight time, which becomes 1:00 a.m. local standard time.

Lenten Practices

Continued from p. 13

and complaining, Jesus invites us instead to take up these crosses with a smile, and walk in his footsteps.

CHARITY

- Let the hunger that comes from fasting remind you of the many people who are always hungry because they have little to eat. Share with the poor the money saved by fasting. Make sacrificial gifts to the work of the Church.

- Visit the sick and the elderly. Be especially kind to members of your family. Strive to be polite to all. Avoid revenge and retaliation; do your best to pray for your enemies and to treat them with charity.

- Spend some time working directly for the poor by assisting at parish food pantries. Help groups like *Birthingright* and other agencies which promote justice and respect for life.

- If you are at odds with a relative, neighbor, or co-worker, take the first steps toward making peace.

Yes, we are all sinners. But the Good News is that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Lent places before us this great Good News!

Father Oscar Lukefahr is a Vincentian priest who is the author of numerous books on the Catholic faith, including "We Believe ... A Survey of the Catholic Faith."

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John Michael Talbot Concert – April 22

John Michael Talbot will perform at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 22, at Assumption Church in Ganado.

With the production of 46 albums with sales approaching four million records, he has received eight Dove Award nominations and one Dove Award.

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

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

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

Land Office letter from the front tells tale of Texas history

AUSTIN — On February 23, 2007, Jerry Patterson, commissioner of the Texas General Land Office, will unveil a letter from the Land Office archives written more than 171 years ago. Patterson said the letter, written by a soldier fighting for independence from Mexico, is much like e-mail soldiers in Iraq send home today.

“J.C. Logan was a soldier in a foreign land, opposing tyranny,” Patterson said. “But writing home to his family, he tells them he’s OK, he complains about the bad chow and he states a firm resolve to do his duty. Letters from the front like this tell the true story of a nation at war.”

The following excerpts - with their many misspellings, odd capitalization and sparse punctuation - are from Logan’s letter: “We are all most naked as we are cutting up tent cloth to make us Panteloons,” he wrote. “* a good many of us are bare footed & worst of all the Schooner that

was bringing Provision & Clothes has been wrecked * I did intend to return to the united states at this time but there is a force from mexico of about 7000 men marching to retake this Country again & our whole force at this time dont Exceed 800 men but we are willing to meet them *”

Kentucky native J.C. Logan wrote the letter on Feb. 24, 1835, at Goliad, the same day William Barret Travis penned his defiant plea to all Americans from the Alamo. Under James W. Fannin’s command, Logan was one of several hundred men holed up in the presidio at Goliad, awaiting Mexican General Santa Anna’s armies.

Like many of the other 35 million documents in the Land Office archives, Logan’s letter needs professional conservation.

That’s why Patterson is urging all Texans to donate to Save Texas History this

March and honor 171 years of Texas Independence. Online donations can be accepted, or individuals may purchase a print of a historic Texas map from the Land Office archives. All proceeds from the map sales go toward preserving more maps and other historic documents at the Land Office.

After items are conserved they are digitally preserved and made available to the public via the Internet. The Digital Preservation Project of the Save Texas History Program has been recognized by the Texas Historical Commission for its monumental effort to digitally preserve these historic treasures.

To search for maps, place orders, or make a monetary donation to the Save Texas History Program, visit www.glo.state.tx.us/archives/savetxhist/donate.html or call the GLO toll-free at 1-800-998-4GLO.

Special Collections

Operation Rice Bowl — Sundays of Lent and Easter Day
Holy Land (Good Friday) April 6

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 Hallsville on FM 340) at 11:00 a.m. For more info. call (361) 594-3024.

Engaged Encounter—Register as soon as you have contacted your pastor due to limited space. **It is strongly recommended that you attend an encounter weekend four to six months prior to your wedding date.** For a registration form, contact your pastor, visit the **Web site at www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm**, or write to: Engaged Encounter, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. The weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. The dates for 2007 are: June 22-24, Sept. 28-30, and Nov. 30-Dec. 2. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 56. A date cannot be reserved for any couple unless a cashier’s check or money order is sent in the amount of \$190 for weddings being held within the Diocese of Victoria or \$245 for weddings being held outside the Diocese of Victoria.

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

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

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

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.**

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.

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:** March 24 and 25 The Crossroads of Texas Living History Association and Presidio La Bahia will stage a reenactment of the occupation of the fort by Col. Fannin and the Goliad Massacre of Col. Fannin and his men at Presidio La Bahia in Goliad, Texas. On Saturday battles will take place around the fort. In the evening candlelight tours will be conducted through the barracks, the Mexican officer’s quarters and there will be a hospital scene in the chapel where the Texian prisoners are being held. Sunday the death march will begin inside the presidio and goes to one of the locations where the massacre actually took place. The program will conclude with a Memorial Service that begins in the chapel followed by a procession to the Fannin Memorial. **See the Web site at www.presidiolabahia.org for more information.**

Picnics, Activities, etc.

March

East Bernard — The county- and area-wide True Love Waits Program will be held throughout March: Session II on March 10 at 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church; Session III on March 17 at 6:30 p.m. Grace Community; Session IV on March 24 at 6:30 p.m. First Methodist. Closing ceremony March 25 at 2:00 p.m. Holy Cross Church. Contact Terrie Vacek at 979-335-7344 to register or for more information.

Victoria—Our Lady of Victory Youth Ministry Fish Fry will be on the Fridays of Lent — March 9, 23 and 30 with serving from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Dine in the school cafeteria or take-home plates available at \$6.50 p/p. Meal consists of fried catfish, hushpuppies, coleslaw, green beans, garlic bread and tea. Proceeds benefit the parish’s youth ministry programs.

El Campo—Urbanovsky Pilgrims Reunion will be held at St. Philip the Apostle (304 W. Church Street) March 11, from 9:00 a.m. to evening. All former and hopeful future pilgrims invited. Registration at 9:00 – 9:30 a.m.; Mass at 11:00 a.m.; covered dish dinner at 12:00 p.m.; 3:00 p.m. Divine Mercy; continue visiting through evening. Questions, call Betty at (979) 543-2333.

New Taiton—St. John’s Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner (fried-chicken and homemade dressing) March 11 at the Tai-

ton 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—Catholic Daughters of the Americas District 14 Meeting, Thursday, March 20, at St. Philip the Apostle Parish Hall (304 W. Church). Registration will begin at 6:15 p.m., with a meal being served at 6:45 p.m. followed by the meeting. Members and officers are encouraged to attend. RSVP to Terri Beltran, district deputy (979) 578-3647, or to court regents.

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. with dine-in or drive-thru available. There will be an auction, cakewalk, free dance with music by Bobby Jones Polka Band (1:00-5:00 p.m.), also an Antique Tractor Show and much more.

Upcoming Events

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

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

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

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

World Day Pray for Vocations — April 29

Hostyn—Holy Rosary Mayfest May 6 beginning with a Polka Mass at 10:00 a.m. A barbecue-pork and sausage dinner will begin at 11:00 a.m. with music, activities and games all day.

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

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



Finding God in Goliad

**Only in Texas could the government own a church and the Catholic Church own a fort.
One chapter in the state's long history explains why.**

By Marion Amberg, freelance writer

Twists of fate are the stuff of legends. But in Goliad, Texas, one legend is a twist on *faith*. In a peculiar reversal of Church and State, the state of Texas owns a Spanish mission and the Catholic Church owns a presidio—a fort! Nobody planned it this way, certainly not the Franciscan friars who came here in the name of God.

"It is indeed strange that the Church owns a fort," says Newton Warzecha, director of Presidio La Bahía, a National Historic Landmark located 90 miles southeast of San Antonio. "But this isn't any old fort. This is where the Texas Revolution began."

Fortuitously, while the Church holds down the fort, it's also protecting its Southern Catholic legacy. And, like Texas history, some legends are larger than life.

Of God and Crown

This "Goliath of a story" began nearly three centuries ago at Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast. In 1721, the Marqués de Aguayo and several friars—including the venerable Padre Antonio Margil de Jesús—founded Presidio Nuestra Señora Santa María de Loreto de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo—Spanish for "Presidio of Our Holy Mother Mary of Loreto of the Bay of the Holy Spirit"—on the ruins of La Salle's Fort St. Louis.

Mission Nuestra Señora de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, which means "Mission of Our Lady of the Bay of the Holy Spirit of Zúñiga," was dedicated in 1722.

Their respective royal assignments: Protect the interests of the Spanish Crown in northeastern New Spain and convert the

work; the inland fort guarded both the coast and the main road from Mexico to San Antonio.

A Mighty Fortress

As many tourists discover, it's easy to confuse the presidio and mission at first glance. Both are bulwarks of stone, both are enclosed by a wall and both have a house of worship.

"Our Lady of Loreto Chapel was a military chapel," Warzecha explains. "It was built to serve the needs of the men



The "Nine Flags Over Goliad" stand erect outside the walls of the Presidio La Bahía.

who were assigned to this fort and their families. They did not go to church at the mission, nor did the Indians from the mission come to church here."

The revolutionaries did come, however, and Presidio La Bahía gained the reputation as the most fought-over fort in Lone Star history. Standing in a row like soldiers outside the presidio walls, the "Nine Flags Over Goliad"—Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, Confederacy of America, the United States of America and three others (relating to the Republic of Texas)—attest to the area's colorful past.

Except for a couple of short takeovers, Spain controlled the fort until 1821 when Mexico won its independence from Spain. When Mexico opened up its Texas territory for Anglo settlement, the lure of pennies-per-acre land grants prompted a "rush on Catholicism." Under Mexican colonial law, settlers had to swear they were Catholic.

"[Stephen F.] Austin's colonists from the United States apparently took the oath with their fingers crossed," wrote Kathryn Stoner O'Connor in *Presidio La Bahía: 1721-1846*, an account that doesn't mince history. "Some bought baptismal certificates from Father Muldoon who was appointed chaplain of that colony and was more of a politician than a priest."

Irish-born Father Michael Muldoon served in Texas from 1831 to 1832 and his willing converts became known as the "Muldoon Catholics." If the paper-converts didn't pass on the faith, they did their land: Some South Texas ranches have been in the family for several generations.

Never Forget

After seizing control of Mexico in 1833, General Antonio López de Santa Anna began wielding iron-handed rule over Texas. The Texians, as they were then called, retaliated with an iron will for independence.

In October 1835, Texian rebels cap-

tured Presidio La Bahía, and on December 20, a contingent of 92 Texians signed the First Declaration of Texas Independence from Mexico in the presidio chapel. Rebels also hoisted the First Flag of Texas Independence—a banner that depicted a bloody arm with a sword and signified that the rebels would fight to their deaths.

"Many more lives were lost at Goliad than at the Alamo," says Warzecha, gazing across the eerily silent quadrangle. It was a different scene on Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836, when the presidio and outlying areas turned into an execution ground.

On orders from General Santa Anna, the Mexican army executed Colonel James W. Fannin and 341 of his troops, a violation of Fannin's terms of surrender a week earlier. Had it not been for Francita—the "Angel of Goliad"—another 17 men would have died, notes Warzecha. The Angel—the mistress of a Mexican army captain—interceded with the commanding officer for their lives.

Francita, whose heroic mercy is immortalized by a statue outside the presidio walls, returned with the captain to Mexico where he abandoned her. Little more is known about the Angel.

The Palm Sunday executions only served to rally the scattered Texian troops and inspired the rousing cry, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21. In a surprise attack, the Texians defeated Santa Anna, and the Republic of Texas was born.

A Chapel Redeemed

In 1841, the Republic of Texas restored confiscated church property back to the church. "That's how the Catholic Church obtained ownership of the missions in San Antonio except for San Antonio de Valero, now known as the Alamo," Warzecha explains.

For some reason, the presidio chapel and mission weren't brought back into the fold. In 1844, the Republic of Texas gave the fort and mission to the town of Goliad as part of a land grant. A family rented the chapel and made it their home.

History took another quirky twist in 1853. Bishop Jean-Marie Odin, C.M., of the Galveston Diocese, which then encompassed all of Texas, demanded the chapel's return. The mayor of Goliad refused and offered to "adjust by sale" the old church. The price: \$1,000.

"When the debt was paid off in 1855, the bishop's deed was for the entire fort," Warzecha says matter-of-factly.

Across the river, Mission Espíritu Santo never "rejoined the church." Secularized in 1830, the mission served briefly as a college, then fell into ruin. The State of Texas acquired the site in 1931. Under the direction of the National Park Service, the Civilian Conservation Corps reconstructed the church, granary and workshop.



Francita, the "Angel of Goliad."

The Fort Beckons

Raiford Stripling, a restoration architect at Mission Espíritu Santo, was lured to the crumbling presidio. "It's said he used to come over here and dream about one day restoring the fort," Warzecha says.

During the 1960s, the late Kathryn Stoner O'Connor, a Catholic, local rancher and author, fulfilled Stripling's dream and rescued Presidio La Bahía from certain doom. She donated about \$2 million to restore the nearly 3.5-acre site to its 1836 appearance—the era of Texas Independence.

After centuries in the making, the "twist on faith" was complete. In their unique roles, the state of Texas diligently preserves a Spanish mission and Franciscan legacy, while the Diocese of Victoria proudly guards Presidio La Bahía and its significant chapter in Texas history.

"We may be the only diocese in the world to own a fort!" states Bishop David E. Fellhauer of the Victoria Diocese. "Do you know of another Catholic fort?"

Owning a fort, however, was never the Church's goal. Bishop Odin bought the chapel so that local Catholics would have a place to worship, Bishop Fellhauer says. "It's because of the chapel that we own the fort, and the chapel is still important today. History is not logical!"

And every March, thousands of visitors come to the legendary fort to relive one of the most important chapters in Texas history—history preserved by the Catholic Church.

Presidio La Bahía, three-quarter's of a mile south of Goliad on U.S. Highway 183, is open daily 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., closed on some holidays.

Illustrating the area's rich culture and history, a museum in the former officers' quarters includes arti-

facts unearthed during the fort's restoration, and a display of religious and military clothing. The Annual Goliad Massacre Living History Program is held on the weekend closest to March 27, the date when Colonel Fannin and troops were executed. In 2007 this weekend will be March 24-25.

Mass at the historic Our Lady of Loreto Chapel, which seats about 120, is celebrated Sunday afternoons at 5:00 p.m. For more information, call (361) 645-3752 or visit the Web site at www.presidiolabahia.org.

This article originally appeared in a longer form in the January 2006 issue of St. Anthony Messenger.

See related story on page 19.



The Crossroads of Texas Living History Association stage a re-enactment scene at the Presidio La Bahía during the Living History Program in March. This year it will be held March 24 and 25.

natives. It was easier said than done.

"[Matagorda Bay] was a terrible location," explains Warzecha. "It was low-lying: alligators, mosquitoes." While the Spaniards and gray-robed friars suffered the pests, the Karankawa Indians had a natural remedy.

Described by white settlers as handsome, muscular and over six feet tall, the Karankawas reportedly ate skunk meat and doused themselves with skunk musk and bear fat to repel the mosquitoes. The scent didn't deter the padres, but their converts—40 families, some say—were temporary at best. The Indians fled and reverted to their nomadic ways.

The friars looked for a better spiritual vineyard and, in 1726, the presidio and mission moved 26 miles inland near present-day Victoria. Here the missionaries evangelized the friendlier, more sedentary Aranama tribe.

British and French encroachment along the Gulf Coast prompted another move. In 1749, the presidio and mission relocated 25 miles south to opposite hilltops overlooking the San Antonio River near Goliad. The mission resumed the Lord's



Bishop David Fellhauer addresses a group at Our Lady of Loreto Chapel.