

The Catholic Lighthouse

The Cradle of Texas Immigration



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

February 2008

Vietnamese Dominican Sisters celebrate Golden Jubilee

By Cynthia Brewer

PORT LAVACA — The Vietnamese Dominican Sisters (OP), dispersed throughout southern Texas, including parishes in the Diocese of Victoria, are cel-

brating the jubilee of their congregation's 50th anniversary throughout 2008.

The Dominican Sisters have missions in Port Lavaca and Shiner serving the towns' parishes, missions and Catholic schools.

On World Day for Consecrated Life, Saturday, February 2, the sisters in Port Lavaca were graced by a visit from Bishop David Fellhauer who celebrated Mass with them in recognition of this celebration. The five sisters processed in with candles, renewed their vows, and had the bishop bless rosaries which they gave to those who attended the celebration.

The Diocese of Victoria began receiving the help of the Vietnamese Dominican sisters in 1989 when Father Joseph Pham Trinh invited the sisters to teach catechism and Vietnamese Culture to the children of 100 families at the Our Lady of the Assumption Community in Palacios. In 2005, Father Dan Morales generously allowed the sisters to reside at Our Lady of the Gulf Parish so it would be more convenient for

the sisters who attend Victoria College/university and help them share the joy of religious community together. The sisters moved to Port Lavaca yet still continue to serve in Palacios.

Responding to an invitation of Father Dan in 2002, three sisters began serving the Seadrift community while residing in



Bishop Fellhauer and the Port Lavaca Vietnamese Dominican Sisters (from left) Sisters Catherine Mary, Maryanne, Ann Catherine, Theresa and Mary Goretti pose with the Dominican shield outside their convent in honor of their Golden Jubilee. Shiner Sisters (not pictured): Sisters Maria Raphael, Catherine and Christine.

Despite hard choices, Catholics must vote, New Hampshire bishop says

By Catholic News Service

MANCHESTER, N.H. (CNS) — Catholics must not seek to avoid difficult decisions about political candidates by choosing not to vote, Bishop John B. McCormack of Manchester, New Hampshire, said in a new document on "Conscience and Your Vote."

"Some candidates advance proposals that fail to mirror the commitment of the church to the protection of all human life," he wrote. "In many cases, these same candidates advance other policies and proposals that can be supported in light of church teaching."

"This frequent mixture of laudable and unacceptable positions causes great perplexity," Bishop McCormack said.

But "in order to sustain a healthy democracy, all citizens have a moral obligation to vote," he added. "Deciding not to vote therefore is an unacceptable solution, even to this difficult situation."

The bishop's five-page document is based largely on "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' 10,000-word document on political responsibility, overwhelmingly approved during the bishops'

See *Despite hard choices*, p. 16

Port Lavaca. Since then, the sisters have begun teaching at Our Lady of the Gulf Elementary School.

In 2006, Father Bob Knippenberg invited three Dominican Sisters to come teach at the St. Ludmila Elementary and St. Paul High School in Shiner.

The Victoria Diocese has been greatly blessed to receive the benefits of the Vietnamese Dominican Sisters.

The congregation begins in Vietnam

Faithful women, who were actively teaching and helping with different tasks in parishes in the Diocese of Bui Chu, North Vietnam, initially began to form the community in 1951. With the development of the Vietnam War and the division of Vietnam (1954), the formation process was delayed while the newly formed group began migrating from North to South Vietnam. After struggling seven years to develop into a religious community during the Vietnam War, the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena in Vietnam was approved by the Holy See on January 21, 1958.

The sisters form the a province in the USA

The Mary Immaculate Province in Houston developed through divine providence by Vietnamese Dominican Sisters who had become refugees in the United States. With the loss of Saigon when the Communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, seven sisters who lived at Vung Tau mission, close to the shore, escaped from Vietnam on two small boats with families of fishermen. This group was rescued by American naval ships and sent to Guam; they were then transferred to a refugee camp at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. With the sponsorship help of two Vietnamese

See *Vietnamese Dominican Sisters*, p. 7

Two local Catholic Schools win thousands

By Cynthia Brewer

Our Lady of Victory in Victoria and St. Michael in Cuero have each won a competitive grant from the Diocese of Victoria to provide funds needed to make improvements to their Catholic elementary school campuses.

Many Catholics in the diocese may not even be aware that there is such a grant available to the Catholic schools from the Diocese of Victoria, nor realize it needs continuous donors in order to expand and provide greater assistance to its schools.

The Catholic School Endowment Fund, a category within the Endowment Fund for the Catholic Diocese of Victoria in Texas, has evolved over the past few years into a highly competitive grant since the formation of a grant review committee in 2003.

Bishop David Fellhauer, the diocese business office and the endowment fund committee want to get the word out to every Catholic in the diocese that there is an endowment fund to which they may

make donations in order to assist our Catholic schools.

Our Lady of Victory School won the first place grant of \$14,000, allowing it to install a mobile computer lab on its campus. Partly because of the pastor's and school's innovative way of obtaining in-kind matching funds, St. Michael School in Cuero also received a grant. St. Michael received \$4,000, which will go towards the replacement of the school's playground equipment with durable, institutional-quality equipment.

Robert Kovar, chairman of the grant review committee, explained how the grant process has evolved from a handout type of gift to each school to a competitive grant of a larger dollar amount to allow for greater impact.

The amount of money the endowment's earnings provide is around \$28,000 each year. In the past, each school would receive approximately \$2,000 from the earnings. After dispersing the funds this way from 2003 – 2005, the committee felt the fund wasn't achieving the best

Special Capital Campaign Notice

We Need Your Help!

We have begun the pledge redemption process for our A Reflection of Faith Campaign and will continue through the five-year pledge period. The Business Office is working with their new database system entering pledges and tracking payments. And as with all new computer programs, we have discovered a few quirks. It has come to our attention that many of our donors have received donor acknowledgement letters and pledge reminder statements with some incorrect information. One of the reasons we send these letters and statements is to check and be sure we have the correct information concerning your pledge and membership information, including the names of both husband and wife. We deeply apologize for any errors that may have occurred and may continue to occur as we make changes. Be assured that we appreciate all of the generous donors to this campaign and it was not our intention to exclude anyone from the recognition process.

We are asking not only for your patience, but also for your assistance in updating our database and correcting any misinformation. Please call Sue Ellen Galvan at the Business Office at the Chancery (361) 578-0828 ext. 20 or note any changes or corrections on your pledge reminder forms. We are working hard to make this process run as smoothly as possible and appreciate your cooperation and support. Thank you again for your generosity and continued faith.

Special Catholic Schools Pull-out Section Pgs. 9-12



results for the schools or a good means of stewardship.

Beginning the 2006 – 2007 school year, the fund committee changed the way the Endowment Fund grant would be distributed. Now instead of all the yearly interest earned being divided amongst the diocese's 13 Catholic campuses and the diocesan school office, half of the monies are divided amongst the schools and the diocesan school office, allowing \$1,000 for each entity. The only requirement is to turn their yearly budget proposal into the diocese on time. "That's manna from heaven," said Mr. Kovar, a \$1,000 gift for just doing what they always do.

The other half, about \$14,000, is awarded as a competitive grant to the school or schools with the most innovative, passionate, and most competitively completed grant application. The ability to receive a matching donation from other donors is also a requirement to receive this grant.

See *Two local Catholic Schools*, p. 4



Bishop Fellhauer's Schedule

February	
10	3:00 p.m., Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, Our Lady of Victory Cathedral
17	11:00 a.m., Mass, Pilgrims Reunion, St. Philip Church, El Campo
22	1:00 p.m., Mass, installation of Bishop Patrick Zurek as Bishop of Amarillo
24	1:30 p.m., Diocese of Victoria Catholic Knowledge Bowl, Holy Family Church, Victoria
25	11:00 a.m., Mass, Texas Diocesan Fiscal Managers' Conference, Spiritual Renewal Center, Victoria
27	2:00 p.m., Spelling Bee, Our Lady of Victory School, Victoria
March	
2	12:30 p.m., Banquet in honor of the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Victory Boy Scout Troop, Knights of Columbus Hall, Victoria
5	10:00 a.m., Diocesan Presbyteral Council meeting, Chancery Office
9	5:00 p.m., Mass, Youth Spectacular, Holy Family Church, Victoria

11th Annual Bishop Fellhauer Invitational Golf Tournament is on the horizon

It is almost impossible to remember how tragic a place this world is when one is playing golf.

~Robert Lynd

By Debbie Vanelli, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Director

The diocesan youth and the vocation programs are about to get a much-appreciated boost with the help of the Knights of Columbus 9088 of Holy Family Parish in Victoria. These two programs have been selected as the benefactors of the 11th annual Bishop Fellhauer Golf Tournament, scheduled for April 4, 2008, at Colony Creek Country Club. Monroe Rieger, chairman of the tournament, along with the committee, has been busy preparing for this jam-packed day!

All funds received from this tournament will be used for new youth and vocation programs and to subsidize existing programs. Our diocese is blessed to have very active youth and vocation ministries that work hand in hand to minister more effectively to the young people of the diocese. Unfortunately, due to limited

resources, some young people are unable to participate in the various activities. The funds from this tournament will help alleviate that situation, as well as provide opportunities for new and innovative programming.

You can help with this fundraising affair by being a sponsor for the event. All Priest Level sponsors and higher will

be given first priority to play in the tournament. Sponsor signs will be displayed on the tee boxes and on a large display sign at the main scoreboard. Bishop sponsorships will also include your name on a specially designed flag which will be prominently displayed. The flag will be yours after the tournament. Sponsorships for the tournament are categorized as follows: BISHOP - \$500; MONSIGNOR - \$200; PRIEST - \$100; DEACON - \$50. To sponsor or to ask any questions, please contact Monroe Rieger at (361) 578-0797.



DIOCESE OF VICTORIA IN TEXAS

1982 - 2007



They're Here!!! Diocese of Victoria History Book Available

The history of the diocese is the history of many of our families who were pioneers to this new nation. Many of them faced great hardships to arrive at this part of the world we now know as the Diocese of Victoria.

As the diocese observed the twenty-fifth anniversary (last year) of its establishment, it is great to recall the history which has brought many this far in the journey of faith, hope and love.

The history book is a 8 1/4" X 11 3/4" hard cover, 168 pages of glossy paper in full color throughout at the cost of \$32 each, \$35 if mailed. The books are available in most local parishes and at the chancery office.

The chancery is located at 1505 E. Mesquite Lane in Victoria.

2007 DSA YEAR END REPORT

The 2007 Diocesan Services Appeal closed out on December 31, 2007. The final amount pledged was \$772,485.23 with the total paid amount of \$761,396.37 contributed by 4,920 households.

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

The 2008 Diocesan Services Appeal will begin soon. Pledge cards will be mailed during the month of February. A pledge may be a one-time gift or a monthly payment for the remainder of the year.

Stewardship involves the conscientious, firm decision, carried out constantly in action to conduct one's self as a follower of Jesus, regardless of the cost. Please consider joining these faithful members of our diocesan family and pledge a gift to further and maintain God's work.

Thank you for your continued support of this vital appeal.

Jeri Joseph
Diocese of Victoria
Business Office

Stewardship Thought:

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

A Memorial to Father Wolfgang

By Father Donald Hayden, O.S.S.T.
Our Lady of the Gulf, Port Lavaca

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Here is a true Israelite. There is no guile in him." Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (John 1:47-49).

I read a reflection by Art Katz recently, a Christian convert from Judaism, titled "An Israelite in Whom There is No Guile." His words made a deep impression on me. It was a sermon on Nathanael – about his first en-

counter with the Lord, a simple encounter. How was it that Nathanael could discern

something in a matter of seconds that the entire nation of Israel had yet to figure out in over two thousand years? Art Katz suggests that the reason that Nathanael and John the Baptist were able to see God was because they were pure in heart. Because only the pure in heart will see God!

It seems to me that those with the least guile, the purest of heart, are teenagers. As tumultuous as the adolescent years can be, I believe that this is a time in life when people are the most honest. In touch with the rawest of emotions and perhaps having to make the most difficult decisions of their lives,

adolescents have little choice but to deal with life "as it is!"

It is in that context that I consider the life of Father Wolfgang Mimms, O.S.S.T., who died here in Victoria last month. His life-changing decision at the age of fifteen to embrace the faith of the Catholic Church with all its victories and calamities was the driving force in his particular concern for young people throughout his years of priestly ministry. For those who knew anything about Father Wolfgang: his love for opera and rock music, his penchant for all kinds of gadgets secured at the Mall and area pawn shops, his slogan t-shirts and droopy jeans and signature braid all spoke of his admiration for the honesty and giftedness of young people and his desire for them to know the Lord as one who loves them with all intensity. Father Wolfgang spent hours in conversation with teenagers explaining the Catholic faith and encouraging them to live courageously and chastely.

Father Wolfgang loved his African, German and Irish roots. He spoke often of the importance for young people to come to cherish their unique cultural heritages. Understanding our ancestry and our past could only help us to understand better the future to which God was calling us. Respecting our own gifts, he believed, was the way we establish true dialogue with people who are different from us. Catholicism in its truest expression is openness to all people, no matter how different or strange they may seem to us. Father Wolfgang understood this as the core of our life in Christ!

In 1977, when Father Wolfgang joined the Order of the Most Holy Trinity after many years of service to the Church in the Order of St. Benedict, he found great joy in the charism of St. John De Matha who urged his brothers to bring liberty to people who were held bound by sin and oppression through devotion to the



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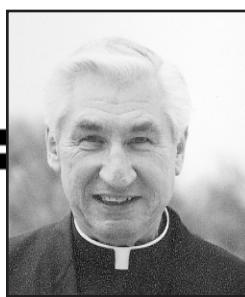
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FAITH POINT

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

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



Evolutionary Humanism, A Very Nasty Ideology

If Evolutionary Humanism could be called a church (it is most assuredly a religion) its chief denominations would be Cultural Marxism/Communism, Secular Humanism, Postmodernism, and Spiritual Communism. The offshoots of these are among others, New Age/green environmentalism/Gaia, socialism, progressivism, liberalism, multiculturalism and atheism. Individually and collectively, these are modern pagan religions.

A worldview is a system consisting of principles and presuppositions regarding reality (metaphysics), ways of acquiring knowledge (philosophers call this epistemology), and conduct (ethics). Evolutionary Humanism holds that matter either existed eternally (in spite of the Big Bang theory) or spontaneously generated (something from nothing) and therefore there is no creator. Its knowledge is limited to those things that can be detected by the senses. There is no objective moral system and certainly not one imposed by God.

The whole system of Evolutionary Humanism is based on inherent contradictions. It states that only that which can be proven scientifically is valid, but they cannot prove by science their account of the existence of matter. In acquiring scientific knowledge they resort to all kinds of realities that cannot be detected by the senses: theories, presuppositions, laws, universals, moral values and categorical statements. Universals are truths of an immaterial or non-sensory nature but they are crucial to our understanding of nature. Such concepts as inalienable rights cannot be viewed under a microscope. The laws of logic are not detected by the senses but are absolutely essential in doing science or even coherent reasoning. The whole exercise of authenticating the pagan view of reality is a non-sensory (metaphysical) projection back into time. No scientist ever observed creation or spontaneous generation or changes of species and yet neo-pagans speak of these things as scientifically established. They make statements that are impermissible under the rules of their own system, but pretend not to notice.

But whatever may be the shortcomings of their knowledge theories, their real deficiency is their ethical system. It is a humanity-hating Culture of Death. If you do not believe that, permit me to draw up a list of particulars, which is severely inadequate because of space limits.

Evolutionary Humanists say that ethics must be built on human social instincts that are in a continuous process of change over evolutionary time. This view demolishes both moral ethics and social taboos, thereby liberating man to do as he pleases. Over time this results in a lawless climate haunted by bullies, predators, despots, psychopaths and other unsavory elements.

In just the first 87 years of the twentieth century, the evolutionist project of radically transforming the world and mankind through the power of evolutionism has led to the extermination of between 100-170 million "subhuman" men, women and children. The most efficient and brutal

killers of humanity have been the twin atheistic systems of Nazism and Communism.

In Evolutionary Humanism, scientific theories need not be proved so much as agreed upon by consensus. Once a majority is achieved it is then imposed on the rest of humanity. An example of this is the very much unproven and, in fact, disproven statement that the insecticide DDT causes harm to humanity and the environment. This has produced a worldwide ban that has caused millions of deaths from malaria, which was almost eliminated by DDT. The ban also assists Evolutionary Humanists to decrease human population. *"In Guyana, within 2 years, it (DDT) had almost eliminated malaria...my chief quarrel with DDT...is that it has greatly added to the population problem."* (Alexander King, former president of the Club of Rome)

Evolutionary Humanists are very concerned about the number of humans. Perhaps they should be called Inhumanists. *"The total world population should be no more than 2 billion rather than the current 5.6 billion."* (Cornell University professor David Pimentel, speaking before the American Assoc. for the Advancement of Science) *"The damage people cause is a function of demographics...One American burdens the earth much more than 20 Bangladeshes...In order to stabilize world population, we must eliminate 350,000 people per day."* (Jacques Cousteau, the UNESCO Courier, Nov. 1991) *"Cut the population by 90%"* (Dr. Sam Keen, Gorbachev Conference in San Francisco). There was no suggestion on how to accomplish the supposedly necessary population cuts, but presumably banning DDT is a good beginning. This is cultural imperialism. How long would the ban have lasted if Europeans were dropping dead by the thousands daily?

Humans are a plague species according to Evolutionary Inhumanists. *"Saying homo sapiens are a 'plague species,' the London Zoo opened a new exhibit featuring—eight humans. We have set up this exhibit to highlight the spread of man as a plague species and to communicate the importance of man's place in the planet's ecosystem."* (Human Beings: Plague Species; WorldNet Daily, 2005) *"Human beings, as a species, have no more value than slugs."* (Earth First! Journal editor John Daily) *"To feed a starving child is to exacerbate the world population problem."* (Yale professor Lamont Cole) *"Until such time as homo sapiens decide to rejoin nature, (we) can only hope for the right virus to come along."* (David Gruber, research biologist with the National Park Service) *"Nonpersons or potential persons cannot be wronged...because death does not deprive them of something they value."* (John Harris, Sir David Alliance professor of bioethics, University of Manchester, England)

Global warming alarmism, a part of the Evolutionary Humanist creed, is ultimately an anti-human tool, which may explain why they hold it so ferociously. For them it is settled science although many reputable

climatologists pronounce it a myth. Scientists reported in the International Journal of Climatology that over the past three decades computer generated models do not correlate with actual, measurable data from weather balloons and orbiting satellites. The Arctic ice cap is not shrinking and is within 1% of its winter norm at the beginning of winter. The southern polar ice cap has grown substantially compared to last year. There are now 22,000 polar bears compared to 5,000 60 years ago. The computer generated climate models cannot predict the past, much less the future. The earth's warming and cooling cycles exactly coincide with the sun's magnetic activity.

In spite of this, Evolutionary Humanist alarmists are not just content to repeal the Industrial Revolution but want to diminish the numbers of human beings. In the Medical Journal of Australia, Professor Barry Walters urges a one-time "baby levy" of \$5,000, followed by an annual tax of \$800 per child, on Australian families with more than two children because every

newborn baby is a potent source of greenhouse gas emissions for an average of 80 years. Walters says that childbearing is an ecologically unfriendly behavior. "We have no problem in principle with humans reducing their numbers by killing one another. It's an excellent way of making humans extinct," said a spokesman for the Gaia Liberation Front. "Given the total, absolute disappearance of homo sapiens, then not only would the Earth's community of Life continue to exist, but in all probability, its well-being enhanced. Our presence in short is not needed," wrote Paul Taylor in "Respect for Nature, A Theory of Environmental Ethics."

We can either support the Culture of Life by adopting the Judaeo-Christian ideology or the Culture of Death of the Evolutionary Humanist ideology. Joshua offered the people a choice to serve the gods of nature or the Lord. We have a similar choice today. Imitating Joshua we should say, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

Catholic and Jewish scholars speak in Houston on how to avoid future Holocausts

By Cynthia Brewer

The Houston Holocaust Museum hosted a series of speakers on the topic "Medical Ethics and the Holocaust" this past fall through winter. Through the Internet/satellite I watched one of the talks on Science and Religion featuring John M. Haas, Ph.D., S.T.L., president of The National Catholic Bioethics Center, and Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Ph.D., president of Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.

The title of Dr. Haas' talk was "Science, Medicine and Religion in and after the Holocaust" while Rabbi Greenberg's talk was titled "Science and Religion Need to Cooperate to Prevent a Recurrence of the Holocaust."

The Houston Holocaust Museum's Medical Ethics and the Holocaust series is so timely as today scientists are grappling over cloning, embryonic stem cell research and end of life issues.

Dr. John Haas began his talk stating that the Hippocratic Oath, itself the foundational document of ethical medical practice, was taken by swearing to the known deities of the ancient time to uphold its ethics. This was a first example of the relationship between religion and medical science.

He explained that in the Catholic Church this natural and enduring relationship between religion and medical science continued. Since the beginning of Christianity – the healings by Christ – the Church has always been involved in the healing ministry. From the time of the fourth century, hospitals, asylums, leper colonies and orphanages were run by religious communities in the Church, he said. It wasn't until the 18th century that the state began taking over some of these charitable and healthcare activities.

The Catholic Church continues this ministry, as in the United States it is the largest non-governmental provider of healthcare, generating \$90 billion a year in revenue and holding over \$200 billion in assets, Dr. Haas said.

The Catholic medical professionals have never had a problem embracing the pagan Hippocratic Oath to never violate a patient, Dr. Haas said, just as they also believe in a natural moral law written by God in the hearts of all human beings so that when that moral law is violated there is always an awareness of the violation at some level.

In the Ethical and Religious Directives

for Catholic Health Care Services, the U.S. bishops state that the directives seek to ensure that every patient in a Catholic health care institution is treated with utmost respect and that the "Catholic health care ministry is rooted in a commitment to promote and defend human dignity; this is the foundation of its concern to respect the sacredness of every human life from the moment of conception until death."

"It is this uncompromising commitment to the dignity of each living human being that can save health care from ever being put to sinister and disordered purposes, as has happened more than once in history," Dr. Haas said.

Germany did not come up with their sinister medical practices on their own, Dr. Haas alerted his audience. Rather, they got the idea from Social Darwinism and eugenics movements that spread throughout the United States and Great Britain in the 1860s. A corruption of the medical profession had actually begun well before Hitler's rise to power, said Dr. Haas. The National Socialists just adopted the theories and practices that grew out of the international eugenics movement.

He explained how in the Germany of National Socialism, everything and everyone came to be ordered to the good of the state, rather than the state ordered to the good of the people.

Alfred Jost, a German so-called race scientist wrote in 1865 in "The Right to Death" that the "final solution" to the "population problem" was state control over human reproduction. In 1933 when Adolf Hitler came into power a law requiring forced sterilization for eugenic purposes was passed. From there, the slippery slope continued to the euthanasia of unmentionables – those not deemed worthy to live, which then led to the outright murder and massacre of other unwanted peoples, mostly Jews, Gypsies, Slavs and homosexuals, leading to the Holocaust.

There was proof that the natural moral law was trying to work in Hitler's Germany however, as the Nazis had devised the appearances of due process and legality to justify their unspeakably inhumane actions.

Germany, and particularly the German medical profession, continues to live under the shame and ignominy of the National Socialist period, Dr. Haas said. Regarding medicine, science, and religion after the

See Catholic and Jewish scholars, p. 7



Seminary Burses

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

As of January 30, 2008		TOTALS
— General Seminary Burse		
Previously reported		\$91,404.00
In memory of Joe A. Roeder by		
M/M Gary Pustejovsky & family	10.00	
In memory of Joe A. Roeder by		
his Goddaughter Marilyn		
Triska Mahoney	50.00	
In memory of Joe A. Roeder by		
Fritz and James Eugelking	25.00	
In memory of Joe Rubio by		
M/M Bob Bochat	25.00	
	Total	\$91,514.00
— Rev. John C. Bily Seminary Burse		
Previously reported		\$1,300.00
In memory of James Vornsand by		
James and Barbara Janak	25.00	
In memory of Mildred Kasperek by		
James and Barbara Janak	25.00	
	Total	\$1,350.00
— Deceased Priests of Praha Burse		
Previously reported		\$1,145.00
In honor of Rev. Msgr. Edward C.		
Bartsch by Georgia Cerny	50.00	
	Total	\$1,195.00
— Knights of Columbus Victoria Council 1329 Seminary Burse No. 3		
Previously reported		\$7,437.50
In memory of Fred J. Sanchez by		
K of C Council 1329	100.00	
In memory of J. C. Mzyk by		
K of C Council 1329	100.00	
In memory of Joseph Peyton Wyatt by		
K of C Council 1329	100.00	
	Total	\$7,737.50
— Knights of Columbus 4th Degree St. Michael's Assembly 1527 Weimar Burse		
Previously reported		\$2,300.00
In memory of Claude J. Marty Jr. by		
KC 4th Degree Assembly 1527	175.00	
	Total	\$2,475.00
— CDA Court Our Lady Queen of Peace 1374 Seminary Burse (El Campo)		
Previously reported		\$3,567.72
In memory of Regina Priesmeyer by		
CDA Court Our Lady Queen of		
Peace 1374	55.00	
	Total	\$3,622.72
— Catholic Daughters Court of St. Ann 369 Seminary Burse No. 2 (Victoria)		
Previously reported		\$5,432.20
Gift from all Victoria Diocesan		
CDA Courts	51.79	
In memory of Joe Rubio by		
Randy, Regina and Taylor Janak	5.00	
	Total	\$5,488.99

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;
- Call Rev. Gary Janak (979) 543-3770 or Sr. Emilie Eilers (361) 575-7111, Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach;
- 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.

Two local Catholic Schools win thousands

Continued from p. 1

Since going to this form of grant, the completion of applications has improved greatly and applications are being completed much more professionally, Mr. Kovar said.

"Not all schools submitted applications — only about eight or nine. But the applications were well thought out, requesting material, curriculum and technology that would really impact the schools," he said. "It looked like our new strategy was beginning to work."

Each application is objectively scored with the two highest ranked schools becoming finalists. The two finalists are then interviewed at their campus — the judges looking at the schools' involvement, compassion, and commitment. The committee then gets together and selects the winning finalist.

"As a check and balance, the committee brings the two finalists and then the winning finalist before the bishop to see if he concurs with our decision," said Mr. Kovar.

The first winners of the newly revised grant process ('06-'07 school year) were two schools, St. Joseph in Yoakum and Our Lady of the Gulf in Port Lavaca, which partnered together to win a grant to obtain an online, parent/student information system.

Because the review committee encouraged the schools to produce better grant applications by having to compete for the larger, more rewarding grant, it seems the

schools are improving their fund-raising abilities as well, Mr. Kovar said.

Each of the large-grant winning schools has exceeded raising the necessary matching funds. This has allowed them to purchase more equipment related to their request. The schools that did not win the grant have produced fund-raising goals and plans they can use to go to their communities and to other foundations to obtain their goals, he said.

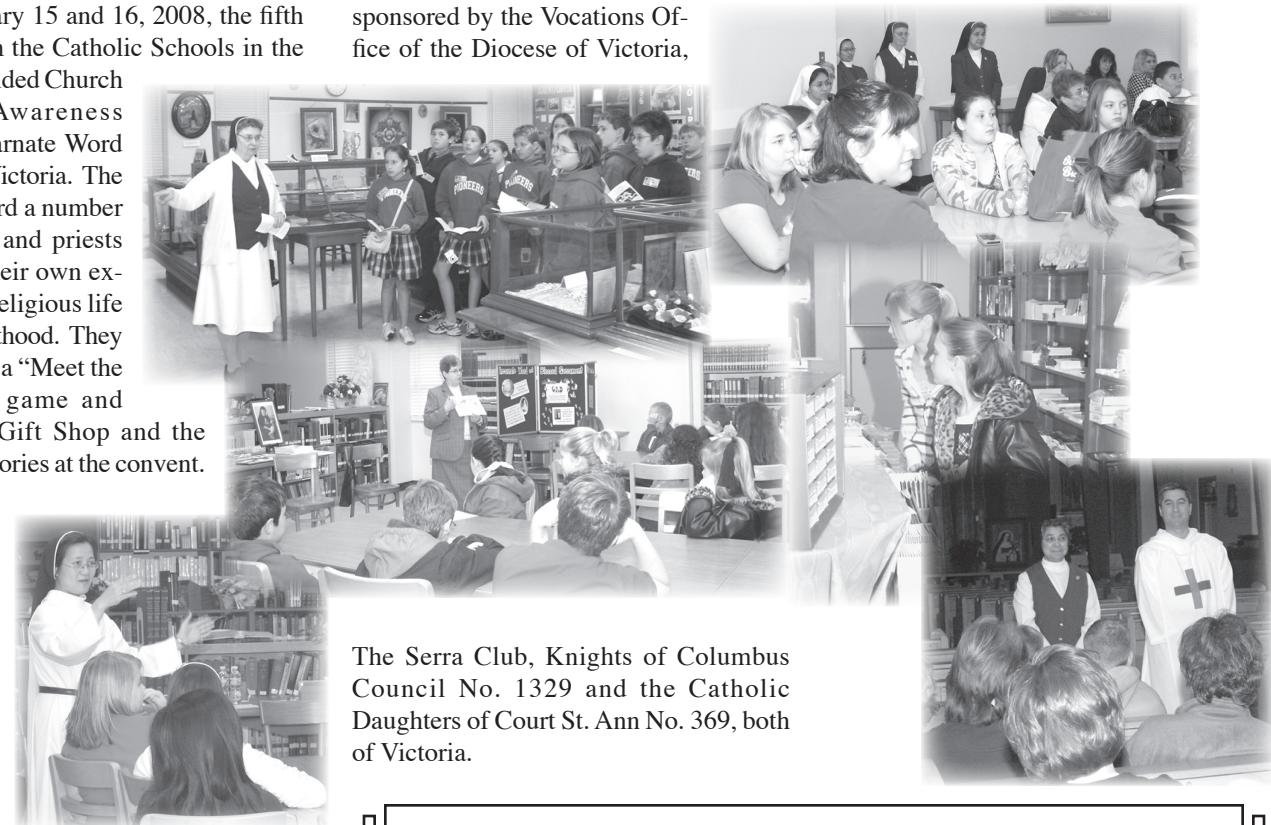
After every selection process, the committee always says, "We sure wish we had more funds to give out," Mr. Kovar said.

He and the committee feel as though they are being good stewards of the endowment's funds and see how the schools have made a "step change" to becoming more innovative in their grant requests and applications. "We feel more comfortable to ask for more since we have a process and have seen schools becoming more innovative," he said.

The diocese would love to be able to have a base of \$10 million dollars in their Catholic School Endowment Fund, Mr. Kovar said, so they could provide \$50,000 grants to several schools each year.

Bequests, charitable remainder trusts, and outright gifts of disposable income will be greatly appreciated to continue to improve the Catholic School Endowment Fund. To make donations, please contact the diocese's finance officer, Mike Brown, at (361) 573-0828, ext. 18.

Catholic School 5th graders introduced to vocations



sponsored by the Vocations Office of the Diocese of Victoria,

The Serra Club, Knights of Columbus Council No. 1329 and the Catholic Daughters of Court St. Ann No. 369, both of Victoria.

2008 Pilgrimages with Betty Urbanovsky

PILGRIMS REUNION — February 17, 2008 (El Campo)

Shrines Of The USA.....May — An awesome trip to see the wonderful Holy Sites here in Our USA with the beautiful dogwoods of many colors in bloom, also see the Statue of Liberty and Arlington Cemetery and so much more.

Shrines Of Italy And RomeJune 8-20 — Venice / Florence / Siena / Assisi/Cascia / Monte Cassino / St. Filomena / audience with Pope Benedict, and Rome

Shrines Of France /Spain/PortugalSept. 30 - Oct.15 — Fatima / Lourdes / La Salette / St. Jean Vianney and so much more: 150 Anniversary of Our Lady of Lourdes / Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette / be in Fatima for the BIG Anniversary of the 13th of October

Shrines Of The USA And Canada....End of Oct. — National Shrine of Divine Mercy / St. Anne de Beaupre / St Joseph's Oratory / Our Lady of the Cape and more

Holy Land....November

For more information and inquiries, Please Contact Betty Urbanovsky at:
911 Fahrenhold, El Campo, Texas 77437
Tel: (979) 543-2333 or E-mail: burbanovsky@sbcglobal.net



An Ignatian Experience for young adults to be held May 16-19

The Adventure – An Ignatian Experience is being offered at Montserrat in Lake Dallas for men and women, ages 19-26, May 16-19.

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

March conference to focus on ethical issues in sex, marriage

STEUBENVILLE, Ohio (CNS) — The moral limits of technology for reproduction and the relationship of sex, marriage and procreation are among the topics to be explored March 27-29 during a conference on ethical issues in sex and marriage at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. "We will be considering the most controversial issues involved in the clash between secularism and traditional morality," said Patrick Lee, director of Franciscan University's Institute of Bioethics, in a news release about the conference. "Conference participants will acquire a clearer view of these issues and will meet others who are working in the area as philosophers, legal professionals, political specialists and diocesan ministry professionals," Lee added. More information is available online at: www.franciscanconferences.com; by calling (800) 437-8368; or by sending an e-mail to: plee@franciscan.edu.

USCCB offers multimedia online resources for Lent

WASHINGTON — The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is offering a variety of multimedia resources to help Catholics reflect during the 2008 season of Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday, February 6. Resources include a new series of "radio retreats" in English and Spanish, several versions of the Stations of the Cross, including a new audio version available for download. The resources can be found at www.usccb.org/lent. The site includes information on fasting and abstinence, examinations of conscience to aid preparation for the Sacrament of Penance and a section on Holy Week observances. Resources are also structured to assist different user groups including families, parishes and youth. Funding for the creation of the resources was provided by the U.S. bishops' Catholic Communication Campaign.



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life when virtually all life-determining options, and life-derailing mistakes, are made. The Adventure is intended to recreate the authentic 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.

The Adventure will be held Friday, May 16 (evening), until Monday, May 19 (afternoon), for men and women between the ages of 19 and 26. (If you started last year, then sign up for The Adventure, Part II: Discernment.) To sign up, please call Montserrat at (940) 321-6020 and ask for Carol or Charlene or e-mail Carol Ackels at montcarol@centurytel.net. The cost is \$35. Checks payable to Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House or major credit cards accepted. Your reservation is confirmed when we receive your payment. Deadline is May 1. Space is limited. There will be a \$20 late fee after the deadline. Questions: Contact Father Nathan Stone, SJ, nstonesj@yahoo.com; Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House, 600 N. Shady Shores, PO Box 1390, Lake Dallas, Texas 75065; www.Montserratretreat.org; (940) 321-6020

Common Practice of Penance for Lent

Dear Friends in Christ:

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday, February 6. All Christ's faithful are obliged by Divine Law, each in his or her own way, to do penance.

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

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

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

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

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

May this holy season of Lent be a time of conversion and renewal for all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Rev. Msgr. Thomas C. McLaughlin, V.G.
Chancellor, Diocese of Victoria

El Campo K of C Spring Picnic

Knights of Columbus Council 2490

Sunday, March 30

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

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Letter to the Editor

To: Editor,

I recently read an article in the *Wall Street Journal* that stated statistics from The National Retail Federation that predicted that an amazing \$26 billion in gift cards will be purchased this Christmas season by U.S. consumers.

I would like to share with your readers a strategy. I have received gift cards in recent years for which I have had no use. Last Christmas I received a \$50 gift card for a retail chain store whose business practices I do not necessarily like. Thinking that this gift card would be useless to me, I donated it to a local home for unwed mothers and was told by an appreciative staff member it would go a long way to help a young mother who has made the courageous decision to have her baby in

the abortion-saturated culture in which we live. Afterwards, I donated two other gift cards that were hanging around from past years, which were also put to good use.

Sometimes these "useless" gift cards go lost or unused. I would like to encourage your readers to consider donating such gift cards that they will not use to a local home for unwed mothers. Such gift cards can make the difference for a brave young mother who has courageously chosen life and has a rocky road ahead of her.

Sincerely,
John Nguyen
Niantic, CT

Thank You Notes

Your Excellency,

I am writing on behalf of the Holy Father to acknowledge the offering of \$38,004.52 forwarded to the Apostolic Nunciature as Peter's Pence from the Diocese of Victoria for the year 2007.

His Holiness wishes me to thank you for this contribution to his apostolic ministry. He is aware that the collection involved effort and that your people were motivated by faith in Jesus Christ and union with the See of Peter.

Invoking upon you, the clergy, religious and laity of the diocese grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing.

With personal good wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State

Dear Bishop Fellhauer,

I wish to thank you and the people of the Diocese of Victoria for your generous gift of \$51,535.58 to support the work of the Church in Central and Eastern Europe.

Through the national collection, Catholics in the United States build the Church in a vast territory ranging from Poland, Slovakia, and Lithuania through the Balkans, Central Asia, and Russia to the shores of the Pacific. The Church in all these lands, so weakened by decades of repression, now enjoys tremendous growth, due in no small part to the generous solidarity of Catholics here at home.

Your efforts for the Eastern Europe collection sustain Catholics of immense faith and surpassing hope. Permit me to express on their behalf a word of profound gratitude for your support.

Sincerely in Christ,
Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman
USCCB Committee to Aid the
Church in Central and Eastern Europe



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Colin MacIver and Colin Nykaza train 130 adults to teach on Theology of the Body for Teens.



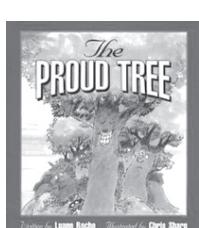
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Visit www.victoriadiocese.org to search the library catalog or call 361-573-0828. Library hours are Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Lent and Easter Videos

The Proud Tree video tells of the Crucifixion from the viewpoint of Rex, the tree that became the cross of Jesus. This is a familiar story told in a new and memorable way.

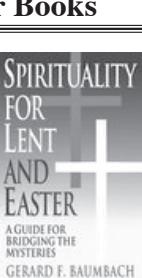


- *El Arbol Orgulloso*
- *Lent: A Time for Renewal*
- *God Sees Into the Heart*
- *Celebrating the Season: Lent*
- *This is the Night*

For more videos, books, or DVDs on Lent and Easter go to www.victoriadiocese.org and browse our on-line library catalog.

Lent and Easter Books

Spirituality For Lent and Easter offers a four-part approach to enter into the mystery of each of the Sundays of Lent and Easter, with special focus on the triduum, the most sacred days of the liturgical year



- *Inviting God In*
- *Lent and Easter – Prayer at Home*
- *That You May Have Life... Let the Mystics Be Your Guide for LENT*
- *What Every Catholic Needs to Know About Lent*

Theology of the Body for Teens training a huge success

If Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message.

John Paul II

By Debbie Vanelli, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director

Every day teens are thinking about their sexuality as they search for meaning in their lives. On Friday and Saturday, January 18-19, 2008, one-hundred and thirty adults who routinely work with young people were trained to use the curriculum for Catholic teenagers based on the Theology of the Body that helps them understand the significance of their sexuality and the purpose of their lives. The new curriculum, which was recently granted the Imprimatur by Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, is titled "Theology of the Body for Teens: Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life." This curriculum answers such questions as:

- Why did God give us our sexual desires?
- What is the difference between love and lust?
- What does our sexuality teach us about God?
- Can Christ bring healing to me if I've already "messed up"?
- What is the "language of the body" and how do I "speak" it?
- How can I discover my vocation?
- How far is "too far"?
- How can teens remain pure in our oversexed culture?
- Does waiting for sex make marriages stronger?
- Is there any hope for overcoming lust and pornography?

"The one thing I've seen that turns off kids today, is telling them 'you're wrong.' We need to show them what fruits come from waiting. I haven't seen any 'no's' in this program; it's all 'yes's' — yes to God, yes to what's good. It's all about freedom and that's what kids are looking for today," stated Colin MacIver, main speaker for both days of this training.

Theology of the Body was the topic of a series of Wednesday general audiences given by Pope John Paul II starting Sept. 5, 1979, and concluding Nov. 28, 1984.

Over those 129 audiences, the pontiff discussed the many facets of the dignity and integrity of loving human relationships throughout life. The audiences reframed discussion about the human body as a powerful symbol of God's life and love for the world and became the late pontiff's first major teaching as a pope. This program is published by Pennsylvania-based Ascension Press, which the publisher describes as a "comprehensive approach that includes stories, real-life examples, activities, prayers and references to the culture that teens understand."

The Theology of the Body for Teens is the first published curriculum to apply and adapt Pope John Paul II's principles of Theology of the Body specifically to teenagers and currently has a program for preteens in development. The text upon which the program is based was written by chastity educators Jason and Crystalina Evert, and Brian Butler, a longtime youth minister in New Orleans, with consultation by Christopher West of the Theology of the Body Institute. Aimed at students, ages 13 to 19, the program is taught in 12, hour-long sessions, and deals with a myriad of issues of relevance to contemporary teens. It covers the broad foundational concepts of humanity, dignity and respect, and also deals with sensitive issues such as homosexuality, artificial insemination, pornography, masturbation and contraception.

The program is designed to stimulate outcomes that include a deeper appreciation of human sexuality as part of God's plan for salvation and is being used widely around the country.

"I think this program is so great because it takes Pope John Paul's great work of *Theology of the Body* and brings it to the teenage experience," said Meagan Weaver, a teacher of this program in the Diocese of Palm Beach. "Our late Holy Father used the questions that stir deep within our hearts — What is my purpose? What is love? — to teach about the sacred gift of our bodies and our sexuality, why sexual intimacy is only able to be lived in marriage. He used human experience to show us that turning away from God brings us emptiness and slavery."

Through a generous grant, the Office of Youth Ministry was able to bring this training to our diocese. The enthusiasm of the participants was palpable, as the plans were being made to implement this program in the various parishes and schools.

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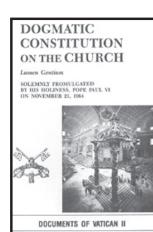
Rev. Greg Korenek, instructor
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1505 E. Mesquite Lane

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Wharton Center
Holy Family

Feb. 18 – March 24

Rev. Eddie Winkler,
instructor
Mondays, 7:00-9:15 p.m.
2011 Briar Lane



Anyone interested in learning more about Catholic doctrine can register for the classes above. As Catholics in today's world we need to be able to understand and live our faith and make a lifelong commitment of growing and responding to God's love in our everyday lives.

Registration fee is \$15. Book fees are extra. Call (361) 573-0828, or e-mail bparkan@victoriadiocese.org to register or register the first night of class.

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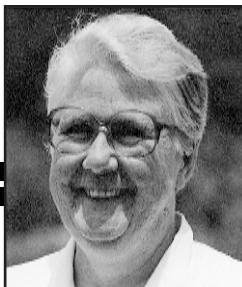
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SISTERLY THOUGHTS

By Sister Mildred Truchard, IWBS



"Now Is a Very Acceptable Time"

Lent is a special time for us to respond to God's call to conversion. The Lenten Lectionary readings call us to conversion, to move forward on our journey toward God. Saint Paul writes, "Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" The key word is "now," not "when I get around to it," or "when I get older and have more time" or whatever rationale we use when we're reluctant to step beyond the comfort of "the way it is" or "let's leave good enough alone."

As we listen to God's Word, we also hear how Abraham was called to leave his homeland to enter a land that the Lord would show him. While most of us are not being called to physically pick up and move, all of us are challenged to leave behind all that may burden us and hinder our entrance into a life of intensified conversion.

Furthermore, we hear how "At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert" So let us let go of whatever it is that is impeding our wholeheartedly following of Jesus so that we can accompany him into the desert. One aspect of the desert is that it is a place of sparse population and poses danger from scorpions, wild animals and outlaws. On the other hand, since it is a place devoid of many of the distractions of human interaction, one can more easily find God. What, then, can our own Lenten "desert" be? Is there a way that we can avoid the dangers of poisonous non-Christian influences about us? How do we remove unnecessary distractions which deprive us of the time and interest in our quest of finding God in our lives? Can we eliminate some of the time that we spend in meaningless activity, gossip, hours of unnecessary television viewing, internet use, or other activities that are not conducive to a deepening relationship with God? What can we curtail in order to reserve some time each day so we can hang out with Jesus and look at life through his eyes?

After Jesus was led into the desert, he fasted for forty days and forty nights. How can we fast, which is the way that we are to manifest our spirit of sacrifice and self denial, during our Lenten desert experience? The first way is by observing the Church's precepts of abstaining from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent and fasting during Lent, especially on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, if we are under sixty years of age and in good health. How about fasting from the vending machine or the snack bar and donating



WINDOW ILLUSTRATES PRACTICE OF ALMSGIVING—The practice of almsgiving is illustrated in a window at the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec City.

Alms, the freewill offerings to those in need, are the focus of this year's Lenten message from Pope Benedict XVI. He said almsgiving helps Christians conquer the constant temptation to become slaves to wealth and material goods. (CNS photo/Crosiers)

the money we save to the Rice Bowl or other charity? How about fasting from hurtful remarks and actions? What else is there that we can fast from—as individuals or as families?

Another manifestation of our Lenten spirit is alms-giving. When we give to the Rice Bowl or other charitable cause through our personal sacrifice, we are honoring Jesus who gave his all to show us the way and to save us.

The third very important way of enriching our Lenten experience is prayer. Spending time with Jesus through personal prayer, participating in daily Mass whenever possible and attending Lenten services with our Church community are ways to help us connect with God. Then like Jesus, we will be strengthened when Satan attempts to tempt us to minimize or even sever our relationship with God.

So let us be mindful of God's call to deepen our conversion during this season of Lent. And let us listen to St. Paul as he says, "Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!"

St. Mary Adoration Chapel in Victoria is thankful for the volunteers who filled the three open positions in January. Now in February, the adoration chapel is in need of a Monday, 6-7 p.m., adorer. Please call Cleo Boldt at 573-6161 or St. Mary rectory at 573-4328 if you are able to take this time or fill in as a substitute.

Catholic and Jewish scholars speak in Houston on how to avoid future Holocausts

Continued from p. 3

Holocaust, Germany has some of the most rigorous ethical guidelines for medicine and research in Europe today, he said.

"Physicians, politicians and the Church in Germany are today committed to avoiding the kinds of horrors that occurred under the National Socialists," Dr. Haas continued, "Research on human subjects is very carefully monitored."

In Rabbi Greenberg's talk, "Science and Religion Need to Cooperate to Prevent a Recurrence of the Holocaust," he spoke of the systemic failures that allowed for the Holocaust to occur and the mechanisms and specific policies that must be developed in order to prevent a repetition.

What failed to prevent the Holocaust, Dr. Greenberg stated, was the failure of the checks and balances of Germany's democratic system, the Weimar Republic; the failure of the Allies to stop Hitler in the 1930s; Christianity's set up of the Jews as being responsible for Christ's death, thus allowing for 1900 years of hatred and dehumanizing of Jews; the ideology of utopianism which allowed for the envisioning of a perfect and transformed world; and modern technology and bureaucracy, which offered efficient, dependable procedures to eliminate unwanted persons in order to create that utopia.

Dr. Greenberg said efforts are needed to shift policies in all these areas for the future prevention of another holocaust, noting with pleasure the achievements of post-Shoah Jewish-Christian dialogue.

What Dr. Greenberg believed to be the most needed change in society to prevent another holocaust or future genocide is the development of cultural pluralism, developed by both science and religion.

He said pluralism involves accepting limits and affirming essential values. As an example, he said, "Even if I believe I

have absolute authority/absolute revelation, I allow for others with contradictory views."

He said this grows out of the recognition of "1) the existence of multiple truths; 2) the frailty and limit of human judgment (self-interest may corrupt—so allow that no one group can have absolute authority; and 3) the other has the right to be heard; therefore, we need dialogue." All the above factors justify limits on one's position/power.

Pluralism, built on balance of power can protect freedom, dignity, inquiry, while promising the prevention of the concentration of power (political, military, economic, cultural and religious), Dr. Greenberg continued.

"Today the sheer volume and overwhelming amounts of power make it of the highest urgency to build in checks," he said.

Where I disagreed with Dr. Greenberg's ideas was that he also believes there should be no uniform source of moral consensus, no moral absolutes. I feel that without moral absolutes, one could not even believe in natural law. If there is not even the moral absolute that killing is wrong, I have a hard time seeing how another holocaust could be prevented. Dr. Greenberg also stated that Pope Pius XII did not speak out against the Nazis in a manner that could have saved the Jews. There is quite a lot of evidence that proves otherwise.

Besides my disagreement with two of Dr. Greenberg's points, I believe the two talks were very helpful in understanding what allowed the Holocaust of World War II and what could prevent a future one.

To learn more about the Houston Holocaust Museum and its changing exhibits, please go to: www.hmh.org

Vietnamese Dominican Sisters celebrate Golden Jubilee

Continued from p. 1

Dominican Sisters who had come to Pennsylvania to study abroad in 1970, they moved to Waterbury, Connecticut.

Two sisters from this group had volunteered to stay back in the refugee camp in Arkansas for a couple more months to catechize the children. These two sisters were sponsored by the Dominican Sisters in Houston and settled there with Vietnamese immigrants. Another group of six sisters was sent to the refugee transitional camp in Florida. They were sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Spark Hill, New York.

In 1977, all the religious sisters from these three groups were reunited in Houston through the help of two Vietnamese Dominican priests, Fathers Vincent Du Nguyen and Joseph Doan Bang, who had asked Bishop John Morkovsky to accept the sisters into the Diocese of Galveston-

Houston. Father Gerard Joubert, OP, arranged with his friend, Msgr. Dexter George, a residence for the sisters at St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

The Diocese of Galveston-Houston recognized the sisters as a religious community in the diocese September 8, 1978. The sisters moved from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in 1987 to build the provincial curia at 5250 Gasmer Dr. in Houston. They support themselves by various means such as nursing, teaching, making tofu and gardening.

Today they have 75 final professed sisters in the U.S. with another 25 on their way to becoming professed. In Vietnam they have 173 sisters and 174 in the process of becoming professed.

On this special Golden Jubilee, the Holy See has issued a Decree of Indulgence for all of the faithful who visit the sisters' chapels in Vietnam or the United States on fifteen specified dates of the year. With the approval of their pastor, Father Dan Morales, the Dominican Sisters from Our Lady of the Gulf will also open their chapel and invite all the faithful to join them in this privilege of plenary indulgence. Feast days on which one may receive the indulgence by attending OLG chapel are March 15, April 29, May 25, May 30, August 8, September 5, October 5, November 23, 2008, and January 21, 2009. Please call OLG for more information (361) 552-6140.

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Army of Me makes first record

WASHINGTON, DC—"We wanted a record that would communicate with everyone. We're saying what we feel in a simple way with the hope that if you're a human being with a heart that's beating, you will appreciate at least some part of this record," says Army of Me singer Vince Scheuerman. The big songs of Army of Me's debut, CITIZEN, speak from the heart, with the feeling that less is more. On CITIZEN they find themselves expanding their sound and scope for a band with firm roots in the Washington DC indie rock scene; this is new territory.

"We are trying to be one of the best bands you will ever see," said lead singer Vince Scheuerman during an interview with Alternative Press magazine (June 2005). Army of Me had just been named one of the top unsigned bands in America by the influential rock magazine, and the article started a barrage of major label interest for the Washington DC based band. This came after several years of DIY touring, a string of self released albums and EPs, and thousands of flyers wheat-pasted all over the East Coast.

The new album, CITIZEN, represents growth and a new chapter for the band. With the band sounding bigger than ever before, the lyrics deal with change, desire, transformation, hope, love, and the human condition in songs like "Perfect," "Going Through Changes," and "Rise" — a song inspired by the tsunami of Dec. 26, 2005 — just three of the albums 12 tracks. Scheuerman, the lyricist, says, "The aim is to share my experience, my search, my questions, and my belief that there is redemption and hope. It's a very human record."

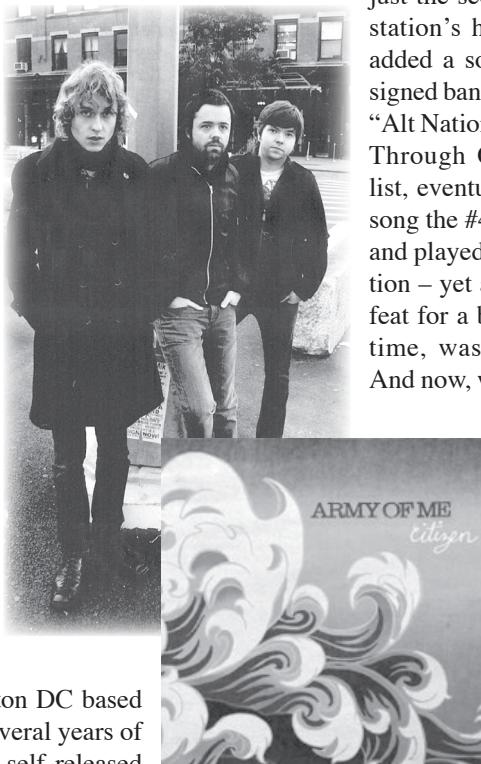
Vince (lead vocals/guitar), Brad Tursi (guitar, backing vocals), and Dennis Manuel (drums), formed Army of Me in 2001 and refined their sound with continu-

ous touring of the East Coast and Midwest of the U.S. Opening for bigger acts throughout the process, they developed a passionate regional fan base, leading to sold-out shows at DC's famous 9:30 club, and numerous clubs in New York City.

Their touring success was only part of the story. "Come Down to DC," an epic ode to their roots, was added into full rotation on DC101 in the fall of 2005 — just the second time in the station's history that they added a song from an unsigned band. Sirius Radio's "Alt Nation" added "Going Through Changes" to its list, eventually making the song the #4 most requested and played song on the station — yet another amazing feat for a band who, at the time, was still unsigned. And now, with their album,

CITIZEN, released by the prolific Doghouse Records, the radio story continues to grow, with adds for "Going Through Changes" at KROQ in L.A., WOCL in Orlando, DC101 in Washington, DC, XM and SIRIUS.

Army of Me is an indie band from Washington, DC — it's in your best interest to discover them now. The band is not a so-called Christian band, but the lead singer, Scheuerman, is a Catholic and he doesn't hide his faith.



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Youth Calendar of Events

February 16 — Basic Youth Ministry Certificate Course — Class No. 5 - **Justice and Service** — at the Chancery from 8:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required

February 17 — Confirmation Retreat — at St. Michael's in Cuero

February 21 — Campus Ministry at Victoria College — Mass and social at 6:00 p.m.

February 23 — Fullness of Truth Conference in Corpus Christi

February 25-29 — Diocesan Directors Meeting — Brownsville

March 2 — DOVE Retreat at St. Mary's in Victoria

March 9 — High School Spectacular — at Holy Family in Victoria

March 27 — Campus Ministry at Victoria College — Mass and social at 6:00 p.m.

March 30 — Youth Leadership Training — 8:45 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

April 4 — Knights of Columbus 9088 — **Golf Tournament** to benefit youth ministry and vocation programs in the Diocese of Victoria

April 4-5 — RADIX at Holy Family in Victoria, contact Judy Seiler at Holy Family, (361) 573-5445 for more information

April 5 — Basic Youth Ministry Certificate Course — Class No. 6 - **Ethics and Crisis Management** — at the Chancery from 8:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required

April 13 — DOVE Retreat at Sacred Heart in Hallettsville

April 19 — Basic Youth Ministry Certificate Course — Class No. 7 - **Retreat Formation** — at the Chancery from 1:30 p.m. — 5:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required

April 22 — **Sharing Faith with Young Adolescents** — a workshop for all adults who work with junior high age young people

April 27 — Youth Leadership Training — Camp David planning - 8:45 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

June 1 — **Rocky Mountain High Staff Development** and parent/participant meeting at the Chancery

June 6-8 — **Camp David Staff Development** at the Spiritual Renewal Center

June 8-13 — **Camp David**, Spiritual Renewal Center

June 20-22 — **D-week Staff Development**, Spiritual Renewal Center

June 23-26 — **Girls Vocation Camp** at Stony Creek Camp in Columbus

June 23-26 — **D-week**, Spiritual Renewal Center

July 5-13 — **Rocky Mountain High** in Pagosa Springs, Colorado

July 15-18 — **Boys Vocation Camp** at Stony Creek Camp in Columbus

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

That championship season

By Stephen Kent
Catholic News Service

Do Catholic schools make a difference; are they worth the sacrifice?

It's a reasonable question to ask when yearly tuition at some Catholic high schools now reaches the five-figure level, money that could buy a fine sedan.

Proponents of Catholic education point out that faith-based education is increasingly important, especially when youth are exposed to media messages of consumerism, materialism and "it's all about me."

The primary value of Catholic schools is educating within a philosophical value base, a reinforcement of spirituality where inner religious values are important and stressed and where students become aware of their soul as the mind.

However, too often the value of Catholic education remains vague and theoretical. Doing the right thing at great cost, as recently experienced at one Catholic high school, brings it into life. This story has all the markings of a Hollywood script.

Archbishop Murphy High School in Everett, Wash., began the 2007 football season aware that its legendary coach, Terry Ennis, was close to death. The team won its opening two games. Ennis, suffering prostate cancer for the past five years, died four days after the second game.

The second winningest coach in Washington state history, Ennis came out of retirement to found the Archbishop Murphy football program in 2000. His team won state titles in 2002 and 2003 and gave him

a 75-12 record at the school.

More than 2,000 people packed the school gymnasium to pay tribute to Ennis in a two-hour memorial service. The team dedicated the season to their late coach.

The team also won its remaining eight games, each by at least 20 points, for a perfect 10-0 season to win its fourth consecutive conference title. It ranked third in the state in a wire service poll; the next step was the playoffs leading to the state championship game.

While going through records preparing for the winter athletic season, athletic administrators discovered the physical exam for one football player had expired in early September prior to the first football game.

The school reported the violation to the league, which found the player ineligible for having competed in eight games — the eight after Ennis' death — because he didn't have the proper physical exam required by state rules. Archbishop Murphy was required to forfeit those eight games.

The school appealed to the conference, to the district level and eventually to the state high school athletic board to no avail. Rules are rules.

"In any other normal year, this certainly wouldn't have happened," said Rick Sturbrud, the interim coach. "I'd call it just a very honest mistake; there was no intent to violate a rule."

A perfect season ended for them on the day of the first playoff game, a season in which the Wildcats had won every

game.

The discovery of the disqualifying mistake just days before the team was to advance could have easily been put back in the folder, to be forgotten about.

Instead, the Wildcats found their season ended with rejection of their appeal.

Here was values-based education at its finest.

The Wildcats of Archbishop Murphy could have won a trophy and cherished lifelong memories of a championship season. Now they have something greater: that perfect season when values they learned and professed were put into play to great disappointment.

Does the values-based education of Catholic schools make a difference?

Ask the members of the team with a perfect record, a championship season.

A Memorial to Father Wolfgang

Continued from p. 2

Holy Trinity. The love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit was the dominant force in the life of our Father Wolfgang, and his devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe was a special joy to him during his years of ministry at Our Lady of Sorrows in Victoria. Anyone who ever saw him pray, who ever heard him preach, or got stuck with him in his office knows that. As outrageous as Father Wolfgang could be in his enthusiasm for life, there was no guile in this man! The Diocese of Victoria was enriched by the ministry of this unique and life-filled priest. We pray that his love for God will lead many of our young people to service in the Church as priests and religious.





Celebrating Catholic Schools Week 2008

in the Diocese of Victoria in Texas

"Catholic Schools Light The Way"

Special pull-out section

By Sister Gloria Cain, S.S.N.D.
Catholic Schools Superintendent

This year's Catholic Schools Week theme, "Catholic Schools Light the Way," combines concepts of God as the light of the world and the light of knowledge that our Catholic schools kindle in students.

At this special time, we again recognize and pay tribute to Catholic schools throughout the United States, especially the 12 elementary and 3 Catholic high schools in our own Diocese of Victoria. Evidence indicates that these schools continue to achieve significant academic results and inspire lifetime attitudes and values in their students. Our schools edu-

Catholic Schools Light The Way

cate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. We are proud of the fact that the heart of education in our Catholic schools is the development of the whole person.

Catholic schools face a variety of challenges in lighting the way. One of the major challenges for schools is to prepare young people for a world that is changing rapidly. Children must of necessity be lifelong learners. Schools must focus not only on imparting information but also on teaching critical thinking skills and cooperative problem solving. More basi-

cally, Catholic schools are challenged to ground students in Catholic doctrine and values. We want our young people to become change agents, able not only to cope with the prevailing culture but also impact that culture with the Gospel. This is not an easy task, but it is essential to the mission of Catholic education. If teachers, principals, and pastors do not have the support of parents, the task becomes even

more difficult, perhaps impossible.

This time of celebrating our Catholic schools gives me opportunity once again to thank parents, pastors, administrators, faculty, staff members, volunteers, and all those unnamed individuals who are committed and support the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Victoria. I believe, as I hope you do, that our Catholic schools are integral to the educational ministry of the Church. Together we will continue to provide excellent Catholic education for the children of this diocese.

Continuing Education for 130 Years



Sister Emilie Eilers, IWBS, teaches the first grade class at Our Lady of Victory in 1957.



Today, 50 years after the first students came to OLV, students (left to right) Vyvian Pham and Reagan Heard, enjoy reading books in the reading center.

OLV Celebrates 50 Years Of Education With The IWBS Sisters' Help

Our Lady of Victory Elementary Victoria

In 1955, the Thomas O'Connor Sr. and Martin O'Connor families donated 20 acres of land on North Laurent and Mesquite Lane to build a new parish plant – church and school – to serve Victoria's growing Catholic community. The name of the parish would be Our Lady of Victory in keeping with the titles of the three existing Catholic Churches. In 1956 construction began for a church, rectory, garage, 12-room school and administration building.

By the fall of 1957, three units with four classrooms each and an administration building had been completed. On September 4, 1957, Our Lady of Victory School opened its doors to 231 students from grades one through four. Our Lady of Victory is indebted to the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament for staffing the school in its earlier years.

As the school grew, so did the buildings and curriculum. Another unit of classrooms and cafeteria were added. Our Lady of Victory became a school for students in kindergarten through eighth. A library, additional classrooms and gymnasium followed. Some twenty years later the school expanded with an Early Childhood Center serving students Pre-K3 through 8th. An Art Center soon followed.

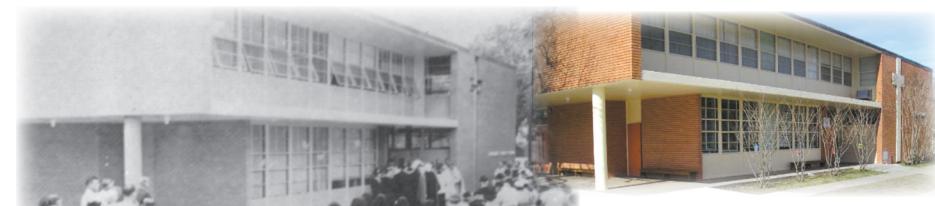
In 1971 Our Lady of Victory School organized the curriculum on the Montessori philosophy using small group instruction

as a means of creating an environment where a student's potential is realized. The program was so successful that in 1974 the Texas Education Agency recognized Our Lady of Victory as a "Demonstration School" for individualized instruction. The school continues to use this method of instruction for math and reading. Our Lady of Victory continues to expand the curriculum in the area of technology and foreign language.

Not only has the school thrived academically; it has continued to cultivate the faith life of each child that enters its doors. It sees itself as working in partnership with its students' parents and the Church, providing the best education possible.

On November 10, 2007, Our Lady of Victory commemorated its 50th Anniversary by hosting a Family Day Celebration. The event brought the OLV family and friends together for a day of fun and entertainment. The Family Day Celebration included lots of games, food, and entertainment by the Ballet Folklorico, Rusty Steins, Nazareth Academy Choir of Angels, St. Joseph High School band, cheerleaders and drill team, Memorial High School cheerleaders and dance team, and the OLV choir, cheerleaders and pep squad.

Our Lady of Victory School has seen many changes in the past 50 years, but some things have not changed – the excellence of its school, the spirit of its students, the dedication of its teachers, and the love and sacrifice of its parents.



St. Michael's School today (above), which was constructed and dedicated in 1955 (pictured left).



The St. Michael's alumni were invited to the school's open house to celebrate the school's 130th anniversary. Prizes were awarded to Monroe Rieger for Farthest Traveling Alumni (standing on left); James Crain Jr. for Eldest or Most Mature Alumni (third from left), and the winners of the Alumni Brain-Teaser Quiz: John Meitzen (standing, ninth from left) and Patrick Crain (kneeling, fifth from left).

St. Michael Elementary Cuero

St. Michael's School in Cuero celebrated Catholic Schools Week by looking at the past, present and future. The celebration began on January 26 with the opening Mass followed by a proclamation issued by Cuero's mayor, W.L. "Buzz" Edge honoring the school on its 130th anniversary. Following the ceremony, an Open House was held at the school and a special "Alumni Recognition" was featured in one of the classrooms.

Throughout the week, students heard from past alumni on the value of education, especially Catholic education, in their lives. They prepared for the future by hearing from city and county leaders about how government works and how education, good citizenship, and public service are connected. They looked back at the music of the past five decades for the school's annual talent show. They predicted the future by looking at current fads and today's culture.

St. Michael's School was established in 1877. The school was originally staffed by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio. In September of 1916, the Sisters of Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament of Victoria became the teaching Sisters of St. Michael's School.

In 1953, the first lay teacher was hired by St. Michael's. In 1955, plans were drawn for the building of a new modern brick school and convent on additional church property.

During 1966, plans were made to dou-

ble the size of St. Michael's School. Four classrooms, a music room and teachers' lounge were added, making St. Michael's a grades one through eighth school. This was the first time in the history of the school that each grade was taught in a separate classroom. All the classrooms, new and old, were also air-conditioned at this time.

In 1984, St. Michael's entered the Computer Age by installing seven computers and offering a computer literacy course. A year later, St. Michael's added a portable building to house a kindergarten classroom and began offering a full-day kindergarten program, which was expanded to pre-Kindergarten for three and four year olds in 1999.

The school's first lay principal was hired in 1984. There were two Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament Sisters on staff plus eight lay teachers. In 1996, after serving St. Michael's School for 80 years, the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament ceased to staff the school. Since then, St. Michael's School has been under the leadership of lay principals.

A new playground was erected in 2000. In March of 2003, St. Michael's School purchased a 23-passenger school bus with grant funds, and it installed new air-conditioning throughout the school in 2007.

Currently, the school serves Grades 3K-6th. The school's mission is to know as Jesus knew, to love as Jesus loved, and to serve as Jesus served.



St. Michael Weimar: Lights the Way

St. Michael Elementary Weimar

St. Michael School is much more than nice buildings. The campus is aglow with creative students who are striving daily to be what Jesus calls us all to be and which the school's mission statement proclaims: "Be Christ-like—Friendly, Respectful and Responsible." Students are challenged with not only a strong, basic academic program, but also with many opportunities to develop their God-given talents in the fine arts. St. Michael School affords every student in Grades 5-8 the opportunity to take band by providing instruments and classes twice a week. The result of their hard work is displayed twice a year at their Band Concerts. Students also share their musical and acting talents through their inspirational Christmas pageant and their solemn Easter pageant, both of which are attended by many more than just the St. Michael School family and Church members. St. Michael School also features its Special Choir, which sings at the weekly Masses. Students at St. Michael School, under the tutelage of caring and dedicated teachers, have always been known to fare

well during academic fairs and athletic events. Another big opportunity made available to St. Michael School 8th graders is to travel to Washington DC to visit the Nation's Capital.

Another important aspect of educating our students is by making them aware of serving others. St. Michael School has adopted Lomodong, a student in Africa, for a number of years contributing money for his medical needs. Here locally, the students collect food for the food pantry, visit the local nursing home, and assist with school functions. During Catholic Schools' Week our students are expanding their service by cleaning the local cemeteries, planting a tree for the Garden Club, visiting various nursing and assisted living facilities and "saying" thank you to our community helpers.

It is at St. Michael Catholic School that our students learn what it means to be a light in the city of Weimar. Our students go on to be the future leaders at the high school and, as they continue along the path of life, leaders in the Church and the greater Weimar community.

"Service Above Self," a Goal of Sacred Heart Catholic School

Sacred Heart Elementary Sacred Heart High School Hallettsville

The students at Sacred Heart Catholic Schools participate in many service projects throughout the school year since service is such an integral part of Catholic education. Service assists the students in meeting their educational, developmental and social goals.

One of the many projects that the students in grade 5-12 participate in at Christmas is the Adopt a Family project. This year the students at SHCS adopted six needy families in the community so their children could have a joyous Christmas. Over 600 gifts, including \$1,500 in cash, were collected and distributed. This year the project also included assisting the Child Protective Service by collecting and distributing household items to those in need.

The students also sent holiday items, letters, pictures and snacks to the Medical Troop, Regimental Support Squadron (6/2), of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Division stationed in Iraq. Sacred Heart Catholic School 2003 graduate, Traci Kaiser's husband, SSG Brian Jalomo is a member of the troop. The elementary and junior high students colored cards and wrote letters to the troops, while the high school students donated money to buy Christmas decorations and snacks to send.

A food and clothing drive for the

Manna Food Pantry and LAMB was held and sponsored by the Sacred Heart GVEC Leadership Team. The members of the leadership team attended a leadership seminar and one of the follow-up activities was to sponsor a community service project.

The kindergarten class collected money for the Lavaca County Sheriff's Department Deputy Santa Program. The



(above) The Sacred Heart Catholic School GVEC Leadership Team members are Kristin Dworsky, Amy Klimitchek, Amanda Shimek, Cavan Harper, Samantha Kubena and Ricky Fenner (not pictured). The food and clothing drive that the team sponsored collected two truck loads of donated items.

(right) The students at Sacred Heart Catholic School sent decorations, snacks and Christmas greetings to the soldiers in Iraq. Pictured are (front row l-r) Paige Hanacek and Shelby Haas (back row l-r) Douglas Gray, Megan Pavlicek, Carly Haas and Tyler Wagner.



The handmade quilt belongs to Vincent Havens and his family. He did all the drawings on the quilt.



The bench was made by Ryan and Daniel Rubio and their family.

Spiritual Values are Important at Holy Cross

Holy Cross Elementary Bay City

The Holy Cross staff helps the students understand that spiritual values are more important than secular values. The staff believes the development of a child's spirituality is every bit as important as intellectual and physical development. The school produces well-rounded students who succeed intellectually and socially as they enter the junior and high school arenas. Students are frequently reminded of God's real presence by their caring, concerned teachers at Holy Cross.

Holy Cross has staff that is qualified, dedicated and concerned for each and every student. Holy Cross is a small family oriented school that is supported by the parish, advisory council, Home and School Association, foundation, parish organizations and community.

The Bay City Community is blessed to have the option of parochial, private and public educational choices. Catholic

Schools Week is a time when Holy Cross commemorates and celebrates a few of its countless blessings. Some noteworthy events were:

- Family Dance
- Special Liturgy and Open House
- Muffins and Donuts Breakfasts
- Green and White Games Day
- Talent Show
- NED "Yo-Yo" Program
- Scholastic Book Fair

The projects (pictured above) are the family projects the students were asked to do for CSW. We wanted the students to involve their family in making them. The classes also did various assignments during the year that were put out for display.

Small classes, dedicated faculty and staff, basic education with a fine arts program, supportive parents, before and after school care, and computer lab are a few things that make Holy Cross unique and special.

lection were used for the missions in Africa, particularly the one served by Sister Rebecca of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament.

Some other service projects that the students at Sacred Heart participate in during the year are Student Council sponsored food drives and blood drives. The students have also assisted several Sacred

Heart Catholic School families and alumni with hamburger benefits to help defray medical costs and the Environmental Science class participates in the Adopt a Highway program.

Sacred Heart Catholic School strives to educate its students in all areas of their lives; therefore, the students must realize the importance of service. As Mother Teresa once stated, "Love cannot remain by itself—it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service."



Mayor Annie Rodriguez is shown with members of the St. Joseph Student Council, Father Matthew Huehlefeld, and Principal Susan Kelley declaring a Proclamation of the City of Yoakum for Catholic Schools Week. Pictured sitting left to right is Ryan Hagan, Mayor Rodriguez, and Father Huehlefeld. Standing is Katherine Hull, and Principal Kelley, and John Patek

St. Joseph, Yoakum, stresses the three "R's"

St. Joseph Elementary Yoakum

St. Joseph Catholic School in Yoakum has been serving the community for more than a century. We stress high academic achievement and the three "R's"—Religion, Respect and Responsibility. Students are taught to make Christ the center of their life, to respect others and their self, and to make a commitment to hard work. These are the essentials of a successful life.

Opportunities for students to experience a large variety of activities are part of the curriculum. During Veterans Day, we invited veterans to our assembly and each class gave a patriotic performance. At Thanksgiving the students sang at the

community service, and contributed to the local food drive. Before Christmas we had our annual Musical Christmas Play with the whole student body participating. The Eighth graders made quilts for patients at MD Anderson Hospital. Every week we have a class go to a local nursing home and celebrate the Mass with the residents.

The events listed above are just a few of the activities we do to teach life skills beyond the classroom. Awareness enables our students to learn to live life to its fullness.

St. Joseph has a wonderful cohesive faculty and this spirit is conducive for a high-spirited learning environment. Our student body is presented with many

opportunities and we never pass up an opportunity for expressing humor. During Catholic School Week, the faculty challenged the student body to a basketball game, a spin off of the Harlem Globetrotters. The teachers call themselves the St. Joe Globetrotters. What the teachers lack in athletic ability they make up for in wit. Using aides like a stepladder, saran wrap, and a special teacher basketball rulebook help even the odds. Needless to say the teachers will win!



A Community Working Together at Shiner Catholic School

St. Ludmila Academy St. Paul High School Shiner

Shiner Catholic Schools is going through the accreditation process established by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department. This is a very involved process during which the community conducts a self-study that focuses on how the school is performing in relation to the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department standards. Through this process we identify things at the school that need improvement.

It has been amazing to be a part of this process, not because of the self-study itself, but because of the community's response to the school's identified needs. For the past two years or so we have been identifying facility needs around campus. It seems as though each time we identify a need, a member of the school community responds by taking the initiative to identify a solution and resolve the problem.

The entry hallway at St. Ludmila Elementary was painted by a group of faculty members and the current computer lab was given a facelift by an Eagle Scout during the summer of 2006. This past summer that same group of elementary teachers undertook an extensive bathroom renovation at the St. Ludmila Elementary School primary bathrooms. This undertaking was completed almost entirely with volunteer labor. The exterior



Students from Mrs. Schacherl's kindergarten and Mrs. Knesek's 1st grade classes play on the new playground equipment at St. Ludmila Academy in Shiner. Bathroom renovations (left).

new security gate was built by a volunteer and installed at the entrance to the gym hallway with a team of helpers.

It is amazing what can be accomplished when people pitch in and work together. Despite the significant needs of the school facilities, the generous spirit of this community is a real sign of vitality and hope. We will keep you posted on the progress we are making. There is currently a joint Eagle Scout project underway to coordinate a study for renovating the old convent building.



Bishop David Fellhauer blesses the O'Connor Athletic Complex on April 12, 2007. Since opening day, the complex has enhanced the athletic programs at St. Joseph High School. Also pictured assisting the bishop is future Flyer Connor Burdge.

St. Joseph High School – 140 Years of Quality Education

St. Joseph High School Victoria

St. Joseph High School is in its 140th year of providing Catholic education to the young men and women in the Victoria area. The school prides itself on providing a rigorous curriculum to students preparing them for college or other post-high school studies. On average, 98-100 percent of the students graduating from St. Joseph High School are accepted for admission to a college or university.

The faculty and staff are working diligently this year in preparation for an accreditation visit from the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation. The renewal of this accreditation provides veri-

fication by external sources of the Catholicity of the school and its mission and the rigor of St. Joseph's academic programs. The process verifies that the school is preparing every student for success in an ever-changing and diverse world.

While academics are the priority at STJ, students are provided a well-rounded education by playing sports



STJ seniors Amy Verbout and Avery Rains volunteered in the STJ Advancement office. Every student at St. Joseph High School is required to complete service hours each year.



(below) The city mayor of Schulenburg, Roger Moellenberndt, signed a proclamation at city hall in honor of Catholic Schools Week 2008. Two representatives from each grade went to represent the school. Photographed from left (front row): Taylor Demel, Kirley Cernosek, Ellie Fike, Julia Oeding, Dalton Demel and Morgan Marburger; second row: Elizabeth Edwards, Jase Hollas, Kyra Mays, Mayor Moellenberndt, Madeline Sommers, Jack Jacobs and Aimee Adamek; third row: Ray Thompson, Jacob Rehak, Victor Mondragon, Baylie Fietsam, Emily Kossa, Clayton Brossmann, Emily Seyl, Jade Bujnoch and Principal Rosanne Gallia.



(above) Larry Osina hugs his second-grade granddaughter at the Veteran's Day Mass breakfast reception. Kristen is a third generation St. Rose student and her grandfather Larry was a Mother Seton Award winner for his many contributions to St. Rose School.

St. Rose School is anything but average

St. Rose Elementary Schulenburg

"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine..." Almost everyone is familiar with this favorite Gospel song but how many of us choose to live the way the song is calling us? How many of us have our light shining for others to see?

Catholic schools are taking the opportunity everyday and especially during Catholic Schools Week to let their light shine for everyone to see. This year's theme, "Catholic Schools Light the Way" draws attention to these very special places that are calling and encouraging children to let their light shine.

From the beginning Catholic schools have provided parents a way to be certain their religious traditions and beliefs were passed on to their children and the generations that followed. Still today Catholic schools across the country are carrying on that very same mission. St. Rose of Lima Catholic School is proud to have been providing an excellent Catholic education for students since 1889.

Much like the intentions of those first founders, the people walking the halls at St. Rose Catholic School today are passing on a tradition, lighting the way for future generations. At first glance the people at St. Rose might look like any average person you meet on the street or in any other school across the country. But make

no mistake, the students, parents, faculty and staff are anything but average, and St. Rose of Lima Catholic School is not your average school. Aside from the responsibility of educating students, St. Rose School is family.

That close family bond is reflected in the commitment of its teachers. With 185 years of combined teaching experience and 85 of those years at St. Rose School, it is a true testament to the commitment, dedication and belief in the great things that are happening at St. Rose. Three of the teachers on staff are former graduates, bringing their passion for Catholic education to a new generation of students.

St. Rose Catholic School is a school for the family. Currently enrolled are five third generation families and nearly 10 families that are second-generation students. The grandparents and great-grandparents of these children started a tradition of passing on the faith not just in their homes, where all learning begins, but during their school day.

By choosing St. Rose of Lima Catholic School, families give the gift of education and fill their child's day with prayer, love and the opportunity to walk hand in hand with Christ. This choice encourages that little light to shine, and generations later parents are still making that choice for their children.

ers line the sidewalk honoring families and their STJ traditions. Pavers are still available and can be purchased through STJ Office of Advancement.

The school has also been making a concentrated effort to stay in touch with former students of the school. In addition to the regular class reunions, St. Joseph Alumni have been invited to several events in the past year including a tailgate party and the Alumni Flyer Classic Golf Tournament. Former students are also receiving the new St. Joseph Magazine highlighting the accomplishments of generations of St. Joseph students. If you or someone you know would like to be included on the school's mailing list please provide your information by e-mailing advancement@stjvictoria.com or call (361) 573-5239.



St. Anthony School bonds as a team during CSW

St. Anthony Elementary Columbus

Catholic Schools Week came on the heels of St. Anthony boys winning the DVAL basketball championship. This excitement carried into the week which was full of team events. St. Anthony divided all students from 4k to 8th grade into 12 teams right after Christmas. The teams gathered every Friday to create a flag to represent their team.

Spirits soared as our students attended opening ceremonies Mass, carrying their flag. Monday found the students wearing crazy socks and being the light in our community by cleaning the area around our campus. Tuesday followed with our students sharing the light with our yearly dress-up theme of "I would rather be..." Students also participated in a Spelling Bee. On Wednesday, National Appreciation Day, our students showed their gratitude by recognizing our soldiers fighting for our freedom. Every student wrote letters and brought donations for a care package that was sent to Iraq. On Wednesday, our students were in the spotlight during

our annual talent show.

After a school wide rosary on Thursday, the much anticipated field day started with the twelve teams competing in 6 events. Each team was decked out in team shirts provided by our PTC. The finals to a weeklong Speed Stack Tournament was also held on Thursday immediately prior to the annual staff vs. 8th grade volleyball game. After our Children's Mass on Friday morning, our teams met for lunch with their teacher/team leader. The finale of our week of excitement was a school-wide movie in our cafeteria where our teams sat together with pillows and blankets and were able to enjoy popcorn and more team bonding.

The week wrapped up with a junior high dance held in the cafeteria. Our theme of "A Night in the Spotlight" had our students dressed like stars. This week brought our campus together from top to bottom. The friendships made between the elementary and junior high students will continue to make our school one big family.



Eighth grader Laura Chapa and instructor George Blaha demonstrate a ballroom dance step while other students look on during PE class.

Nazareth Academy alive, well, growing

Nazareth Academy Victoria

By: Kate Tucker and CeCe Padilla, 8th Grade

Nazareth Academy is a very unique school. It was established in 1867, and is the fourth oldest Catholic school in the state of Texas. Nazareth, now the longest running school in Victoria, is filled with many traditions that complement our faith-based education. From top academics – fourteen seventh graders this year qualified for the Duke University Academic Talent Search, to excellent extracurricular activities – our band played the National Anthem at the Victoria County Veterans' Day Ceremony (the first time a Junior High band has been invited to do this); our choir performed at this same ceremony and also won Best of Show for the second consecutive year in Victoria's Christmas parade; and our volleyball and football teams are both District Champions this year – one can see that Nazareth Academy provides a well-rounded education second to none.

Though tradition is important, we have many new and exciting classes this year. Junior High students are learning ballroom dancing and home economics, while all grades (Pre-K through 8th grade) are learning Spanish. We also have a school newspaper known as the Jetsetter, which



Eighth Graders CeCe Padilla and Kate Tucker (authors of the article)

is written by the students in Journalism class. In addition, Nazareth Academy has a TV show that is aired twice per month. The students direct and also star in this production broadcast on FOX19 and NBC. Watch this show to see the wonderful and exciting things about our school.

Finally, Nazareth Academy is a growing school. We are growing not only in numbers, but also in technology and service. Year 2006-2007 witnessed the second consecutive year of our earning the Best Buy Teach Award for academics and technology. This

year we welcome our new online grading system, known as RenWeb, where we, the students and our parents, have the opportunity to check our grades. This is very useful to us, as we are able to keep track of, and therefore achieve, our academic goals. Furthermore, enrollment increased rapidly over the past two years due to the positive publicity we have been receiving. In fact, during the fall semester alone Nazareth Academy was featured in the Victoria Advocate ten times, or, twice per month on average. Television coverage has been positive as well, most recently with our art teacher, Mrs. Conti, being chosen as Newscenter25's Educator of the Week.

As can be seen, Nazareth Academy is alive and well and growing. As our slogan says: "We are traditionally the best!"

Sharing our Blessings

Our Lady of the Gulf Elementary Port Lavaca

Even though it has been over two years since Father Dan Morales first went to work at the Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro Hospital and Orphanage in Antigua, Guatemala, he still returns routinely to visit and provide support. Thus Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic School decided to make the Guatemalan Orphanage for adults and children its 2007 Advent Project.

Father Dan kicked-off the project by visiting each classroom and explaining the needs of the mission and the people it serves.

The needed material and medicines are difficult to bring into the country because the government encourages these items be bought locally to support the economy as much as possible. Thus, instead of donating items off an Angel Tree such as blankets, clothes, etc. the students created their own Giving Tree. Rather than take an Angel off a tree, the students placed an ornament on a tree each time they made a donation. By the time Christmas break came around, a beautifully decorated Christmas tree stood in the main school hall as a reminder of all the nickels and dimes the students had collected and donated to the mission totaling approximately \$400.

Then right before Christmas break, the students presented their annual Christmas Pageant incorporating the Guatemalan Orphanage into the story. They did



Our Lady of the Gulf kindergarten class holds the money that was collected and the cards that were made by the children for the Guatemalan Orphanage, the school's 2007 Advent project.

sion in Guatemala". Within minutes the students had raised another \$672 toward their Advent Project thus collecting over \$1,000 for the mission.

Father Dan will return to the Guatemalan Mission in February and present the students' gift accompanied with their prayers and cards to their Guatemalan brothers and sisters in Christ.

Faith in Practice is a charitable organization that sends medical teams and supplies to the Guatemalan orphanage for adults and children. To learn more about their mission, activities, and how to make a donation, please visit their Web site at www.faithinpractice.org. You may also visit the Obras Sociales Hermano Pedro Hospital and Orphanage Web site directly at www.obrahermanopedro.org.

Expect the Unexpected at St. Philip School

St. Philip Elementary El Campo

Visitors to St. Philip Catholic School in El Campo can expect the unexpected. From early morning band practice to evening sports, the students are busy with not only academic lessons, but also life lessons. As the theme for Catholic School's Week is "Catholic Schools Light the Way" our students brighten the future in many ways. We encourage our students to evangelize at age appropriate levels, and these activities make our textbooks come alive.

St. Philip has a strong academic base, but students also enjoy many extracurricular activities including band, chorus, one act play (Area Champs!), PSIA competitions (Area Champs!), volleyball (Zone Champs!), football, basketball, track, and soccer. These same students also make time to volunteer at the nursing homes, serve at weekly Mass and funeral Masses, celebrate national holidays as well as church holidays (the Saints Parade on All Saints Day is a favorite activity), peer tutor, and much more. Their fundraising activities not only raise money, but also encourage students to read (annual Read-A-Thon that has raised over \$1 million to date) and recycle (aluminum can collection, which benefits the PTC).

The academic experience not only prepares students for high school, but it also integrates disciplines so that students see how everything is intertwined. Math lessons also teach current events. Science

lessons require knowledge of language arts. And within every discipline, Christ is the ever-present teacher.

The St. Philip experience has cultivated a large group of honor graduates from El Campo High School (over 1/3 of honor graduates over the past 10 years) who are committed to community service.

Students are encouraged to achieve academically and to help their classmates to succeed. One well-loved tradition at St. Philip is the buddy program, where 7th and 8th grade students buddy up with kindergarten and 1st graders. The younger students' eyes light up when they see their buddy in the hallway, and the older children's excitement is evident. Having an older buddy helps ease the transition into school, and having a younger buddy reminds those about to graduate of their wonderful years at St. Philip.

The St. Philip experience is a blessing to the students and also to their families. The dedication and support of St. Philip parents is shown through many hours of volunteer effort each week. Whether it's heading a fundraiser or coaching a sport, these volunteers are dedicated to the success of St. Philip.

The students celebrated Catholic School Week by participating in BINGOS with buddies and in "A Class Act" talent show. We bring in the community of SPS by beginning the week with a spirit filled Mass. If you would like more information about St. Philip Catholic School, call (979) 543-2901.



FAMILY PUZZLE CONTEST

Find What Makes Catholic Schools Special

What makes a Catholic education special? Find the words in the grid that describe what Catholic schools offer. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

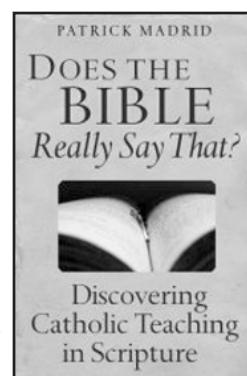


Academics	Fun	Respect
Achievement	God	Service
Balance	Inspiration	Study Skills
Catechism	Jesus	Success
Compassion	Leadership	Tradition
Diversity	Morals	Values
Excellence	Praise	Worship
Faith	Prayer	
Friends	Religion	

“Does the Bible Really Say That?” to be February Puzzle Contest Prize

If you are less than familiar with the Bible, you might be surprised at what you'll find there. Is drinking alcohol a sin? Do Christians have an absolute assurance of salvation? Is the rosary really a biblical prayer? And what's up with the Rapture?

In “Does the Bible Really Say That? Discovering Catholic Teaching in Scripture” Patrick Madrid leads the reader on an investigation of what Scripture has to say about these and many other topics, revealing, in the process, the biblical roots of much Catholic teaching.



“Does the Bible Really Say That?” is published by Servant Books and sells for \$13.99.

Patrick Madrid is a best-selling author whose books include “Search and Rescue,” “Pope Fiction” and the acclaimed “Surprised by Truth” series. A popular presenter of parish seminars on Catholic themes, he is the host of four EWTN television series and of EWTN Radio’s Thursday live show “Open Line.” Patrick and his wife, Nancy, have been blessed with eleven happy and healthy children. They live in central Ohio.

Family Puzzle Contest Winners

Loretta Pfenninger of Immaculate Conception in Goliad is the January Family Puzzle Contest winner and will receive Joseph Girzone’s “Joshua’s Family.”

Michaela Blough (8 years) of Holy Family in Victoria is the winner of the youth puzzle contest. She will receive a gift from the Incarnate Word Gift Shop.

Thank you to everyone, especially the youth, who entered the contest this month. We've had a record number of contestants for the past two months.

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 Feb. 27, 2008, to: Family Contest, The Catholic Lighthouse, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, TX 77903. Only youth need to include age.

Sunday readings from Feb. 17

February 17 —
Second Sunday
of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4a
Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22
2 Timothy 1:8b-10
Matthew 17:1-9

February 24 —
Third Sunday
of Lent

Exodus 17:3-7
Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42

March 2 —
Fourth Sunday
of Lent

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

March 9 —
Fifth Sunday
of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45

March 16 —
Palm Sunday
of the Lord’s Passion

Isaiah 50:4-7
Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

POPE BENEDICT XVI
CHRIST OUR HOPE
APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE UNITED STATES 2008



**2008
Papal Visit**
April 15-20

The Love Letter

The letter didn't come on Valentine's Day. I didn't receive it on an anniversary. The best love letter I ever received came from my husband a few weeks ago on Christmas Eve.

While John was raised Baptist, much of his extended family was Catholic. His parents' siblings had married Catholics and raised their children in the Catholic Church. But John's mom was Baptist, and John and his sister first discovered God's love through their mother in a Baptist church.

When John was in middle school, his mother died of breast cancer. He tried to go to church regularly for awhile, but it just became too difficult without a mother's prompting. John's dad decided to send his son to a Catholic high school, hoping it would be a soft, safe place for the boy who had experienced a terrible loss at such a tender age.

Like most students in Catholic high schools, John gained a strong identity by being part of a private school. He wore the school's name (St. John Vianney) with pride, even though he did not convert.

After high school, John headed off to college, but church wasn't a big part of this phase of his life. One day, while commuting to graduate school, the radio station paused its regular programming to announce that the Federal Building in Oklahoma City had been bombed. The tragic news made John take stock of his life, and he decided that it was time to return to his faith because he realized that for all of us there are times when faith is all that's left to go on ...

like when a mom dies and a boy is only half-grown ... or when tragedy comes suddenly, and there is nothing anyone can do but pray.

John and I met about a year later. The timing was ideal. I needed some ballast in my life. John was rock solid, and that was an important thing to a single mother of three small children.

After a brief engagement, we married. We attended the Presbyterian church where my father preached. When Dad became ill and left pastoral ministry, we attended the Baptist church where John's mother had taken him as a small boy. Then my father died, and I went searching for answers. I found a copy of Dark Night of the Soul by St. John of the Cross and eventually found my way to the Catholic Church.

“I think I’m supposed to become Catholic,” I told John one day. He nodded and told me that was fine, but he wasn’t interested in becoming Catholic. I agreed to keep my Catholic journey private and preserve our Baptist identity as a family. Back then, I thought that would be enough. I barely understood what was happening to me, and I didn’t think I was in any position to help anyone else become Catholic. In time, however, things changed. I wanted all of us to be Catholic and on the same page with our faith.

But that doesn’t always happen the moment you realize how much you want it.

Grace has its own timetable. Another’s free will can’t be forced. And while I prayed for this one conversion, I must admit, I didn’t think it would ever happen. “Remember St.

Monica,” my parish priest said. “Would she have become a saint if she had not had a son who needed her prayers? And then we never would have had St. Augustine.” Okay, fair enough.

So I prayed in earnest – at Mass – during my hour of Adoration. But it is very difficult to hope for something you cannot imagine.

On Christmas Eve everything changed. While waiting for Mass to begin, John passed me a card. I looked at it for a second, and while my heart filled with joy (because John’s love letters are always very special), I still did not know what was about to happen. I opened the letter and began to read. I love John’s handwriting; it’s so familiar to me, like all the other things about him after eleven years of marriage. I read the words, about how deeply he loves me, and how that had prompted him to consider the Catholic Church. “And so, I join the Church this coming Easter,” I read the final sentence.

He smiled as the tears gathered in my eyes. I tried to wrap my mind around this news. “When are you going to begin?” I whispered, unsure that the unfolding miracle could really be true. And he told me that he had been secretly studying with our parish RCIA leader for months.

The impossible had happened. And I realized that his life, like my own, has been dotted by one grace after another. Some moments had seemed very good, some very difficult, but all of it pointed to conversion, our “yes” to the great call of divine love ... God’s love letter to us.



“I don’t think we’re devoted to the Lord.
I think we’re devoted to dessert.”

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The Joyful Catholic

© 2008 By Frederick Hermann
E-mail: RH222@sbcglobal.net



For soul repairs, call a divine handyman

If we only knew how much our Lord wants to help us fix the problems in our lives and how skillful he really is, we might turn to him sooner rather than later.

We would gladly place ourselves completely in his loving hands.

To glimpse this approach to fixing everything demonstrated in a down-to-earth manner, I recommend an entertaining television series called "This Old House".

It features a delightful cast of super-handy tradesmen who show up with all the right tools to fix everyday problems in ordinary homes.

They tackle every project with great confidence and enthusiasm, and after a while, they usually uncover an unexpected problem caused by the homeowner's neglect or lack of knowledge.

A recent episode featured my favorite character Norm Abram, an experienced carpenter with a red-checkered shirt, thick eyeglasses and big calloused hands.

As he carefully removed the siding from a house, he discovered a long-hidden water leak in the roof that had seeped down,

rotting the wood foundation of the home.

He showed the homeowner the problem and said, "This has to be fixed or it will ruin your whole house."

The homeowner appeared shocked by the revelation but glad to discover the source of the problem and the extent of the damage.

Relieved to be in the presence of a capable and honest repairman, the homeowner gratefully gave permission to proceed to fix the problem.

When Norm was finished, the house was fixed perfectly and everyone was smiling.

This popular show appeals to me because it represents what Jesus wants to do for us. He wants to fix us up. He wants to make us better than ever.

The Master Carpenter seeks to renew us, to fix us in our broken places and make us good as new.

He already knows exactly what needs fixing. "God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (1 John 3:20).

Vatican official: Church should reconsider Communion in the hand

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments said he thinks it is time for the Catholic Church to reconsider its decision to allow the faithful to receive Communion in the hand. Archbishop Albert Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don, the Vatican official, made the suggestion in the preface to the book, "Dominus Est: Reflections of a Bishop from Central Asia on Holy Communion," about the Eucharist by Auxiliary Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Karaganda, Kazakhstan.

In the newly released preface to the book, Archbishop Ranjith wrote, "The Eucharist, bread transubstantiated into the body of Christ and wine into the blood of Christ — God in our midst — must be received with awe and an attitude of humble adoration."

The archbishop said the Second Vatican Council never authorized the practice of Catholics receiving Communion in the hand, a practice that was "introduced abusively and hurriedly in some spheres" and only later authorized by the Vatican. The liturgists, theologians and pastors who encouraged the change said it better reflected the ancient practice of the church and the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, he said.

"It is true that if one can receive on the tongue, one also can receive in the hand because

this organ of the body has equal dignity," he said. However, Archbishop Ranjith said, the introduction of the practice of receiving Communion in the hand coincides with the beginning of "a gradual and growing weakening of the attitude of reverence toward the sacred eucharistic species."

"I think the time has come to evaluate these practices and to review them and, if necessary, to abandon the current practice," Archbishop Ranjith said. "Now more than ever, it is necessary to help the faithful renew a lively faith in the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic species with the aim of reinforcing the very life of the church and defending it in the midst of dangerous distortions of the faith," the archbishop wrote.

The bulk of Bishop Schneider's book was published in early January in the Vatican newspaper; he said that if a Catholic truly believes in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, he or she should kneel in adoration and reverence when receiving Communion. The article in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, appeared under the headline, "Like a nursing child in the arms of the one who nourishes him" and included the bishop's opinion that just as a baby opens his mouth to receive nourishment from his mother, so should Catholics open their mouths to receive nourishment from Jesus.

Lewis & Company does not have the people power to put together thousands of rosaries, but they do have the supplies and are willing to donate them. The goal is to introduce the joy of rosary making to Catholic laity and clergy. Each participant will receive a completely free Missionary Ro-

He wants to unplug our stopped-up communications, repair our rusty relationships, restore the crumbling foundations of our lives and upgrade the circuits of our minds.

We all know we are broken in some way, and we all need the healing hand of Christ. We need only call upon him. He will quickly go to work on us with infinite care and marvelous results.

Most of us know that we have a drippy habit needing transformation, a broken heart in need of mending or a dark room in our soul requiring new light. However, we neglect it because we are afraid to investigate it alone.

We fear that the problem may be too big for us to solve or we expect the problem has no solution.

Most daunting of all, we do not believe we know anyone capable enough to fix the problem.

We need to realize that our creator has all the answers.

We need to trust his promise that he has our best interests at heart. Then we can run to him with confidence.

We may have to wait awhile for him to finish his work, but he promises to make us perfect in his time. We just need to remember to allow him to proceed on his divine schedule and not expect him to meet our impatient deadlines.

So let us call on the Master Craftsman to come fix us today. He is willing to help us, he is wanting to help us and he is waiting to help us. All we need to do is ask.

Soon we will hear an eager knock on our door and a reassuring voice saying, "I will build you up, and not tear you down" (Jeremiah 42:10).

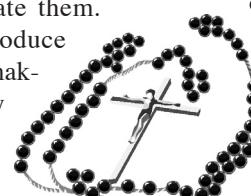
Hermann is a Catholic writer, author and speaker.

Make rosaries for the mission field

The Lewis & Company is continuing its Worldwide Rosary Campaign to meet the need of one million rosaries for The Family Rosary's mission activities. Three years ago it was the company's 55th anniversary as rosary producers and they wanted to give back as a "thank you" for their years of success. They were astonished to find an urgent worldwide need for rosaries. They joined with The Family Rosary to solicit donations of rosaries for the missions and added a twist. They offered a free Mission Rosary Kit to anyone who would make a rosary and send it to The Family Rosary. They were proud that their rosary making customers donated over 200,000 rosaries to the campaign; now their effort will continue.

Lewis & Company does not have the people power to put together thousands of rosaries, but they do have the supplies and are willing to donate them. The goal is to introduce the joy of rosary making to Catholic laity and clergy. Each participant will receive a completely free Missionary Ro-

sary Kit by calling 800-342-2400 or by going to rosaryparts.com on the web. The kit includes instructions. After assembling the rosary, participants mail it back in the pre-addressed envelope. Lewis & Company will



Evolution and creation: A recurring papal theme, often misunderstood

By John Thavis Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In commentaries, papal speeches, scientific conferences and philosophical exchanges, the Vatican has been focusing more and more on the relationship between God and evolution.

From the outside, this may seem a reaction to the U.S. debate over creationism versus evolution, but it really has as much or more to do with the pope's interest in defining the legitimate spheres of science and faith.

Pope Benedict has weighed in several times on evolution, essentially endorsing it as the "how" of creation but cautioning that evolutionary theory cannot exclude a divine cause.

And yet, many people are under the vague impression that this pope has rejected evolution, or is getting ready to, or has serious objections to the science involved.

When a group of professors protested the pope's planned — and ultimately canceled — visit to Rome's Sapienza University, some said it was because they viewed the pope as a critic of Darwinian theory.

It probably doesn't help that the pope has shown a fondness for the phrase "intelligent design." He uses it to describe the idea that, whatever the biological processes involved, the natural world as a whole appears to witness to a divine creator.

That's not the same as the concept of a designer God intervening at particular points in natural development, however.

A correct understanding of evolution seemed to be on the pope's mind from the beginning of his pontificate. At his inaugural Mass in 2005, he said the existence of man can never be fully explained by a scientific process.

"We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God," he said.

In his recent encyclical on Christian hope, the pope returned to that theme, saying a personal God ultimately governs the world and "not the laws of matter or evolution."

In 2006, the pope made evolution the topic of his annual encounter with his former graduate students. That fueled even more speculation that the pontiff was planning a shift in the church's position on evolution; nothing of the sort happened.

This year, the Vatican is preparing its most systematic look yet at the question, in an Oct. 31-Nov. 4 conference sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the theme "Scientific Insights Into the Evolution of the Universe and of Life."

According to a draft booklet on the conference, the program features several Nobel Prize winners and guarantees a fascinating session: The famed physicist Stephen W. Hawking will talk on the origin and destiny of the universe; Swiss chemist Albert Eschenmoser will discuss the search for the chemistry of life's origin; U.S. biologist David Baltimore will examine evolution at the genetic level; and Greek biologist Fotis Kafatos will speak on evolution and the insect world.

Those addressing the theological and philosophical aspects of evolution include Italian Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, who will discuss evolution from a biblical perspective, and Father Stanley L. Jaki, a professor of physics and the philosophy of science at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, who will speak on evolution as science and ideology.

Lest there be any doubt about Pope Benedict's views, the academy has prefaced its booklet with a lengthy papal quotation from last July.

"I see in Germany, but also in the United States, a somewhat fierce debate raging between so-called 'creationism' and evolutionism, presented as though they were mutually exclusive alternatives: Those who believe in the creator would not be able to conceive of evolution, and those who instead support evolution would have to exclude God," the pope said.

"This antithesis is absurd because, on the one hand, there are so many scientific proofs in favor of evolution which appears to be a reality we can see and which enriches our knowledge of life and being as such. But on the other, the doctrine of evolution does not answer every query, especially the great philosophical question: Where does everything come from? And how did everything start which ultimately led to man?" he said.

The pope is scheduled to meet with participants toward the end of the conference. Then, according to the tentative program, participants will gather to hear a final presentation titled "The Latest Challenge to Evolution: Intelligent Design."

then send all finished rosaries to

The Family Rosary for worldwide distribution to needy families around the world.

Rosaries for the World, is a program of The Family Rosary instituted by Father Patrick Peyton, CSC, The Rosary Priest, in 1942 in Albany, New York.



Pope, at Angelus address, appeals for peace in Kenya, Colombia, Iraq

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI appealed for “a rapid solution” to the violence unfolding in Kenya, an end to extortion and kidnappings in Colombia, and the seemingly endless “wickedness” carried out in Iraq. During his weekly Angelus address Feb. 3, the pope urged the thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square to join him in praying for “reconciliation, justice and peace” in Kenya. He said he hoped talks under way would “be successful and lead -- thanks to the good will and cooperation of everyone -- to a rapid solution of the conflict that has already caused too many victims.” More than 800 people have died and more than 250,000 have been forced from their homes since a Dec. 27 presidential election that international observers claimed was rigged. Pope Benedict also expressed his concern for the people of Iraq, who have been so “harshly tested.” Nearly 100 people were killed and up to 200 wounded Feb. 1 when two mentally disabled women reportedly were used as suicide bombers at two crowded outdoor markets in Iraq.

Youth’s rape only tip of the iceberg of Latin American prison horrors

LIMA, Peru (CNS) — Late last year, a 15-year-old girl was locked up for 24 days with adult men in a police holding cell in Abaetetuba, Brazil, where she was raped repeatedly and burned with cigarettes and lighters. Although the case outraged Brazilians when an anonymous phone call brought it to light, the girl, her family and some of the people who came to her defense received threats, and she and some relatives went into hiding. While that case was particularly scandalous, church workers and others familiar with Latin America’s prison system say it is the tip of an iceberg of problems with juvenile justice -- and the entire prison system -- in the region. “Unfortunately, since the 1980s there has been exponential growth in the prison population,” both adult and juvenile, said Elias Carranza, director of the U.N. Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. The number of people in prison in Brazil rose from 240,000 in 2002 to 371,000 in 2005. The result is serious overcrowding in prisons with inadequate infrastructure, personnel and services.

Study says amount of time for public service announcements shrinking

WASHINGTON (CNS) — If you were to look at a DVD of a half-hour TV show with no commercials, it would clock in at about 22 minutes. An hourlong show wouldn’t fare much better — probably 45 minutes. That includes the opening and closing credits. That leaves 15 to 16 minutes each hour for pitches of one kind or another. Most often the pitches are commercials for products or services. Virtually all the rest of the time is spent on promotions for other network shows that likewise feature another 15-16 minutes of commercials. On average, 17 seconds of each hour — one-half of 1 percent — of commercial time is used for public service announcements, or PSAs. Or it would if PSA time were spread out that equally throughout the broadcast day. In truth, nearly half, or 46 percent, of all donated PSAs were aired between midnight and 6 a.m., and the midnight-6 a.m. slot was the

African saint turns Oregon death-row inmate’s life upside down

By Ed Langlois
Catholic News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. (CNS) — From a windowless cell at the Oregon State Penitentiary, a Catholic death-row inmate evangelizes across the world.

A former white supremacist, Jeff Tiner is now inspired by a humble African saint. He resists publicity for himself, saying he wants only to spread far and wide the story of St. Josephine Bakhita. He uses most of this time and resources to support the Canossian Sisters, the religious community St. Bakhita joined more than a century ago.

At one time, Tiner had other priorities. In 1993 in Springfield, Ore., according to court records, he shot a man and disposed of his body in a remote area of the Cascade Range. He had been in trouble with the law before and bore tattoos of a swastika and the words “White Pride.”

Years after being convicted, Tiner was sitting despondent in his cell when a letter appeared under his door. The writer, calling herself his “Swiss Mum,” informed him that Jesus, Mary and Josephine Bakhita loved him.

Huh?

Tiner tried to throw the letter into the waste bag, but it fell short. He bent over to grab it for another try and it felt as if the letter jumped into his hand. He placed it on his desk and returned to other projects. But the letter nagged him.

Tiner wrote back to the stranger, telling her that he did not know he was Swiss and inquiring about this Bakhita woman.

As time went by, he received more letters and pamphlets about the Sudanese saint from his Swiss friend, a lay member of the Canossian order.

Born to an important family in the Darfur region in 1869, Bakhita was kidnapped at age 6 by Arab slave traders. Treated brutally, she was sold and resold five times, falling at one point into the hands of an Ottoman army officer who marked her as his with scars and tattoos.

Sold to an Italian diplomat when she was still a teen, she met the Canossian Sisters, an Italian order founded in 1808,

in Venice. Bakhita sought baptism in 1890. A court later found that Italian law did not recognize slavery and so she was freed.

She professed vows with the Canossian Sisters in 1896 and became known for her gentle spirit and holiness. She died in 1947 and was canonized in 2000.

After reading about St. Bakhita’s life, the condemned man felt hope.



St. Josephine Bakhita
(CNS file photo)

“I came to understand that I, too, could come back to life, spiritually,” he wrote in a 2006 article for the Canossian Sisters’ magazine. “I could be rescued from slavery to sin and find redemption and joy in the arms of Jesus and Mary.”

He felt St. Bakhita leading him down a path toward Jesus, he said, declaring, “I am no longer waiting to die. I am alive in Christ Jesus.”

Tiner was baptized in 2005. Because prison officials refused to allow him into the main chapel, the chaplain asked two guards to fill a large laundry tub with water and wheel it to death row.

“There, in shackles and handcuffs, I was baptized in the water that flowed from the side of Christ, made new in the Holy Spirit,” Tiner recalled in a letter

dumping ground for 60 percent of all PSAs aired on over-the-air TV. The prime-time hours got just 13 percent of all donated PSAs. This news comes from a new Kaiser Family Foundation report, “Shouting To Be Heard (2): Public Service Advertising in a Changing Television World,” issued in January.

Sister Dorothy Marie Hennessey, peace activist jailed at age 88, dies

DUBUQUE, Iowa (CNS) — Franciscan Sister Dorothy Marie Hennessey, a teacher turned activist who made national news at age 88 when she was sentenced to federal prison for trespassing at a Georgia military base, died Jan. 24 at age 94. The stream of friends who attended her wake and Jan. 28 funeral celebrated the influence and positive impact they said she had in their lives. Franciscan Sister Nancy Miller noted that Sister Dorothy Marie believed prayer and politics — in the true sense — went hand in hand. She often said, “I am convinced more than ever that we should get into today’s political life with Gospel motivation.” In 2001, Sister Dorothy Marie and her sibling, Franciscan Sister Gwen Hennessey, then 68, were sentenced, along with 24 others, to six months in the federal prison in Pekin, Ill., for trespassing at Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., as part of the annual vigil to

close the School of the Americas, now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. When a judge offered to commute Sister Dorothy Marie’s sentence to “motherhouse arrest,” she replied, “I’d rather not be singled out. If you wouldn’t mind, I would just as soon have the same (sentence) as the others.”

Exiled Ethiopians say U.S. must push Ethiopia on democratic reforms

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS) — Two exiled Ethiopian opposition leaders are calling for a tougher U.S. stance toward their country, saying Ethiopia’s role as a wedge against radical Islam in the Horn of Africa is coming at too high a cost in internal repression. Hailu Shawul, chairman of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy,

to Auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Steiner of Portland.

The summer after Tiner’s baptism, Portland Archbishop John G. Vlazny came to the prison to confirm him and four other prisoners.

With the help of Deacon Allen Vandecouer and St. Edward Parish in Keizer, Tiner started the Bakhita Project to help the Canossian Sisters.

The women, who wear simple gray habits, have worked in Sudan since 1996, teaching children who are refugees from the long warfare there. They also provide food and health care for families. Through the Bakhita Project, Tiner and his associates have so far helped build classrooms at St. Francis School in Khartoum, paid for a brick school and women’s center in a desert refugee camp, and provided food and supplies for several thousand children attending school in tents.

The project is also seeking to raise \$45,000 to pay for a new bus to transport students in the desert where temperatures can reach 130 degrees.

The Swiss lay Canossian and several Canossian Sisters who work in Rome have been sacramental sponsors for Tiner on his faith trek.

“I consider myself very fortunate in being one of Jeffrey’s pen friends because of his most edifying spiritual life,” writes Canossian Sister Velia De Giusto. “He shows an unquenched thirst for becoming more Christ-like.”

One nun in Singapore, moved by Tiner’s writings, refers to him as a “lay Canossian brother.”

“Has anyone ever done so much and from behind prison bars?” Sister Mary Siluvainathan wrote in her order’s magazine.

Editor’s Note: More information is available on the Web site www.sainteds.com, by clicking on “The Bakhita Project” in “featured pages.” Donations may be sent to: The Bakhita Project/St. Edward Church, 5303 River Road North, Keizer, OR 97303.

and Bedru Adem, an elected member of the coalition’s central committee in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa, made the charge in separate interviews in San Francisco. The nation of 80 million is the Bush administration’s strongest ally in the war on terror in the volatile Horn of Africa, yet the relationship requires tolerating a high level of repression within their country, they said. “The Bush administration supports the regime,” Adem told Catholic San Francisco. “They think they are against terrorism. But the government is terrorizing its own people day and night.” Adem and Shawul were in San Francisco to visit allies among Ethiopian emigres and members of the Catholic community as part of a campaign in North America and Europe to step up international pressure on the Ethiopian government to implement democratic reforms.

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CARDINAL DINARDO VISITS HOUSTON HOLOCAUST MUSEUM—Newly installed Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, left, visited Holocaust Museum Houston on Thursday, January 17, meeting with former Museum Chair Peter Berkowitz; Christine Rosen, senior editor for The New Atlantis; and Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute. DiNardo is the highest ranking Catholic leader to visit the Holocaust institution in its 11-year history and made the visit to meet with

Collins prior to the geneticist's Thursday night lecture on 21st-century genetics as part of the Museum's "Medical Ethics and the Holocaust" series. Ironically, the visit came the same day a California firm announced the first cloning of a human embryo. Collins, Rosen and DiNardo viewed the Museum's exhibit on medical ethics and its new Danish rescue boat, which will be officially dedicated Sunday, January 27. The cardinal also met with three Houston rabbis during his visit.



Texas 'Teacher of the year' award nominations open

Meriden, CT — Nominations for the Texas 2007-2008 TOTY™ (Teacher of the Year) are being accepted through April 30, 2008. The announcement came from the TOTY Award™ sponsor, Teachers' Insurance Plan™, a car insurance program exclusively for members of the educational community.

The award will include \$1,000 to the winning teacher and a \$500 grant to that teacher's school. The Texas TOTY Award™ winner will also be eligible for the National TOTY Award™ that includes a special recognition and a \$2,500 travel certificate.

Recent past state winners include Frank De La Rosa, a fourth grade teacher at Shimotsu Elementary School in Mission, and Elizabeth Charbonnet, a teacher at Lakeway

Elementary School in Lakeway.

Teachers, students and parents can nominate any of the state's more than 315,000 accredited teachers.

TOTY™ nomination forms are available online at www.teachers.com/toty. To nominate an educator, or yourself, explain in 250 words or less why this teacher should be the Teacher of the Year. Nominees will be judged on their ability to motivate students, their special talents, and their contribution to their school, students or educational community.

Winners will be announced at the start of the next school year.

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New York Giants' head coach has ties to parish in Rochester Diocese

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (CNS) — Mayor Ted Young of Waterloo sees a link between the success of the New York Giants and St. Mary Parish in his Seneca County village. He and Tom Coughlin, the Giants' head coach, are 1960 graduates of the parish grade school. Young believes Coughlin's Catholic-school upbringing helped shape his coaching achievements in college and the National Football League. "I think it played a large part. It sets your life values, and your values are set very early on," Young said in an interview with the Catholic Courier, newspaper of the Rochester Diocese. "Say what you



New York Giants football coach, Tom Coughlin, walks near players during practice. (CNS photo/Ray Stubblebine, Reuters)

want, he's been successful everywhere he's gone," Young said. "His values, his determination, his dedication -- if a little bit of that can be instilled in the players he's coaching, that can instill success. A coach like Tom drives you to put heart into what you're doing." Such qualities came in handy in the NFL's National Football Conference title game Jan. 20, as the Giants pulled out a 23-20 overtime victory in subzero temperatures in Green Bay, Wis., over the Green Bay Packers. The upset earned the team a Super Bowl date with the New England Patriots Feb. 3 in Arizona. The Giants brought the Patriots' perfect season to a halt with a 17-14 victory.

Despite hard choices, Catholics must vote, New Hampshire bishop says

Continued from p. 1

2007 fall meeting. Like "Faithful Citizenship," it outlines seven key themes for voters in 2008: right to life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable;

dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and caring for God's creation.

Bishop McCormack said Catholic voters are not obliged to vote the same way on all public policy matters.

"With respect to some public policy issues, faithful Catholics will adopt a variety of positions as they sincerely exercise their prudential judgment," he said, naming health care, "strategies for fostering economic justice and ways of ending war" as examples of such issues.

But support for certain other issues — including abortion, euthanasia, human embryonic stem-cell research, murder and the intentional targeting of innocent civilians in war — is always wrong, the bishop said.

"A Catholic should never perform or support an intrinsically evil act and rely on conscience to justify it," Bishop McCormack wrote. "In such instances, either one's conscience is not fully informed in light of the Gospel and church teaching — and one is obliged to have an informed conscience — or one acts against what one's conscience knows to be true.

"When candidates support or tolerate policies that include intrinsically evil acts, a Catholic must carefully assess the situation and decide which candidate will produce the least harm to innocent human life, if elected," he added.

In a separate opinion piece distributed to local media, Bishop McCormack said the document "was developed to encourage people to vote and to make informed, conscientious decisions as voters — not on a voter's self-interests or party affiliation, but rather on a well-formed conscience which will look to the advancement of the public good."

"I know that there are some who would prefer to see the church stay out of the debate on the future course of our country," he wrote in the opinion piece. "As Catholics — laity and clergy — we see our participation in the public forum as a moral obligation. To sit idly by is to forsake our vocation as Christians to defend the dignity of every human person and to promote the common good."

To read the U. S. bishops' full document, "Faithful Citizenship," in English or Spanish, please go to: www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship



CARDINAL VISITS CONVENT RAVAGED BY GANG IN INDIA—Cardinal Telesphore Toppo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, prays in front of a desecrated statue of Mary at the Carmelite convent in Balliguda Jan. 30. The cardinal toured areas of Orissa state that had been the scene of sectarian violence at the turn of the year. Dozens of Catholic churches, schools and other buildings were ransacked and the houses of Christians were burned in the rampages that began Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, since then, Catholic youth have retaliated by burning Hindu homes and businesses because they say police have made no effort to arrest the Hindu gangs. "We can never justify this kind of response," Cardinal Toppo told CNS. "This is not a witness to Christian faith." (CNS photo/Anto Akkara)

Sainthood cause opened for founder of first black parish in Brooklyn

BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS) — The process to declare a former Brooklyn pastor a saint has begun. The name of Msgr. Bernard Quinn, founding pastor of St. Peter Claver Parish in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the first parish established for black Catholics in the Brooklyn Diocese, will be sent to Rome to be considered for canonization. Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn officially approved the effort Jan. 13. The same day Auxiliary Bishop Guy A. Sansaricq was the main celebrant of a Mass at St. Peter Claver Church. The congregation of 500 people included members of the Quinn family. Joining him at the altar were retired Brooklyn Auxiliary Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan, and Father Paul Jervis, the current pastor and main promoter

of Msgr. Quinn's cause. Another concelebrant was Msgr. William Rodgers, 85, a member of St. Peter Claver Parish who became the first black accepted into Brooklyn's diocesan seminary and the first to be ordained for the Brooklyn Diocese.

Non-Catholics choose Catholic schools for academics, moral guidance

ATLANTA (CNS) — Recommendations from other parents and a long-standing reputation as effective educators who also address a student's moral development are key reasons why non-Catholic parents choose Catholic schools for their children. Jamal Burt, who is Christian but not Catholic, is both a teacher and the parent of a student at St. Peter Claver School in Decatur. His son, Isaiah, is a kindergartner. "I'm a product of Catholic schools from

Religious leaders, in letter, urge Bush to promote Middle East peace

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Two U.S. cardinals are part of an interfaith group of religious leaders who have asked President George W. Bush for his "active leadership" in achieving a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian territories, and for a comprehensive cease-fire covering Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. "The split in Palestinian governance between the West Bank and Gaza is incompatible with a durable peace agreement," said the letter, which was signed by Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago, president of the U.S. bishops, and Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington. The United States should "quietly support efforts by others, possibly including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to help form a new unified Palestinian government ... committed to rejecting violence, accepting previous agreements, and negotiating a two-state solution as the basis for peaceful coexistence between Israel and Palestine," said the Jan. 30 letter, written for the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East.

first to eighth grade," said Burt, who grew up in New Jersey. "My education received a jump-start (in a Catholic elementary school), and when I went to a public high school I saw that I had an advantage." He described the experience of attending a Catholic school as intense and exciting. "We're able to talk about faith, to talk about God specifically. To me, it's an important part of socializing a person," he said in an interview with The Georgia Bulletin, newspaper of the Atlanta Archdiocese. The National Catholic Educational Association reports that non-Catholic student enrollment in the nation's Catholic schools stood at 14 percent for the 2006-07 school year.

Jesuit says congregation trying to decide how to respond to pope

ROME (CNS) — As the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus discusses and deliberates the order's present and future, one of the big questions faced by the 225 Jesuit delegates is how best to respond to the encouragements and concerns of Pope Benedict XVI. "The warmth and enthusiasm and trust that is coming from Pope Benedict now is inviting a renewed and enthusiastic response from the society," said Jesuit Father David Smolira. The priest, former head of the Jesuits' British province and current director of the Jesuit Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa, met reporters Feb. 1 to explain how the General Congregation was working. After the delegates elected Father Adolfo Nicolas to be the



Cardinal John Foley, grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher, coadjutor Bishop Fouad Twal of Jerusalem, and many other clergy members met at the Madaba Inn Hotel in Madaba, Jordan. The tour Cynthia Brewer went on to the Holy Lands just happened to be staying at that hotel at the same time as the bishops' dinner. Above, Cardinal Foley meets HCEF pilgrimage spiritual director, Jordanian born Father Mike Salah, who resides in Washington, DC. "It was such an honor to meet the newly elevated cardinal while in the Holy Land," said Cynthia.

Cardinal Foley calls trip to Holy Land inspiring, informative

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — U.S. Cardinal John P. Foley said his first trip to the Holy Land as grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher was "both inspiring and informative."

While he was struck by the "very distressing" living conditions of Bethlehem's residents and the restrictions on some seminarians' freedom to travel, he was also touched by the enthusiasm and faith of the area's Christians, the cardinal told Catholic News Service Jan. 18.

His Jan. 7-13 trip to Jerusalem, the West Bank, Jordan and "all the major shrines" was "a great joy" and "very necessary for me in my new job."

Pope Benedict XVI named Cardinal Foley pro-grand master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher in June. The chivalric organization is dedicated to supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to responding to the needs of Catholics in the Holy Land.

The 72-year-old Philadelphia native had not been to the Holy Land since 1977, he said, "and what a way to go as cardinal, I must say."

He met with numerous bishops, dignitaries, and local Christians and helped celebrate Mass at a number of venues, including at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher which, the cardinal said, was a

new Jesuit superior general Jan. 19, they began discussing issues of concern that would impact the more than 19,000 Jesuits worldwide. Included in the discussion, he said, was the need to respond to the letter Pope Benedict sent to the outgoing superior general, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, praising the Jesuits' contributions to evangelization and urging them to reaffirm their fidelity to contested points of church doctrine, particularly regarding sexual morality and relations with other religions.

very moving experience "especially given my new job."

In meetings with local pastors, the priests "were very clear and forthright" in outlining what aid they had received from the chivalric order and what now were their most urgent needs, the cardinal said.

Their No. 1 priority, he said, was additional funding for Catholic schools.

"The cost of living is going up and they can't afford to give raises to the teachers," he said.

He said Catholic school officials "don't want to lose their teachers" — some of whom are leaving to work in better-paid public schools.

The schools are crucial for helping the minority Christians "maintain a Christian identity," Cardinal Foley said. Since Latin-rite Catholics, Melkite Catholics, Greek Orthodox and even Muslims attend the schools, these institutions also foster understanding and peace in multifaith communities, he said.

Seeing how people in Bethlehem, West Bank, were affected by the Israeli security barrier "was very, very distressing," he said. Some people cannot access their land on the other side of the barrier, a series of concrete slabs and barbed-wire fences, and while Israeli settlements have sprung up on contested lands.

"They're very unhappy, Christians and Muslims alike," he said.

The cardinal said he was struck by how enthusiastic and strong in their faith the Christians of Zerka, Jordan, were. Meeting with and celebrating Mass for "the descendants of the first Christians" was very inspiring, he said.

He said he also was impressed by "the quality of the students and enthusiasm" of the seminarians in Beit Jalla near Bethlehem, despite "the frustration of not being able to return home for Christmas." Visa restrictions had prevented nearly half the students from leaving the West Bank for the holidays, he said.

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The Darfur Genocide: Never Again, Again?

Free Lecture to Focus on Individual Response to Genocide

HOUSTON — Since 2003, more than 400,000 people have been killed and more than 2.5 million have been displaced from their homes in the Darfur region of Sudan. The Sudanese government has sent its troops and militias known as the Janjaweed to destroy villages, pillaging national resources and torturing, raping and murdering innocent civilians in what the Bush administration has declared a genocide.

What can be done to prevent such occurrences will be the focus of a Feb. 18 lecture at Holocaust Museum Houston titled "Darfur Genocide: Never Again, Again?" featuring Mark Hanis, founder and executive director of the Genocide Intervention

Network.

Hanis will discuss the crisis in Darfur, what America has done in response and specific things that can be done to help bring an end to the genocide. Hanis will appear at a reception at 6:00 p.m., Monday, Feb. 18, followed by his lecture at 6:30 p.m. Both events will be open to the public and will be held at Holocaust Museum Houston's Morgan Family Center, 5401 Caroline St., in Houston's Museum District.

Admission to both events is free, but seating is limited, and advance registration is recommended. Visit www.hmh.org/register.asp to register online.

Special Collections

Operation Rice Bowl — Sundays of Lent/Easter Sunday

Catholic Relief Services — March 2

Holy Land (Good Friday) — March 21

Ongoing Events

Grief Group — Have you experienced the death of a loved one?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Engaged Encounter — Register as soon as you have contacted your pastor due to limited space. **It is strongly recommended that you attend an encounter weekend four to six months prior to your wedding date.** For a registration form, contact your pastor, visit the [Web site at www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm](http://www.victoriadiocese.org/family/ee.htm), or write to: Engaged Encounter, P.O. Box 4070, Victoria, Texas 77903. The weekend is held at the Spiritual Renewal Center. The dates for 2008 are: April 4-6; June 27-29; Sept. 26-28; and Nov. 14-16. For more info., call (361) 573-0828 ext. 50. All registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Fee must accompany registration form.

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 — A Retrouvaille Weekend will be held on February 29-March 2, at the Spiritual Renewal Center in Victoria. The word Retrouvaille means 'rediscovery.' It is a program that offers the chance to rediscover yourself, your spouse, and a loving relationship in your marriage. Tens of thousands headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending. The program will be held from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, with six, four-hour follow-up sessions. 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 or www.helpourmarriage.org.

The Beginning Experience — The Beginning Experience is an international ministry that helps divorced, separated and widowed individuals resolve their grief surrounding the loss of a marriage partner. For more information, go to their Web site: www.beginningexperience.org; e-mail: sanantonio@ yahoo.com; phone: (210) 734-2146.

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.

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 (361) 649-9157.

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

Natural Family Planning — For English or bilingual sessions of the **Sympo-Thermal Method (S-TM)** in Palacios, call Rene and Wilma Galvan at (361) 972-5030. Available for counseling and classes. For information about the Sympo-Thermal Method in the Victoria area, contact Rudy and Estella DeLos Santos (361) 894-6950. 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

CRS presentation: Making a Difference in Guatemala

The public is invited to hear a talk titled "Operation Rice Bowl: Making a Difference in Guatemala" sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. Lucrecia Oliva, a native of Guatemala, will be speaking on Thursday, February 14, at noon at the chancery, 1505 E. Mesquite Lane, and again at 7:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 208 W. River Street. Lucrecia will talk about hunger in her country, its causes and effects and the difference made by U.S. Catholics through Catholic Relief Services (CRS), including Operation Rice Bowl. Those coming to the noon presentation at the chancery may bring a brown-bag lunch. For more information, please contact bparkan@victoriadiocese.org or (361) 573-0828 ext. 25.

Movie Capsule

"Bordertown" (THINKFilm) — Worthy but bleak investigative drama in which, at the behest of her editor (Martin Sheen), a Chicago reporter (Jennifer Lopez) travels to Juarez, Mexico, to uncover the truth about a series of rapes and murders committed against female factory workers. Writer-director Gregory Nava's film, inspired by true events, is absorbing, despite some melodramatic elements and an oversimplified indictment of globalization. Brutal rape and attempted rape, nonmarital sexual activity, rear and upper female nudity, graphic images of blood and corpses, some rough, crude and profane language, and occasional crass language. The USCCB Office for Film & Broadcasting classification is L — limited adult audience, films whose problematic content many adults would find troubling. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

(979) 335-7306 for more information or to register for classes. **Natural Family Planning is the only church approved form of family planning.**

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

Picnics, Activities, etc.

February

Victoria — St. Mary's Festival Feb. 10 community center.

Victoria — Our Lady of Sorrows ACTS will be having a Lenten Fish Fry every Friday during Lent: Feb. 22 and 29, and March 7 and 14. The fish fry will be at Trinity Hall, 208 W. River, from 5:00-8:00 p.m. The plates are \$7 p/p with dine-in or carry-out available.

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser Feb. 17 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

When & Where

El Campo — The St. Philip Catholic School invites you to their Annual Dinner and Dance, on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the civic center. The theme this year is "A Mexican Fiesta." Schedule of events: 5:30 - Social Hour; 6:30 - Dinner; 7:30 - Auction; and 9:00 - Dance by the Triumphs. Tickets are \$35 per person and can be purchased by calling Kim Singleton at (979) 532-5652 or (979) 543-2901. Tickets are also available at the school office. Ticket purchase deadline is Feb. 15. Anyone wishing to make a cash donation or donate an item to the auction should contact Michelle Korenek (979) 541-3228 or Dana Jenkins (979) 578-1430.

Corpus Christi — "Why We're Catholic When We Could Be Anything Else!" Fullness of Truth Catholic Family Conference in Corpus Christi Feb. 23-24 to be held at the American Bank Convention Center & Selena Auditorium. Register at www.fullnessoftruth.org or call 1-800-731-4500. The movie, "Bella," to be shown.

Victoria — Our Lady of Lourdes Holy Name Society Annual Chicken and Sausage Dinner on Feb. 24 at the church (105 N. William St.). Inside plates are \$6 for adults and \$3 for children. Chicken or sausage plates-to-go will be \$6. Serving will be from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more information call Dennis at (361) 574-8569.

Wharton — Knights of Columbus Council 3262 will host their 28th Annual Straight Domino Tournament, which will be held on Feb. 24 in the council hall (2820 N. Fulton St.). Registration is from 8:00-9:00 a.m. Prizes for 1st to 4th place will be awarded. There will be food and drinks available. Registration fee is \$12.50 per person. Public is invited. Proceeds benefit scholarships and other charities.

Victoria — KJZT 101 will have Lenten Soup at St. Mary Church Feb. 29 after the 6:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross.

Upcoming Events

Victoria — The IWBS Sisters are hosting a Discernment Weekend for single Catholic women between the ages of 18 and 50 years of age on March 1-2 at the convent. For more information go to www.iwbsvictoria.org or call (361) 575-7111.

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 will smoke hams for your Easter dinner. These hams will be fully cooked and weigh about 20 pounds. The cost is \$45 per ham. **Pre-sale only.** Call Dennis at (361) 574-8569 to reserve your ham. Hams must be picked up Monday, March 17, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Deadline to order is March 2.

Hillje — St. Procopius Spring Festival March 2 at the parish hall.

A fried-chicken dinner will be served starting at 11:00 a.m. with dine-in or drive through plates-to-go available at \$6.50 p/p. There will also be a bake sale at the parish hall.

Hungerford — KJT Society No. 79 and KJZT Society No. 57 Annual Barbecue-chicken and Sausage Dinner March 2 at the community center. Serving begins at 10:30 a.m.; plates-to-go will be available. There will be an auction and free dance with music by The Twilights until 5:00 p.m. Raffle drawing will be at 5:00 p.m.

Victoria — Our Lady of Victory Boy Scout Troop 364 will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on Sunday, March 2, at the Victoria Knights of Columbus Hall. The event will begin with a Scout Sunday Mass at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral. As plans are being made for this event, we ask that former scouts of this troop give us their names and updated addresses to be included. You may contact Loren Hackbarth, 361-576-3341, or Brigid Sonntag, 361-578-9454. Also, information can be entered at the troop Web site at www.olvtroop364.org.

Victoria — Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court St. Ann Annual Games Party March 6 at the KC Hall. A beef-casserole dinner will be served, door prizes, fish bowl raffle and more. Doors open from 6:00-9:00 p.m. for \$6 per person. RSVP to Grace Brown at 573-2221; Sandra Genoway at 573-5890; or Janell Kruppa at 575-8166.

Victoria — KJZT 101 will hold a bake sale at Holy Family Church March 8 — 9 after all Masses.

Blessing — Knights of Columbus Council 4307 will sponsor their annual fish fry and raffle on March 9. It will be held at St. Peter Parish Hall. Fried-catfish with all the trimmings will be served from 10:30 a.m. till 1:00 p.m. Plates - \$7.00 each (includes dessert and drink). An auction will also be held during the event. The proceeds will benefit Knights of Columbus scholarships and charities.

New Taiton — St. John's Altar Society Annual Chicken Dinner March 9 at the Taiton Community Center with serving beginning at 11:00 a.m. Dine-in or plates-to-go with fried-chicken, homemade dressing and all trimmings at \$7 p/p. There will be an auction, cakewalk, country store, kiddy area, raffle and silent auction.

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser March 16 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Victoria — A SPECIAL NEEDS, one-day ACTS retreat will be held March 29 at Our Lady of Victory Cathedral. Anyone in the Victoria area with a disability or special need is welcomed to attend. Applications will be available soon throughout the diocese. Please contact Vicki Pyatt, director, at (361) 572-9301 or Pam Kovar, co-director, at (361) 781-0338 for more information. Anyone who is an ACTS brother or sister and interested in volunteering to be a part of the team for this retreat, please contact Vicki or Pam as well.

El Campo — KC Spring Picnic March 30 at the KC Hall (Hwy. 71 and Armory Road). A chicken-barbecue dinner will be served beginning at 11:00 a.m. There will be an auction, cakewalk, free dance from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. with Texas Sound Check and much more.

Shiner — Annual Sts. Cyril and Methodius Gala April 5 at the American Legion Hall. This year will be Taste of Texas "Tat-aliano!" A limited number of dinner reservations available. Call (361) 594-3836 for more information. All proceeds will benefit Sts. Cyril and Methodius Education Endowment Funds.

World Day of Prayer For Vocations — April 16

Victoria — Knights of Columbus Council 1329 chicken-barbecue fund-raiser April 20 at the KC Hall. The price is \$6 per chicken. Beans and Spanish rice available for \$1 per pint. Sale starts at 8:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit council's projects.

Pilgrimage to Italy for Deaf — Official American Catholic Delegation to the International Deaf Community Papal Audience June 25, 2008. Pilgrimage to Italy June 16 — 27, 2008, includes Rome, Assisi, Florence, Padua and Venice, \$3,285 land/air from Dallas and other cities. For information and brochures, contact Travel Provider — Best Catholic Pilgrimages; 800-908-2378; FAX 888-647-2378; e-mail: info@bestcatholic.com.



ST. JOSEPH HIGH COUNSELOR HONORED BY TEXAS A&M—Mr. Paul Matula, STJ guidance counselor, has been selected by Texas A&M University as a counselor of the year. This distinction is awarded to 35 school counselors throughout Texas and Louisiana. Texas A&M will also award a \$1,000 scholarship to one of STJ's students in honor of Mr. Matula. Texas A&M representative, Monika Caylor, surprised Mr. Matula with this recognition in front of the STJ student body at the end of Mass Tuesday, January 22. Pictured left to right: Monika Caylor, Texas A&M recruiter; Paul Matula, STJ Guidance Counselor; and Veronica Blanco, Regional Financial Aid Advisor.

By Cynthia Brewer

The cold drizzle and wind stopped just in time for the nearly 150 pro-life marchers to begin the March for Life Thursday evening, January 24, 2008. Although it was still cold, the valiant marchers lit their candles or turned on their flashlights and vigilantly marched for the right to life for all humans from the moment of fertilization to natural death.

The march began at Jerusalem Family



Praise Center at 208 N. Ben Wilson and ended at the newly dedicated Capilla de la Santisima Trinidad (Holy Trinity Chapel) on Pleasant Green Drive, where a national speaker challenged young people to stand up for life.

Ashlynn Treviño (13) of Victoria asks Erik how to get involved in pro-life work.

Erik Whittington, a young man from Stafford, Va., and director of Rock for Life, a project of American Life League, informed participants that in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court waged war on his generation, the 35 and younger group, taking away their rights while still in their mother's wombs.

He asked how many in the chapel were under 35 years of age and then told them that for every two of them, another one is missing — that 1/3 of their generation was lost in the holocaust of abortion.

The survivors of the WWII Holocaust did not keep silent, Erik said; their cry was, and still is, "Never Again!" He asked all those under 35 to shout out, "I am a survivor!" and then, "I survived the abortion holocaust!"

As horrific as it was that over six million Jews, and thousands of gypsies, homosexuals, and mentally disabled were slaughtered by the Nazis in WWII, those numbers equal only about 1/10 of those who have been murdered by abortion in the past 35 years, he said and believes one day there will be a memorial in Washington, D.C. for the millions lost in the abortion holocaust.

In the United States 48 million children have been killed in their mother's wombs since January 22, 1973. That makes 1.2 million abortions a year, 3,500 a day, one every 27 seconds, he said, alerting the audience that by the time his 20 minute talk was finished, 40 babies will have been aborted.

Survivors also include the mothers and fathers guilty of having or supporting an abortion, as now they suffer from great mental, physical and emotional trauma. For some, every time they hear a vacuum or hear a toilet flush, or see a baby, or a stroller, depression sets in.

"The U.S. Court gave us abortion, now we're reeling from the results," Erik said.

As the director of Rock for Life, an organization committed to offer youth encouragement to stand up among their peers to fight against the destruction of their generation, Erik urged the young people to not keep silent. Every day ask God, "What can I do to live a pro-life lifestyle?"

He said prayer was most important, he then recommended youth to start a Rock for Life chapter in their area, wear pro-life t-shirts and sport pro-life bumper stickers. So many people have changed their minds from having an abortion, he said, by seeing a pro-life bumper sticker or t-shirt.

Young people can speak up in their classrooms as well, he said, noting it's so necessary, as 19 percent of all abortions are performed on teenagers and 50 percent are performed on women 25 years or younger. Because of these statistics, it is most im-

The Holy Cross School 4-year-old program received a donation from the KJT Society 100 and KJZT Society 139. From the donation, tricycles were purchased for the school's playground.



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 fundraiser on September 24, 2007. A total of \$429 was raised during the bake sale, which made for a grand total of \$679 for the school. At the presentation of the grant check were (left to right): society sales representative, Dan Stavena; principal of Holy Cross School, Sister Geraldine Pavlik, IWBS; society secretary/treasurer, Vincent Nemec; society president, James Engbrock; society chaplain, Rev. Casimir Jarzombek; and society vice-president, August Svatek.

Pro-life speaker calls on youth to take a stand

portant to live chaste lifestyles and speak up in schools reminding their friends that life is sacred.

Just as the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. portrays many pictures and stories, Erik said, so the abortion survivors must show graphic photos and tell their stories of the horrors

of abortion.

Holocaust museums also honor heroes who risked their lives to save Jews in WWII. We need to leave a legacy for our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Erik said, asking how we will answer our children if they ask us what we did to stop the abortion holocaust.



HOSTYN YOUTH BRING CHEER TO ELDERLY—Members of the Holy Rosary Youth Group of Hostyn went caroling to Monument Hill Nursing Home, Care Inn Nursing Home and The Jefferson Place in La Grange in December. During their caroling, they visited with the residents and delivered each of them a hand-made dove ornament. They had some help from past members and members of the adult choir in singing songs in the Czech language, as many of the residents enjoy hearing Christmas songs in their native language. This year, they also surprised some with a Christmas song in both German and Spanish.



PASO A PASO KEEPS WALKING—Paso A Paso team, made up mostly of CDA members, collected \$1,300 for the 2007 Wharton County Relay for Life Cancer Walk. Paso A Paso has participated in the relay since 1999. "Relay for Life is a very worthy project and helps many persons," said Elma Escobar, captain, "We are proud to represent our parish, San Roberto Bellarmine (in Wharton)." Pictured kneeling are Hailey Flores, Annie Muños, Elma Escobar, Jennifer Limas; standing: Gabriel Treviño (survivor), Helen Escobar, Nora Molina, Vicky Limas, Lorine Molina and Augie Beltran. Not pictured: Adelma Martinez and Marissa Estrada.



Reflections on my pilgrimage to the Holy Land - January 2008

By Cynthia Brewer

After five years of awareness of what was happening to the Christians in the Holy Land, my husband, Greg, and I finally had a chance to experience the Holy Land first hand.

We went on a "Fact Finding" Pilgrimage with the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical



Priests, patriarchs, bishops, mayors, legislators and over 1,000 children from Christian schools throughout Israel and the West Bank march for peace on the HCEF sponsored Journey to Bethlehem.

Foundation (HCEF) January 7 – 20.

The highlights of the trip were meeting Holy Land Christians and experiencing the Holy sites where Christ performed his miracles.

The first thing we noticed about the Holy Land Christians was that they seemed just like us Americans: they're very modern; they're up on the latest technology and trends: cell phones, computers, digital cameras and fashions.

However they're unlike Americans in a few ways: they eat very healthfully; tomatoes and cucumbers at every meal – breakfast, lunch and dinner – and weigh accordingly, and always dress their best. The young women look like they're fashion plate models with their hip huggers, heeled boots, terrific figures and fashionable hair and make-up.

They may be an oppressed people in that they are unable to go places and do things without permission from the Israeli military, but their ambitions are just like ours.

An amazing thing that was hard to go unnoticed was the friendliness of Palestinian drivers. Once you cross a checkpoint to enter the occupied territories, you leave the modern streets of Israel with several lanes upon which to travel and streetlights to give direction. I didn't see one traffic light in Bethlehem or Ramallah. These are very busy cities with winding, narrow streets with only stop signs and yield signs to guide a driver. One had to constantly yield to other cars and people walking in the street; however, you'd only hear a light beep to pedestrians so they'd know a car was on the road with them. No hands went flying up in impatience the many times I saw one car having to back down a hill to let an oncoming car continue down the road before they could try once again to reach the summit. Why are they so patient in such chaotic traffic? Is it because they live such suppressed lives under Israeli military rule that they've become used to being turned aside and having to find another way to get where and what they want?

I also learned that Palestinian Christians are highly educated. Many have several college degrees, bachelors and masters, and know a minimum of three languages. Our guide, Samir, told us that Palestinians are the most highly educated people per capita in the world. Based on my work with the Holy Land Christians, I am aware that education is the only ticket for young people to escape to live free lives in the West.

As a tourist one might not understand or realize that the Palestinian people are living under a difficult occupa-

the Palestinian people.

Besides the obtrusive Separation Wall cutting between property, families and neighbors and the multiple checkpoints, the poverty and injustice they cause is mostly hidden from tourists. Often when tourists go to the Holy Land, they don't go beyond the holy sites in Jerusalem, Nazareth in the Galilee area, and Bethlehem, the only

Pastors of churches have been weighed down with the responsibility of taking care of not only the spiritual needs of his parishioners, but also their physical needs. They are truly shepherds of their flock, ap-



If it's new and on the top of a hill, it's an illegal Israeli Settlement (illegal – according to the U.N.). Below the settlement is an Israeli-only highway and protection wall.



I met my HCEF sponsor child, 11-year-old Iyad, at Father Faisal's parish, Our Lady of Fatima, in Beit Sahour.

tourist city in the West Bank. And rarely do they spend time getting to know the Palestinian Christians.

Unless you speak to the people, you'd never know what they are suffering at the hands of the

Israeli military. Fortunately our "fact finding" mission included meeting with many Palestinian Christians, even staying over night with a family.

I learned from Khalil, a young, technical engineer for the Bethlehem office of HCEF, that he had four of his good friends killed during their college years by the Israeli military. So many Palestinians – Muslims and Christians – have had family members and friends killed by the military occupants.

What I learned from many of the Christian Palestinians was that if you don't own a car with an Israeli resident license plate, or have a traveling permit, you are very limited in your ability to travel. You are not able to drive just a couple of miles into Jerusalem, one of the few remaining prosperous cities where most good jobs can be found; therefore, your income is limited. Neither are you allowed to travel to the top hospitals in Jerusalem for cancer or heart treatments.

Because the Palestinians held fair, democratic elections, but voted in the wrong politicians according to the U.S. and Israel, the U.S. and European Union held back financial aid packages that used to provide funding for the salaries of public service workers: doctors, nurses, teachers, municipality/utility workers, police, etc. Without these incomes, families have had to rely on their churches, mosques and non-governmental organizations for charity to survive. Others who've had minor setbacks have had to cut back in other areas: healthcare; private, Christian education; heat; nutrition and luxuries.

plying to the Israeli government for travel passes for their parishioners during the holy seasons, requesting permission from the Israelis for travel permits to hospitals for medical needs – and often being denied until it is too late, requesting money from the Latin Patriarchate (diocese) to pay for exorbitant hospital fees or for scholarships for students who are applying to trade schools or universities.

But again, the typical tourist is shielded



A Spiderman Birthday Cake (what else?) for 4-year-old Ivan (bottom front) of Beit Sahour (Shepherd's Field).

for the local people, but it was harder to see how they financially and psychologically affected the people.



HCEF staff from its Bethlehem office.

The Separation Wall divides cities, cutting through main city streets, dividing people from their places of work, from their neighbors, or from their farms. And once a farm or business is unable to be tended to – because one is not allowed to go to it – it is confiscated as Israeli designated land.

I also saw many military checkpoints and dozens of illegal, Israeli hilltop settlements encircling the Palestinian towns, built on farmland recently confiscated from



No Peace with Settlements



A very tall wall! This one cuts down the middle of a street in Bethlehem. (left) A sign put up for President Bush's visit to Navitiy Square in Bethlehem.

from these things. Since our tour guide was a Palestinian Christian from Jerusalem, our bus had the right license plate. We just went along our unencumbered way past the checkpoints and barrier wall as tourists. If we had not met with the Palestinian Christians, we'd never know the difficulties they endure.

Spiritual Highlights to be in next issue of *The Catholic Lighthouse*.